

THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

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

Dear Friends,

Gratitude creates openings in our lives for more of what makes us happy and well. My first letter to *Gentian* readers as President of our organization is about being grateful. I am grateful to Eloise Butler for having the foresight to lobby for the protection of the Garden so that future generations could enjoy it; and for understanding the value of places like the Garden for contemplation, study, connecting with nature and each other. In these times, when we can sometimes feel estranged from our neighbors, I am grateful that we can meet in the Garden to create common ground and common experiences that can allow us to be citizens together, enjoying this beautiful place.

We are grateful to Pam Weiner, who served as President of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden for the past 10 years. During her tenure, the Friends significantly increased support for the Garden, initiated a transportation program to bring grade-school kids to the Garden in the summer and developed a robust invasive species removal program that restored the protective buffer zone around the Garden.

Pam's articulate and insightful letters in the *Gentian* also helped Friends of the Garden keep up with issues of interest and find ways to support the Garden. Her influence has shaped the Friends into a more broadly based and well-regarded advocacy organization. This has led to significant increases in donations, which only happens when donors believe an organization is effective, focused and stable. We are proud and fortunate to have been represented by a person of such vision and devotion to the Garden and to the Friends. And we are grateful that she

will continue to champion the efforts of the Friends, helping to raise funds to complete Phase II of the award-winning boardwalk.

I am also deeply grateful for the wonderful group of people who have agreed to guide the Friends organization with me, particularly the board of directors whose names are listed in this newsletter. I must also say a special thank you to departing board members Anthony Waldera and Phoebe Waugh, both of whom gave tirelessly of their unique gifts for many years.

I am grateful for the volunteers, whose enthusiasm for the Garden is reflected in so many ways—clearing buckthorn, pulling garlic mustard, staffing the shelter, walking the trails, tending legacy plots, producing the *Gentian* and so much more.

Finally, I am grateful for the many people who braved the extreme heat and stormy weather to come to the Garden for the very successful Showy Lady's-Slipper celebration on June 10 and 11. The State's official flowers were spectacular and appropriately showy, as were the yellow iris, blue flag iris and forget-me-nots. Many people signed up as new Friends members and many others renewed their memberships. And we raised over \$3,000 in donations and sales of bike raffle tickets and lady's-slipper-themed merchandise, as well as in-kind donations. Congratulations to all who planned and participated in the weekend! Thanks especially to Mark Addicks, One on One Bikes and Utepils Brewery for their



photo: John Toren

partnerships with the Friends and generous donations, all of which helped make the weekend such a success.

If you are not familiar with the Garden, or haven't visited it in a while, I encourage you to come this summer—so much has changed! The recently constructed portions of the boardwalk have made the marshy areas of the Garden, which are always beautiful to walk through, much more accessible and appealing. Phase II will extend the walking surface northward and includes an expanded gathering spot with benches. Campaign 175, which we are raising funds for now, aims to raise the remaining funds needed to complete the boardwalk project.

Thanks to Garden Curator Susan Wilkins and her team, who have worked tirelessly to remove buckthorn and other invasives. Many

more native plants, as well as the contours of the Garden itself, can now be easily enjoyed. Today, the Garden is recognized for being a great place to bring kids to explore and learn about nature in many different and fun ways.

I hope you will consider visiting the Garden and supporting it by joining the Friends, making a contribution to the boardwalk fund, volunteering to care for a particular section of the garden or helping to eradicate invasives. More information about how you can help the Garden can be found in this newsletter.

Thank you, in advance, for your support. I hope to see you out on the trails.

Sincerely,

Kathy Connelly

Cedar Bog Lake Woods *by Betsy McNerney*

*Bracken fern,
sensitive, royal, interrupted
by my passing.*

*Jewelweed,
its clockworks
pinched and sprung.*

*Flanks of trees
pressing in, peeling skin
of cedar. Tamarack,*

*branches packed
in cornrows of nub
the soft shock*

*of a yellowing green.
Nodding come the wild
sarsaparilla,*

*the lovely and round-lobed
hepatica,
partridge berry peering up*

*dark and prim,
the stems of anemone
already empty.*

*Indian pipe
up on the knoll
—three pale stalks—*

*a dried brown offering
tumped down deep
in each bowl.*

*Over the hill, fits of sedge,
hummocks of mud,
the hot buttered coins*

*of marsh Mary's gold.
At the end of the path
rimming the lake,*

*swamp loosestrife in full riot,
hurling its orange
into the air.*

*One by one I come to these,
yet everything here happens
all at once, so I stop*

*halfway back
in a platter of sun,
in a rain of green*

*nutrient energy,
cycle of breath,
flow of amazement.*

Betsy McNerney is a Friends of the Wild Flower Garden board member.



