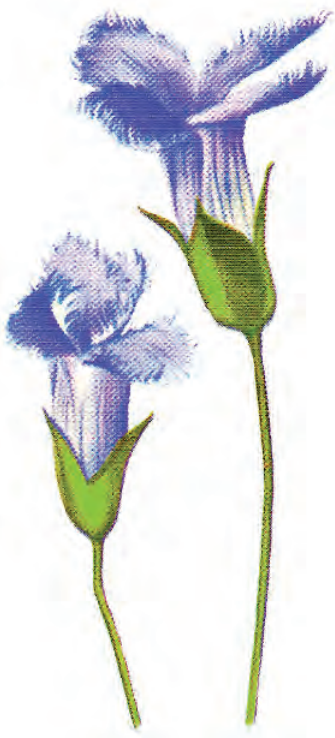


# THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

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



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## DEAR FRIENDS,

This year my winter reverie started in the fall. Maybe the Medicare card arriving in the mail had something to do with the early onset. I was definitely on the reminiscence program, drawn to thoughts and images of people and places from the past. And then, at Thanksgiving I looked into the faces of my nieces and nephews and saw the features of their grandparents, a generation now disappeared. Into December, as the days became shorter and colder, this recollecting and remembering continued, expanding into other realms of my life.

For me, the Garden's buffer zone in winter—real winter—has been a snowy dream, as well as a destination. I treasure the memory of following my now-deceased dog, Buck, along the perimeter fence line, where he seemed to be on patrol. No amount of snow was enough to keep him on the sidewalks and roadways in the neighborhood, so into the park we tramped. In the mornings, there were chickadees flitting and bluejays chattering; once in a while, we'd see a fox or the pileated woodpecker. At dusk, Buck scanned and sniffed while I listened for the great horned owl as the western sky turned pink, then purple. Sometimes we'd meet a cross-country skier or two; often we had this lovely white world all to ourselves.

Soon, of course, this state of reverie with its fluid sense of time will pass. As spring approaches, the very real and present 2012 season of the Eloise Butler Willdflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary will come into focus and, as always, there will be much to anticipate and experience. 2012 is the 60th anniversary year of the Friends, and we are hoping to create a special event during the summer months. Information will follow in the spring issue of *The Fringed Gentian*.

Fundraising for the Cary George Wetland Project has been very gratifying; we now have \$13,700 toward our goal of \$15,000. Friends members have donated almost half of this amount, and we received a generous grant of \$7,000 from the Steve Leuthold Family Foundation. Special thanks are due to board members Emily Anderson and Jeff Lee, who directed this effort on behalf of the Friends.

The Student Transportation Grant program, a major ongoing Friends endeavor, was very successful last year, with more than a thousand students provided access to the Garden and its programs. We plan to continue this important work, and we will be reaching out to you for support to do so.

Finally, please consider receiving your copy of *The Fringed Gentian* via email to reduce our use of paper and our printing costs. The Friends and the trees will thank you! To request this service, please send an email to [info@friendsofeloisebutler.org](mailto:info@friendsofeloisebutler.org), indicating your preference for a high- or low-resolution pdf version of the *Gentian*. You will need Adobe Reader or a similar program to view the pdf.

Here's to a fine winter with just enough reverie!

Sincerely,

**J. PAM WEINER, PRESIDENT**

*Photo by Judy Remington*





*Another full and fruitful Wildflower Garden season has come to pass. It's a delight to reflect on the inspired work of the past 12 months carried out by staff members, volunteers and the Friends. I'm continually impressed with the dedication and good-spirit with which this community of educators, stewards and supporters approaches the day-in, day-out work of the Garden. What great fortune we have, to do our very best here, so that all—visitors, plants and animals—can revel and thrive in a wild native plant Garden, full of nature's splendor and sanctuary.*

## **A few highlights from the late autumn and early winter**

### **Extensive buckthorn removal in Wildflower Garden and surrounds**

A great team effort created fabulous results. Staff members spent a large part of November and early December removing "second generation" buckthorn from the entire Garden, and it shows! We were fortunate to have the assistance of hard-working Minnesota Conservation Corps crew members helping us with buckthorn removal in the Garden's wetland and along the east fence line outside of the Garden, which is one of the areas the Friends have been caring for so diligently. On two days, staff members and the MCC crew worked in this area with many seemingly tireless volunteers from the Friends. We are all looking forward to sharing the renewed beauty of the Garden next spring.

