

PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE
WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

MHC
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THE FRINGED GENTIAN

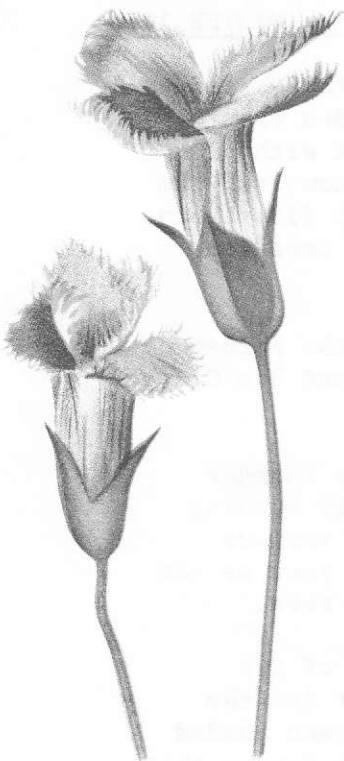


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A Winter Evening with Martha Crone



Martha Crone has many pleasant memories of the beginning days of the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden when it was an unfenced section chosen by Miss Butler and other Botany teachers. Martha began volunteering her help about 1918 and for the next 15 years worked beside Miss Butler to keep the garden going. Miss Butler, Martha and her husband Dr. Crone spent Wednesdays "botanizing"-- searching for wild plants in open and wooded areas. They would return with carloads of plants which at times were transplanted that night by the light of the car's headlights. Martha laughed as she told of these happy times.

In 1933 after Miss Butler's death Martha Crone took over the duties as Curator.

Until the late 30's there was no water in the garden; at times Martha would bring water from home in a milk bucket for the new transplants and always hoped for rain. When pipes were finally laid from Xerxes Avenue, they ran out of narrow pipe and finished with wider pipe which resulted in poor water pressure. The Park Board allotted \$100.00 a year for plant purchases those years, and Martha purchased from several sources in Minnesota. The little office was primitive, without heat or light, and so kerosene lamps, and occasionally a kerosene heater were used. At times she would run up and down the path a few times to warm up!

Theodore Wirth once thought the garden hillside would make a fine amphitheater for staging plays. Martha had to do some fighting to preserve it as a Garden.

During those years Clinton Odell was very helpful. He encouraged holding land which became the upper(Prairie Garden) and personally paid the salary of two men one summer to clear the sumac from that section to establish it. He also worked with Martha in developing a supportive organization for the Garden, The Friends of the Wildflower Garden, which began in 1952.

Their first Newsletter, The Fringed Gentian was printed in January, 1953. Its editor, Martha Crone continued this role until April, 1971. Through efforts of Mr. Witt, the design of the Fringed Gentian for the letterhead was done by Mr. Japs of Japs Olson Printing.

During the years before the development of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum by the University, our garden served the double role of preserving the native Minnesota flora and displaying hardy plants suitable for Minnesota cultivation.

Some of the plants introduced into the garden for this purpose that remain include the azaleas and rhododendron which surprise so many Garden visitors in the Spring with their beauty. Martha continued to experiment with additions to the Garden throughout her years as curator. The Snow Trillium which she brought North from the Mankato home 30 years ago still flourishes. (Some of these that she planted at her cabin 30 miles below the Canadian border bloom beautifully late June.)

During her years as curator, Martha was assisted in caring for the garden by Park Department employees Ken Avery, Sam Baker, Ed Bruckelmyer and Bob Clark as well as by many volunteer Friends.

One memory that she treasures is of her good friend and Friend's founder Clinton Odell, president of the Burma Vita Company. He, in early evening would take a chair into the lower garden and sit there and test various mosquito repellants that his company was developing. In a damp year we can all appreciate what an excellent testing ground this would have been.

Though the Garden has been changed recently by the loss of many of its beautiful elms, Mrs. Crone sees this as a new era of development for the Garden and the return of some of the plants that have recently been shaded out. Two trees she remembers fondly are an elm just outside the Garden that was fenced in back in the days when Theodore Wirth and Alvin Witt considered it "their" tree. This is the largest elm remaining in the Park and with treatments by the Friends has so far survived the elm disease. The other tree, a monument for many years, was a large oak which after more than 700 years of growth was destroyed by a storm. For many years it was the nesting home of a Barred Owl. A slab from this tree is displayed in the Martha Crone Shelter at the Garden.