Bobbi Olson and her family enjoyed visiting the Garden for Showy Lady's Slipper Days.

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Garden Curator's Letter

By Susan Wilkins

Spring at the Wildflower Garden was a wonderful whirlwind of beautiful plants in bloom, engaging programming and enthusiastic people visiting! Not to mention the enormous amount of work involved with planting projects and constant garden care. We owe a special thanks to the many new Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board seasonal staff members working in the Garden, as well as the education program, for a successful and engaging season so far.

Please welcome Garden Education staff members:

Kari Ramstrom, Garden Education Program Coordinator
Timothy Glenn, Interpretive Naturalist (in a new role as lead daytime naturalist)
Amie Durenberger, Interpretive Naturalist
Maia Campbell, Interpretive Naturalist

And Garden Field staff members:

Chee Yang, Natural Resources Specialist
Emily Christian, Horticulture Support Intern
Kathleen Mitchell, Horticulture Support Intern

Also, thank you to returning interpretive naturalist staff for another great season: Lauren Borer, Jodi Gustafson, Tammy Mercer, Wes Nugteren, Kyla Sisson, Kara Snow, and Ron Spinosa. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful group of people working at the Wildflower Garden.

With so much going on, I'd like to mention one program in particular that we are getting ready for this July. This program has been an important one for us since 2010. Let me tell you why: Working with summer school youth from Minneapolis Public Schools has always been a highlight for Garden staff. For the past seven years (this will be our eighth summer), about 500 fourth-graders visit the Garden and Quaking Bog to spend a day exploring the ecology with naturalists and learning about things like the amazing adaptive skills of birds.

One or two classrooms visit each day over a period of a few weeks, allowing for smaller groups and a richer experience. For some of the students, more than you would imagine, this meaningful day is the first time they have experienced what it's like to be in a natural setting as wild as Wirth Park, let alone being guided by a caring and skilled teacher. For many, the program opens their

eyes to a world beyond the confines of classrooms and malls, offering a break from electronic devices and giving them a chance to get closer to nature right in their own city. Our staff members are excited about this kind of programming because they are able to reach a new generation of potential stewards and nature lovers and share with them the joy and happiness of being connected to nature. It can take time in the elements, as well as skilled mentors, to help foster a love of nature, and this programming is one wonderful step along the path to making that connection, which can last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, there are often barriers to helping get urban youth engaged in nature-based programs. Minneapolis Public Schools' budget cuts in recent years have decreased students' ability to take trips. But the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden's student transportation grant program, which pays for a significant portion of Minneapolis Public Schools costs to bus kids to the Garden, is making those nature experiences possible. We are deeply grateful for your continued support of this program, and I want to say thank you to each and every member who contributes to keep it going. Your contributions really do make a difference in the lives of youth visiting the Garden.

I hope you'll stop by this month to see our programming in action, and enjoy your strolls along the Garden trails all season long!



Photo: John Toren

Horticultural intern Kathleen Mitchell removing invasive grape vines from the upland garden.

Summer Birdsongs

by John Toren

Once the leaves have filled out on the trees and the migrating warblers have passed through the Garden, most of them on their way to nesting sites farther north, we often must content ourselves with hearing birds that we don't see. But learning the bird songs is a tricky thing. Birding guides sometimes provide mnemonic aids for remembering the songs; for example, the Eastern towhee says "drink-your-tea" and the barred owl says "who-cooks-for-you?" Such aids can

help us remember songs we already know, but they're seldom of much use to anyone who hasn't already learned to associate a song with a particular bird. The best way to learn a bird-call—perhaps the only way—is to recognize the bird and then watch it sing. But if you can describe something you've heard in common language it might be easier to call the bird to mind the next time you hear its song. And you can reinforce those associations at websites like allaboutbirds.com.

Here are ten birds you might not see but are likely to hear at the Garden in summer, described in plain English.



GOLDFINCH ►

The goldfinch has a high-pitched, cheerful song, sometimes sharp and tuneful, at other times sputtering like an old jalopy that won't start. You will often see a flock of goldfinches in the distance, singing as they fly; the bobbing flight pattern also gives them away.

