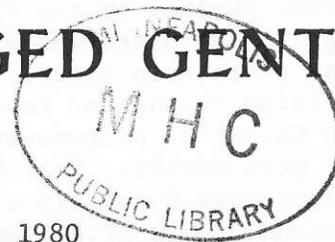


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PUBLICATION OF  
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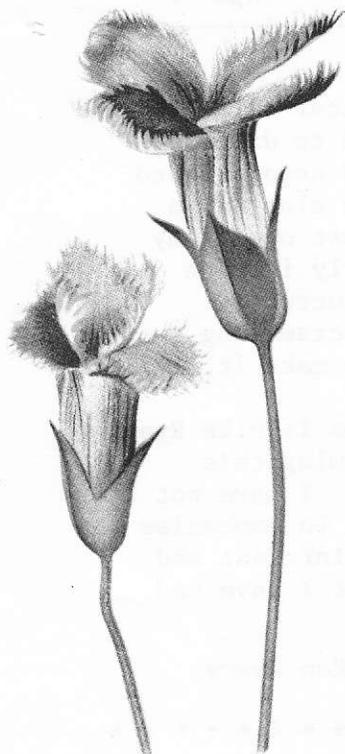
# THE FRINGED GENTIAN



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**CURATOR'S COMMENTS:** A few years ago it was the "trendy" thing to say that the winds of change were blowing across America. This phrase isn't as fashionable as it once was, but the winds are still blowing and to adjust to them the Wildflower Garden is about to set a different course.

Few people realize the shift that took place when I replaced Mrs. Crone in 1959. The Garden stands as a steadying force-- never changing much from one year to another -- masking any change. But beneath the calm exterior the Garden had changed course; not much, but it had started to veer in a different direction.

One change was in my (and the Garden's) relationship to the Park Board. Mrs. Crone's official title was Curator. When I replaced her; there was no change in the duties which I assumed, and I must admit that I received the same pay. Everything seemed the same, but titles are important, and I have always been the Gardener at the Wildflower Garden. Another more subtle change took place when I replaced Mrs. Crone. The Garden has always reflected the personality of its Curator. I'm sure it reflected Miss Butler's personality and I know that it was the reflection of Mrs. Crone's, when I first worked here under her. While I have never purposely made any changes in the Garden, nature is never static and as changes were demanded, naturally they were mine. Shortly after I assumed this position, I reflected upon what the Garden should be and I made two decisions. First; it occurred to me that since the opening of the Arboretum the side interest the Garden had in testing the hardiness of exotic plants was no longer warranted. I decided to concentrate on reintroducing the plants that had once grown in the area and to a lesser extent to attempt to grow all plants native to Minnesota

Secondly: I decided to institutionalize the Garden -- that is to remove the Curator's personality as an important element in its makeup. I feel that the Garden prospered under my hand. As I look back on it now the zenith of this period was just prior to the building of (cont. p 2)

We were saddened to learn of the death of Honorary Board Member Whitney Eastman on December 3, 1979, in Boca Raton, Florida. His association with the Eloise Butler Garden and the FRIENDS extended over many years. His involvement with bird and nature organizations, both local and national, was extensive. In 1974, the Hennepin County Parks Commission honored his active involvement in nature causes by naming the Nature Center in Elm Creek Park Reserve for him. He will be much missed, but long remembered by us. Our sincerest sympathies are extended to his wife Karen, to his daughter Betty (Mrs. Morrow Peyton), to his grandsons, and his great-grandchildren.

(cont. from p. 1)

The Martha Crone Shelter by the FRIENDS. The building of the shelter heralded another change in the direction of the wind; the Park Board seemed to discover the Garden and started to assert its influence. Oddly enough this accomplished my second decision -- that of institutionalizing the Garden. This also was a time when the Garden's patronage increased tremendously, and I lost one of my two helpers - permanently. The Shelter added more work particularly for the first few years; then Dutch Elm disease added more work; and the increased attendance demanded more attention. Through it all we have been scrambling just to keep up. It is now beginning to look as though we are going to make it.

Now another wind of change is blowing through the Garden --his name is Mike Ryan. Mike is the Coordinator of Environmental Education. Mike, in assuming this position, is asserting more influence over the Wild Flower Garden. I have not had any long conversations with him but I am sure that he is going to emphasize the growing of native plants in the Garden. He has already shown interest and concern for the wild areas owned by the Park Board. A concern that I have had for all these years. I sincerely wish him well!

Ken Avery

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ANNUAL MEETING - The annual meeting of THE FRIENDS OF THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN, INC. will be held at the Martha Crone Shelter in the Eloise Butler Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary of Theodore Wirth Park at 10:00 A.M. May 17, 1980. All FRIENDS and friends are invited and encouraged to attend. Reports of Garden activities will be presented, election of the 1980-81 Board of Directors will be held, awarding of the 1980 Student Grants will be made, and of course the Garden will be attired in her always lovely Spring mantle. See you May 17.

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VOLUNTEERS - The Martha Crone Shelter will again be opening in early April for the 1980 Garden season. If you can help, either regularly or occasionally, to staff this shelter please call Dr. Marian Grimes - 377-0583 or send her a note 1105 Washburn Ave. So., Minneapolis, 55405 indicating the times you can assist. Remember, only YOU can keep the services of the Shelter available to our Garden visitors.

