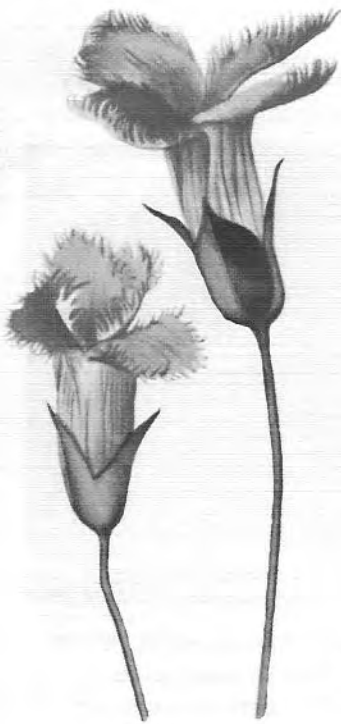


PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE
WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

SPRING 2005

Volume 53, Number 2



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President's Report –

We are proud to announce the completion of two projects we've been working on for several years. Both improvements to the Garden will add to the positive experience of visiting this unique, natural preserve. Both also meet our goal of adding to the Garden, but in subtle ways so that we don't detract from the Garden's natural, wild look.

Ken Avery Birding Terrace

Please join us in the Garden on Father's Day, Sunday, June 19th, 2005, at 2 p.m. for the dedication of the Ken Avery Birding Terrace, a tribute to Ken's years of contributions and service. Ken was the Curator-Gardener from 1959 to 1987. He was the third head Gardener, following the leadership of the founder and first Curator, Eloise Butler, who was in charge from 1907 to 1933, and Martha Crone, the second Curator, from 1934 to 1958. Ken was known for his hard work in the Garden, his sense of humor and his loyalty to Eloise Butler's vision of preserving a natural, wild garden. He also was an avid birder, so we dedicated our "birding terrace" as a fitting contribution to the Garden in his honor. This is located within the Garden near the back gate. The terrace is simple and dignified – a boulder with a plaque and an open area with wooden benches surrounded by new native plants and shrubs selected by Susan Wilkins, the current Curator-Gardener. Once the plantings grow and fill in the space, we think the Ken Avery Birding Terrace will look as if it's been there for years. We think Ken would like that.



Site of the future birding terrace

Back Fence Completion

When the Friends celebrated its 50-year anniversary in 2002, we made completion of the back fence our anniversary project. The Friends paid for construction of the back gate years ago, and we've wanted to replace the old chain link fence with fencing that would match the quality look of the stone and iron back gate. In June, the "anniversary fence" will be installed, replacing obsolete fencing on both sides of the back gate. We think the result will be a pleasing, uniform look. After a while, it will look as if it's been there for years. We think Ken would like that, too.

Many thanks to Muriel Avery and to other donors for their financial contributions, to the Park Board and staff for their cooperation and hard work, and to the Board members who gave their time to make these projects a reality.

Steve Pundt



Mixed styles of fencing to be replaced

Alert: Attend an Upcoming Community Meeting to Protect the Garden!

You can help.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is sponsoring open community meetings to discuss what level of protection should be established for the southern segment of Wirth Park that surrounds Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.

What can you do? You can attend these meetings.

The beautiful, natural park land surrounding the Garden has long been designated a wild buffer area. But now it may be threatened. You can be present to show that you care – that you support serious protection for the Garden and its unique plant, animal and bird habitats from giant ski racing trails, mountain bikers and other inappropriate, destructive users. We hope to see you.

Mark your calendars for these dates:

Thursday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m.

Take a walking tour of the Garden buffer area.
Meet at the Wirth Beach Parking Lot (located on Glenwood Avenue)

Wednesday, May 25, at 6:30 p.m.

Meet at the Wirth Picnic Pavilion on Glenwood Avenue (across the street and up the hill from Wirth Beach)

Thursday, June 9, at 6:30 p.m.

Meet at the Wirth Picnic Pavilion on Glenwood Avenue (across the street and up the hill from Wirth Beach)

For more information, feel free to call Pam Weiner, Vice-president of the Friends, at (612) 377-3573.

The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary is an untamed garden and sanctuary for wild native flora and fauna. It is officially open from April 1 to October 15, barring heavy spring snows. The Garden entrance is located just off Theodore Wirth Parkway close to the intersection of the Parkway and Glenwood Avenue.

