

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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



Dear Friends,

Once again it is my great pleasure to mark the coming of spring and the beginning of another season at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. Surely it is age-related to find the passage of seasons becoming ever more deeply appreciated as one senses that this cycle will NOT go on indefinitely—for the individual—or maybe not for our dear Earth, either. For many of us, that feeling of endless personal time one has in younger years is no longer a tenable reality. And yet, thankfully, we can still have our annual thrill of anticipation and wonder as we come back to the Garden in spring, fully expecting a beautiful array of ephemerals in the woodland and the song of warblers along the paths we know so well. I think it's fair to say we are never disappointed!

As always, there will be a mix of the old and the new at the Garden this year. We will find many familiar and favorite plants, along with a few new additions thoughtfully chosen and carefully placed by Curator Susan Wilkins and her staff. We will stroll through the wetland (soon, we hope, on a beautiful new boardwalk) to greet our treasured lady's slippers and the ancient *equisetum* (horsetail). We will crane our necks to look for the indigo bunting. The acute observer might note some other more mundane but welcome changes like new signage or a repaired bench. Of course, the Martha Crone Shelter will welcome us with the usual friendly volunteers and informative new educational displays by the naturalists.



Photo: Meleah Maynard

Purple trillium

This mélange of old and new will carry over for the Friends in 2015 as well, as we host a special fundraiser in the historical Schutt home above the north end lagoon at Lake of the Isles. Perhaps you remember the story of Mendon Schutt and his bride Clara, for whom he built this imposing new home in 1897. As we understand it, Clara knew Eloise and helped support her with plant donations in the early years of the Garden. Then, Mendon and Clara's daughter Elizabeth became an early Friend and helper to Martha Crone during her tenure as Gardener in the mid-1900s. Elizabeth lived in the family home and cared for an extensive garden until her death in the '90s. Even before she died, the Schutt family trust had named the Friends as a beneficiary, and we continue to receive their gift of about \$1,000 every year.

After Elizabeth died, the house stood empty for a while and was badly in need of repair and renovation. The present owners bought the property about a decade ago and worked on the house and the grounds for several years before moving there in 2009. Now they have graciously invited the Friends to visit the beautifully tended gardens and tour the elegant home from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 25. We're calling it the Schutt House Garden Party, and proceeds will support the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served. Current Friends can purchase tickets for \$25 (or \$40 per couple) on our website. We will also be inviting some prospective new Friends to join us and become Friends members. You will receive a postcard invitation to this special party in May, and you can also find more details right now on our website. Please save the date and plan to attend this special Garden Party that celebrates both historical devotion to the Garden and our present commitment in a beautiful setting among Friends old and new.

Here's to spring and a wonderful year for our treasured garden!

Sincerely,

J Pam Weiner

J Pam Weiner

Kris Felbeck: Finding Life Lessons in “This Little Corner”

By Donna Ahrens

Kris Felbeck is an intrepid camper and hiker. A “mostly retired” finance and business manager. A mother and grandmother. A nature and bird lover. An active volunteer in the arts and for her church. An experienced mountain climber.

She’s also an Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, “super sub.”

Kris has volunteered at the Martha Crone Visitor Shelter for a dozen years, often subbing on short notice when volunteer shifts pop up. Says Volunteer Coordinator Lauren Husting, “Kris is one of my most reliable and enthusiastic volunteers, from her willingness to come in every week to her bringing along her young granddaughter [Elvie] to enjoy the beauty of the Garden at the volunteer picnic.”

NATURE AS A FAMILY AFFAIR

Raised in Rhode Island, Kris credits her parents with her love of nature. “My father was a passionate birder and developed a lifelong love of the outdoors by being a Boy Scout and Eagle Scout in Pasadena [California],” she says, adding that her family also did a lot of car camping. “My folks had a great system. They would do the driving, and then when we got to a campsite, they would get out their lawn chairs and evening drinks—and the three sisters would set up camp! I was the oldest, and set up the tent. Jeannie (sister #2) set up the stove and got dinner going, and Cindy (#3) collected wood and started a fire.”



In 1980, Kris moved to Minneapolis with her husband, Dave, and settled near the University of Minnesota. She discovered the Wildflower Garden when she was exploring parks in the area where she could take her two young sons. Over the years, her family’s enthusiasm

for outdoor life took them to dozens of state and national parks.