### **Full Survey of Wildflower Garden: Wonderful Management Tool**

Prompted by the planning process for the wetland boardwalk project, a full topographical survey of the Garden was conducted in December. In addition to elevations, the survey includes accurate trail, building, bench, fountain, utility and fence locations; and an updated inventory of all trees with a diameter (at 4.5' above ground) of 4" or greater. The wetland portion of the Garden will be surveyed in the spring. In addition to its usefulness for the development of the new boardwalk design and installation specifications, this information will be helpful in managing the Garden in future.

### **Wetland Boardwalk Project Developments: Great Progress**

It is thrilling that we continue to make progress on the development of a plan to install a boardwalk through the wetland area of the Garden. The boardwalk project goes above and beyond the bridge replacement project outlined in the Garden's management plan and addresses a key need to improve the trail system through the heart of the Garden. In addition to the survey work, five soil borings were taken in December to assess several characteristics of the soil in the wetland. This was done to ensure that site-appropriate materials and footings will be used to stabilize the boardwalk in our unique wetland setting. The thoughtful design and installation of a boardwalk in this area will provide for an enduring and ecologically sound addition to the infrastructure of the Garden. As planning for the wetland boardwalk project continues, I would like to thank the Friends again for their ongoing commitment to and enthusiasm for this project, including sustained efforts

to raise funds to go toward materials and installation of the boardwalk. I would like to extend one grand end-of-the-year thank you to the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden for the tremendous amount of support and generosity this organization continues to bestow upon our treasured public Garden. The Friends support the Garden in so many vital ways, from helping to grow programming for young people, through transportation grants, to funding planting projects and fundraising for the wetland boardwalk project. The Friends have been staunch supporters of the Garden for the past 59 years. It's collaborative and sustaining relationships like these that make gardens like ours grow.

During this quiet and beautifully still time of year, as we continue to do our field work and planning and preparations for the next growing season, the wise words of Henry David Thoreau seem most welcome:

*“We are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us.  
We can never have enough of nature.”*

# Family Affair: John and Joan Haldeman

By Donna Ahrens

This fall, John and Joan Haldeman celebrated three decades of marriage—a partnership that began in front of a roaring fire in the Martha Crone Shelter. The couple had planned on a small ceremony on Oct. 3, 1981, in the Upland Garden, but the day was cool and rainy. Fortunately, Garden Curator Ken Avery was on hand to build a fire and welcome the wedding group of about 15 family members into the shelter.

Though the wedding marked a highlight of their relationship, the Garden had long been a presence in both their lives before they met. Joan, who grew up on Minneapolis' North Side, says trips to the Garden with her mother were a part of her life from as far back as she can remember. John's mother was a member of the Kenwood Garden Club, and he accompanied her on many trips to the Garden. "It's such a nice quiet haven," he remarks. "You go in there and you just don't hear the noises of the city."

Though John and Joan met in 1954 as students at West High School in Minneapolis, they didn't become a couple for more than 20 years, after they reconnected in 1977. The Garden was a point of connection for them and has been an important part of their lives together. They joined the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden in 1975 and have been active supporters ever since. Memorial plaques to their mothers hang in the shelter, and over the years they've contributed to many Garden projects and education programs.

Ken Avery was a beloved friend, and they often visit the Ken Avery Birding Terrace, which memorializes his service to the Garden. In the early 1970s, John invited Avery to speak to the 75 Club, a large group of Minneapolis business professionals. "He was delighted to spread the



*The Garden*   
*has always been  
part of my life, and of  
our life together*

Photo by Judy Remington



news about the Garden," John recalls. The group met at Charlie's Café Exceptionale, the classic downtown Minneapolis supper club that was run by Charlie Saunders—whose wife, Louise, was also a "North Sider" and Wildflower Garden devotee, Joan notes.