◄ INDIGO BUNTING

The indigo bunting is almost always solitary. You often see it singing from the top of a tree up in the prairie area. In bright sun it might look black rather than indigo-blue. Its song is similar to that of the goldfinch, less melodic but also deeper and richer. The sound reminds me of someone slurping saliva loudly through their cheeks and teeth.

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE ►

The sweet, languorous, high-pitched song of this bird is unique and unmistakable. It has two parts that sound like they're being played on a very small plastic slide-whistle. The first part resembles the whistle someone might make to summon their lagging companions with a wave of the hand—"Come on, over here!"—though it's far slower and more fatigued.



The second part, which always comes a few seconds later (and sometimes not at all) is a two-note descending call full of disappointment. Evidently no one came! Neither part sounds terribly vigorous or hopeful.

◄ GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER

This bird gives a single loud call that reminds me of an ascending war hoop—though I've never heard a war hoop, except in the movies.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER ►

This bird delivers a single loud horse-like shriek that echoes through the woods, as if to say:
Please! I do not have a red belly."





◀ RED-EYED VIREO

The red-eyed vireo is the bird most likely to be singing in the mid-day heat. Its song is a long succession of crisp three-note riffs—up-down-up or down-up-down—each one different than the last but all of them tethered within a relatively small range of pitches. Some birders find it helpful to remember the pattern by repeating the phrases, “Here-am-I. Where-are-you?” The song tends to be loud. In fact, it’s often delivered with enough force to provide a little “whip” to the end of each three-note explosion. (A robin sometimes repeats a similar three-note phrase, but its voice is much richer and more relaxed.) We might liken it to a lecture during which the professor resorts to insistent delivery to compensate for the fact that she’s saying the same thing over and over again.

HOUSE WREN ▶

This little brown bird with an upturned tail is the supreme chatterer of the forest. A rapid-fire succession of busy notes on various pitches becomes a blur of agitated sound. But if the scolding seems to go on and on, and sounds unusually high-pitched and musical, you’re probably listening to the far-less-common winter wren strut his stuff.



◀ CEDAR WAXWING

The call of the cedar waxwing is a twittering squeak, like two pieces of wood rotating against each other,

but it’s so faint and high-pitched, many people simply can’t hear it. Cedar waxwings travel in flocks, and if a flock happens to be passing by overhead you’ll commonly hear a chorus of out-of-key squeaking, like a hundred miniature oxcarts moving slowly down the trail. If you can hear and recognize this sound, you’ll soon become convinced that cedar waxwings are among our most common birds.



BLUE JAY ▶

The blue jay has quite a few calls and songs, including a harsh squawk, but the one I like best is a loud hollow echoing gurgle that reminds me of the sound effect used on old TV shows like *Silent Service* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* when submarines were diving or cruising underwater.



◀ SONG SPARROW

The song of this bird is less a song than a succession of stutters and shrieks, and what distinguishes it is the unusually large interval between the shrieks, which are high-pitched, and the cluck-like sputters, which are more than an octave lower. During the sputters, the song sparrow seems to be gathering material or energy for the next shriek. The second sputter is shorter than the first, and the third shriek is less dramatic than the first two.



Eloise Writes about Herself

Eloise Butler occasionally lowered her guard and wrote a few words about herself. Here are three comments she made in 1911 for reasons that remain unknown.

From her Autobiographical Sketch:

My mother said I was abnormally good when I was a baby, but got bravely over it when I grew up. Indeed, some of the neighbors thought I must be idiotic because I lay quietly in the cradle, making no demands for attention. They said, too, that I hadn't any nose—only two little holes in my face where my nose ought to be. Accordingly, everyone was pinching my face in order to make the organ grow. Who can tell how much my lack of good looks is due to that practice?

On the day her hat caught fire when she was burning brush:

As it was, my hat was a charred ruin and my hair, which I could ill afford to lose, was about one-quarter burned away. Some visitors came into the garden during the afternoon, but I sent every one home and waited alone until it was dusk, skewering my hat together with safety pins and filling up the hole in the crown with a big rose that had survived the fire. I hoped that in the crowd [on the streetcar] and darkness, my peculiar head-gear would pass unnoticed.

Writing about the plant soapwort or bouncing Bet (*Saponaria officinalis*):

...but the other name, 'old maid's pinks,' seems especially applicable. For to do their duty cheerfully under adverse circumstances is the métier of spinsters.

Eloise never married.



