

THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

A PUBLICATION OF FRIENDS OF THE WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

Dear Friends,

ONCE AGAIN, WE ARE GLAD TO WELCOME spring and another season of beauty and wonder at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. I expect this 102nd year of our treasured Garden will bring both familiar pleasures and some new plants and birds to appreciate. The health and sustainability of the Garden are based on a balance of environmental stability and adaptive change, a principle common to all living things.

And so it is with the Friends and our activities. Some of our endeavors are continuations, while others are innovations. As usual, we will provide shelter volunteers, now under the able leadership of new volunteer coordinator Melissa Hansen, and invasive removal volunteers, led by *weedbuster extraordinaire* Jim Proctor. And, as we often do, we'll help sustain the plant communities in the Garden by donating funds for new specimens chosen by the curator. The lovely *Gentian* will come your way each season. As ever, we will promote the Garden and maintain an advocacy role in the community.

Our new initiative this season is a project designed to bring more urban students to the Garden. Board members Ann Godfrey and Gary Bebeau have developed the Garden Visit Program in cooperation with MPRB staff members. Minneapolis public school teachers who want to bring their students to the Garden can apply for

transportation funding from the Friends. More information can be found on our website, www.friendsofeloisebutler.org.

Another 2009 focus for the Friends is increasing our membership. You can help by giving a gift membership this year when you renew—or at any time. We're happy to report that people now can join the Friends via our website.

We have a few openings on our board of directors. If you are interested in advancing the mission of the Friends by serving as a board member, please contact me through the website or at 612.377.3573. At the present time, we are actively seeking a new secretary. Please consider getting involved. The Friends need you!

And please join us for our annual meeting on Saturday, May 16, at the Wirth Park Pavilion. This is located across from the (free) Wirth Beach parking lot on the south side of Glenwood Avenue one block east of Wirth Parkway. The meeting starts at 10:00 A.M., but please come at 9:30 for refreshments and a chance to visit with other Friends. Directions are also available on our website. I hope your springtime pleasures will include the Garden and her Friends. 🌸

Sincerely,



J. Pam Weiner
President



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A Note from Susan Wilkins Garden Curator

SPRING'S BOUNTY OF BEAUTY IS NEARLY before us and the Wildflower Garden stands ready to welcome in this season of splendor and sensory renewal.

I have been thinking about what I find so irresistible about spring. Perhaps, more than anything, it is the re-awakening of my senses. Each year, when spring rolls around, smells, scenes and sounds emerge that I've nearly buried over winter's long hours.



It's the surprise of breathing in and smelling a world enlivened: the scent of moistened woods rife with new promise, the bouquet of mossy greens emerging and the delectable aromas of life released from winter's grip. A quiet winter leads me to forget about the poetry of spring's song until I hear the first robin's call, the sound of crackling earth thawed and alive, the chirping of frogs fresh from their muddy retreat.

Then there are the scenes and landscapes found only in spring. The still dark and open woods graced with a guarantee of rebirth: the inky, fruitful soil exposed; an unexpected patch of verdant growth; the wet, pulsing trunks

of trees; and the lumps and bumps of moss-covered stones soon to disappear under the weight of life unfolded.

Spring cracks my wintry stiffness and dissolves the weariness I'd gathered, cloaked around me like a winter coat. Shedding one season as we walk into another, our senses awakened from their winter deprivation and lead us out the door and into the early spring garden.

Please join us as we revel in this prized season and the stirring of our earthly senses. Below is a list of just a few of our best program offerings this April and May. If you would like to register for or find out more about any of our programs, please contact Garden staff members at 612.370.4903 or visit us on the web at www.mplsparcs.org.



Free Public Programs

SECRETS OF THE SPRING WOODS

Sunday, April 26, 3:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.
Spring is a time to appreciate the little things in the wildflower Garden. Take a walking tour with a Garden naturalist who can assist in your discovery of the tiny miracles happening all around you this time of year.

