

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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

DEAR FRIENDS,

"Summertime, and the livin' is easy...." Or so we think—because that's the time most of us, and our children, did not attend school. But throughout the summer-school season, students at the Garden are busy studying and learning, and that's a good thing. Along with late spring and early fall, summer is the time when schoolchildren visit for a nature-learning lab. In late May, I volunteered in the shelter on a Wednesday morning when the Garden's Environmental Education Specialist Lauren Borer was teaching a home-school class about botany. She covered the structure of plants, use of a microscope and the process of photosynthesis, with all of its amazing chemical and atomic foundations. I was completely entranced by her active, engaging content and method, and so were the nine-, ten- and eleven-year olds.

After the children finished assembling hydrogen molecules from plastic parts, Lauren took them out into the Garden to observe plants and their attendant species of insects, birds and small mammals. We all learned a lot in that class! And I felt I had experienced the power of inspired, experiential natural science teaching, especially important in these times

of "Nature Deficit Disorder." I also realized that while this unit was prepared for fifth- and sixth-graders, it was valuable to this senior learner as well.

And that got me thinking about the educational role of the Friends and how well we are meeting our goals on that front. Our bylaws state: *The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden is an organization of private citizens whose purpose is to protect, preserve, and promote the interests of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary for its unique beauty and as a sanctuary for native flora and fauna of Minnesota, and to educate and inspire people of all ages in relating to the natural world.*

You may already be aware of some of the ways we uphold our commitment to education. Through our Student Transportation Fund, for example, we support education by paying for school buses that bring children to the Garden. In the past, we have also provided some small scholarships for interns and naturalists to attend classes and conferences. We have purchased books for the shelter and provided financial support for Martha Hellander's book, *Wild Gardener*, as well as the Garden guidebook that visitors can use for a self-guided walk.

