

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN

March 1992

Vol. 42 No. 1

**ANN KESSEN, President of the Friends**

I have said many times in this column that the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary is a special place. What makes it so special, so unique in the Minneapolis park system? Simply this: it is a *wild* garden.

When Eloise Butler founded this Garden, she was inspired by the great botanic gardens of the East, but with a twist of her own. She wanted it to be a *wild* botanic garden, wild not just in terms of the native plants cultivated in it but also in terms of the setting, the presentation of native plants. Thus it is not simply a wildflower garden, a garden of wildflowers. Rather, it is a wild flower garden, a flower garden that is wild. This is how Eloise viewed the Garden and this is how the Garden persists today.

Certainly the wildflowers in the Garden (or their parents) have been planted there, and certainly they are cared for. The visitor, however, can detect none of this. To the visitor the plants in the Garden appear to have sprung quite naturally from the earth in exactly those places in which they are seen growing. In such a setting, the visitor appreciates the plants in a way not possible in a more formal setting.

No wildflower grows in a vacuum. Each plant and flower is part of a larger ecosystem. To be fully understood, a plant must be viewed as part of the complex intertwining network of life. It is important to see the flower and the shade that falls across it. It is important to hear the notes of birds that build nests on the ground nearby and the rustling of grasses that grow close around it. It is important to smell the rich warm moistness of the earth in which it grows and the sweet scent of blossoming trees not far away. It is important to feel the dampness of dew brushing against one's pant legs and the warmth of the sun on one's back. This is what the Garden is about. It presents wildflowers in a wild setting, a setting that encourages reflection, that offers a peaceful place in which one is freed to contemplate the subtle excitement of nature.

It is for this reason, the fact that it is a wild garden, that the Garden is a special place, unique among all of our parks and gardens. Eloise's dream has persisted for eighty-five years. May it continue for eighty-five again, and beyond.

**I have an appointment with spring. She comes to the window to wake me,  
and I go forth an hour or two earlier than usual.**

**-- Henry David Thoreau**

## NOTES FROM OUR GARDENER, CARY GEORGE

As I take my morning walk to unchain the back gate of the Garden with the intention of noting "spring signs," it becomes more an exercise in the subtleties of things to come. March in our area holds more of a promise of spring than the genuine article. The chipmunks, red and grey squirrels are active on sunny days. Crows harass the great horned owl and red-tailed hawk as they seek cover in the white pines. Some of the willows are blooming. The buds on the red and silver maples are swelled and will bloom before the month ends. Looking at past phenology notes for the Garden, if we have an early spring as the lack of frost depth indicates snow trillium, false rue anemone, skunk cabbage and hazelnut could all be blooming before April 1.

My real excitement this spring comes from the anticipation of renovation of the back gate area. As many of you know, with the help of Sandra Welsh, Mpls. Park Board Landscape Architect, we received an Open Space Habitat Improvement Grant to re-align the walking path, dredge the pond, and create a rock outcropping and waterfall. With this grant and monies provided by the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden a long neglected area will again become one of the jewels of the Garden.

Actually the back entrance didn't play such a secondary role until after World War II with the improvements to Wirth Parkway, the popularity of the automobile, and the shift in population to the suburbs. Before that time the

Garden was on the city's edge and visitors came by foot or streetcar and found the Xerxes Avenue entrance more convenient. Eloise Butler while curator lived at the Babcock residence on Xerxes Avenue and each morning would walk to the Garden through a wooded path to what we now call "the back entrance."

A landscape contractor will be chosen soon and by April major work will begin. Hopefully, by June most work will be completed except for landscape plantings. We have spent most of March removing and burning undesirable, mostly alien shrubs: the infamous glossy buckthorn, tartarian honeysuckle, and weedy boxelder. To my surprise and delight while clearing the thicketed areas many grey dogwoods, red-osier dogwoods, nannyberries, and highbush cranberries were found.

The project area also includes a hemlock grove planted in the 1920's. Many believe it to be the southern-most stand of Canadian hemlock *Tsuga canadensis* in the United States.

My belief is that this project is an excellent example of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden and the Mpls. Park Board working together to protect and preserve part of our city in a pristine, pre-settlement condition. Eloise Butler's intention for her Botanical Plant preserve was to give visitors an idea of what it would be like to walk here before the negative effects of civilization had been realized. I think she would be proud of our efforts.

**Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth.**

**-- Herman Hesse**

**40th ANNUAL MEETING  
of the  
FRIENDS OF THE WILD FLOWER GARDEN**

**Saturday, May 16, 1992 at 10:30 A.M.  
Martha Crone Shelter, Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden  
Minneapolis**

**MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE WELCOME!!**



*Aquilegia canadensis*

**ATTENTION MEMBERS:** Are you interested in serving on the board of directors of the Friends for the coming year? If so, please call Ann Kessen at 529-3793 (evenings or weekends) by April 4.

**THANK YOU:** A very special "thank you" to Don and Elsie Miller for their life membership. Their support of the work of the Friends is simply wonderful!

**HELP THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN - JOIN THE FRIENDS!**

To join the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden complete the membership form below and send the completed form and membership dues to: Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Betty Bryan, Membership Chair, 1076 Cedar View Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

Membership entitles you to receive *The Fringed Gentian*, a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends, issuance biennially of a membership roster, voting at annual meetings and, above all, participation in a program of conservation and development represented by the Friends.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM - *Friends of the Wild Flower Garden***

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- Individual ..... \$10.00
- Family Membership ... \$15.00
- Limited Income ..... \$ 8.00
- Sponsoring Member .. \$25.00
- Sustaining Member .... \$100.00
- Benefactor ..... \$200.00
- Life Member..... \$500.00

I am interested in becoming a volunteer.