SPRING EPHEMERALS

Saturday, April 25, 3:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.
Many woodland wildflowers need to flower and fruit early in the growing season. Come to the

Garden to learn more about the habits of this group of plants called spring ephemerals and search for their beautiful blossoms before they disappear for the season.

Paid Programs

INTRO TO BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tuesdays, 9:30 A.M.–12:00 A.M.
May 12, May 19, May 26
\$65 for course

SPRING EDIBLE AND MEDICINAL PLANTS

Mondays, 6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M.
May 4, May 18, June 1
June 10, June 17, June 24
\$15 per class

WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY

Fridays, 9:00 A.M.–10:30 A.M.
April 24, May 8, May 22
June 26, July 10, July 24
\$15 per class

Volunteer Opportunities with Garden Staff Members

Join staff members in the field as we weed out some of the wildflower garden's most ferocious invaders. The focus this spring will be on the removal of second year garlic mustard plants from the Garden's plant collections. Please call 612.370.490 for more information and to pre-register.

SPRING GARLIC MUSTARD PULLS

Weekdays, 5:30 P.M.–7:00 P.M.
Tuesday, May 5
Wednesday, May 13
Thursday, May 21



A Rookie's Top Five Wildflower Garden Volunteer Experiences

by Donna Ahrens

AS SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER KNOWN MUCH ABOUT WILDFLOWERS or gardening, I had considerable trepidation about volunteering at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. I fretted, for example, about not being able to differentiate among all those yellow flowers or the different types of trillium. But once I realized I wasn't going to fail any tests or get booted out for not knowing the answer to a visitor's question, I had some great experiences. Here, in no particular order, are my top five experiences from my first summer as a Garden volunteer.

1. Naturalist walks. So many flowers, so little time. But the naturalists gave me identifying clues and were a font of information about plant names and histories, even if I couldn't always keep track of them.



2. Kid visitors. My mom was a kindergarten teacher for 25 years, so I have a soft spot for kids and learning. It was really touching to see how eager kids were to learn, and how great the parents and naturalists were at teaching. One time my heart sort of sank when a large group of multi-aged kids trooped into the shelter, but I ended up having a great time pointing out birds, talking about things on the touch table and helping them with crafts.

3. The blast-from-the-past visitor. One afternoon two couples, both in their early 70s, came to the shelter. Standing inside, one of the men threw out his hands and exclaimed, "I haven't been here in 50 years, and I remember this exact spot!" It turns out that Martha Crone had recruited him and three other adolescents in the 1950s to help her keep the bird feeders full during the winter—because she was short and had trouble managing the task in the snow. When we pointed out the centennial commemorative booklet, he looked through it and found an essay written by one of his birdfeeding pals—who recently had a birding book published! The visitor has lived in Washington, D.C., for years and now directs the Johns Hopkins health sciences. For me the conversation was a wonderful little window into the Garden's history.



4. The Hollywood visitor. One afternoon while I was sitting by the shelter window reading an old "New Yorker" magazine, I looked up to see a small group walking up the path to the shelter. There was a young boy and his dad, pushing a stroller, and an older couple. I thought to myself, *Wow, that older guy*

looks a lot like Dustin Hoffman. Then I stood up, took a closer look and said, "That IS Dustin Hoffman!" I raced over to tell Kristin, who was on the computer in the naturalists' office, and she just rolled her eyes and kept typing. Then they



came in, and there was no mistake—it really *was* Dustin Hoffman! Turns out his daughter and son-in-law live just a few minutes away in Golden Valley, and they had walked over to the Garden. Dustin Hoffman was extremely complimentary about

the Garden and the coziness of the shelter (its warm fire was burning at the time!). He wanted to talk about invasive species and to know about the pictures on the wall. It was definitely an *I can't believe this is happening to me!* half-hour. Best yet, he bought a tee shirt for his son-in-law and dropped a bill in the donation box before they left! After they left the shelter, I immediately called my daughter in Brooklyn, who's always mentioning her latest celebrity sighting, and dropped this one on her. Ka-CHING!



