

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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

## DEAR FRIENDS,

The 2013 season has come to an end, and once again the Garden's gates are closed for a winter rest. Perhaps you recall a past letter in this space when I went on about the charms of the Garden's perimeter and surround in the snowy months, particularly in the company of a beautiful big dog. Those walks are gone but well-remembered, and I am tempted to suggest that winter's clear, cold days live more brightly in the memory somehow. I guess we are fortunate to remember the good parts of the past, whatever the season.

Although I was hampered by what my Boppa called "a bum hip" this summer, and my strolls through the Garden were fewer and shorter than usual, I did manage to gather some memories to see me through the winter. In the woodland, my slower pace made me notice even the smallest clump of wild ginger, both kinds of Solomon's seal and the youngest Ohio buckeye saplings. I made the pilgrimage to the ever-dazzling showy lady's slippers and visited my favorite ancient plant, the equisetum, in the wetland. One breezy summer day I got up to the prairie and reveled in the golden sunflowers, the buzzing of the busy bees and the lavender clouds of wild *Monarda*. And I was grateful for the bench, too....

Our "goodbye" to the Garden this fall was sweetened by some very good news about the Cary George Wetland Project and the connecting north-south boardwalk that runs through the heart of the Garden. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board planning staff and Curator Susan Wilkins have selected a landscape design firm to create the new installation and oversee its construction. Board members are involved in this process and the Friends will have input on all aspects of the new infrastructure. We are committed to seeing a functional and beautiful feature that is true to the guiding principles that motivated Eloise Butler and Cary George. They

believed that the natural environment, with all of its resident species, was the *raison d'être* of the Garden and that we should provide access to its variety and beauty to interested visitors for study and pleasure. We are hoping to have the segment dedicated to Cary George completed in the spring of 2014, when we will host a celebration in his honor. Please visit our website ([www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org)) for updates on the project and our plans.

The 2013 Volunteer Appreciation Event was held on Sunday evening, Nov. 3, in the Terrace Room at St. Mary's Church near Lake Calhoun. Once again, we were able to enjoy a fine evening of socializing and lovely refreshments with our loyal shelter volunteers, the FIPAG invasive warriors and steadfast legacy stewards, as well as Garden staff and special MPRB guests. As always, the Friends board co-hosted with Curator Susan, who brings the most amazing desserts! Door prizes were a highlight, especially the pottery and glass items donated by artistic Garden Friends Larry Gravitz and Judy Remington. And we had another round of gardening books to distribute from Children's Chance, too. It was a fine conclusion to another year of dedicated effort from our superlative volunteers. Please look for some photos from the event inside this newsletter.

Looking ahead to the 2014 season, we Garden fans are anticipating the wonder of the next spring and the emergence of the magical ephemerals, as ever. We cannot know what kind of spring we will have—perhaps very late, like 2013, when the Garden opened on April 29, or maybe a more normal kind of arrival, which would be welcome, for sure. But we do know it will come, and so will our tribute to Cary George, long awaited and richly deserved. In the meantime, best wishes for a peaceful winter season and your own Garden memories that are clear and sweet.

Sincerely,

*J. Pam Weiner*

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

#### PRESIDENT

J Pamela Weiner

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Vivian Mason

#### TREASURER & MEMORIALS CHAIR; WEBSITE COORDINATOR

Gary Bebeau

#### SECRETARY

Candy Bartol

#### MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIRS

Susan Dean

Jayne Funk

#### VOLUNTEERS CHAIR

Melissa Hansen

#### MONEY MANAGEMENT

Steve Benson

#### INVASIVE PLANT CHAIRS

Jim Proctor

Liz Anderson

#### HISTORIAN

Phoebe Waugh

#### THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Meleah Maynard, *editor*

Donna Ahrens, *copyeditor*

Jacqui Blakeley, *designer*

Colin Bartol

Sue Budd

Gloria Miller

Jennifer Olson

Sally Pundt

Steve Pundt

Barry Schade

Anthony Waldera

#### GARDEN CURATOR, EX OFFICIO

Susan Wilkins



## GARDEN CURATOR'S LETTER

By Susan Wilkins



It's been a bright, beautiful and busy season at the Wildflower Garden. With so many wonderful programs and projects unfolding this year, the Garden continues to blossom and grow. I've made note of a few program and project highlights below, but this letter is primarily about thanking so many of the dedicated people who make the Garden a special place for all.