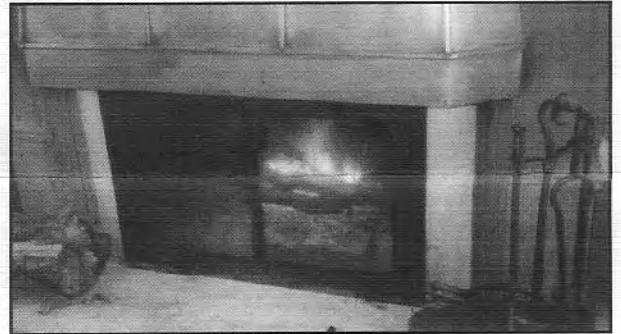
Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., is a nonprofit organization of private citizens whose purpose is to educate by enhancing visitors' appreciation and understanding of Minnesota's native plants and their natural environments. It aims to enhance and safeguard the interests of the Garden.

The Fringed Gentian is published on a quarterly basis for members and supporters of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Editor is Lisa Locken, 1227 Edlin Place, Minneapolis, MN 55416. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. E-mail: ldlocken@goldengate.net

Peaceful Moments on Opening Day



April first was a cloudy but calm day. A layer of ice remained on the pond and no flowers were yet in bloom, but there were buds on the snow trillium.



There was a warm, inviting fire at the shelter.



Surrounded by leafless trees, the shelter provided a cozy retreat in which to contemplate the wonders of nature.

In the Spirit of Eloise Butler

by Susan Wilkins



Susan Wilkins

The season of green is upon us once again at Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. This spring we will be planting over 1,000 native plants. These plants are part of planned plantings in the Garden -- including the restoration of Hepatica Hill, the creation of the Ken Avery Birding Terrace, renovations on the north side of the prairie and additions to the Garden near the entrance of the Martha Crone Shelter.

Dozens of plant species will be added this year, including many of our Garden favorites. As well, several species that have been in the Garden in the past but are no longer part of our collection will be added back this spring. Eloise Butler constantly added new plant species to the Garden as part of her vision to have a complete collection of the plants native to Minnesota represented within her sanctuary. So, it is in this spirit that we will continue to add to the diversity of native plant species found within the Garden gates.

Following is a bit of information about a few of the species that will be showing their spectacular selves here this season.

Fringeleaf wild petunia (*Ruellia humilis*)

This species is a new addition to Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. A perennial of noteworthy hardiness and beauty, fringeleaf wild petunia is sure to become a favorite plant of Garden visitors.

Naturally found in open woodlands and prairie edges, this plant is native to much of the Eastern United States. The plant has large, lavender funnel-shaped flowers that bloom from June through August. It is known to be drought tolerant. Look for it this season in sunny woodland openings near the Martha Crone Shelter.

Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)

This is a species of unbearable sweetness. The small, delicate flowers found during the first days of spring bring a beauty to the otherwise winter-washed woodlands. The five star-like petals are light pink or white with narrow veins of dark pink that add a vivid contrast.



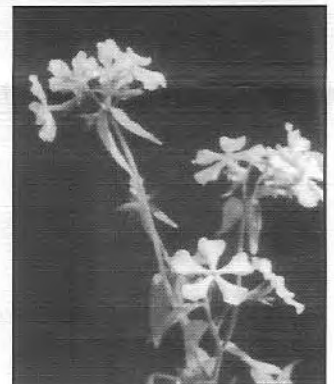
Spring beauty

The spring beauties of the Garden have come and gone over the years. Sadly, our few remaining individuals died out within the last few years. Replanting these species in soil that is amended with compost and peat hopefully will prove Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden to again be worthy of their wonderful presence.

Woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)

Another early summer favorite with five petals is woodland phlox. Sometimes known as blue phlox, it is found in open forests throughout the eastern woodlands of the United States.

This is a wonderful, native perennial plant with blue to purple flowers. It spreads by rhizomes and aggressive ground cover in shade gardens.



Blue phlox

Woodland phlox is not to be confused with dames rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), a very pretty but alien plant from the mustard family that it resembles. A "garden escape," the dames rocket has a greater presence than desired at the Garden. The simplest way to tell the difference between these look-alike plants is by the number of petals. While woodland phlox has five petals, dames rocket has only four.

According to her records, Eloise Butler planted woodland phlox quite frequently. Although it has not naturalized and created self-sustaining populations in the Garden, with a little love and care we hope that it can finally make itself at home here.



Avid bird watchers on the April 16 hike



Tammy Mercer leads the early-morning hikers into the wetland area north of the Garden.