5. Naturalists at work. Having the opportunity to watch the naturalists at work—whether preparing exhibits, answering questions from visitors or discussing the latest Garden activity—made me appreciate how much they know and how willing they are to share their expertise. I learned things all the time and hope I even remember a few of them for next year! We're very lucky to have so many outstanding naturalists at the

Garden, and we owe them many thanks for all they do to help keep it a wonderful attraction for people of all ages.

All this means I'll most definitely be back next year. Over time, maybe I'll even learn to tell all those yellow flowers apart. 🌸



Native Plant Diversity at Home

by Douglas Owens-Pike
EnergyScapes, Inc.

WE COME TO ELOISE BUTLER WILDFLOWER GARDEN happily expecting to see wild gardens. But when we return home, do we see our lawns and yards also in tune with nature? Why is it important to have native plant diversity at our homes, in our own yards?

Before European settlement, the most common habitat near the Garden was oak savanna, a boundary (*ecotone*) between prairie and forested regions of Minnesota and states to our east. The dominant tree and shrub were Bur Oak and Hazelnut. Associated important savanna plants included Northern Pin Oak, Trembling Aspen, Chokecherry, Bluestems, Indian and Porcupine Grasses. Other common species included Lead Plant, Steeple Bush, Silky Prairie Clover, Rough Blazing Star, many asters and goldenrods. Our own “prairie” at the Garden is actually oak savanna.

These days, less than one-tenth of one percent of Minnesota’s oak savanna areas has not been converted to agriculture, homes or industry. Unfortunately, the few remaining preserves are overrun with invasive plants—as we well know from attempting to remove them from the Garden. According to World Wildlife Fund, upper Midwest oak savanna is one of the world’s most endangered ecosystems. Of the species formerly common in oak savanna, more than a dozen herbaceous plants and several invertebrates are critically threatened. One of those is the Karner Blue Butterfly that requires Lupine to survive.

Every single oak savanna plant that we place in our own yard can create change. Our home gardens are important for preserving diversity and providing a refuge for each plant and for all the

butterflies, birds and soil critters who depend on finding that nectar, seed or root system for food. The good news is that a number of nurseries grow native plants from seed first collected from the remnant oak savannas.

Help is available if you’re interested in adding native diversity to your yard. For inspiration, try *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas Tallamy, University of Delaware Press. If the project seems overwhelming, consider working with a landscape designer who has experience with native plants. Many cities provide grants to residents who install rain gardens or native plants.

Blue Thumb is a consortium of nearly 50 cities, watershed districts, nurseries and landscape design/build companies. Check www.bluethumb.org to learn the basics, what your city is doing or to find either nurseries or get help with your landscape. Some local nurseries selling native plants include Landscape Alternatives, Outback, Prairie Moon, Kinnickinnic and Sunrise.

According to World Wildlife Fund, upper Midwest oak savanna is one of the world’s most endangered ecosystems.

A final note relates to our changing climate. Bees, butterflies and other insects that collect nectar and pollinate flowers are responding to the earlier warming

we’ve had in recent springs by arriving earlier. Local plants, however, have not changed when they come into bloom. The flowers, therefore, are not ready when the pollinators are.

In addition, climate change is happening faster than the native plants can move with it, by dispersing their seed. That problem is compounded by the lack of contiguous native preserves for the seed to move north. There are not enough preserved lands onto which the seed can disperse.

This makes people important for moving diversity north. To do this, we can select some of our plants or seed from nurseries based up to 200 miles south of us. One reason for this is that native species have evolved into ecotypes that respond to local climate. For example, a chokecherry tree from central Wisconsin brought to the Twin Cities area blooms about two weeks ahead of the local chokecherry.