In 2000, when her sons were 12 and 15, they rented a tiny Peugeot and set off on a two-month camping vacation in Europe. She notes, wryly, “In hindsight, I would not camp again—it was harder to socialize with people than if we had stayed in hostels. And with two big, strapping boys, the Peugeot was a little on the small side! But the boys were good sports.”

David was an avid mountain climber, and Kris accompanied him on climbs in New Zealand, Mexico, Peru, and Africa, as well as in the United States. Their climb of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa’s highest mountain, was particularly memorable, she says. “On the summit day, we started climbing at midnight. Six hours later, we were on the top—and it was still pitch black out! We couldn’t see a thing.”

Sadly, David died of a heart attack on a climbing expedition in Colorado in 2012, “his fiftieth 14er,” Kris notes, referring to peaks exceeding 14,000 feet. She has continued to spend the summer months camping, especially in Colorado and other western states, and takes frequent short camping trips in Minnesota.

AN “UP NORTH” CABIN EXPERIENCE CLOSE TO HOME

After closing out a finance career in business and education, Kris wanted to do “outdoors volunteering that would force me to get out in nature on a regular basis.” Recalling the pleasure she and her family had from their visits to Eloise Butler, she signed on as a Shelter volunteer. One of her earliest interests was birding, and she still enjoys pulling a chair up to the shelter window to watch the birds at the feeders and building a fire in the fireplace on cooler days. “It’s like having an Up North cabin in the city,” she says.

Reflecting on what the Garden means to her, Kris says, “As with many things, it’s the people who make the experience.” She notes she has been especially impressed by the work of the Friends’ Invasives Plant Action Group (see page 6), led by Jim Proctor and Liz Anderson, and the Garden’s legacy stewards, who restore and maintain small plots in the Garden.

“Watching the invasives group work on removing species like garlic mustard and buckthorn, in specific areas, and seeing the results of the efforts over time, has been a lesson in dedication,” Kris says. “Instead of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the task, these group leaders and volunteers have tackled the job in little chunks. And now our little corner here is protected through their steady, ongoing work. It’s a lifetime lesson.”

Donna Ahrens is a Shelter volunteer and copy editor of the *Fringed Gentian*.

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Garden Curator's Letter

By Susan Wilkins



Every spring, what feels like a miracle occurs. The days begin to warm and lengthen. We find ourselves dropping layers—mittens, scarves and heavy coats—and stepping out to feel the caress of sunlight on bare skin. When only weeks ago we traveled to and fro with our busy lives cloaked in winter's dark blanket, now the soft evening light or early morning's glimmer guides us into our gardens to discover what is emerging from awakened soil. A hint of green under decayed leaves—delight! A flower found in full bloom—pure joy! Tree buds bursting in vibrant hues above our heads—unstoppable! As our planet tilts and spins so steadily along, rested earth gives way to another season of refreshed potential and irrepressible growth. We have arrived and spring is singing.

This season marks the 108th year of the Wildflower Garden's existence. And each year, the importance of botanic gardens like this one grows. Within the Garden's 15 acres, over 500 species of plants (primarily natives) are nurtured and more than 130 species of migratory and resident birds find refuge for a little, or a long, while.

Thanks to a recent two-year study led by entomologists Elaine Evans and Joel Gardner, and funded jointly by the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, we now know that at least 104 bee species call the Wildflower Garden home. Gardens that focus on fostering

biodiversity and healthy habitats for a wide variety of plant and animal life are quickly becoming more significant refuges for species that are feeling the pushes and pulls of the modern world. Botanic gardens worldwide are working diligently to conserve and understand the richness of plant life—and, often, insect, bird and other animal life, too.

As we set out into our gardens this season, at home and also as visitors and volunteers at botanic gardens like the Wildflower Garden, we can take great pleasure in knowing that we are part of a wonderful community of stewards spanning the globe. As communities and individuals focus on conserving natural areas, enhancing green spaces, creating habitat and bringing more of nature into neighborhoods, cities and farms, all of our lives are the better for it. Our collective efforts are truly something to celebrate. Happy gardening, everyone, and happy Garden visiting this spring!

And be sure to stay connected to all of the wonderful programs, classes, and special events occurring at the Garden this season. There is too much to list here, but please visit the Garden's Facebook page for up-to-date information. You can also receive periodic emails about Wildflower Garden happenings and news by joining the Wildflower Garden's email list. Simply go to www.minneapolis-parks.org and click on the red envelope. Enter your email address and select the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden from the Things to Do menu.



