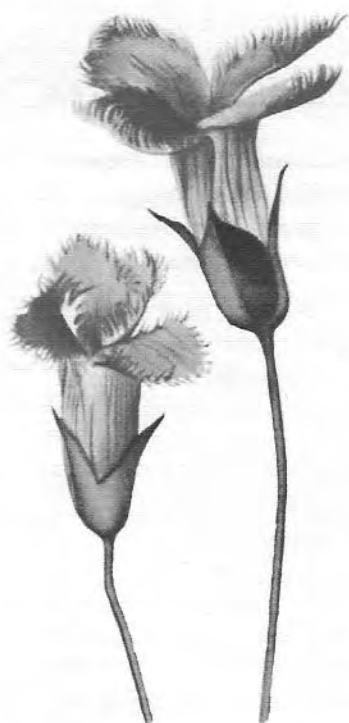


PUBLICATION OF  
FRIENDS OF THE  
WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

SUMMER 2005

Volume 53, Number 3



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## *President's Report –*

### **The Garden Is Threatened**

By the time you read this, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will be close to making a decision about their commitment to preserve the wooded area around the Garden as a protected, natural buffer zone.

The Board of the Friends has been actively working to designate this buffer zone as a preserve for low-impact recreational enjoyment of nature. This issue is controversial, mainly because of the effort by the City of Lakes Loppet organization to use the area near the Garden as a route for the annual City of Lakes Loppet. Unfortunately, a portion of the Loppet trail was placed adjacent to the Garden in fall, 2004, when the Loppet organization was working with the Park Board staff to relocate portions of the trail. We strongly oppose locating the Loppet trails so close to the Garden within the protected buffer zone. We feel cross-country skiing is an appropriate recreational activity in all of Wirth Park, including around the Garden, but we oppose putting 20-to-25-foot wide paths required for the Loppet's



*View of the the 25-ft. wide swath that was clear-cut adjacent to the Wildflower Garden.*

skating-style of ski racing in the buffer zone around the Garden sanctuary. We believe the Loppet is a wonderful event for the City of Minneapolis and for those who enjoy the skating style of cross-country ski racing, but the event would be successful in other parts of Wirth Park where there are already high-impact types of sports and recreational activities. There is no compelling reason to place the Loppet trail in the buffer zone around the Garden sanctuary. There is no compelling reason to cut new trails through these woods. Maintaining a wide, road-like trail that is clear of any brush or woody plants is contrary to the goal of restoring the area as a natural preserve.

### **Historical Precedent for Preserving a Wooded Buffer Zone**

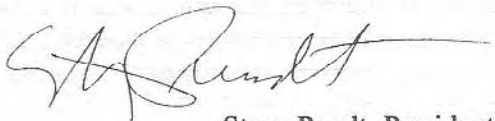
There is historical precedent that the Park Board intended to preserve this wooded area as a buffer zone surrounding the Garden sanctuary. In 1964, the Park Board, as reported in its weekly news bulletin, approved the request of the Friends that adjacent areas in Theodore Wirth Park be considered part of the Garden, "so that these areas may remain in their natural state." When the Park Board wrote a Master Plan for Wirth Park in 1980, it was clear that it intended to preserve the area around the Garden for passive, low-impact recreational activities. The Master Plan described the Garden, Birch Pond, Quaking Bog and the large forested area surrounding these features as areas which should be off-limits to active sports. Sections of the area should be "developed for increased pedestrian access and passive enjoyment... Nature observation and hiking would also be appropriate uses."

*continued*

## Garden is Threatened *continued*

Unfortunately, the Park Board has taken little affirmative action to implement the concepts of the 1980 Wirth Park Plan. Now, because of increased pressure by the Loppet organizers, preservation of the area surrounding the Garden for low-impact use is in jeopardy.

One of the primary purposes of the Friends organization is to nurture and protect the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. The Garden is best protected by preserving the area surrounding it for passive, low-impact recreational activities. As long as there is a possibility that maintaining 20-ft.-wide paths for ski racing would be harmful to the protected area, should we not err on the side of preservation?