Extending bloom times and periods of ripening fruit in your own yard by introducing species from seed collected up to 200 miles south of here is a great way to help some species survive the rapid changes underway and also to bring more birds and butterflies into your yard. A sampling of nurseries farther south of the Twin Cities includes Prairie Nursery, Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries and Prairie Ridge in Wisconsin; Ion Exchange, Inc., in Iowa.

Your own yard can become an important refuge—perhaps not as large as Eloise established 100 years ago, but it can be just as critical for the species you add. You can help them survive loss of habitat, invasive plants and climate change. And you will be thrilled with the diverse life that will appear when you do. 🌸

—Douglas Owens-Pike founded EnergyScapes, Inc., 20 years ago to help people plan, transform and nurture their landscapes for health and beauty.



A native plant garden designed and installed by EnergyScapes, Inc.



History Notes Sampler



By Gary Bebeau

1909

The spring of 1909 was a busy season of planting for Eloise Butler after she returned from a winter visit with her sister in Malden, Massachusetts. Good snow depth during the early months of the year (more than 10" still remained at the end of February) and March rains brought plenty of moisture to start the spring season.

As early as April 4, she reported planting Purple Avens (also called Prairie Smoke) she'd gathered from the plateau area near Minnehaha Falls. On the 19th, she planted a large number of species she'd ordered from Gillett's nursery in Southwick, Massachusetts. Within several days she'd planted those along with a number of trees and shrubs provided by the Park Board. These included Eastern White Pine, Red Pine, Balsam Fir, Northern White Cedar, Eastern Red Cedar, Canada Yew, Sugar Maple, Black Walnut, Balsam Poplar, White Ash and Green Ash, Mountain Ash, Honey Locust and Kentucky Coffeetree. Some of these went into an area she called the Pinetum which she located on the west hillside overlooking the bog. Throughout the spring she gathered plants from sites around Minnesota, including Big Island in Minnetonka, Anoka, Mahtomedi and Point Douglas, which was in Washington County on Lake St. Croix, named for the point of land at the south end of the Lake. (As a place name it is no longer on the maps.)



Butler also found it noteworthy to record seeing these birds: Indigo Bunting, Hermit Thrush, Peabody Bird, Myrtle Warbler, Maryland Yellow Throat and Bluebirds.

1934

Garden curator Martha Crone reported that the unprecedented 1933 drought wiped out the entire supply of Showy Orchids, Shooting Star and some varieties of ferns. She reported that other showy plants took their place. Although that season was not as stressful as the later 1958-1959 winter, it is likely that the lack of snow during the winter of 1933-1934 and unusually warm January temperatures causing a day-night freeze-thaw cycle, would be the prime causes of the plant loss noticed in the spring. The snow depth in December and January rarely exceeded four inches and, due to the well-above-average temperatures in January, there was no snow cover in February and March 1934.

Crone installed 996 new plants during 1934, of which 36 were small Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus canadensis*). A number of these trees are still present in the woodland area of the Garden today. Butler had also planted some Kentucky Coffeetree 25 years earlier. Crone also planted a large number of Fringed Gentian, a plant she called one of the wildest, as well as one of the most charming wildlings. She hoped to germinate seeds the following winter. (note: This plant has been very difficult to maintain in the Garden. It has been tried a number of times, all unsuccessful in the long run).

On May 4, a bronze tablet in honor of Eloise Butler was dedicated, following her death the previous spring. The tablet is mounted on a large boulder sitting in front of the current Martha Crone Visitors Shelter. The cost of fabrication was paid by a group of Ms. Butler's former pupils and her friends.

1959

Ken Avery was beginning his first season as garden curator. He wrote in his annual report that *as 1959 was my first opportunity to place an order, I concentrated upon replacing those plants that had been destroyed during the winter.*

The Winter of 1958-1959 was very hard on the Garden plants. There was a moisture deficit coming into the winter, a violent wind storm in November, little rain or



snow in December and January, with no snow cover left in January. Snow in February only remained on the ground for the month. After the turn of the year, the warming sun, reaching a ground exposed due to lack of snow, caused much thawing and refreezing.