Above – Virginia bluebells (Photo: Meleah Maynard); Top Right – Interrupted fern (Photo: Don Beimborn); Bottom Right – Showy lady's slipper (Photo: Sher Stoneman)



On the left is a male yellow-rumped warbler in his finest breeding plumage. Note the yellow on the rump, sides and crown. The breeding male also has a striking dark mask and white wingbars. The underside is mostly white with dark streaks. Female and juvenile yellow-rumps (right) have similar features but are more subdued in plumage.

So Many Warblers, So Little Time

By Tammy Mercer, Garden Naturalist

The colorful wood warblers are the most exciting harbingers of spring for many birders, including me. They arrive sporting their brightest breeding plumages of yellow, orange, olive green, rich browns and other colors. But for beginning and more experienced birders alike, they can be a challenge to see and identify. These tiny birds are in constant motion as they search for insects, often high in the trees. They do not stay here for long. Most of them are just passing through, stopping to refuel as they head farther north to breed.

Over the years, I have seen at least 24 species of warblers in and around the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, and other birders could add a few more to that list. With so many species that we see only during spring and fall migration, it's easy to feel a bit overwhelmed. But the thrill of getting a look at these beautiful birds, however brief, is well worth the effort.

Warblers are smaller than most sparrows, with thin, pointy bills for catching insects. They are almost always on the move. Most warblers forage in the trees for tiny insects and spiders on the leaves, branches and other parts of trees. Some prefer to hunt high in the trees; others may be found in lower branches and shrubs. A few even hunt for food on the ground, while others prefer open, scrubby areas or wetlands.

Foraging behaviors can help you distinguish some of the species. Many fly from branch to branch, but some hover about the tips of branches to find their prey, and others snatch flying insects from the air. Some move about the trunks and limbs of trees, probing the bark for insects.

The best way to start learning to identify warblers is to take one species at a time. One of the first and most abundant warblers to appear each spring is the yellow-rumped warbler. Yellow-rumps tend to forage lower in the trees, making it easier to find them. They also hunt for insects in open areas and wetlands and will fly up to catch insects in the air.

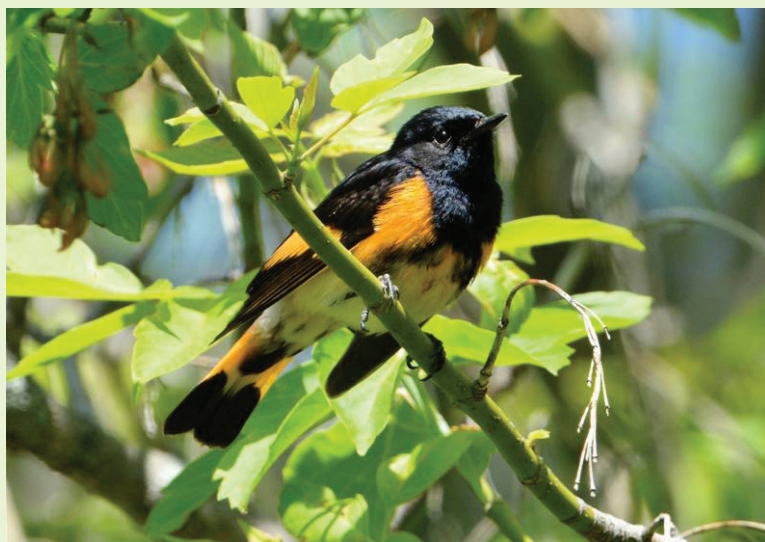
The most important field marks of the yellow-rumped warbler are the yellow rump, which is a patch of color on their back, just above

the tail; and yellow patches on their sides, just in front of their wings (see photos at right). Males also have a spot of yellow on the top of the head, but this is not always visible. Sometimes you get your best look from below. The yellow-rump is mostly white from below. It has a white throat and a white belly streaked with black on the breast and sides. Yellow-rumps also have large white spots on their tails.

You may want to grab your field guide or check one out from the library. Get to know the parts of a bird from a drawing, usually found in the front of the book. Then look for the section on warblers for other views of the yellow-rumped warbler. Once you get to know the yellow rump, you can start to compare it to other species.

Whether you know the warblers' names or not, you can enjoy their beautiful variety of colors and behaviors while they are here. They are well worth making the effort to find. Spring migration usually lasts from late March to early June, with different species arriving at different times.