Steve Pundt, President

## The Friends Have the Support of the BMNA

The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association of Minneapolis (BMNA) passed a resolution at its June 8 Board meeting supporting the formal establishment of an environmentally-protective buffer zone around Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. It reads, in part, "The South Wirth Woods, between Glenwood and I-394, from north to south, and between Xerxes Avenue North and the fence west of the Quaking Bog, from east to west, should be designated as the buffer zone." The BMNA values this area as a resource for families and students of nature, and wishes to see it preserved for low-impact, pedestrian-based uses.

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*The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary is an untamed garden and sanctuary for wild native flora and fauna. It is officially open from April 1 to October 15, barring heavy spring snows. The Garden entrance is located just off Theodore Wirth Parkway close to the intersection of the Parkway and Glenwood Avenue.*

*Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., is a nonprofit organization of private citizens whose purpose is to educate by enhancing visitors' appreciation and understanding of Minnesota's native plants and their natural environments. It aims to enhance and safeguard the interests of the Garden.*

*The Fringed Gentian is published on a quarterly basis for members and supporters of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Editor is Lisa Locken, 1227 Edlin Place, Minneapolis, MN 55416. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. E-mail: ldlocken@goldengate.net*

## Voice Your Concerns!

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary, the crown jewel of the Minneapolis Park system, is threatened by a decision soon to be made by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioners.

On July 6, between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m., staff of the MPRB will make recommendations (that will not be available in advance of this time) about the fate of the urban forest in Wirth Park that surrounds and protects the Garden as a buffer zone. These recommendations will be made to Commissioners on the MPRB Planning Committee. Then, if the Planning Committee approves, these recommendations will be forwarded on to the full Park Board for approval at its meeting on July 20.

At question is whether the Park Board will reconsider its long-standing policy to leave the wooded area around the Garden in its natural state – or whether it will be altered to allow high-impact sports such as skating-style ski racing on 25-ft. groomed roadways through the woods and adjacent to the Garden.

The Friends and also the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association are in agreement that the boundaries to the buffer outside the Garden fence should be from Glenwood Ave. to Highway 394 and from Xerxes to the western edge of the fragile Quaking Bog.

The well being of the Garden is at stake. We encourage you to let the Park Board Commissioners on the Planning Committee know that you want this protective wooded buffer made permanent and free of high-impact sports activities.

### MPRB Planning Committee Commissioners:

Bob Fine, Chair (6<sup>th</sup> Prk. Dist.) (612) 230-6443 ext.6  
yorkfines@juno.com

Walt Dzierdzic (1<sup>st</sup> Prk. Dist.) (612) 230-6443 ext.1

John Erwin (Cmsr.At Lrgc.) (612) 230-6443 ext.8  
erwin001@umn.edu

Marie Hauser (3<sup>rd</sup> Prk. Dist.) (612) 230-6443 ext.3  
marich@visi.com

M.Annie Young (Cmsr.At Lrgc.) (612) 729-3359  
anniey@visi.com

### Other Park Commissioners:

Jon Olson (2<sup>nd</sup> Prk. Dist.) (612) 230-6443 ext.2

Vivian Mason (4<sup>th</sup> Prk. Dist.) (612) 377-5234

Carol Kummer (5<sup>th</sup> Prk. Dist.) (612) 722-0370

Rochelle Berry Graves (Cmsr.At Lrgc) (612) 230-6443 ext.7



## Cherishing Orchids, an Eloise Butler Legacy

by Susan Wilkins

Since its founding in 1907, the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary has been a refuge for many of the 43 species of orchids native to Minnesota. This captivating family of plants has always been a favorite of Garden visitors, and the orchids of the Garden continue to inspire those who take the time to view their fantastic displays of color and form.