This season, a record number of special programs on a wide variety of nature-focused topics were offered and enjoyed by youth and adults. These fee-based programs for school, scout and other youth groups, as well as an array of specialized programs for adults, were all offered on top of the Garden's regular public programming. Special thanks to Wildflower Garden staff, including Wildflower Garden Program Coordinator Lauren Borer; Garden Naturalists Tim Glenn, Jodi Gustafson, Elizabeth Heck, Rebecca Horton, Kimberlee Hunter, Karen Katz, Julia Manor, Tammy Mercer, Wes Nugteren, Ron Spinosa and Diana Thottungal; and Wildflower Garden Interns Kirsten Knappe-Langworthy, Dakota Sexton and Ja-nel Thompson. Thanks to your hard work and dedication, more and more people are learning about the beauty and wonders of the natural world.

I also want to thank the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden for all that they do to sustain and nourish the Garden season after season. In particular, I want to express my gratitude for the Friends' Student Transportation Grant Program. The project makes it possible for schoolchildren in the Twin Cities to visit the Garden by providing funds to subsidize their bus trip. For many of these children, a chance to be in nature at the Garden would not be possible without this support.

It goes without saying that the many volunteers here, whose love for the Garden is evident every day, are an integral part of the Wildflower Garden ecosystem! The shelter volunteers, legacy volunteers, preservation zone FIPAG volunteers and special projects volunteers all contribute to making the Garden the wonderful place and community resource that it is. I don't know what we would do without all of your support and dedicated efforts. Thank you.

I would also like to celebrate and thank two people with deep ties to the Wildflower Garden who are moving on to new pursuits: MaryLynn Pulscher and Diana Thottungal. MaryLynn,

Environmental Education Coordinator for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for the past 14 years, has taken a new position within the Park Board, as the Community Engagement Coordinator for Regional Parks.

MaryLynn has served as an amazing advocate and resource for all things related to the Wildflower Garden during her time as the Environmental Education Coordinator. Tackling big-picture issues, leading the charge on new initiatives, supporting the work of staff and volunteers and creatively finding solutions for problems large and small, she has always looked for ways to ensure that the health and integrity of the Wildflower Garden endures. Thank you, MaryLynn, and we look forward to working with you in your new role!

Diana, who started out as a volunteer before joining the Garden's team of naturalists 12 years ago, has made tremendous contributions during her tenure. Like MaryLynn, her accomplishments are too numerous to list in full here, but let me highlight a few of them. Many of the projects that Diana has curated over the years include inventories of various plant groups, such as the golden-rods and asters, not to mention the mosses, slime molds and fungi of the Wildflower Garden. Documentation of these species, and the associated guides, keys and other resources she has created, will continue to be used and expanded, benefiting innumerable people now and in the future.

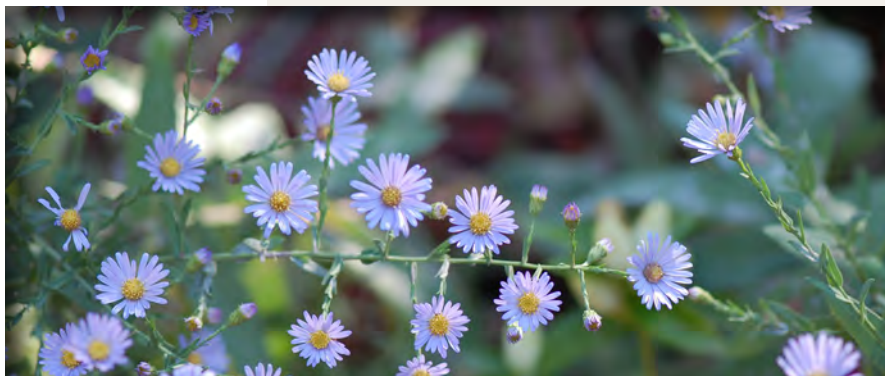
More recently, she has been the lead instructor and program developer for a suite of programs offered to students from the University of Minnesota's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). These programs have been met with rave reviews. A mentor to all of us here at the Wildflower Garden, Diana will be missed, and we wish her the best in her retirement and look forward to seeing her wandering Garden's trails.

Moving on to project highlights, the bee inventory fieldwork being carried out by entomologist Elaine Evans this season has been completed for 2013. Over the winter, data will be compiled and analyzed so it can be used to help educate visitors about the types of bees found in the Garden and their importance to our ecological systems. Look for an update on this project in next spring's newsletter.