Bird List

Following is a list of the birds identified on Saturday bird hikes in the month of April, 2005:

Blackbird, red-winged	Nuthatch, red-breasted
Cardinal	Nuthatch, white-breasted
Chickadee, black-capped	Siskin, pine
Cowbird, brown-headed	Sparrow, song
Duck, wood	Swallow, barn
Flicker, Northern	Swallow, tree
Goldfinch, American	Teal, blue-winged
Goose, Canada	Warbler, yellow rumped
Hawk, broad-winged	Woodpecker, downy
Jay, blue	Woodpecker, hairy
Kingfisher, belted	Woodpecker, pileated
Kinglet, ruby-crowned	Woodpecker, red-bellied
Mallard	

A Great Place for Birds

by Tammy Mercer, Naturalist

When Eloise Butler and subsequent Garden curators planted such a wonderful variety of plants for us to enjoy, they were also creating a wonderful and diverse habitat for a large variety of birds.

The Garden offers mature forest habitat with some dead and dying trees. In our neighborhoods, we cut down old and dying trees in our yards because they are no longer attractive, or because we don't want them falling on our homes in a storm. But these old and dying trees are important homes to a variety of wildlife, and are particularly valuable when surrounded by other mature trees. With the habitat provided in the Garden, we hear and see many birds that are seldom seen in most neighborhoods, including red-eyed vireos, great-crested flycatchers and pileated woodpeckers.

The wetland in the middle of the Garden is a great place for birds. The wetland is surrounded by forest, creating an edge habitat. This is ideal for many birds because they can find insects in the open areas and are close to cover when danger appears. There are also many kinds of shrubs in and around the wetland. Catbirds need dense shrubs next to open spaces or slow-moving water. Common yellowthroats also make a home in these shrubs. Mallards often nest in this wetland, too.

The Garden also has an upland area with prairie/oak savannah habitat. This area is home to nesting pairs of indigo buntings and provides a buffet of seeds for many other species of birds. We may not particularly like thistles, and the non-native species can be very invasive. But they are crucial to the American goldfinch. Not only do the seeds provide food for them, but goldfinches use the fluff as well, to line their nests.

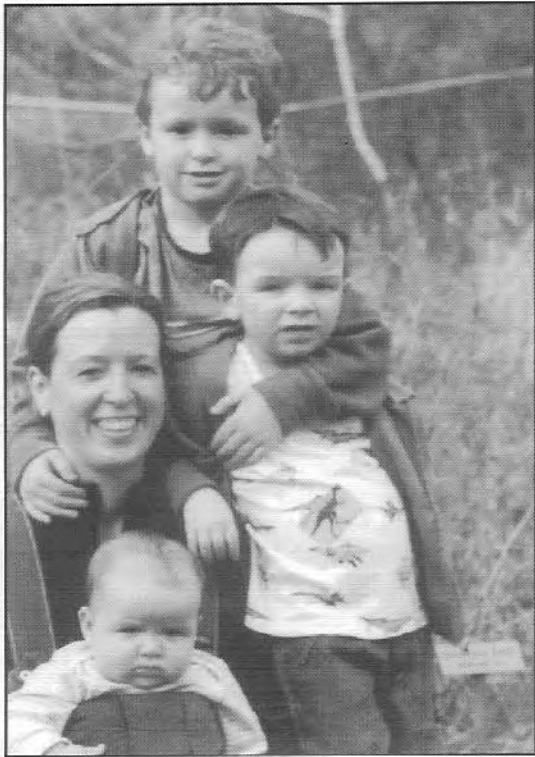
With all the fruiting shrubs and other plants in the Garden, migrating birds find a critical rest stop with food to fuel their long journey. The diverse habitat produces an abundance of insects, seeds, fruits and water for both the spring and fall migrations.

Come to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden to see a wonderful variety of birds in a variety of habitats.

The month of May is an excellent time to try to catch migrating warblers and other birds, but there are so many birds nesting in the Garden that you'll find the birding to be very rewarding all summer as well.

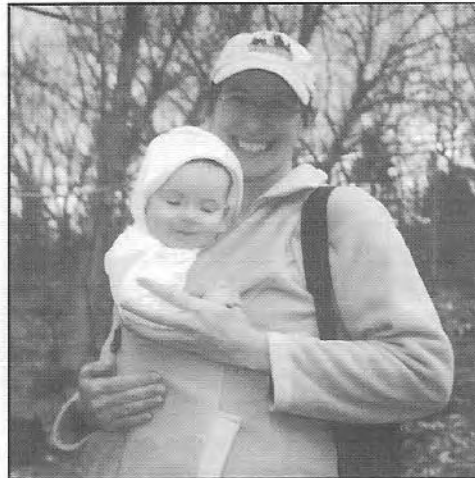
An experienced naturalist, Tammy Mercer has been retained by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to conduct bird programs on Saturday mornings throughout the season. If you are interested, call (612) 370-4903 for details or to register.