The couple say they never tire of the Garden's changing beauty throughout the seasons. "We're there at the outset, as soon as the Garden opens," says Joan; John adds that they eagerly await the emergence of the anemones, trillium, hepatica and other early-blooming flowers. "We're always there for the lady moccasins in June," Joan continues. "In the summer we enjoy walking in the upper and lower gardens. And then we come in the fall around the time of our anniversary,

which is just before the Garden closes." Avid bird watchers, they're always listening and looking for birds as the seasons change, and especially look forward to seeing the pileated woodpeckers every year.

"The Garden has always been part of my life, and of our life together," Joan says. Their wedding and their visits to the Garden over the years have helped Joan and John sow a lifetime of memories, and their longtime devotion to the Garden and the Friends mission has enriched the experiences of countless other couples, families, and friends. We wish the Haldemans many more treasured walks in the Garden.

# A Tale of Two Owls

Tammy Mercer

One January morning, well before dawn, I awoke to a soft but penetrating call: *whoooo's awake — meeee too*, followed by the same in a slightly higher voice. I foggily wondered who was up watching nature shows in the middle of the night. Then I realized it was a live nature show, right outside my window!

Two great horned owls were calling to each other — a mating ritual in the dead of winter. Two species of large owls are commonly seen in our area: the great horned owl and the barred owl. Large owls must get an early start on their breeding season. Unlike tiny songbirds that can develop from egg to fledgling in a matter of weeks, larger birds like these two owl species take many months to grow. For their young to be old enough to fly and hunt successfully by the leaner times of the following winter, they must begin breeding in the winter.

Both species are well adapted to suburban areas, though barred owls require larger tracts of mature trees. Neither species builds its own nest. Great horned owls usually take over the old nest of a hawk, crow, heron or squirrel. Barred owls prefer large tree cavities over 20' high. This requires a habitat with more mature trees. If they cannot find a cavity, they too may use an old hawk, crow or squirrel nest.

Nesting and hunting for food in winter involves many challenges. As you can imagine, the nests of these early breeders must be well attended or the eggs could quickly freeze. Hunting for food is made difficult by snow cover, which can hide the movements of small mammals. Fortunately, owls can hear movement under the snow. The fringe on their feathers breaks up the sound they might otherwise make in flight. This stealth not only helps them surprise their prey but also allows them to continue to hear the prey until they

## Great horned owlets

pounce through the snow. If the snow is too deep, or a crust of ice forms on top, the owls may need to focus on such other prey as squirrels, rabbits or birds.

Nesting and hunting for food in winter involves many challenges.

Both species of owl incubate eggs for about a month.

While the great horned owl chicks are hatching in March, the barred owls may be just laying their eggs.

The newly hatched chicks

are about the size of baby chickens and covered with white down. Their eyes are closed and they cannot hold their heads up. They can, however, beg for food, and the race is on for the parents to provide. The female will brood the chicks for about three weeks, before she joins the male in the constant hunt for food.

By April when the Garden opens and the barred owl chicks are hatching, the great horned owl chicks are growing wing and tail feathers and wandering about the nest. The parents of both species bring prey to the nest and feed their young shreds of the animals they catch. Any undigested bone, fur or feathers is regurgitated in a pellet.

By May, the young great horned owls may be perched in branches near the nest, where they exercise their wings and wait for their parents to bring them food. Since cavity nests can get very crowded, barred owl chicks may be perched in nearby branches by May as well. They use their

beaks and talons to grip the bark as they move about the tree.

With the emergence of hibernating mammals, reptiles and amphibians in spring, hunting for the parents becomes much easier. Migratory birds have returned, and soon their inexperienced fledglings will make easy prey.

By summer the young owls are busy learning to fly and hunt for themselves. One summer, while sitting in a friend's backyard near Minnetonka, I heard what I would describe as a rising whispered screech. It was not easy to find the source of the sound but because my friends had

The newly hatched chicks are about the size of baby chickens and covered with white down.

told me about their frequent visitor, I knew I was looking for a young barred owl. The screech seemed to be the youngster's way of staying in contact with its parents in the nearby woods. Near dusk, I heard an adult, calling *Who cooks for you* from deeper in the woods.

Throughout the summer, the young barred owl learned to hunt by perching in a low branch or on a seesaw, patiently watching the ground and then pouncing on grasshoppers, frogs or mice. The parents continued to bring food to the young owl at night or very early in the morning.