## NOTEWORTHY NOTES

**NOTE:** Last year *The Fringed Gentian* featured three botanical gardens, The Betty Ford Alpine Garden in Vail, Colorado; the Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden near Hilo, Hawaii and the Root Glen at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. If readers of *The Gentian* have information on other public gardens, let us know so we can report on them in the newsletter. Phone Kathryn Stennes (612) 374-1268.

**NOTE:** Volunteers are needed to greet visitors to the Wildflower Garden. Mornings or afternoon, weekdays or weekends. Volunteer orientation will be May 3 at 3:00 P.M. Phone Shirley Schultz, Volunteer Chair, 521-5422 (after 10 A.M.) to sign up as a volunteer for the season.

**NOTE:** A slide show on the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden is now available through the Friends. A speaker will come out to your group or company to talk about the Garden. Phone Ann Kessen at the Friends, 529-3793 (evenings or weekends) to schedule a talk.

**NOTE:** April 1 marks the official opening of the Wildflower Garden. Come and enjoy!!

**NOTE:** Phone the Martha Crone Shelter for directions to the Wildflower Garden - 348-5702.

**AND FINALLY:** On Sunday afternoon, August 2 from 1:00 to 4:00 we will celebrate Eloise Butler's birthday. Join us at the Wildflower Garden to honor her.

FRIENDS OF THE  
WILD FLOWER GARDEN  
P.O. Box 11592  
Minneapolis, MN 55412

Non-Profit Organization  
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### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!

Judith A. Bell, Mpls .... Mr. & Mrs. J.H. Robinson, Shawnee Mission, KS ....  
Edward S. Grew, Orono, ME

# PROGRAM CALENDAR

April 1992

## Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary

Saturday, April 4, 3:00 P.M.

Learn about the spring ephemerals at the Garden and bring binoculars to spot migrating birds. Use the spotting scope at the Crone Shelter.

Sunday, April 5, 3:00 P.M.

Learn to identify common trees and shrubs of our area, familiarizing yourself with oaks, maples, dogwoods and others.

Saturday, April 11, 8:30 P.M.

Walk through the Garden at night, learn about the territorial great horned owls nesting in the Garden.

Sunday, April 12, 3:00 P.M.

Learn to look for signs of spring in the Garden.

Saturday, April 18, 7:30 A.M.

This is a morning program for those interested in learning about birds and their migration. Bring binoculars.

Sunday, April 19, 3:00 P.M.

Walk the trails with the park naturalists, discovering the blooms of early spring wildflowers: trilliums herald the arrival of spring.

Saturday, April 25, 3:00 P.M.

Geared to children and the child-like this program will help you learn the secrets of the plant world.

Sunday, April 26, 7:00 A.M.

This is a morning bird-watching hike through the Garden: fox and song sparrow, cedar waxwings, red-breasted nuthatches and buffleheads.

All naturalist programs are held on weekends and are free and open to the public. Please pre-register by calling the Crone Shelter at 348-5702 after 10:00 A.M. Park naturalists will take participants on a guided walk through the Garden so it's advisable to wear comfortable shoes. Programs begin at the Martha Crone Shelter.

**IN ADDITION:** Park Board naturalists provide guided tours of the Wildflower Garden throughout the season, registration for the tours is not necessary. The scheduled tours begin April 6, and the times are as follows: Weekdays at 6:00 P.M., Saturdays at 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M., and Sundays at 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. Tours for the Garden depart from the Crone Shelter.

Tours of the Wirth Park Tamarack Bog located across Wirth Parkway are Saturdays at 5:00 P.M. Tours for the bog depart from the main gate of the Wildflower Garden.

# PROGRAM CALENDAR

May 1992

## Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary

Saturday, May 2, 3:00 P.M.

Park naturalists will talk about spring blooms: Jack in the pulpit, pasqueflower, bloodroot, bellwort and others. And, the renewed life of ferns!

Sunday, May 3, 3:00 P.M.

Volunteer training will be conducted for anyone interested in volunteering their time at the Crone Shelter, greeting visitors to the Garden. Welcome!

Saturday, May 9, 7:00 A.M.

A morning hike for those interested in bird-watching. Learn about bird calls.

Sunday, May 10, 1-4 P.M.

Mother's Day - Meet Martha Hellander, local writer and author of *The Wild Gardener: Life and Selected Writings of Eloise Butler*. Martha will be talking about the life of Miss Butler and autographing her book.

Saturday, May 16, 8:45 P.M.

Experience the Garden in the moonlight. Discover the nocturnal world of raccoons, chorus frogs, owls, earthworms, and bats. Bring a flashlight, insect repellent and a long-sleeved shirt!

Sunday, May 17, 3:00 P.M.

Gardeners will learn which native flowers and plants the home gardener can plant to attract birds and other wildlife to your yard year-round.

Saturday, May 23, 7:00 A.M.

On this morning bird hike you'll spot warblers and vireos migrating through the Wildflower Garden. Use the Park Board's spotting scope.

Sunday, May 24, 3:00 P.M.

Bring your sketching materials and draw your impressions of the natural world of the Wildflower Garden.

Saturday, May 30, 3:00 P.M.

Bird lovers - learn about migrating birds, learn about their travels.

Sunday, May 31, 3:00 P.M.

Naturalists will discuss herbaceous plants in bloom: anemones, dame's rocket and others.

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