And last but not least, the bridge and boardwalk project is underway, thanks to the dedication and financial support of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. The Cuningham Group was selected and hired to work with the community, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden and Park Board staff to design an ecologically sensitive, beautiful and enduring bridge and boardwalk in the wetland area. As of late October, the concept plans for the project were still in development. We will post periodic updates about this project, including dates for community open houses, on the Wildflower Garden's homepage throughout the winter and early spring.

One final note of thanks goes out to everyone, including all of the Wildflower Garden visitors and supporters from afar. Each and every person who walks through the Garden gates, or has a special place in their heart for the Garden, helps make the Wildflower Garden what it is. Thank you. ■

Smooth blue aster  
photo by Gary Bebeau





# SEDGES OF THE ELOISE BUTLER WILDFLOWER GARDEN

By Liz Heck, Garden Naturalist

An inventory of sedges found in the Garden was completed this summer after several seasons of work. Many common favorites were observed, but there were also some surprises, including the discovery of some rare species. If you aren't familiar with sedges, superficially, they resemble grasses and rushes with long, narrow leaves. Yet sedges are distinguished from grasses and rushes by three-sided stems called culms. Their flowers are also structurally different from those of grasses and rushes, and most blooms appear between April and July, before many of the native grasses bloom.

Sedges grow in a variety of habitats nearly worldwide, including wetlands, prairies and woodlands, and were found in each of these environments within the Wildflower Garden, too. The sedge family (Cyperaceae) is quite large, with roughly 5,000 species. Nearly all of the 25 species found in the garden in 2013 are in the *Carex* genus with one species in the *Scirpus* genus. The lifespan of these plants ranges from 10 years to over 150 years. A few of the garden species, such as the bottlebrush sedge (*C. hystericina*) and owl-fruit sedge (*C. stipata*), have disappeared in recent years, perhaps due to the end of their lifespan.

Sedges are often under-appreciated perennial plants. Their flowers are extremely subtle and yet, after a bit of study, they become just as fascinating as the most showy bloom. They teach us to look closely, and then again even *more* closely, as each species has its own distinctive personality. Sedges are an important component of the ecosystem, providing habitat and food for wildlife and many other organisms. Deep, dense rhizomatous roots of many species provide excellent erosion control, even in the most challenging environments, such as riverbanks. And their sensitivity to nutrient changes can serve as a clue to adverse changes in their environment.

Exciting finds discovered during the inventory include the soft fox sedge (*C. conjuncta*), which is on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' list of threatened species; cattail sedge (*C. typhina*), currently on the DNR's list of special concern; and Swan's sedge (*C. swanii*), which is not known in Minnesota and is rare in Wisconsin. One of the sedges with the most character is the Sprengel's sedge (*C. sprengelii*), with its large pendulous blooms shooting out in all directions. (Look for it on a wooded hillside in the fern glen.) For additional information regarding the Garden's sedges, stop by the Garden shelter, where a key to help identify and locate sedges in the Garden is available. ■

—Liz Heck created the sedge inventory in collaboration with Otto Gockman, a biologist with Midwest Natural Resources.

**Hairy Sedge, (*C. hirtifolia*) found along the woodland trails. Photo by Liz Heck**





# A FASCINATION WITH

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WILD MUSHROOMS IN THE GARDEN? RETIRED MYCOLOGIST R

By Ron Spinoso, *Garden Naturalist*

Who remembers Euell Gibbons? Come on now, I know some of you boomers do. Gibbons was the original “Mr. Natural,” and he launched the first wave of foraging for wild edibles back in the 1960s. (He also starred in those 1970s commercials for Grape Nuts.) After foraging came flower power and love-ins and the “back-to-nature” movement, which evolved into eco-activism and the green movement of today. I know this because, as an aging hippie, I was part of all that, and when I came across Gibbons’ book *Stalking the Wild Asparagus* (published in 1962), I headed out to the forests and fields, eating all the exotic tubers, berries and weeds I could find.

Gibbons didn’t have a lot to say about fungi, and in those days I had never even considered eating a wild mushroom. But he did mention morels and, one day, as I was riding my bike down a country road, I noticed two yellow sponge-like growths under a tree. A light bulb flashed in my head, and I thought: “Morels!” I immediately recognized them from the book, and morels are so unique, they really grab your attention when you spot them.

