

THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

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

Dear Friends,

After a wonderful spring at the Garden, we have entered into the glorious season of summer, a time of growth and richness in the natural world. For many of us in modern urban life, it is also a time of recreation and ease, a time when we are free to be outside for hours being active and relaxed. We remember with gratitude, and more than a little amazement, that our foremothers and forefathers were not having our kind of summer; they were very busy tending crops and gardens, caring for livestock and maintaining their tools and equipment, working towards that critical goal of the bountiful autumn harvest from which their food and funds for the next year would come.

Across the world, midsummer and the solstice are still celebrated as the symbolic beginning of the fertile power of the earth, sustaining us and all our fellow living things here on our amazing planet.

At the Garden, summer's warm weather brings a fairly steady stream of visitors, many family groups and quite a few out-of-towners. It's a busy time in the Martha Crone Shelter, and our volunteers play an important role in welcoming everyone and orienting visitors to the Garden's many treasures. The naturalists conduct a wide variety of programs, and I encourage you to check out their offerings on the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's website. Go to www.minneapolisparcs.org/ebwg, and scroll down to the summer program brochure. There you'll find wildflower walks, tours geared to families, birding programs, nature hikes and much more. Most programs are free, but there are some special ones with fees. Program descriptions, schedules and all the information you need to sign up are provided.



One of several great-horned owllets that were spotted in the Garden this spring.

photo: Tammy Mercer

As you might imagine, prime growing season for wildflowers, tomatoes and herbs is also very kind to invasive plants. (Perhaps you have walked our city lakes and other green spaces and observed the huge swaths of buckthorn.) In and around the Garden we are winning many battles against invasives, but the war goes on. For our FIPAG (Friends Invasive Plant Action Group) volunteers, there is a summer lull between the spring campaign—focused mostly on garlic mustard—and the fall one targeting buckthorn. Co-chairs Jim Proctor and Liz Anderson are on the watch nonetheless, keeping track of key problem areas near the Garden and planning future pulls. In addition, they confer with MPRB staff, especially the Garden Curator and other local experts on methods and technique, tracking results from other projects in our region. The science on invasive species is fairly new, and ideas are in flux, even among experts, especially in light of today's complex climate change factors.

This summer we have the additional pleasure of using our new wetland boardwalk to stroll along in search of plants, birds and beautiful dragonflies. After my Sunday afternoon shift in late May, I rested on the bridge bench, admiring the yellow flag iris and the leaves and buds of the showy lady's slipper, preparing to bloom in a couple of weeks. I thought about the next stage of the boardwalk, for which we will start to fundraise later this season. It feels good to see what we've accomplished so far and know that we can eventually complete this essential and beautiful complement to the Garden.

In closing, I want to share some very good news. We are welcoming a special new arrival to the world of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. Our Garden Curator, Susan Wilkins, and her husband, Casey Miller, are the proud parents of a precious spring baby. We send them our heartfelt congratulations and hope to see the little fellow at the Garden later this season.