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Photos by Gary Bebeau





GARDEN CURATOR'S LETTER

By Susan Wilkins

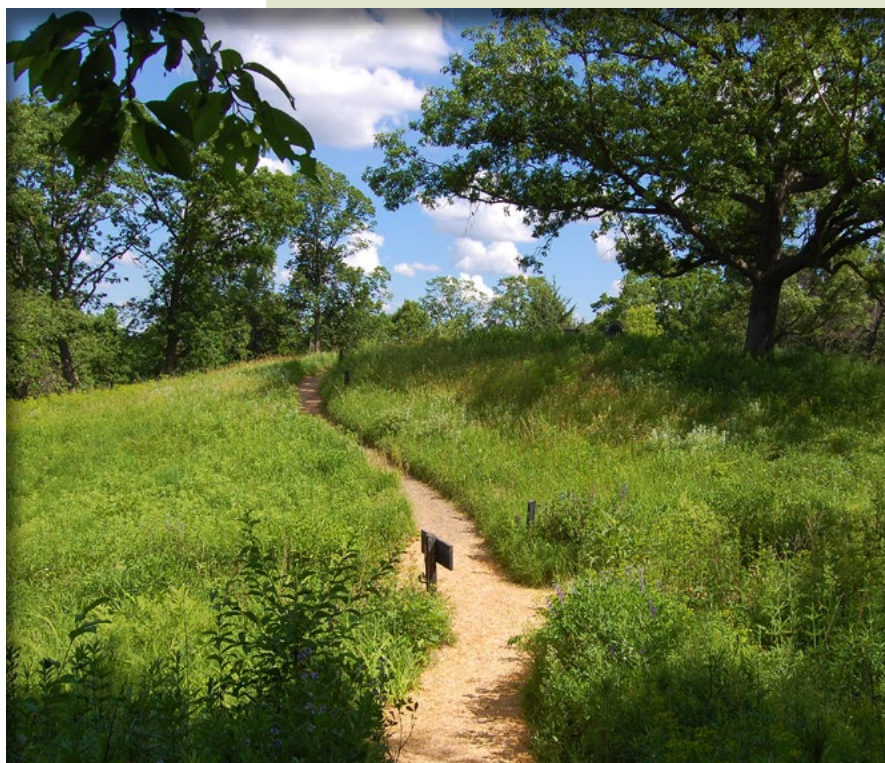


It's been a dynamic Garden season so far. With such a cool and snowy spring, we opened nearly a month later than scheduled. Unlike many years when the woodland wildflower blossoms are staggered throughout April and May, this season many bloomed all at once, offering the delights of the season in a condensed and crescendoed way. With the abundance of rain throughout the spring and early summer, the woodland areas could not have been more lush, nor the multitudes of Garden trees more bejeweled in luxuriant growth. In mid-June, the showy lady's slippers were in bud, but not blooming, keeping the shelter's phone line busy with expectant visitors calling to find out when they could plan a visit to see them in flower. In recent years, we've had showy lady's slipper flowering as early as late May.

By the end of June, the prairie was an oasis of green accompanied by colorful flourishes of blue false wild indigo and yellow golden Alexanders. These blossoms came later than in years past, but were welcomed all the more! Suffice it to say, some years it's quite obvious that weather and climate play a critical role in the growth, health and development of the plants, and every other living thing in the Wildflower Garden. (More on this in a minute.)

Speaking of spring, it was a wonderful season for birding. Many migratory warbler species were stalled out in our area in May, likely due to the weather or perhaps other factors, leading to a "warbler fallout," as birders say. Many other bird species were easy to see and abundant at the Garden and in greater Theodore Wirth Park this spring, as well.

Photo by Gary Bebeau



The Garden's Environmental Education Specialist Lauren Borer and staff naturalists continue to be as busy as ever teaching a wide array of classes to Twin Cities-area schoolchildren, as well as adults. The Garden truly is a haven for learning about the fabulous flora and fauna of our area. This season we are also undertaking a new project at the Garden. It is a systematic inventorying of the bee species of the Wildflower Garden, and the work is being carried out by Elaine Evans, a University of Minnesota doctoral candidate and entomologist.

Elaine is surveying the bee species of the Garden through a variety of methods throughout the duration of the spring, summer and autumn months. She will provide an analysis of her findings, which will be used by staff in education programs as well as visitor tours, handouts and displays. The information will serve as an important record and reference of the bee species found in the Wildflower Garden at this point in time. Thank you to the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden for generously supporting this project in partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Several planting projects have already taken place as well, including the addition of more than 600 native ferns and wildflowers in the front entryway area along Trillium Trail. This planting was made possible by a generous donation from the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Over 20 species were planted, including large-flowered trillium, blue cohosh, maiden fern and bloodroot.

Now, returning to the subject of weather and climate: In recounting the Wildflower Garden season of 1930, Eloise Butler noted: "It seems amazing that Mother Nature—by blending two factors, temperature and moisture, in different proportions—can form an endless variety, no two seasons alike, [with] consequent variations in vegetation." Continuing her observations for that year, she remarks that spring was late and cold with continual downpours and early blooms came later than usual.

Eighty-three years later, I find her reflection equally fitting for this season and all others. The continual variations of moisture, temperature and humidity are constantly coming together in an endless array of combinations, creating different conditions in the Wildflower Garden and beyond, of course. It's such a simple way of understanding weather and climate; certain inputs lead to certain outputs or results. I wonder what Eloise Butler would have to say about the concerning issue of global warming and climate change. Would she see that the additional inputs, "in different proportions," of greenhouse gases would naturally lead to a change in outputs or results? That this, in turn, could potentially lead to consequent variations in vegetation? What would Eloise Butler have done in the Wildflower Garden, knowing that these changes in vegetation may occur as a result of a changing climate?

It's a hefty question and one that deserves thoughtful and continual study, reflection, strategizing and, ultimately, appropriate actions. As part of thorough management of the Wildflower Garden and the remarkable plant collections within, we will continue to explore this topic and issues pertaining to climate change as it relates to Wildflower Garden management. Look for more on this in future issues of the Gentian. ♦

THREE UNIQUE PLANTS OF THE GARDEN IN LATE SUMMER

By Gary Bebeau

As the season moves into late summer, it's difficult to choose which plants to admire next. To borrow a phrase from Eloise Butler, in speaking of asters: "The one I look at last, I like best of all, for each species has a charm peculiar to itself."