After harvesting the mushrooms, I went back to my book to double check the identifying features and felt confident that they were, in fact, that fabulous fungus. That’s because morels are one of the few mushrooms that even a rank beginner can easily identify. Clyde Christenson, a University of Minnesota mycologist, calls morels one of the “Foolproof Four,” meaning that even beginners can identify them and eat them without fear. (The other three mushrooms are giant puffball, sulfur shelf and shaggy mane.)

Despite my correct identification, I was still nervous about eating the mushrooms. Most people are very wary of eating wild mushrooms—and they should be, because many are poisonous. But I went ahead and fried them up in butter; and, once I tasted them, I was hooked. I wanted to learn everything I could about wild, edible mushrooms. Knowing this, my girlfriend got me a mushroom field guide for my birthday. But using the guide was a struggle. I was able to master a few mushrooms, but there is definitely a steep learning curve to mushrooms (something wildflower lovers are no doubt familiar with, too).





# THE FUNGI

RON SPINOSA CAN HELP.

Luckily, a few years later I found out about and joined the Minnesota Mycological Society. As part of the mushroom club, I was able to talk with experienced mentors who helped me identify mushrooms and observe important things about them, not just with my eyes, but by touching and smelling them. As it turned out, that fateful bicycle ride started me down a road that has led to a lifelong passion for mycology and the company of the fascinating breed of folks who are mycophiles. Now, some 30 years later, my passion for mushrooms has led me to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden as a new naturalist, looking forward to sharing my love of fungi and nature with others.

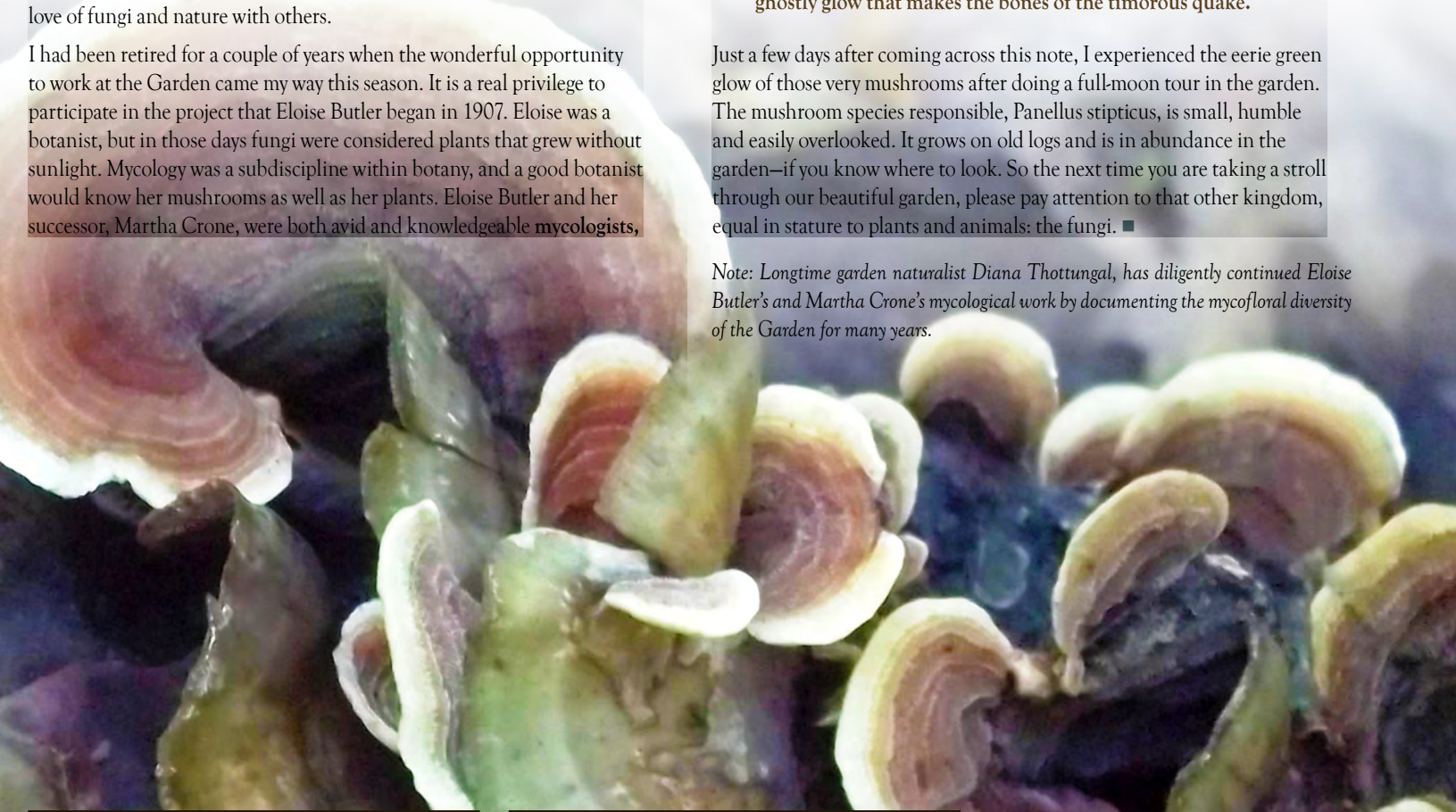
I had been retired for a couple of years when the wonderful opportunity to work at the Garden came my way this season. It is a real privilege to participate in the project that Eloise Butler began in 1907. Eloise was a botanist, but in those days fungi were considered plants that grew without sunlight. Mycology was a subdiscipline within botany, and a good botanist would know her mushrooms as well as her plants. Eloise Butler and her successor, Martha Crone, were both avid and knowledgeable mycologists,

