



Garden Curator's Letter

By Susan Wilkins

It's that wonderful time of year again when after a deep pause from the pulsating growing season and just enough time to reflect, retool and prepare, the Wildflower Garden opens to welcome in another spring of beauty and renewal.

This is the Wildflower Garden's 110th season of being a wild botanic garden for all to enjoy. When Eloise Butler envisioned a public, native plant sanctuary so many years ago, she set out to create a space that would provide room for a wide variety of plants from all across the state and region and a place that would afford anyone with the interest and inclination an opportunity to learn about and enjoy the experience of native plants in a natural setting. Years later, her hope of what a wild botanic garden could provide for the community endures. It's heartwarming to recognize that we are still working to sustain Eloise's vision.

This season we are pleased to have two horticulture interns and one full-time seasonal gardener working out in the field. These critical staff members work day in and day out to physically care for the Wildflower Garden's plant collections through a variety of tasks that involve enormous amounts of weeding, invasive species removal and planting, not to mention trail maintenance. The 15-acre Wildflower Garden, although naturalistic in its style, is a garden like any other and requires thoughtful and thorough tending throughout the season.



We are excited this season to have the helpful guidance of local and national gardening and natural resources management authorities, including Claudia West, Rick Darke, Roy Diblik, Fred Rozumalski, Lee Frelich, Julia Bohnen and Dan Shaw as we work to improve the health and vitality of the Wildflower Garden. Through meetings, professional conference presentations and literature, these individuals have shared their knowledge and tips about how to work with some of the challenging issues that a garden like ours faces. To this end, look for the addition of several sedge species that will be planted as groundcovers in woodland garden areas this spring. Also, see if you can find a few of the creative ways that we are experimenting with erosion control and soil development in woodland and wetland garden areas this summer.

The Wildflower Garden is an urban ecosystem like no other, and that includes the dedicated people who care for and about it. Volunteers are always welcome to join the volunteer program managed by the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden to assist in the Visitor Shelter and out in the field. In addition, people can help out with special projects, like the completion of the boardwalk through the wetland, by donating to the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Keep up to date with current programs and plants in bloom by visiting www.minneapolisparks.org/ebwg. We look forward to seeing you out in the Wildflower Garden this season. Enjoy the beauty of nature today and every day!



Photo: John Toren