Sincerely,

J Pam Weiner



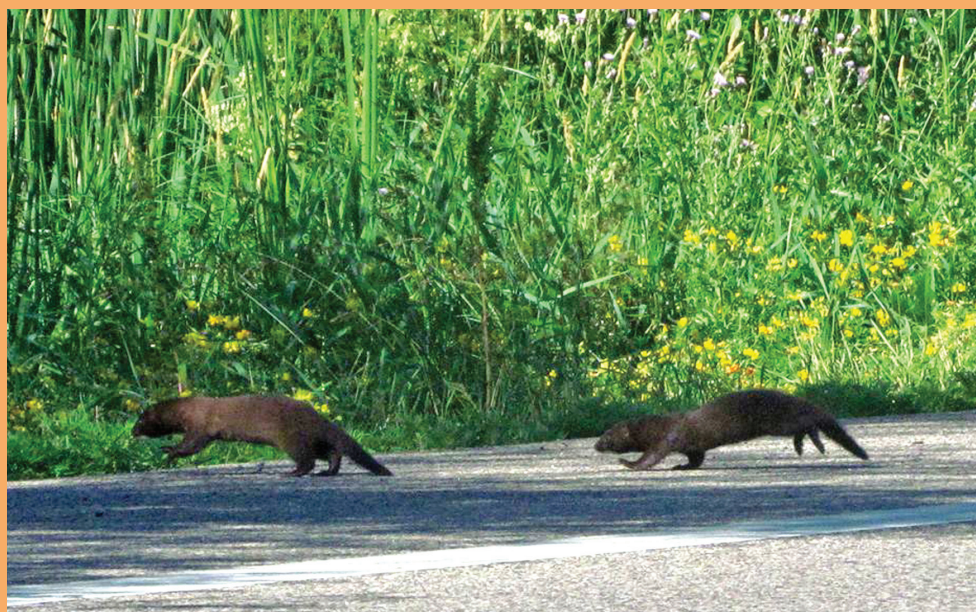


Photo: Tammy Mercer

Mink Family on the Move

The Early Birders group that meets every Saturday morning at the Garden is often fortunate enough to see other kinds of wildlife too. In July, we spotted a family of mink running across Glenwood Avenue from the marsh to the wetland.

Mink do not form pair bonds, so the females raise their young alone. When she needs to hunt, mom usually leaves the kits behind in their den or in another safe place. But when she needs to move the whole family, she grabs one of the kits to make sure the rest of them follow her.

— Tammy Mercer, Garden naturalist

June Blooms at the Garden



Photos: John Toren



Clockwise from upper left: Canada elderberry, showy lady's slipper, spiderwort, false indigo

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The Eloise Butler Memorial Tablet

By Gary Bebeau

Visitors to the Garden sometimes ask whether there is a memorial to Eloise Butler on the grounds. There is. The memorial tablet, as it is known, is mounted on a large boulder in front of the Martha Crone Shelter, and it was dedicated on May 4, 1934.

The idea for the memorial tablet is mentioned in the April 19, 1933 minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners and was spoken of at the memorial service for Eloise Butler on May 5, 1933. It was planned, created and presented by some of her friends and some of her former pupils from her years as a botany teacher in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Several dedication inscriptions were suggested and submitted to Martha Crone, who replaced Eloise as Garden Curator. A fundraising campaign was initiated with the suggested donation being limited to no more than one dollar.

The inscription on the bronze tablet reads:

In loving memory of Eloise Butler (1851–1933), teacher of botany in Minneapolis Schools, founder and first curator of this native plant reserve. This oak has been planted and this tablet erected by a grateful public.

To this sequestered glen Miss Butler brought beautiful native plants from all sections of our state and tended them with patient care. This priceless garden is our heritage from her and its continued preservation a living testimony of our appreciation. Here her ashes are scattered and here her protective spirit lingers.

The dedication ceremony was held on Arbor Day, May 4, 1934. Elizabeth Foss, a North High School teacher, presented the tablet, and an original poem was recited by Florence Hadden, a former pupil. Others, including several children, did some birdcalls for the dedication, and a pin oak was planted near the boulder in Eloise's memory.



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Garden Curator's Letter

Garden Curator Susan Wilkins' letter will return in the next issue.



Photo: John Toren

Kirsten Grohovsky

Kirsten Grohovsky, in her first full season as Education Program Coordinator at Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, brings her knowledge of botany, herbal medicine, and environmental teaching to the position. We caught up with her in the midst of the busy opening of the Garden this spring.

Where did you grow up, and how did you get interested in nature?

I grew up in Zumbrota and Lake City, a couple of small towns in southeastern Minnesota. I have always been very adventurous. My dad likes to tell a story about the time I climbed about three-fourths of the way up a 100-foot pine tree in our backyard when I was only five years old. (He had to convince me to descend halfway down the tree to meet him.)

I often could be found playing with the sap on the pine trees, saving any animals I could find and bringing them home, riding down the creek in our kiddie pool during heavy rainstorms, crossing rivers on fallen trees or building tree forts. I've always had a fascination with the natural world.

Tell us about the academic and career path that led you to Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and to the position of program coordinator.

Ten years ago I decided I wanted to pursue herbal medicine as a profession. Through my studies at The Evergreen State College, in Olympia, Wash., I started exploring ethnobotany and then returned to Minnesota, where I completed an individual learning contract from Evergreen State on the practice of Western herbal medicine. It was important for me to learn the plants of the region where I would eventually return. During that time I interned with Cynthia Thomas, an herbalist who introduced me to Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. We came here a couple of times so that I could start identifying local plants. Like most people, I fell in love with the Garden on my first visit.