Photo by Cheryl Ciampa

## Barred owl

Photo by Tammy Mercer

	Barred owl	Great horned owl
January	Mating ritual	
March	Just laying their eggs	Chicks are hatching
April	Chicks are hatching	Chicks are growing wing and tail feathers, wandering about the nest
May	Cavity nests can get very crowded, chicks may be perched in nearby branches	Chicks may be perched in branches near the nest, where they exercise their wings
Summer	Young are busy learning to fly and hunt for themselves	
Fall	Young will be independent and leave the territory	

By fall most of the young will be independent of their parents and leave the territory. This is a dangerous time for them because they still lack experience.

At the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden we have heard and seen both species of large owl, but the great horned owl is more frequently heard and most likely nests nearby. When a large mob of crows or blue jays makes a racket it is usually because they have

discovered one of these raptors that prey on their own. If you can follow the noise, you may just sight one of these big beautiful owls.

—Tammy Mercer is a part-time naturalist who teaches on Saturday morning bird walks at the Garden.

### References

- Ehrlich, Paul R., David S. Dobkin and Darryl Wheye. 1988. *The Birder's Handbook: a Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*. Simon & Schuster Inc. NY, NY.
- Stokes, Donald and Lillian. 1989. *Guide to Bird Behavior, Volume Three*. Little, Brown and Company. Boston, MA.



## Icicle Theory, Practice and Weirdness

By Diana Thottungal

The theory part is pretty easy. Sun, or heat escaping from the attic, warms piled up snow on the roof. Snow melts and starts to drip down. But the air is still cold and freezes the drip. *Voilà*, an icicle is born.

Out in the woods, snow can be piled on dead leaves that have not yet fallen or on conifer needles, but the effect is the same. Leaves or needles that are busy photosynthesizing release and radiate heat the same way poorly insulated attics do.

End of story? No.

**Icicle Tips:** They look pointed but really are tiny inverted cups that hold the drops as they form.



**Curved Icicles:** These do make sense. If one side of the icicle is consistently exposed to the sun, the water stays melted, or gets melted on sunny days, producing a curve that bows in on the sun side and out on the shade side.

**Bumps and Ridges:** They look random but aren't. First, the distance of the bumps from peak to peak is consistent. Second, they apparently vary in number according to the hardness of the water. And third—most amazing—it seems that these ripples move upward as the icicle grows!

**Branches?** In very still air, an icicle can develop a tiny branch. And, if they can grow from a roof or a leaf, they can also grow from a leafless tree or shrub branch, as the Wikipedia picture at this site shows: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Icicles.jpg>.



For more information about icicle research, please see: <http://www.mendeley.com/research/experiments-morphology-icicles-9/> <http://www.insidescience.org/current-affairs/1.1854>

—Diana Thottungal is a naturalist at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

Memorials and Donations to the Friends

Memorials received for

**Marie Demler** from  
Joelle Hoeft  
Dyann Hall  
Natalie & Stan Adler  
**Dr. Deno Wedes** from  
Melissa Hansen  
**Evalyn Norby** from  
Natalie & Stan Adler  
Dick & Veryl Bloomquist  
Jean & Carl Lipke  
Bruce & Eileen Evans  
Nancy Moulden  
Scott & Lisa Norby

In honor of

**Larry Gravitz** from  
Jennifer Palmer  
  
**Gifts Received**  
in support of our programs from  
Martha Atwater  
Dan Leavitt  
Susan Warde  
Christina Maynor  
Toni Beitz  
Pam Weiner & James Wittenberg  
Steven Leuthold Foundation

New Members

Heather, Jeff & Ethan Ilse, Minneapolis	Dean & Margaret Plummer, Madison, CT
Rebekah Hansen, Minneapolis	Benjamin Lander, Minneapolis
Andrea Bolger, Minneapolis	Charles & Laura Miller, Minneapolis
Faye Knowles, Minneapolis	Mary Maguire Lerman, St Paul
Susan Levy Haskell, Minneapolis	Kathy Danyo, Minneapolis
Karen Johnson, St Paul	Mary Kay Harris, Robbinsdale
Marcia Marshall, Minneapolis	Michael Anderson, Golden Valley
Susan Tincher, Minneapolis	

Friends Invasive Plant Action Group

The Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) had a very productive fall season of buckthorn removal in and around the Garden, and we broke exciting new ground working with others in new ways.