Although unusual and often mysterious in appearance, orchids, as a family of plants, are anything but rare. Over 20,000 known species of orchids are found worldwide, the largest numbers in tropical rain forests. The 43 terrestrial species found in Minnesota all moved in after the last glaciers receded from the area.

Eloise Butler was fascinated by and passionate about orchids. One of the reasons that she chose this location for her Wild Botanic Garden was the presence of native orchids endemic to the area. As



Susan Wilkins admires one of the rescued showy lady's-slippers.

she stated, "A particular reason for selecting this place was the undrained tamarack swamp, such a swamp being the abode of most of our orchids and insectivorous plants so interesting in habit and structure." With this in mind, the presence of orchids in our Sanctuary is not only a wonder for the visitor to behold but an important part of the history of the Garden.

Despite our love of orchids at the Wildflower Garden, few that have been planted throughout the past century have survived or reproduced to share their untamed beauty with us. Eloise was quite aware of the difficulty of maintaining orchids in the Garden, finding them "uncertain, coy and hard to please." Regardless, she persisted in her attempts to make them happy here, planting nearly 40 species during her tenure.

Of the scores of native orchid species that have been planted here, none are cherished more than the showy lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*). "The greatest prize of the swamp is our State Flower, the showy cypripedium, the pink and white lady's-slipper, a member of the orchid family. No flower, wild or cultivated, is more magnificent than this," wrote Eloise in June of 1911. Over 20 years later she went on to say that "the showy lady's-slipper... is the crowning glory of the Preserve... Visitors are so enraptured with the display in my garden that they feel like falling on their knees to worship them. The *Cypripedium* is... considered by many the most beautiful flower in the world."

### A Successful Rescue Mission

In honor of the legacy of Eloise Butler and as part of the Garden's

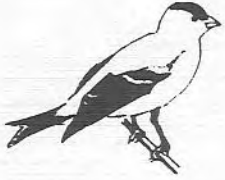


Larry Puchalski of Mndot, left, and Richard Gjertson of the U of M Landscape Arboretum, were part of the lady's-slipper rescue mission.

mission to enhance the diversity of plant life found within the Garden gates, a trip was taken this June to northern Minnesota to rescue several showy lady's-slipper orchids – saving them from destruction in a road-building project.

Although it is unlawful to dig up this precious Minnesota State flower, these threatened plants were collected with the permission, assistance, and enthusiasm of the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation – for transplanting in a public wildflower garden such as ours. With only a week remaining before their eminent demise, the clumps were carefully removed and transported to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and planted the following two days. Several clumps, large and small, were carefully dug from an area very similar to our tamarack swamp in the Garden.

With patience and care, it is our hope that these lovely additions to the Wildflower Garden will enhance the spirit and beauty of the wetland garden for years to come.



## The Rewards of Summer Birding

by Tammy Mercer

Many are under the impression that once the spring migration is over, so is the best birding for the season. I heartily disagree! If you want to get to know the birds that nest in Minnesota, summer is a great time for birding. Males are still protecting their territories with song, and the young are leaving the nest and learning to fly and find food.

When you're a beginning birder, it is best to start with the birds in your own neighborhood. Repetition always is important for me when I'm learning birds, and you will see and hear the birds around your home more frequently than anywhere else. Migrating birds added to the mix only makes learning more complicated and can be overwhelming.

### Distinguishing Fledglings from Adult Birds

Summer birding does offer some unique challenges for birders. While young robins have lots of speckling and less brilliant coloring, many species, like chickadees and cardinals, look very much like adults. If you take the time to watch the way the birds behave, you can better distinguish fledglings from adults.