Avery went on to write, *I also planted some species which I believe should be represented in the Reserve but were not growing there at that time.* (note: The term Reserve is a holdover from earlier days when the Garden was sometimes referred to as The Eloise Butler Native Plant Reserve. Eloise herself had originally called the Garden The Native Plant Reserve.)

In *The Fringed Gentian*, Editor Martha Crone writes of spring: *The Snow Trillium comes with the spring's first sunbeam, it blooms briefly, ripens its seeds and disappears for the rest of the season. The Song Sparrow is as much a harbinger of spring as the Robin or the Bluebird.*

She also recommends that members plant a tree as it is *one of the most practical and economical methods of helping nature.* 🌿

References

- The Fringed Gentian*, newsletter of The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.
- Vol. 7, # 2, Spring 1959, Martha Crone, Editor
- Meeting Minutes of The Board of Directors of The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.
- Annual Reports of the Garden Curator to the Board of Park Commissioners
- 1934, submitted by Martha Crone
- 1959-60, submitted by Ken Avery
- Garden Log of the Native Plant Reserve, Glenwood Park, Minneapolis, MN by Eloise Butler.
- *For additional historical highlights of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary and The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., please visit our site, www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org.

Photo of Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*) by Gary Bebeau; Photo of Bluebird and Goldfinch by Judy Remington

A Golden Opportunity for Friends Members

Want to take your love of the Garden a step further? Do you have ideas for projects and activities to advance and further share our beautiful wild area?

We invite you to join other wildflower and bird lovers who work in support of the country's oldest public wildflower garden. Consider becoming a member of the board of directors of the Friends of the Garden.



Board Members Ann Godfrey and Melissa Hansen

The board depends on people with a diverse mix of skills, including (but not limited to!) administration, volunteer coordination, long-range planning, idea generating, marketing, finances, writing, editing, graphic design, event planning, website creation and management and the occasional weed pulling and cooking. We have a great group of board members now and currently have more than one opening.

The board plans activities and allocates funds to support the Garden, meeting formally six times a year with occasional committee meetings and email conversation in between. We collaborate with the garden curator, Susan Wilkins, and other park board staff members for this work and other special projects. In addition, the board co-sponsors an annual volunteer celebration and recognition event.



Board Member Gary Bebeau

A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
— Margaret Mead

If you're intrigued, not sure or want more information, please feel free to contact Friends board president Pam Weiner at 612.377.3573 or by email through the Friends website.

Join us in accomplishing great things for our Garden.



Board Members Steve Pundt and Steve Benson

Website Notes

Visit our website at www.friendsofeloisebutler.org to view new developments. The site is easy to navigate with a link on the home page to the site plan and archive. Here you will find links to all the information and photo pages that are on the website. Each plant photo has a separate information page.

If you are unsure where to look for something using the main menus, go to the site plan. We have arranged the topics into 14 categories. New site postings are always noted on the home page. The Current Events area provides the latest information on Friends meetings and events.

Members and non-members have begun to create memorials and give donations through the website. Memberships also can now be procured via the website.

A new feature added this winter is a brief historical review from selected past years of happenings in the Garden and activities of the Friends. This article will be changing quarterly.

If we are missing something you think should be there, please let us know. You can bookmark the website with either <http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org> or <http://www.friendsofeloisebutler.org>. —Gary Bebeau, website coordinator

It is in early spring that a restlessness stirs within us, which modern life does not seem to satisfy, then we wish to be closer to the out-of-doors and are irresistibly drawn by the appeal of nature. —Martha Crone

Memorials and Donations to the Friends

Memorials and gifts to the Friends are much appreciated and constitute an important part of keeping the Garden a special place for generations of people to enjoy.