Adventures Along the Garden Trails



Adventures for the Family

Former residents of Tyrol Hills, which is close to Garden, this family still finds the Garden a favorite destination, even if it takes them longer to get there. Standing at the rear is 6-year-old Browdie behind his mom, Meridith, his 3-year old brother, Jonah, and (in the foreground) 6-month-old Chloe.

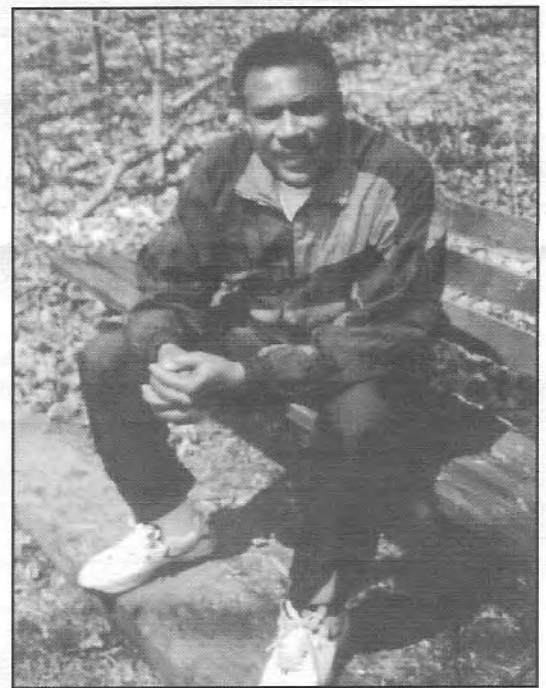


First Visit on Opening Day
Mira Gray, five months old, took her first trip to the Garden with her mom, Angela, on April 1st, enjoying a long hike on all of the trails in the morning hours.



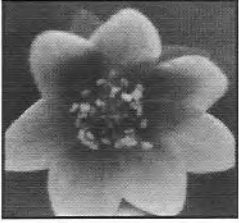
Three Generations

To celebrate her April birthday, Launa Ellison, a member of the Friends Board (left), took a nature hike through the Garden with her daughter, Jennifer Ellison, and her mother, Arlene Hanson.



Liked the Garden as a Child

Dexter Clarke, a native of Minneapolis, has enjoyed the Garden most of his life. As a child in the 1950s and 1960s, he liked to hike to the Garden with his younger brothers and sisters. Some visits also were through the day camp he attended at the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center.



At left, sharp-lobed hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*)

Naturalists' Notes of Spring Happenings

Excerpts from the journals of Naturalists Jodi, Diana and Erica

April 1-10: The first week of April was a warm one, with temperatures in the 50s and 60s, plenty of sun and mild breezes. The spring wildflowers responded by bursting forth into glorious bloom.

The tiny snow trillium finally came into bloom toward the end of the week. The painted brown flowers of the skunk cabbage are poking out of the wetland quite near the path. Flowering in the woodland are the bloodroot, the false rue anemone and the white trout lily. Especially lovely and surprising are the bright lavender flowers of the sharp-lobed hepatica. Charming white and pink hepaticas also are blooming.

Trees and woody plants are putting forth flowers, including the strikingly yellow leatherwood. Red maple, box elder, American hazelnut and pussy willows are all adding color to the woodland and wetland. Pick up and enjoy the scent of the terminal bud scales of the Balm of Gilead; they are littering the west woodland path and they smell delightful.

Birds are very active this week. Pairs of cardinals have been seen in the wetland, and the chickadees at station 30 are building a nest. Also busy this week were song sparrows, hairy and downy woodpeckers, robins, goldfinches and white-breasted nuthatches. The pileated woodpecker has been very vocal and active, much to the delight of photographers and Garden observers alike.

In Birch Pond, a pair of wood ducks has taken up residence, and the red-winged blackbirds are singing merrily amongst the cattails. Chorus frogs are croaking throughout the wetland, in the spring ephemeral ponds outside the Garden and in the Quaking Bog. A mourning-cloak butterfly sailed along the woodland path.

April 11-17: April continues to have warm weather consistently above freezing. A few rain showers this week brought much needed moisture to thirsty plants, and the trees and plants are producing green sprouts.