Eloise Butler (left) at the Garden's main office. [Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society]

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Friends Invasive Plant Action Group

Occasionally, volunteers with the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) ask how long invasive plant removal has been going on at the Garden. Checking the archives of the Fringed Gentian, it seems as though there was no specific start date for invasives removal. Awareness of invasives grew over time as Garden curators, Theodore Wirth Park staff, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden and others came to terms with the serious threat invasives posed to the Garden. By 2006, Garden Curator Susan Wilkins was writing of efforts to remove garlic mustard inside the Garden's boundaries, and Jim Proctor issued a call for volunteers.

That makes at least 11 years, and counting, of invasives work by volunteers—first inside the Garden and then, outside around its borders. Outside the Garden, the goal was to create a buffer zone, and it took a while. Seven years after Susan's first articles appeared, we reported in the Fall 2013 issue of the Gentian that "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."

FIPAG's current project, which we have mentioned in this newsletter before, began in 2014. It is in a deep ravine to the south of the Garden called the maple glen. According to Dr. Lee Frelich,

head of the University of Minnesota's Center for Forest Ecology, this spot is one of the few remnants of Minnesota's Big Woods in Minneapolis. This spring, demonstrating again that persistence and patience pay off, volunteers finished the first round of garlic mustard removal around the entire area, from the vernal pool at the bottom of the ravine to the slopes surrounding it.

People often tell FIPAG volunteers that their efforts are wasted and futile. Nevertheless, they persist, and the results are not only obvious, but growing. Work at the maple glen will continue for several more years, but we have already begun to see the Big Woods re-emerging.

As Elizabeth Czarapata wrote in *Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest*, "The good news is that this is one environmental problem we can do something about. I have seen the tremendous difference that even a few individuals can make in the battle to retain the land for native species." For over 11 years, an amazing core of volunteers—some returning year after year, others coming more sporadically, or maybe only once—has combined persistence and patience to yield amazing results. Our thanks to all of you for allowing us to be part of this grand experience.

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

Memorials and Donations ~ february 2017 / may 2017

— New Members —

Natalie Benson, Minneapolis
Farrand Anderson, Edina
Kris Benson, Minnetonka
Stephanie Blohm, Minneapolis
Darryl Carter, Minneapolis
Catherine Cesnik, Plymouth
Jonathon Coltz, Robbinsdale
Carlos Espinosa, Minneapolis
Ellen Ferrari and Stewart Corn, St Paul
Robert and Elizabeth Genovese, Edina
Janice Haines, Minneapolis
Ryan Hanson, Minneapolis
Erin Hartman and Troy Johnson, Minneapolis
Dan Hathaway, St Paul
Mairead Kerr, Golden Valley
Patricia Kight, New Brighton
Louann Lanning, St Louis Park
Sally Lewis, Brooklyn Center
Pixie Martin and Jay Erstling, Minneapolis
Paul Mielke, St Paul
Minnetonka Garden Club
Barbara O'Connell, St Paul
Tawatchai Paisansinsup, St Louis Park
Amy Ryan, Boston MA
Carolyn Jean Sampson, Minneapolis
Patricia Siebert, Minneapolis
Michael L Snow, Wayzata
Srividya Subramani, Minnetonka
Lori Tews, Minneapolis
Andrea Thaden, Minneapolis
Howard Towle, Golden Valley
Emily Ann Tucker, Eagan
Dana Vanderbosch, White Bear Lake Township
David Wikoff, Edina
Vicki Young, Minneapolis

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. In 2017, undesignated gifts will be used for Phase II of the wetland boardwalk. Project update information is on the Friends website.

Note: Memorials and gifts are tax deductible. When sending a memorial, please give the name and address of the family being honored so that we can acknowledge that a memorial has been received. We acknowledge all donors. Memorials and gifts should be sent to: 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 website: www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org

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For Ross Fefercorn *from* Barbara Levie and Mark Kawell; *For* Molly George *from* Martha Hellander; *For* Gloria Miller *from* Donna Ahrens, Gary Bebeau, Harriet Betzold, Joy Davis and Melissa Hansen; *In honor of* Hanna Grace *from* Barbara Levie and Mark Kawell; *In honor of* Clare Mackney *from* Karen Rose; *In honor of* Pam Weiner *from* Cary and Janet George and Evan and Gwen Weiner

Membership Form

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*Thank you for helping to sustain the Eloise Butler
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THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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Many thanks to Gary Bebeau, Friends' Treasurer and Webmaster, for delivering the Volunteer Shelter's new desk earlier this summer.

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 Coordinator Jayne Funk at: members@friendsofeloisebutler.org or Membership, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, P.O. Box 3793, Mpls., MN 55403.

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