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### SUMMER BIRD LIST

Following is a list of many of the birds that nest in or near the Garden (or are commonly seen in summer):

Bunting, indigo	Kingfisher, belted
Cardinal, northern	Nuthatch, white-breasted
Catbird, gray	Oriole, Baltimore
Chickadee, black-capped	Pewee, eastern-wood
Cowbird, brown-headed	Phoebe
-- (lays eggs in nests of other birds)	Redstart, American
Duck, wood	Sparrow, chipping
Flicker, northern	Sparrow, song
Flycatcher, great-crested	Sparrow, swamp
Flycatcher, least	Swallow, barn
Goldfinch, American	Swallow, tree
Grossbeak, rose-breasted	Vireo, red-eyed
Hawk, broad-winged	Warbler, yellow
Hawk, Coopers	Waxwing, cedar
Hummingbird, ruby- throated	Woodpecker, downy
Jay, blue	Woodpecker, hairy
Yellowthroat, common	Woodpecker, pileated
	Woodpecker, red-bellied

As someone who enjoys learning the songs and calls of birds and how they relate to behavior, I sometimes find myself stumped by different sounds I cannot identify. Often these different sounds are coming from young birds just out of the nest. These fledglings are just learning to fly and will be very dependent on their parents for food and protection for some weeks yet. They stay in contact with their parents using sounds that sometimes remind me of a small human child.

I once watched a young nuthatch on a tree that was constantly yap-yap-yapping as a parent came with food every few minutes.

Recently I was very annoyed by the constant squeaky sounds of grackles on my brother's lawn. When I realized they were fledglings just learning how to hunt insects in the grass, it was a little less annoying and more interesting to watch their behavior. Though the young looked just like their parents, they appeared to be begging for food, and when a noise startled them they followed their parents to a tree.

On a recent bird walk in the garden, we were puzzled by a constant brief squeal coming from a tree. Each time we got closer to the sound it would move away. Finally we caught up to the sound and found it was a young flicker, letting its parents know where it was.

### A Late Summer Treat

In late summer you may be lucky enough to visit the garden on a day when young goldfinches have just left the nest. The sunflowers on the prairie will be filled with young birds constantly calling "feed me -- feed me" to their parents.

Early mornings are the best time to see and hear bird activity during the summer. Robins and cardinals start singing at around 4:30 a.m. By mid-day it's too hot for all but the red-eyed vireo to be active and even his song is sluggish.

I hope you'll get out and enjoy the birds this summer, and join us for a bird hike in the Garden on Saturday mornings at 7:30 a.m. We'll be offering beginning birding at 9:30 most Saturday mornings, when we'll spend more time on field guides and binoculars before we go out to enjoy the birds.

*Tammy Mercer has been retained as a naturalist by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to conduct birding programs at Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.*

For more information on scheduled programs, call the Martha Crone Shelter at (612) 370-4903.

## *A Perfect Day for the Dedication of the Ken Avery Birding Terrace*



*Friends and relatives of Ken Avery gathered at the new birding terrace.*



*Steve Pundt, Friends President, Park Commissioners Annie Young (seated) and Vivian Mason (standing), and Pam Weiner, Friends Vice President.*



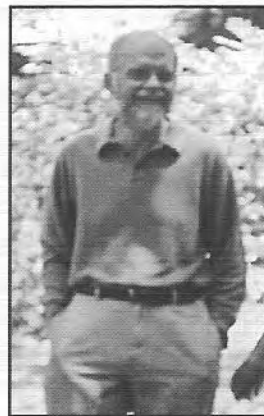
*Muriel Avery*



*Dan Hasty*



*Susan Wilkins*



*Cary George*



*Tammy Mercer*

The new Ken Avery Birding Terrace accommodated a surprisingly large crowd on Father's Day, June 19, 2005, at the time of its formal dedication. Honoring the late Kenneth E. Avery who had served as Gardener for 23 years, the birding terrace is in keeping with Ken's philosophy that nature knows best. The site was prepared with new native plantings, wooden benches and a natural stone bird bath, all purchased by the Friends.