The spring ephemerals are racing to bloom before the leaves on the trees fill out. The snow trillium is almost done for the season, but the hepatica, false rue anemone and both white and yellow trout lilies are in full bloom. The skunk cabbage is finally blooming, with its purple, strong-smelling flowers poking up out of the path near the ninebark shrub. Marsh marigolds appeared in the wetland this week, adding colorful yellow blooms to a drab landscape. Many fern fiddleheads are beginning to unfurl all over the Garden. Near the shelter and also along the hillside path to the upland prairie, look for the Dutchman's breeches – a white flower that looks like a pair of upside-down bloomers.

Migratory birds are returning. On the morning bird hike, ruby-crowned kinglets were spotted in the tree tops. Chorus frogs are filling the air with song.



White trout lily (*Erithronium albidum*) came into bloom in April, as did yellow trout lily (*Erithronium americanum*).

At left is bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), another spring favorite for many Garden visitors.

Friends Events Coming Up

Annual Meeting, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden

Saturday, May 21, 2005, at 10:00 a.m.

To be held at the Martha Crone Shelter. All Friends members are welcome! There also will be a Friends Board of Directors Meeting immediately following the Annual Meeting.

Dedication of the Ken Avery Birding Terrace

Sunday, June 19, 2005 (Father's Day) at 2:00 p.m.

To be held at Garden at the site of the new Ken Avery Birding Terrace, which will be located near the north gate.

Volunteer Opportunities

Needed: Hands-on Help at the Garden

Saturday, May 14 (and other dates to be announced),
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Meet at the Garden. Bring your favorite pair of gardening gloves and prepare to have a rewarding, hands-on experience of removing invasive species. *Note: you must pre-register for these volunteer events. Call (612) 370-4903.*

Be a Substitute Volunteer at the Shelter

If you were a shelter volunteer in last year but have not chosen a regular, weekly schedule this season, you are a good candidate to fill in when needed. If you can help, call Harriet Betzold at (763) 588-4374.

Free Programs Conducted by Naturalists

All season long there are naturalist-led programs of special interest to adults and families. Most but not all are held on weekends. Here's just a sampling:

Beginning Birding, Birding II – on early Saturday mornings. Times vary so check the hour.

Quaking Bog Tour – Sat., May 21, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Binoculars and Field Guides– Sun, May 22, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Scavenger Hunt– Sat., May 14, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Bogs, Frogs and Pollywogs – Sun., May 15, and Sat., May 28, both from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Tremendous Trees– Sun., May 29, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

For more details, and to register, phone (612) 370-4903.

Special Programs at the Garden

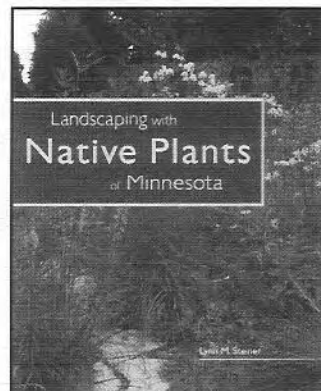
This year professionals from outside of the Park Board staff will be brought in to provide special interest classes. A fee will be charged for these programs which will last for several weeks. Classes will include "Medicinal Walk Series with Lisa Wolff" and "Landscape Painting with Clea Felien."

Call (612) 370-4903 for information on fees, dates of classes and how to register.

BOOK CORNER

Landscaping with Native Plants of Minnesota

By Lynn M. Stevens
Voyageur Press, 2005,
192 pages.



Reviewed by Gary Bebeau

This good-size book is a great handbook for working with Minnesota native plants -- that is plants that were growing here prior to the European invasion of 400 years ago. While the list of possible candidates is more than 900, the author has pruned the landscape down to a more manageable list where a key selection criteria was year-around interest.

She starts off with some basic chapters on understanding native plants and Minnesota's natural plant zones, where the south-to-north plant succession is shown. The author also includes within each plant zone a list of suitable native species to consider. This prepares the reader for a chapter on gardening with these species, where we learn about planting issues, mulching, weed control, watering, grooming and pest management. Pests are less a problem when you use native plants compared with exotics or other imports.

Once you understand the above, the author asks you to look at your goal -- are you interested in plant borders, shade gardens, butterfly gardens, hummingbird attractions, rock or water gardens, etc. She gives advice on how to proceed, including the need to be aware of certain municipal codes regarding landscaping.

Twelve pages are devoted to gardens that others have already designed, followed by the last 109 pages in which rather complete profiles are provided on 350 recommended plants. Grasses that are quite popular today in landscape use are given rather a quick cut with only eight pages, but there will be another review in the next issue on a great book about Minnesota grasses.

Altogether, a wheelbarrow full of information, easily arranged for quick study.

Gary Bebeau is treasurer of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. He has written a number of reviews for The Fringed Gentian over a period of years.