Here are three unusual, late-summer beauties you won't find at most garden centers, but in the Garden—yes!

BUTTER & EGGS (*Linaria vulgaris*)

Also known as common toadflax, butter & eggs seems a more fitting name for this plant. Though *Linaria vulgaris* is listed on the DNR's invasive plant list, Eloise Butler loved it. She wrote: "Some naturalized plant citizens, with attractive flowers, one might like to have in the garden, if they were not so aggressive. But, if admitted, they would selfishly shoulder out the weaker and possibly more desirable inmates. The place for such vagrants is, therefore, the roadside where they will thrive on a hard bed and a crust of earth...."



Partridge Pea



Butter & Eggs

QUEEN OF THE PRAIRIE (*Fillipendula rubra*)

This is the pink flower version of that old, imported Garden stalwart, queen of the meadow (*Fillipendula ulmaria*). It is not considered native to Minnesota but is considered naturalized in Iowa, Illinois and some states east of Minnesota. Nevertheless, it is breathtakingly beautiful and, in the Garden, it is not found in the prairie, where you might expect it, but in the woodland.

PARTRIDGE PEA (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*)

This Minnesota native annual is also known as sensitive pea and prairie senna. Not a tall plant, it is sometimes missed in the wild. At the Garden, you'll find it near the path edges in the upland.

Eloise Butler once noted: "The beauty of the large flower of clear, bright yellow is enhanced by a purplish brown eye formed by the stamens and the blotching of some of the petals. The delicate, fresh, green leaflets of the compound leaf close together when touched and also for protection from cold at night." ♦



Queen of the Prairie

Butter and eggs and partridge pea photos by Gary Bebeau. Queen of the prairie photo from iStock.

LETTER *continued*

Going back in time, the Friends built the Martha Crone Shelter itself to create a pleasant place to learn about the Garden, inside the gates and protected from the elements. Perhaps the "hardware" items like fencing, benches and gates also enable learning in a way.

Along with the amazing Lauren and our very knowledgeable curator, Susan Wilkins, the staff at the Garden includes naturalists who lead a great variety of walks and classes. Naturalists also assist visitors by identifying plants, birds and insects and teaching volunteers the skills they need to best help guests. For the second year, Friends' Volunteer Coordinator Melissa Hansen and Curator Wilkins have created special walks for shelter volunteers in order to increase their knowledge of Garden species so they can pass that on to the public.

The newest aspect of education in our work on behalf of the Garden is the FIPAG program, which may be the most important educational work of all. FIPAG is the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group, a cadre of volunteers led by co-chairs Jim Proctor and Liz Anderson and mentored by Curator Wilkins and other MPRB staff. In addition to removing vast amounts of invasive garlic mustard and buckthorn in the preservation zone around the Garden, FIPAG is teaching Friends volunteers, and other groups, how to identify and remove invasive species, the problems associated with invasives and the importance of plant diversity. They're also helping groups from local and regional parks, as

well as volunteers from the City of Lakes Loppet, learn about habitat health. It is our intention to expand this work further into southeast Wirth Park, while supporting others committed to preserving natural areas by the control of invasives wherever possible.

Last but not least, there's the educational role of The Fringed Gentian. This lovely newsletter pleases the eye with beautiful photos while giving each of us a bit more knowledge every issue. It may be about birding, clouds, the importance of downed trees in the woods or some rare spring ephemeral, but there will always be something that adds to our understanding of the Garden, our treasured microcosm of the natural universe. This is the second issue under the editorship of Meleah Maynard, and it is with pleasure and gratitude that I say "Thank you" to her from the Board for her fine work. We are so glad she is shepherding the Gentian so ably and well.