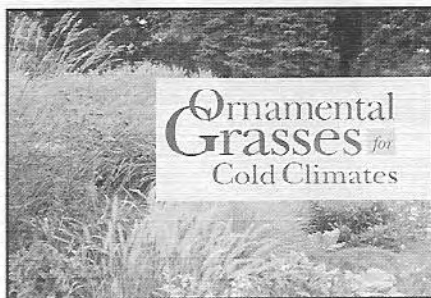
*The late Ken Avery*

Comments were made by Friends president, Steve Pundt, who introduced other speakers, all of whom reflected upon Ken's unique legacy: Muriel Avery, Ken's widow; Cary George, who immediately followed Ken as gardener; Dan Hasty, who had known Ken as a Park Board colleague and mentor, Park Commissioner Vivian Mason; Tammy Mercer, who conducts birding programs at the Garden, and Susan Wilkins, the current gardener-curator at Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.



*The Ken Avery Birding Terrace*

## BOOK CORNER



### **Ornamental Grasses for Cold Climates**

By Mary Hockenberry Meyer  
Dept. of Horticultural Science,  
University of Minnesota  
U of M Extension Service, 2004,  
40 pages.

*Reviewed by Gary Bebeau*

This short, soft-cover 8-1/2" x 11" handbook is perfect for anyone wanting researched data on the planting of ornamental grass in our cold climate areas of zones 3 and 4 (all of the state of Minnesota, for example). The research was done at the University over a period of 17 years.

While the author gives basic information on the growing and care of grasses, her greatest contribution to the reader is in the details. The importance of this book is in the number of cultivars covered and specific information about each of them. While most native plant books cover only a few types, this one covers 40.

Grasses are basically cool-season or warm-season types, and in your planting goals you must know which they are. This section of the book carefully details each plant and includes color pictures. It even has a pronunciation guide for the botanical name.

One of the more commonly available grasses is "miscanthus" and some cultivars you DO NOT want to plant. However, the author gives you a chart of 56 miscanthus cultivars to choose from and outlines their varied characteristics.

The back of the book provides you with a planting guide based

upon your desired result in terms of: color, texture, screening, erosion control, sun/shade, self-seeding, container growing, winter interest, etc.

This is a helpful book for the home landscaper, and it's a great book for people who prefer grass they don't have to mow!

*Gary Bebeau is Treasurer of the Friends and a frequent contributor. He is a businessman and a home gardener.*

### **Memberships**

*by Joy Davis, Membership Chair*

Welcome, new members:

Emily Anderson, Minneapolis  
Backacres Garden Club of New  
Hope, Minnesota  
Sharon Bunnell, St. Louis Park  
Leah Carlson, Minneapolis  
Cheryl Flegel, Maple Grove  
Adriana and Eric Larose-Ransom,  
Golden Valley  
Chris Ruiz, Minneapolis

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### **Directors and Officers Elected**

At its annual meeting on May 21, four new directors were elected and 13 were reelected. New directors are Kathleen Connelly, Jim Proctor, Joe Schmidt and Phoebe Waugh who was elected secretary. Relected officers were Steve Pundt, president; Pam Weiner, vice president, and Gary Bebeau, treasurer. Other directors relected were Steve Benson, Harriet Betzold, Joy Davis, Launa Ellison, Ann Godfrey, Larry Gravitz, Lyle Johnson, Lisa Locken, Constance Pepin and Sally Pundt.

### **Thanks, Retiring Directors!**

The Friends owe a debt of gratitude to four retiring directors: Nita Lussenhop, who served as secretary for many years; Marguerite Harbison, who ably chaired the memorials committee, Shirley Schultz, who chaired and co-chaired the volunteer committee for many years, and her husband, Jack, who served as treasurer and later as part of the financial management committee.

### **Memorials**

Thank you for all of your caring and sharing:

*Gift in memory of James Dean from Pam Weiner and Deb Boehm*

*Gift in memory of Louise Hotka from Helen Hudachek Thuerauf and Patricia Thuerauf Spsychaj*

*Memorial for the Mendon Schult family from the Minneapolis Foundation*

*Gift in memory of G.D. Wallace from Max and Marie Demler*

Memorials should be sent to the Friends treasurer, Gary Bebeau, at 716 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Red Wing, MN 55066. (Marguerite Harbison, former memorials chair, has retired from the board.) Checks should be made payable to Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. Please include the name and address of the family of the deceased so your gift can be acknowledged to them.