Martha has given over 300 lecture/slide presentations to various garden clubs, YWCA, YMCA groups and community organizations in the city and other Minnesota towns. Several communities asked her for specific suggestions to start a wildflower garden in a selected spot, but none had the patience to stick with it. Or as she said, "One must have the wildflower garden at heart to be willing to work day by day."

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CURATOR'S COMMENTS: You may remember that last summer I listed some of the plants growing in the Garden and their opening dates. I guess I am always a bit long-winded and had made a list that was longer than necessary so our Editors had to cut it a bit. I will now list those plants which were cut from the previous listing--it will act as the first harbinger of Spring, a little promise of what will be here next spring. I must say that when I look at those frozen, snow-covered hills I find it hard to believe that they will ever come to life again. I can easily sympathize with our ancestors of the distant past who were never quite sure that the winter would ever end, but I am a modern man and of course I know in just two months the snow will melt and that the earth will green and flower again.

	Earliest	Latest	Average
Purple Avens (<i>Geum triflorum</i>)	4/17	5/25	5/13
Hoary Puccoon (<i>Lithospermum canescens</i>)	5/4	5/24	5/14
Wild Geranium (<i>Geranium maculatum</i>)	5/2	5/30	5/14
Columbine (<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>)	5/8	5/24	5/16
Golden Alexanders (<i>Zizia aurea</i>)	5/10	5/30	5/20
Lupine (<i>Lupinus perennis</i>)	5/15	5/28	5/21
Wild Calla (<i>Calla palustris</i>)	4/30	6/2	5/21
Spiderwort (<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>)	5/22	6/7	5/31

Kenneth E. Avery

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN, INC. - May 20, 1978
Our 1978 annual meeting is scheduled for 10 A.M. May 20, at the Martha Crone Shelter in the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. The attendance of all interested members of the FRIENDS is cordially requested. In addition to the election of a Board of Directors to represent us during the coming year, and the usual reports on events concerning the Garden this past year, an interesting program is being planned. COME! HEAR! BE HEARD! And enjoy the Garden in its full Spring beauty.

COMMITTEES: The Board has recently selected two new committees. Members are encouraged to offer suggestions to them.

Expenditures Committee - to create a long range plan for systematic allocation of funds in support of the Garden to augment the funds allocated by the Mpls. Park Board. Walter Lehnert, chairman; Ken Avery; Bob Dasset; and John Murtfeldt.
Nominating Committee - to recommend a slate for the 1978-79 Board of Directors of the FRIENDS. Mildred Haglin, chairperson; Jane Hooper; and Bob Dasset.
Their addresses are in your membership directory.

VOLUNTEERS - SPRING ALERT ! The Shelter will be reopening in April. Another Spring season is anxiously anticipated. If you will be able to host or hostess at the Shelter this season, please send a note to Dr. Marian Grimes, 1105 Washburn Av. S., Mpls. 55405, indicating the times you will be available. This will assist her in the overwhelming job of scheduling. Remember, only YOU can make available the resources of the shelter to the Garden's visitors.

THANKS ARE IN ORDER TO MANY PEOPLE THIS YEAR. These are a few special friends. GORDON GARIS of the RAYGO company is responsible for the gift to the FRIENDS and the Garden of a powerful log-splitter of his own design to aid in the removal of the many huge logs in the Garden resulting from our elm losses. ANDERSON, LIESER & THORSEN, tax consultants and accountants to the FRIENDS, donated their services in 1977.

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL FRIENDS: Audubon Chapter of Mpls., Kenwood Garden Club (\$15), Lake Minnetonka Garden Club (\$100), Mpls. Audubon Society, Minnesota Garden and Flower Society, Sunset Garden Club, Upper Hiawatha Valley Audubon Society, Webber Park Garden Society (\$25), and the Woman's Club of Mpls. (\$25). Several of these organizations have been strong supporters for much of our existence. THANK YOU EACH, THANK YOU ALL.