Memorials Received

For Phyllis Pundt from:

Lynn & Bob Dixon
 Glenda & Lenny Larson
 Donna Ahrens & Phil Anderson
 Ann & Tracy Godfrey
 Elaine & Rollie Lindstrom
 Marilyn & Hugh Dean
 Faye & Doug Knowles

For Betty Bridgman from:

Judy L. Plant
 Jane Slade

Gifts Received

James Wittenberg
 Greg Lecker,
 Michaud, Cooley, Erickson

Our appreciation to these members who have donated to the Children's Visit Pilot Project as of March 1

Sue Ainsworth
 Elizabeth Anderson
 Lorraine Anderson
 Mary Kay Arthur
 Muriel Avery
 Gary Bebeau
 Judy Bridell
 George Bridgman
 Maria Brittle
 Carolyn & Philip Brunelle
 Sue Budd
 Mrs James Cashman
 Philip & Olga Cheung
 Mary Sue Comfort
 Joy Davis
 Susan Dean
 Bernice Dickson
 Mary Ellen Doherty
 Cheryl Flegel
 Florence Flugaur
 Ann and Tracy Godfrey
 Larry Gravitz
 Karol Gresser
 Seymour Gross

John W. & Joan Haldeman
 Melissa Hansen
 Mary Harrington
 Jane Heaton
 Paul Hinderager
 Wendy Hughes
 Florence Isaacs
 Kari Marie Kleven & Family
 Carol J Krieger
 Janet Krofta
 Sheila Leiter
 Marilyn & Martin Lipschultz
 Vivian Mason
 Don & Mary Lou Mathison
 Edy & Roger Miller
 Sarah Novotny
 Clint & Carol Odell
 Jennifer Olson
 Mary Samuels
 Tom & Pat Scott
 Mary Stanley
 Joan Stenberg
 Charles Sweningsen
 Connie Theien
 Kathy Urberg
 George & Barbara Will

Individual \$15

Family \$25

Sponsor \$100

Life \$500

Other \$_____

Membership Form

Memberships can be ordered online at www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org or mailed with check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.
 c/o Joy Davis, 1089 Cedar View Drive
 Mpls., MN 55405

Please specify if the membership is a gift. Each membership is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

This is a gift membership from: _____

The recipient of your gift will receive a letter of welcome from the Friends.

Donation Form

Donations of gifts or memorials may be made at www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org or sent with check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.
 c/o Gary Bebeau, 716 West 5th Street
 Red Wing, MN 55066

In Honor/Memory of:

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Also Acknowledgement to: _____

Address: _____

All gifts are tax-deductible.

Thank you for helping to sustain the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.

The Fringed Gentian™
Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.
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Minneapolis, MN
Permit No. 251

The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary is comprised of cultivated but naturalistic woodland, wetland and prairie environments, 2/3 mile of mulch-covered pathways and a rustic shelter where educational programming and materials can be found. It is the oldest public wildflower garden in the United States. The 15-acre site is located within the City of Minneapolis and is owned and operated by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Garden is open from April 1 through October 15 from 7:30 a.m. to 1/2 hour before sunset.

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Minnesota nonprofit corporation, formed in 1952. Its purpose is to educate by enhancing Garden visitors' appreciation and understanding of Minnesota's native plants and natural environments and to offer assistance for the Garden in the form of funding and other support.

The Fringed Gentian is published quarterly for members and supporters of the Friends. The editor is Judy Remington, who welcomes your comments and suggestions at judy@temenosgardens.com or 612.377.4491. For changes to your mailing address for *The Fringed Gentian*, please write Membership Chair Joy Davis at 1089 Cedar View Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

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The Snow Trillium comes with the spring's first sunbeam, it blooms briefly, ripens its seeds and disappears for the rest of the season. – Martha Crone

photo by Gary Bebeau