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NEW PARK BOARD PRESIDENT - On January 2, 1980, the Minneapolis Park Board selected a new president - Naomi Loper - from among its commissioners. Ms. Loper is the first woman president the Park Board has had in its 97 year history. She has also been active on the Metropolitan Council Transportation Board, the SE Minneapolis Planning and Coordination Committee, the Minnesota Womens Political Caucus, the League of Women Voters, the Citizens League, and the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. Commissioner Nancy Anderson was reelected vice-president. We wish them well.

A CONVERSATION WITH CHARLES SPEARS - MPLS PARKS SUPERINTENDENT 7/13/79  
(cont. from summer and autumn 1979 FRINGED GENTIANs.)

Speaking of new programs, how is the development of the Riverfront Plan coming?

It's coming great. It will probably be a developed park, though there will be areas that will always be protected because they are hard to maintain. Everything from the bluff down will be undeveloped. From the bluff up, it will be more developed. There will be a great river road, bicycle paths, walking paths. These will make the area accessible to more people. I believe the river is considerably cleaner than it was ten years ago. There are plans for boat launching facilities. There will be some zoning to allow for water skiing and other similar activities - crewing. So that people with different interests will have a place that they can do something. The river is the most exciting thing that is going to be happening around here in the next ten years.

Has there been a recent change in deciding where park plantings are to be placed?

We've cut back on the flowers at Lake Harriet, for instance, in order to spread it over the city a little more. We are trying to spread it around more. We feel that all sections of the city have the right to have some. In some places we are putting plantings around a park identification sign in the corner of a park. And people are appreciating this. Now we are going into a program which we will call Foster a Park; wherein we will hope to get some garden clubs and some groups that will adopt a certain area, especially some triangles - we have about 40 triangles in the city that we maintain - and have these neighborhood groups accepting the responsibility for cutting the grass, plant flowers and take care of the watering. These areas could then become oasis in the city. This of course, also gives this group some additional community exposure. And of course these pleasant breaks of green are what makes this city so special.

Has the budget gone down, or is it just that the city has more needs that the same money doesn't go as far?

Its both. Well, not really; the money itself is not going down as fast as inflation is killing it. Because of inflation our actual spendable money after operating expenses has declined and so we have had to examine our priorities and in some cases make cuts. We don't like to cut services, but we do have to cut something. This will be a continuing problem. Probably the greatest challenge is that we are going to have more demand because of energy and less money to do it with. And I don't know how we will make those two meet. People are going to have to take on part of the burden if they want the level of services they have been used to.

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OTHER GARDENS - Edwin Warner and Percy Warner Parks in Nashville, Tennessee is a 2700 acre park within 11 miles of downtown Nashville is an area of natural and developed park which contains the whole range of facilities from wild flower naturalness to well groomed golf courses. When traveling in that area do stop by and enjoy it.

TOUR GUIDE BROCHURES:

Progress continues on the Garden guide which is being prepared under the guidance of Park employees Mary Lerman and Mike Ryan. Though the deadline is rapidly approaching, we still hope to have the printed brochures available for the Garden's opening in April. If so copies will be available for examination at our annual meeting this year. For financial reasons our treasurer is particularly hopeful that this project can be completed by April and the FRIENDS money that has been reserved for this task finally spent on its execution.

Following are the introductory paragraphs of the WET OPENING - BOG area of the garden as it is described in the present draft.

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WET OPENING - BOG: This portion of the site was a tamarack swamp at the turn of the century. Because it contains many bog plants the habitat has been known as a "bog". A true bog has a dense peat-moss layer formed by filling in a lake or pond. This area, however, probably never had any open water. Therefore it is not a true bog.

The bog is a very limited habitat for most plants. The soil is spongy, containing over 90 percent water, which does not circulate freely. This blocks out normal soil nutrients to plant roots, causing plants to adapt their roots to a shallow surface layer where oxygen and available nutrients may be reached. The apparent abundance of decayed vegetable matter in the bog, actually represents slowly decaying plant material. Bacteria which can operate in an oxygenless environment are slower decomposers. Therefore, decayed material builds up more rapidly than in a woodland. This wealth of organic sediment produces warming gas in winter and acid soil conditions which tend to allow a small and unique variety of plants to flourish.

Many bog plants are "carnivorous". They actually extract nitrogen from trapped insects, because the usual source is unavailable to them. Bog trees and shrubs have developed disk-like root systems which allow them to "float" on unstable spongy soil.

Bogs have an abundance of ferns and insects. They have some resemblance to the prehistoric coal forests which grew in North America 300 million years ago. Most bogs are glacial relics, having remained as cool islands of northern forests which left or receded north 12 to 8 thousand years ago!

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Other areas described in the brochure are: woodland, prairie, oak upland, the "garden" prairie, and the "garden" upland.

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GREEN THEMES: 12:15 p.m., room 216, Mpls Public Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, FREE  
A series of gardening talks offered on Wednesdays by horticulturist, Mary Lerman.  
Mar. 5: EXTRA! EXTRA! (a display of horticultural bulletins)  
12: SEDUMS, SUCCULENTS, AND SUCH (succulent interior plants)  
19: WARM BLOODED FERNS (ferns for the interior)  
26: DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES (new rose, flower and vegetables for 1980)