Sincerely,

J Pam Weiner
J Pam Weiner

A TEACHER STILL LEARNING

By Donna Ahrens

Gloria Miller



Trillium

what we know cannot keep us alive

nor do we survive one moment to rest in the next

forgive me

when these words came to me

i wanted to walk far back into the woods

lie down by the muskrat's pond

and let trillium grow through my back.

—Lon Miller, Friend of the Garden

When Gloria Miller was a child, growing up on the family farm on the North Dakota prairie, in spring and summer she would run to meet her father as he drove his tractor up to the house for lunch. In the tractor toolbox, Gloria would find freshly picked flowers—vivid orange wood lilies, wild roses, bluebells, whatever was in bloom. “It was the highlight of my day,” she recalls.

Six decades later, Gloria’s step has slowed a bit, but she still eagerly awaits the emergence of blooms in the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden every year. “Spring is my favorite season,” she says, ticking off the flowers she especially treasures: trillium, Virginia bluebells, showy lady’s slipper, columbine.

Gloria and her husband Lon began visiting the Garden in the early 1970s, and within a few years, Garden Curator Ken Avery encouraged her to volunteer in the shelter. In 1983, she became the 16th member of the Friends of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. Since then, she has contributed to the Friends in ways too numerous to count.

An artist and teacher (of art and business) by training, Gloria describes herself as a lover of nature “by osmosis,” recalling fond memories of her mother’s extensive vegetable and flower garden. Over the years, she has united her artistic talents with her love of art in several projects for the Friends. Gloria designed the Friends’ fringed gentian logo, featured in the organization’s correspondence and newsletter, and designed and illustrated a Friends membership brochure used for many years.

Her creativity was perhaps most evident in the booklet *From the Friends to Friends*, a gift for Friends donors and other contributors. Gloria conceived the idea for the publication in the mid-1980s, as a way to highlight the beauty of the Garden in words and pictures. An avid photographer, she chose photos she had taken in the Garden, and then added poems collected over the years—including several written by

Lon—to complement the photos. With the project in its final stages, Gloria showed it to the Friends board.

“There was just one problem,” she recalls. “The Friends didn’t have much money, so there was quite a bit of discussion about whether we could afford to print the book.” At that point, Friends board member Shirley Schultz stepped in: She offered to pay \$500 to cover the cost of a printing. The booklet was a great success and went through a second printing a few years later.

In addition to her art-related projects, Gloria served two terms as president of the Friends board, as well as its art historian, and remains active on the board. She mentions the “many interesting, warm and friendly people who are very concerned with the welfare of the Garden, and working together to help preserve it.” She and Lon, who died in 2004, helped plan many Friends events and contributed poetry and photos to *The Fringed Gentian*. Former Friends President Steve Pundt comments, “Thank goodness for Gloria, who has been a creative, loyal, ready-to-help-out-at-whatever-is-needed volunteer.”

Gloria also volunteers at the shelter, which she calls her “weekly ‘gift’ of mental relaxation and renewal.” She enjoys bird watching from inside the shelter while a fire burns in the fireplace and says she often seeks out a spot “up on the hill in the prairie, under the big oak tree. I love to sit there and read poetry or just watch birds.”

Beyond her affiliation with the Friends, Gloria has been a longtime member of the Richfield Garden Club and has participated in the Minneapolis Art Institute’s “Art in Bloom” event for the past four years. The annual event displays floral interpretations of selected art from the MIA’s permanent collection. This year, Gloria’s entry was an interpretation of Jennifer Steinkamp’s “Hurdy Gurdy Man (Chrysanthemums),” which also was featured on the 2013 Art in Bloom poster and brochure. The Steinkamp work consists of small, high-definition video projections of computer-animated flowers dancing to the Donovan song for which the piece is named.

It’s not so surprising that Gloria chose a contemporary, rather challenging work of art for her project. Like all the best teachers, Gloria is also a curious and engaged learner. Her comments about her involvement with the Friends underscore that impression: “I’ve been volunteering for many years, and every time I come to the garden, I learn something new about birds and flowers, or nature in general,” she says.