and there are frequent notes about mushrooms in their journals. Here is one of my favorite notes from *The Wild Gardener: The Life and Selected Writings of Eloise Butler*:

“Sometimes bracket fungi assume strange shapes. Some have been found to resemble the head of Napoleon. Some species are phosphorescent and light up the dusky woodland with a ghostly glow that makes the bones of the timorous quake.”

Just a few days after coming across this note, I experienced the eerie green glow of those very mushrooms after doing a full-moon tour in the garden. The mushroom species responsible, *Panellus stipticus*, is small, humble and easily overlooked. It grows on old logs and is in abundance in the garden—if you know where to look. So the next time you are taking a stroll through our beautiful garden, please pay attention to that other kingdom, equal in stature to plants and animals: the fungi. ■

Note: Longtime garden naturalist Diana Thottungal, has diligently continued Eloise Butler's and Martha Crone's mycological work by documenting the mycofloral diversity of the Garden for many years.



All of these photos were taken in the Garden this season by Ron Spinoso, except for the photo of hexagonal pored polypore, which was taken by Diana Thottungal. The train wrecker (*Ganoderma lucidum*) Bird's nest fungus (*Cyathus striatus*) Honey mushroom (*Armillaria mellea*) Luminescent panellus (*Panellus stipticus*) Hexagonal pored polypore (*Polyporus alveolaris*) and in the background: False turkey tails (*Stereum ostrea*)



FRIENDS INVASIVE PLANT ACTION GROUP

By the time you read this, the 2013 fall buckthorn season will be over, and the Invasives volunteers will have reached a goal that seemed very ambitious when the project was first undertaken. We have come full circle around the Garden, clearing buckthorn (and garlic mustard) throughout the “preservation zone,” the area between the Garden fence and the walking path that circles the Garden. This means that virtually all of the thousands of established buckthorn plants are gone. From now on, we will mainly be pulling newly sprouted buckthorn brought in by birds or already present in the soil. Most importantly, no more buckthorn seeds will enter the Garden from the buffer we have created. (Because of the prolific and biennial nature of garlic mustard, we can’t yet say the same for it. But we are close.)

Coming full circle doesn’t mean we’re done, of course. Legacy volunteers continually maintain and foster the areas we’ve cleared in the past, and the areas finished this year will need to be revisited and inspected for seedlings. We are also starting to expand the preservation zone. Still, reaching this goal gives us reason to pause, celebrate, and thank all of the volunteers, the Friends, Garden staff—particularly Garden Curator Susan Wilkins—and the Park Board, for their support, encouragement, and hours and hours of work over these many years. Some volunteers are as regular as the seasons; others come infrequently or when they can, or maybe only once. We are grateful to everyone.

This July, a special group visited the Garden for the first time and were Invasives volunteers for an afternoon. As part of a Family Partnership summer program, nine urban kids, ages 10 to 12, participated in a Buckthorn and Art project organized by Jim Proctor. The kids spent about two hours in the preservation zone outside the Garden, where they used weed wrenches to enthusiastically pull buckthorn.

Next, they gathered up and cleaned the plants’ black, wiry roots for the art project.