After I graduated from Evergreen, I applied for the horticulture intern position at the Wildflower Garden. With my passion for plants, permaculture experience and herbalism, Susan [Wilkins, Garden Curator] and I hit it off. During that year, I discovered that I love not only working with the plants but also talking about them and teaching visitors about them.

The following spring, there was an opening for a naturalist, and the education coordinator position opened up last fall.

What kinds of education programs are you working on for this year?

Over the years, our education programming, both public and private, has grown tremendously. I believe Susan said we had 20 private programs to begin with; last year we offered over 120 private programs. Our main focus is on organizing all the curricula that have been created over the years. I hope that this season, with the help of naturalists Tim Glenn and Wes Nugteren we can get this huge undertaking completed. Then we'll work on updating curricula. If time allows, I would love to create more botany programs for both adults and youth.

What time of year at the Garden most appeals to you?

Spring has always been my favorite time of year to be out in nature. The woodlands bring me back to childhood fairytales. I also love the sense of birth and rebirth that we experience in the spring. The Garden is such a magical place that every season here is truly beautiful and unique; I feel lucky to be a part of it.

Any thoughts you'd like to pass along to our readers?

Thank you all for your love and support of the Wildflower Garden! Without all of you, Eloise's dream would not continue to live on. Each one of you plays a role in making the Garden the special place it is today.



Photo: John Toren



Photo: Gary Bebeau



Photo: John Toren

Top to bottom: Black-eyed Susans, blazing star, and turk's-cap lily

The Garden in Midsummer

By Matt Schuth

Walking around the prairie at Eloise Butler in midsummer gives me a different feeling than viewing the ephemerals of springtime. Prairie grasses and flowers surround me as I walk the paths. Many of them are knee-high and taller ones meet me eye to eye. The ephemerals are beautiful but fragile, appearing quickly and vanishing just as quickly. Prairie plants have a strength and permanency about them. Perhaps their deep-rootedness, longer blooming period and composite flowers defy the vagaries of time and nature.

When controlled burns are used to clear the prairie of the previous year's detritus, it is difficult to imagine how the black, sooty soil can turn into the spectacular swaying grasses and colorful flowers of summertime. Most prairie species are deep-rooted perennials with growing points at or beneath the soil surface, allowing them to survive fire, wind, hail and grazing because as much as 85 percent of their biomass is underground. Little bluestem and switchgrass root systems, for example, can grow to depths of 5 feet, while others like leadplant and compass plant can penetrate 10 feet into the soil.

Among my favorite prairie plants is big bluestem, the king of the prairie grasses. It is also called "turkey foot" because of the shape of its three-pronged seed head. Cup plant, prairie dock and compass plant are the goliaths of the prairie and they tower above other species. With their yellow, daisy-like flowers on stout stalks, each can grow to 8 feet or more.

Rattlesnake master, with its spiny-edged leaves and flowers that resemble the armor-piercing mace of medieval knights, is another unique plant. It got its name from the Native American belief that it cured snakebites.

The prairie is also home to flowers with blue, purple and pinkish hues including purple coneflower, leadplant and blazing star. The spiny disk of the coneflower resembles a miniature porcupine rolled in a ball with quills extended, which isn't surprising when you consider that the plant's genus name, *Echinacea*, is derived from the Greek word for "hedgehog."

Interestingly, purple coneflower was once one of the most widely used medicinal plants of Plains tribes. It was called "thirst plant" because when its salty-tasting root was chewed it increased the flow of saliva, relieving thirst.

Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*) offers elongated spikes of lavender flowers atop dense, hairy stalks that can eventually become woody. The thick root of the leadplant was so difficult to plow that pioneers called it "the devil's shoestrings."

And then there is blazing star (*Liatris*), which has long, slender pinkish flowers that are so pretty they could be sold on a stick at the State Fair. The Chippewa called blazing star "elk tail," and other tribes fed the corms of the plant to their horses before a race, believing it increased speed and endurance.

As you walk around enjoying the prairie, remember that every plant has a story. Which ones will be most memorable for you?