MEMORIALS: We appreciate memorial contributions from Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Tusler in memory of Dr. Albert Johnson and from Ms. Vera Bernhagen in memory of Helen Wittleson. These gifts help the Garden to serve as a beautiful memorial to them and to the many others who have loved our wild flowers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please continue to send your comments and suggestions concerning the FRINGED GENTIAN to: Mr. & Mrs. O. Lynn Deweese, #314, 2001 Bryant Av. S., Mpls. 55405. We want this to be YOUR paper.

25 YEARS AGO: This is the first issue of our Wild Flower Garden Publication - began in a small, inexpensive way. Let no one be misled by its size - good things come in small packages. Martha Crone, your editor, is a talented writer . . . You will find nothing herein about business or politics, war or sports - so in your home, read it by your fireside and become relaxed for a few minutes in an atmosphere of wild flowers, birds and Thoreausian natural beauty. Clinton M. Odell

THE GARDENER'S COLUMN: "Start a Wild Flower This Spring"

Winter is beginning to drag on and is getting to feel a bit old now. I'm starting to really look forward to Spring and all of the many wild flowers and ferns that will soon begin to grow.

Remember, you don't have to restrict your wild flower enjoyment to parks and other natural areas. You can grow wild flowers and ferns at home in a garden area much as you grow your petunias and roses!

Starting a Wild Flower Garden is really very easy and a lot of fun. Here are the basic steps you should follow to plant a shade loving Wild Garden this Spring.

1. Choose the Shade Area

Total shade is not good. Filtered sun is what you want. Under an oak tree is best because these trees leaf out slowly in the spring when the flowers need the sun and then provide fairly dense leaf cover during the hot summer months.

2. Dig Up Garden Area

Dig entire area at least 8" deep. Loosen the soil and remove large stones.

3. Add Organic Matter

Your plants want a rich dark loam soil that is very high in organic matter. Add lots of rooted manure, damp peat moss and rotted leaves/compost.

4. Choose Easy Plants.

The first year, start with plants that are easy to grow. Leave the Lady's Slippers for next year. Here is a list of beautiful, easy shade loving plants.

Bloodroot (Single and Double)

Purple Trillium

Hepatica

Maiden Hair Fern

Lady Fern

Wild Bleeding Heart

White Trillium

May Apple

That's all there is to it. Don't forget to mulch well. HAVE FUN.

John Murtfeldt

OTHER GARDENS: Last year while in Florida, your editors' friends Lowell and Shirley Johnson visited the CORKSCREW SWAMP SANCTUARY in southwest Florida. This is a remnant of wilderness maintained by the National Audubon Society. A wild garden very different from our own small tract. In its 11,000 acres is the largest remaining stand of virgin bald cypress - the oldest trees in eastern North America. Here can be seen Wood Storks and Great Egrets, air plants and orchids, lettuce lakes, alligators and otters. Any FRIENDS visiting this area may well enjoy taking the self-guided boardwalk tour through this area of bald and pond cypress, pine flatwoods, wet prairie, marsh and ponds. Thank you Shirley and Lowell for sharing this garden with us.

SHAMROCK: Both white clover and wood sorrel have been used by the Irish for many centuries as a symbol of St. Patrick's Day. Both have three leaflets, symbolic of the Trinity. Shamrock is derived from the Old Irish "seamair" (meaning - clover) and its diminutive "seamrog" (little clover). This would give the clover the edge over the sorrel on being the true shamrock of Ireland.

OTHER PARK BOARD PROGRAMS:

GREEN THEMES: Minneapolis Public Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, 12:15 P.M. (WEDNESDAYS)

March 1 - Making no Mess Plant Pets (Topiary Pruning)

March 8 - You Light up My Life (Indoor Lighting for Plants)

March 15- Two for T1 (Indoor Plants - Lily Family)

March 29- Graft In the Callus Business (Propagating Indoor Plants)

HORTICULTURE PROGRAMS Park Recreation Centers - pre-registration required

March 9 - Care of House Plants - 7-8:30 P.M., McRae Park 824-3105

March 10- Planning the Vegetable Garden - 10-12 noon, Fuller Park 822-2767

March 11-Winter Tree Identification - 1-2:30 P.M. \$1.00, Matthews Park 721-6691

April 4- Indoor Trees - 7-8:30 P.M., Matthews Park 721-6691