Jim also brought in additional plant materials, including the stems of sumac, maple and ash; pine needles and cones; grape tendrils and more. He showed the kids ways to assemble them into art objects that became wands, swords, gifts and even a microphone. The entire project took place outside on a beautiful summer afternoon. Best of all, the kids seemed at ease and at home in their outdoor classroom. ■

—Jim Proctor and Liz Anderson,  
Invasive Plant Action Group co-chairs

Below: The upland garden in the fall. Right: Larch and maple show their fall colors in the garden. Photos by Gary Bebeau.



MEMORIALS & DONATIONS  
JUNE 2013 ~ SEPTEMBER 2013

MEMORIAL

For Elsie Morton Barish  
from Dick & Sue Snell

GIFTS in support of our programs from:

- Carol Barkley
- Golden Valley Garden Club Evening Program
- Mary Ireland
- Meleah Maynard and Mike Hoiu
- Judith Morgan and AON Foundation
- J Pam Weiner and James Wittenberg

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 and gifts are tax deductible. When sending a memorial, please provide the name and address of the family being honored so we can acknowledge that a memorial has been received. An acknowledgment will be provided to all donors. Memorials and gifts should be sent to: Treasurer, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, P.O. Box 3793, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Checks are payable to: Friends of the Wild Flower Garden or donate on our web site, [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org).

—Gary Bebeau, memorials chair

WEBSITE NOTES

Please visit the Garden’s website ([www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org)) where you’ll find new articles posted on touch-me-nots; invasive plants; obscure garden plants; the Upland Garden addition; Martha Hellander and her book about Eloise Butler; opening day over the past years; memorials in the Martha Crone Shelter; willow pine galls; cedar apple rust; Garden and Friends history for 1913, 1938, 1963, 1988, and 2003; plus 132 new information sheets on plants. To find links to articles quickly, click on the “Current Postings” link on the homepage. ■

—Gary Bebeau, website coordinator





## SHELTER VOLUNTEER UPDATE 2013

The Shelter Volunteer Program gained nine new volunteers during the season.

Joey Harrington	Nicole Johnson
Judy Krause	Marcy McIntyre
Lynn Meyer	Rod Miller
Bill Miner	Jan Olfe
Olas Rooker	

We continue to attract wonderful people with a wide range of interests and backgrounds. Young working people, recent retirees and a college student made up this season's group of new volunteers.

As the 2013 season ends, we want to thank to all our Shelter volunteers for the time they give and the friendly faces they show to Garden visitors who stop in the shelter. ■

## REMEMBER THE GARDEN IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN

Please consider a gift in your estate plan to benefit the Garden. Gifts to the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by Minnesota and federal law for gifts to charitable organizations. The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden has been approved by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization since 1953.

Estate gifts can be made through your will, revocable living trust, retirement plans or life insurance. To leave a gift for the Garden, simply name the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden as a beneficiary of a portion of your life insurance or retirement account. Or leave a gift for the Garden in your will or revocable living trust by a provision such as: I give \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., to benefit the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.

If you have any questions, please call Steve Pundt at 612-333-1900. Thank you for helping us to fulfill our mission to preserve and protect the Garden! ■

## INTRODUCING THE FRIENDS OF ROBERTS BIRD SANCTUARY

Friends of the Wildflower Garden will be pleased to know that the other bird sanctuary in the Minneapolis Park system now has a Friends organization, too. After many months of planning, the Friends of the Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary (FRBS) incorporated this fall.

The group held its first meeting on Sunday, Oct. 13, and it is hoped that both Friends groups can collaborate on future programs and activities. For more information or to be added to the FRBS mailing list, contact Matt Johnson at 612-298-5509 or northfalke@gmail.com. ■

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

● Individual \$15    ● Family \$25    ● Sponsor \$100    ● Life \$500    ○ Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Memberships can be ordered online at [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) or mailed with a check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
Membership  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

*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 of the Wild Flower Garden.*

## DONATION FORM

Donations of gifts or memorials may be made at [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) or mailed with a check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

*Thank you for helping to sustain the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.*

*All gifts are tax-deductible.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift from: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor / Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793  
[www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit No. 90251

*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 a half hour before sunset.*



*A fun night was had by all at the Garden's 2013 Volunteer Appreciation Event on Nov. 3.*

*1. Dakota Sexton (left), Karen Katz and Lauren Borer 2. Julia Manor 3. Kathy Gustafson (left), and Mary Steinbicker*



*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 for members and supporters of the Friends.*

*For changes to your mailing address, please write membership co-chair Susan Dean at:*

*members@friendsofeloisebutler.org or  
602 Thomas Ave. So., Mpls, MN 55405.*

*Printed with soy inks on  
100% post-consumer waste paper.*