Every Saturday morning from April through October, the Early Birders walk the Garden and surrounding Wirth Park in search of birds. We can help you find warblers and learn to identify them. If the snow has melted, we will meet in the upper parking lot on Saturday, April 4 at 9:30 a.m. For complete monthly schedules, check our website at www.minneapolisparcs.org, then use the dropdown menu on the right to find Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.



The Cape May warbler (above) and the blackburnian warbler (below) pass through in small numbers on their way to nesting grounds in the boreal forest to the north.

Once you are familiar with the yellow-rumped warbler, you can compare it to other warblers. The magnolia warbler (top) also has a yellow rump and the breeding male has the striking dark mask and white wing bars. But unlike the yellow-rump, the magnolia warbler has a bright yellow underside with dark streaks. Unlike most warblers that are just passing through, the yellow warbler (middle) and the American Redstart (bottom) often nest in the Twin Cities area, usually near wetlands.

Friends Invasive Plant Action Group

As we write this in late January, it's not so easy to feel ourselves into May and June. Yet those are not only months of great renewal and glory in the Garden, but also, as invasives volunteers are well aware, prime garlic mustard removal time! Along with the spring ephemerals in the Garden, handouts with the 2015 garlic mustard removal schedule will appear in the Shelter shortly after its April opening. We had a fine time in 2014—good weather, lots of volunteers, camaraderie and a sense of accomplishment. Please pick up a schedule and join us for the first time or again this year. It's a great way to ensure you carve out time to be in the woods.

In April, as you walk down the main path to the Garden entrance, be sure to look to your right to see the new vista unfolding just beyond the gravel path that runs from the parking lot/driveway exit to the southeast corner of the Garden fence. This “maple bowl” area, which we wrote about in the Fall 2014 issue of the Fringed Gentian, is the latest project undertaken cooperatively by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Friends of the Wildflower Garden. For many years, the view into the area has

been completely blocked by a towering buckthorn hedge that runs alongside the gravel path.

Last fall, Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM) crews from the Park Board began removing the largest buckthorn, and already you can see a difference. The Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) will follow, removing smaller buckthorn and other invasives. It's a multi-year project, but it already holds considerable interest. A narrow footpath runs alongside the driveway exit, overlooking the maple bowl. If you follow that footpath up a ways, you'll see the bowl is quite deep. One slope of it receives virtually no direct sun and has very little buckthorn. The slope that receives sun has ... well, you can probably guess. You'll be able to see the difference.

As always, thanks to all who participate in and support our activities. We look forward to seeing you again this year.

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



photo: Susan Gilmore

The Schutt Home Garden Party

in support of
**the Eloise Butler
Wildflower Garden
& Bird Sanctuary**

Please join the Friends for a special evening on June 25, 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the historic Mendon Schutt home on the north end of Lake of the Isles. Hosted by the present owners who have restored the property, the party will include tours of the house and surrounding gardens, as well as delicious hors d'oeuvres and beverages.

Tickets must be purchased in advance for this event
(\$25/individual or \$40/couple) and are available now
on our website—www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org.

Memorials and Donations ~ September - December 2014

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Memorials and gifts to the Friends are much appreciated and constitute an important part of keeping the Garden a special place for generations of people to enjoy. In 2014, undesignated gifts are being used for the Cary George Wetland Project. Project update information is on the Friends website.

Note: Memorials and gifts are tax deductible. When sending a memorial, please give the name and address of the family being honored so that we can acknowledge that a memorial has been received. An acknowledgment will be provided to all donors. Memorials and gifts should be sent to: Treasurer, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, P. O. Box 3793, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Checks are payable to Friends of the Wild Flower Garden or donate on our website: www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org

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Photo: Meleah Maynard

Maidenhair fern

Membership Form

☐ Individual \$15 ☐ Family \$25 ☐ Sponsor \$100 ☐ Life \$500 ☐ Other \$ _____

Memberships can be ordered online at www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org or mailed with a check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.
Membership
P.O. Box 3793
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

Please specify if the membership is a gift.

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

All gifts are tax-deductible.

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THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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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: Don Beinborn

A wild turkey in the garden.

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Minnesota nonprofit corporation, formed in 1952. Its purpose is to educate by enhancing Garden visitors' appreciation and understanding of Minnesota's native plants and natural environments and to offer assistance for the Garden in the form of funding and other support.

The Fringed Gentian is published for members and supporters of the Friends.

For changes to your mailing address, please write Membership Coordinator Jayne Funk at: members@friendsofeloisebutler.org or Membership, Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, P.O. Box 3793, Mpls., MN 55403.

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