She adds, “Most of all, the Garden is just good for the soul! There is no other place like it. ... I call it heaven on earth.” ♦

A FLORILEGIUM GROWS IN THE GARDEN

By Meleah Maynard



Sensitive fern by Linda Powers



Leadplant by Barbara Illingsworth

Botanical art has been around for centuries. Immortalizing beloved everyday plants, as well as those that have vanished over time, the art form is practiced by artists all over the world, including those who are hard at work in the Garden.

Some visitors have probably already noticed students from the Minnesota School of Botanical Art (www.minnesotaschoolofbotanicalart.com) out in the Garden taking photos and sketching. Since 2010, they have been creating a florilegium of the Garden under the direction of Marilyn Garber, the school's founder, who describes a florilegium as "a fancy word for a group of drawings or illustrations of plants that grow in a particular place."

MAKING HISTORY

Florilegiums date back to the 15th century, when explorers would take artists with them on their travels to record the flora and fauna. But there hadn't been much call for the practice until 2000, when the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the Filoli Florilegium in Woodside, Calif., both launched their own florilegium projects. The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden florilegium will be the third contemporary American florilegium to get underway.

Garber, who has been visiting the Garden since moving to Minnesota in 1969, had been looking for "the right place" to do a florilegium since she started her school of botanical art in 2001. She thought the Garden's beauty and history seemed perfect, but she wasn't quite decided—until one day, while walking the Garden's

paths, she lost her car keys. After looking everywhere, she went to the shelter to see if she could call a friend to bring out her extra set so she could get to work on time. "And one of your wonderful volunteers offered to take me to my house, get the keys and bring me back," she recalls. "I thought, 'These are nice people here. This is where the florilegium needs to be.'"



Marsh marigold by Gerry Herriges



Viburnum by Betsy Cole



Blue flag iris by Shelley Bowman

PRESERVING A LEGACY

Garden Curator Susan Wilkins selected the 110 plants that will be included in the florilegium. Plants are representative of each part of the garden, and Wilkins also chose a few plants that were important to Eloise Butler. More than 50 of Garber's students are working on the project, which she expects will take six to eight years to complete. Much of the timing depends on Mother Nature.

"Our goal is to finish a painting in one year, but some can take two to three years to complete because the weather doesn't cooperate," she explains. If the plant doesn't bloom well or produce pods the way it usually does, we have to wait another year to paint those stages the plant normally goes through in order to document all of them." The need to preserve the legacy of the Garden, and the plants inside the gates, is a key motivator for Garber. She says: "I want this little jewel of a place to be remembered five hundred years from now."

So far, 33 paintings have been finished and accepted into the florilegium. Most will soon be on exhibit at the Longfellow House near Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis, where the school is located. They can also be viewed online at: http://www.minnesotaschoolofbotanicalart.com/Minnesota_School_of_Botanical_Art/Florilegium_Paintings.html. Plans for a spring exhibition at Minneapolis' Central Library are in the works. ♦

MEET THE GARDEN'S NATURALISTS

By Meleah Maynard

Visitors to the Garden are often greeted by staff naturalists who are happy to answer questions about plants and wildlife. They also give tours and teach a wide range of classes for children and adults. While some naturalists stay with the Garden for years, others come and go as life and schedules allow. Here is a brief introduction to the 11 naturalists who are on staff currently, starting with newcomers Karen Katz and Ron Spinosa.

Karen Katz—Karen has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and English and has worked at a number of natural resource-related jobs. In addition to working as a naturalist at Dodge Nature Center in the past, she is currently a naturalist at Silverwood Nature Center.

Ron Spinosa—Ron is a past president of the Minnesota Mycological Society and also edited the society's newsletter, *The Toadstool Review*. An amateur mycologist, he has been studying and enjoying mushrooms for more than 25 years. He has a master's degree in zoology, with paleontology and evolutionary biology being of special interest, and he collects rocks, minerals and fossils.