We held three buckthorn removal sessions in September and October, which resulted in the clearing of old and new buckthorn growth from a large portion of the east-side buffer zone outside the Garden fence. Volunteers got their gloves dirty pulling buckthorn seedlings and using weed wrenches to rip out larger specimens. This is the “bread and butter” of what we do, and we do it well.

In the process, however, we encountered some very difficult areas where previously-cut buckthorn stumps have vigorously re-sprouted. These re-sprouts are extremely tough to pull, and pulling them greatly disturbs the soil and can lead to erosion. The best method for this problem is to use herbicide, which, as volunteers, we are not authorized to do. This year we received a great deal of professional assistance with this challenge from two sources: Eloise Butler Garden staff members and the Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC).

On one occasion, Susan Wilkins and her interns joined us for several hours to treat a particularly tough, highly-erodible, high-quality hillside near the back gate. They joined us again as we worked with MCC, hired by the Park Board, in the same area and beyond. And on another occasion, FIPAG volunteers joined members of the Garden staff and MCC in the Garden’s wetland. It was a stellar season of collaborating in ways that will help us tremendously as we continue into the future. Many thanks to Susan Wilkins, the garden interns and MCC for joining us in our efforts in the buffer zone. We hope to continue working this way every year!

*We can always use more hands for this work.*

If you want to join us next year, please email us at [invasives@friendsofeloisebutler.org](mailto:invasives@friendsofeloisebutler.org).

*Thanks!* —Jim Proctor, Ellen Lipschultz, Liz Anderson, Friends Invasive Plant Action Group Co-chairs

2011 Volunteer Wrap-up

Our start-up was good: the two-shifts-per-day schedule filled in quickly; new volunteers were trained; and two refresher sessions with Garden Curator Susan Wilkins were popular.

Then some “interesting” weather impacted our staffing of the Martha Crone Shelter. The wet spring delayed the Garden’s opening a few days past the target date of April 1, but everything was lining up for a great early season of flowers, wildlife and high visitor attendance. However, we were then surprised and shocked by the May 22 tornado, which kept volunteers out of the

Garden for two weeks during cleanup. Shelter life had barely returned to normal when extremely hot temperatures and record-setting dew points settled in. As all things slowed down to cope with the weather, the numbers of visitors diminished; programs were postponed; and those of us who were on duty sweltered along with the staff members. We now know the cement floor of the shelter becomes a wet, slippery (dangerous) mess when a high enough dew point occurs, and mold can grow quickly in a cabin in a valley!

Normal seemed to return again, and a few new volunteers joined for late season training, bringing a total of nine new names to our 2011 roster. Autumn was especially beautiful in the Garden.

In October we were saddened to lose longtime volunteer Judy Jones to cancer. Some other wonderful volunteers have stepped out due to health problems but continue their interest in the Garden with visits, Friends memberships and reading our marvelous website & newsletter.

New volunteers are always welcome. To volunteer, sign up at [friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://friendsofthewildflowergarden.org). Training begins April 2012.

*We close 2011 grateful for time spent in the Garden and hope for an early spring for our return.*

—Melissa Hansen, volunteer coordinator

## Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party

The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party was held at Kenwood Café in Minneapolis on a beautiful warm October 9 evening.

The event is hosted by the Friends and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for the three groups who do so much to help in the Garden: legacy stewards, shelter volunteers and the invasive plant action group.

Great appetizers from the Café and incredible desserts from Salty Tart Bakery kept guests lining up for more.

Fun door prizes and a new tote bag provided tokens of thanks.

Our oldest volunteers got to meet our youngest new volunteer.

All enjoyed the mix of guests, Garden staff members and naturalists, Friends Board members and fellow volunteers.

*Photos by Judy Remington*



*There are so many great people who share their time and talents with the Garden that one party can't express it all, but it's a very fun way to show some of our gratitude.*

**OUR WEBSITE: FRIENDSOFTHEWILDFLOWERGARDEN.ORG**

**Membership Form**    Individual \$15    Family \$25    Sponsor \$100    Life \$500    Other \_\_\_\_\_

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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.*

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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:

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

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*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.*

*Photo by erinandtroy photography*



*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.*

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