## Moving into Summer

*Excerpts from weekly Garden Highlights  
by naturalists Jodi and Christine*

**May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>** – What beautiful weather for the first week of June! Temperatures were consistently in the 70s, there was plenty of sun and two days of rain. The Garden is suddenly lush with green and blooms in every corner. The showy lady's-slipper blooms appeared almost overnight, and they look spectacular. Also in the wetland, the swamp saxifrage, comfrey, highbush cranberry, and the low-growing forget-me-nots and wild calla are in bloom. In the woodland, the wild geraniums, Virginia waterleaf, and dame's rocket provide brilliant pink hues, while jack-in-the-pulpits are popping up everywhere. The blooms of the mayapple hide beneath its leaves, while the blossoms of the many violet species are not so shy. The upland prairie is a palette of colors, with the purple of wild blue indigo, the pink of wild roses and the yellow of golden alexanders all creating a treat for the eyes. Also blooming is white false indigo, shooting stars, columbine and false solomon's seal.

**June 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>** – A mix of summery weather visited Minnesota this week, with everything from hot, humid days to thunderstorms to dry sunny days perfect for a walk in the park. A severe storm this week took down one maple in the woodland, as well as some turk's cap lilies near the shelter. An Ohio buckeye tree inexplicably bent over near station 49, obstructing the path.

Of the three habitats in the Garden, the woodland flowers are almost done. There are still a few Canada violets, Jack-in-the-pulpits, wild geraniums, and Virginia waterleaf. The other two habitats, however, are spectacular. In the wetland, the showy lady's-slippers are so wonderful you may find yourself bursting into spontaneous applause. Also gorgeous is golden ragwort, wild calla, forget-me-nots and comfrey. The water horsetail provides a delightful contrast to the colorful dame's rocket in shaded glens. Many new flowers are blooming in the upland prairie, including foxglove beardtongue, daisy fleabane, yellow daylily, spiderwort and heart-leaved four o'clock. Both the cream colored (native) and the false blue indigo are still enchanting visitors to the prairie, along with golden alexander, wild rose and shooting star. Look closely for the indistinct flowers of alumroot, wild asparagus, and horse gentian.

**June 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>** – Spring has given way to summer, with its hot sunny days and unpredictable thunderstorms. The third weekend of June turned out dry and warm, with perfect weather on Father's Day for the Ken Avery Birding Terrace dedication. The upland prairie is thriving in the sun, with vivid purple blooms abounding, including the false blue indigo, spiderwort, heart leaved four o'clock and American vetch. Follow your nose to the fragrant northern bedstraw and wild rose. Also blooming are colorful day lilies and tall buttercups, as well as horse gentian, alumroot, foxglove beardtongue and white false indigo. The show-stopper in the wetland is still the showy lady's-slipper with many clusters of blooms along the banks of the small stream. Look beneath the tall grasses and water horsetail to find the forget-me-nots and wild calla. The healing medicinal plant comfrey is blooming beneath the shade of the tamaracks, while the huge white flowers of the cow parsnip can be seen in sunny openings. While most plants are done blooming in the woodland, the cycle of life provides many wonders as flowers have given way to nuts, berries and seeds.



### **MplsStPaul Magazine Features the Garden!**

You may want to pick up a copy of the July edition of the *MplsStPaul* magazine. It contains a well-researched feature by free-lance writer Gregg Felsen on Theodore Wirth Park, including a full page on the Garden, plus a separate feature about Susan Wilkins (both pictured above). Felsen provides the history of Wirth Park, describes the visionary thinking of its founder, Theodore Wirth, and he compares the size of the park (about 800 acres) to New York's Central Park.

*"Established on a plot of gently rolling, heavily-wooded land easily accessible from the heart of the city, Butler's Garden is a living museum of flora and fauna that perpetuates a primeval wildness."*

-- Gregg Felsen