Tim Glenn—Tim worked as a musician and music teacher and interned at Dodge Nature Center before becoming a naturalist at the Garden. He holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and is working on a master's in education in natural science/environmental education. He is especially interested in coniferous forests, bats, wolves, insects and outer space.

Jodi Gustafson—Jodi's long, loyal tenure at the Garden began in 2000. She is an interpretive naturalist and has worked with both the Bell Museum of Natural History and the Minneapolis Parks and



Ron Spinosa and Karen Katz are the Garden's newest naturalists.

Recreation Board. She holds a bachelor's degree in naturalist resources and environmental studies, and her favorite subjects are wildflowers, mycology, butterflies, bog ecology and photography.

Elizabeth (Liz) Heck—Liz is an herbal educator whose forthcoming book is titled *Herbalism Up Close, Getting to Know the Healing Plants*. She holds a bachelor's degree in fine art and computer graphics and has worked in marketing for 15 years.

Becky Horton—Becky has over 10 years of experience working in the natural resources field. Currently, she works for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as a wildlife biologist. She earned her bachelor's degree in biology and geology. An avid bird-watcher, she has worked on many projects involving the protection of birds and their habitats over the years.

Kimberlee Hunter—Kimberlee has an associate's degree in Western clinical herbalism. She is interested in a wide range of subjects, including botany, plant evolution, ethno-botany, wild edibles, conservation biology and mycology/bio-remediation.

Julia Manor—Julia is a professor of psychology at Macalester College and has a Ph.D. in animal behavior.

Her favorite areas of study are animal evolution and cognition, and she appreciates that every time she visits the garden she learns something new.

Tammy Mercer—Tammy is working toward a master's degree in environmental education. An avid and knowledgeable birder, she leads many of the Garden's birding programs. She has worked as a naturalist at Wild River State Park and the Bell Museum of Natural History and for Minneapolis Parks and Recreation. She has also volunteered with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, as well as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Wesley (Wes) Nugteren—Wes earned his bachelor's degree in plant science with an emphasis on soil. While his master's degree in soil science is as yet incomplete, he has worked as a soil scientist and as a landscaper. Working as a naturalist at the Garden is his "dream job," he says. And he loves the immense biodiversity on the grounds.

Diana Thottungal—Diana has always enjoyed learning about plants. In recent years, she has delved into the wonders of fungi and slime molds. She has a bachelor's degree in biology with a subspecialty in botany and has taught biology, botany and ecology. ♦

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NEW MEMBERS

- Denise Bryn, Minneapolis
- Isaac Hanson, Minneapolis
- Philip W. Ruehl Jr., Mound
- Carol Shorrock, Minneapolis
- Karen Sloey, Golden Valley

—Jayne Funk,
membership co-chair

—Gary Bebeau, memorials chair

FRIENDS INVASIVE PLANT ACTION GROUP

As this issue of the Gentian goes to press, the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group is finishing its spring garlic mustard activities. After a snow-delayed start, we held four garlic mustard pulls. It's such a pleasure to make new friends and greet old ones at these events, after a winter away from the Garden. In addition to the Friends volunteers, a group of Aveda employees has made pulling garlic mustard an annual event for the past several years now, and we welcomed seeing them again. This spring, we continued to work in the preservation zone on the east and north sides of the Garden. While sprouts and new seedlings are plentiful



enough, most buckthorn is gone now, and there is less garlic mustard each year. Maintenance of almost half of the area on the east side of the Garden has been turned over to individual legacy volunteers, and the invasives group continues to work on the rest while also focusing on the newly added section to the north of the Garden. In addition, we're working with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board on signage to help define this area, clarifying for Park employees and others which areas should be mowed, and which are being maintained by Friends volunteers. The invasives volunteers see the results of our work as we spend time outside the Garden each spring and fall. The results are also visible inside the Garden. For a long time, sightlines for visitors in the Garden came to an abrupt halt as they encountered buckthorn thickets outside the Garden fence. Now, Garden visitors can look through the fence into a diverse and recovering woodland. Thanks to all for your help, your perseverance and your support.

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



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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.



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.

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