Matt Schuth is a naturalist at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Friends Invasive Plant Action Group

As reported previously, the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) is increasingly turning its attention to the maple glen, a beautiful deep ravine immediately adjacent to the Garden. Until recently, visitors looking to their right as they approach the front gate would have been unaware of the area, because it had been completely obscured by a towering buckthorn hedge. Initial work removing buckthorn has been completed, but the area is so large it will keep FIPAG volunteers busy for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Lee Frelich, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Forest Ecology, is a frequent Garden visitor and a supporter of FIPAG's work at the Garden. Recently, he mentioned the maple glen, a Big Woods remnant, in a column he wrote about Big Woods forests in the *Friends of Loring Park* newsletter (vol. 18, #2, Fall 2015).

The Minnesota Big Woods was a forty by one hundred mile tract of forest surrounded by savanna and prairie that extended from St. Cloud to Faribault, including the western suburbs of the Twin Cities and scattered patches throughout the metro area. This seemed to be a very large tract of trees to early explorers, and the large acreage of the tract led to the name, rather than size of the trees. The four major tree species were sugar maple, American basswood, American elm, and northern red oak. In addition, ironwood, red maple, white oak, green ash, bur oak, black cherry, and bitter-nut hickory were present.

The climate and soils of Minneapolis could have supported Big Woods, but burning by Native Americans created and maintained savanna in most of the city. There are a few examples of Big Woods forest in the Minneapolis park system, for example south of Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden in Wirth Park. It was one of three major upland vegetation styles (Big Woods, savanna and prairie) in Minneapolis prior to European settlement. Larger tracts remain in the western suburbs, accounting for the brilliant red fall color in places like Minnetonka.

Frelich also remarked that "about two percent of the original Big Woods remains," and noted the "environmental problems that affect the Big Woods such as extreme fragmentation, high deer populations, European earthworm invasion, garlic mustard and buckthorn invasion, and a warming climate."

FIPAG volunteers are honored to play a part in maintaining this piece of Minnesota history. As always, thanks to all who participate in and support our activities. We look forward to seeing you again this fall. Dates will be posted later this summer in the Shelter and online at <http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org/pages/volunteer.html>.

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



Photo: Phoebe Vaughn

Early Birders explore avian activity in the Garden every Saturday morning during the summer months beginning at 7:30 a.m. Why not join them?

Shelter Volunteer Update

It's been a lovely season at the Garden so far, made even lovelier by the commitment of my amazing docent crew at the Shelter who have filled nearly every shift so far. It's bittersweet, really, as this will be my last season (third time's the charm) as Volunteer Coordinator. In the fall I will begin my doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota, so I will hand over the reins to fellow docent Jennifer Dunne at the end of the season.

Jennifer has joined the Friends board and will be shadowing me to learn the ropes as 2016 progresses. You'll still be able to communicate with ebwgsheltervolunteers@gmail.com for more information, and the calendar will stay active.

I look forward to stepping back into a simple volunteering role, though I will always appreciate how my time as Volunteer Coordinator allowed me to get to know the Garden and its staff better. Here's to a glorious summer in the Garden!

—Lauren Husting, Shelter Volunteer Coordinator

Memorials and Donations ~ february 2016 / may 2016

GIFTS RECEIVED *In support of our programs from:*

Cindy Angerhofer
Zachary Baker
Colin Bartol
Sharon Bunnell
Mary K. Harris
Marjorie Huebner
Leilani LaBelle
Sylvia McCollor

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 2016, 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

MEMORIALS RECEIVED

For Joe Kraker Jr. from Frances Abbott
For Glendora Lanning from Virginia McCall
For Patricia Smith from Wendy and Patrick Hughes

— New Members —

Natalie Benson, Minneapolis
Roger Bolz, Bloomington
Lacey Doucet Campbell, Minneapolis
Richard and Karen Carney, Minneapolis
Carol Cummins, Golden Valley
Barbara Greenwald Davis, Minneapolis
Jennifer Dunne, Minneapolis
Barbara Hall, Asheville, NC
Lucy Hartwell, Wayzata
Kirsten Hayman, St. Paul
Cynthia and Steven Mueller, Minneapolis
Orena Chris Servaty, Minneapolis
Shelly Stanchfield, Edina



Photo: John Toren

Membership Form

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

Memberships can be ordered online at
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Membership
P.O. Box 3793
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

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The recipient of your gift will receive a letter of welcome from the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden.

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P.O. Box 3793
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

*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 Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary comprises 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: John Toren

The button bush languishes in wetland obscurity for most of the year, but when it blooms in early July, its white, extraterrestrial-looking fruits are hard to mistake for anything else.

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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