

THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

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

Let Nature Be Your Teacher: Summer School at the Garden

By Kyla Sisson, Garden Naturalist

There's a season for everything in the Garden: trout lilies, tree frogs, warblers, and—most anticipated of all—summer school students. Visit in June, and you might catch sight of the showy lady's slipper...but come in July, and you could witness 10-year-olds magically turning into birds, traveling 10,000 years into the past to melt glaciers, comparing bog acidity to the pH of their tongues, and learning to use binoculars for the first time.

Science Immersion

Every summer, hundreds of rising fourth and fifth graders from Minneapolis Public Schools visit the Garden for its summer school field trip program. Although most school groups visiting the Garden only stay for an hour, summer school students are immersed in nature for most of their school day. Aligned with science standards for their grade level, the program explores the concept of adaptations. Half the day focuses on birds, using games and hands-on play to investigate how birds have adapted to survive in their habitats. For many children, the highlight is the opportunity to see birds up close. It's often the most wiggly students who become glued to their binoculars, sitting statue-still and hushing their peers as woodpeckers swoop onto the feeder. The other half of the day is a trek to the Quaking Bog. As the last bog in Hennepin County, this preserved ecosystem offers a unique opportunity for students to search for strange, specially adapted plants: to feel the soft needles of tamarack trees, touch sticky sundews, and bounce on the mat of sphagnum moss.

"There's no wifi in the forest!"

For many students, it's their first time in the woods, and they arrive worrying about snakes, bugs, bears, and even tigers. By the end of the day, most of them have held an American toad, learned to treat their mosquito bites



Staff member Mark Emmons planting which hazel for the Fern Glen. Photo by Kyla Sisson.

with plantain leaves, and accidentally gotten their feet wet in the bog—which causes more grins of triumph than you might expect. Garden Naturalist Annelise Brandel-Tanis says, "I love summer school because I get to see kids being curious and investigating their surroundings. It's a change for kids to learn that being outside isn't scary. They get to say, 'Woah, I successfully identified poison ivy!' or 'I identified an edible plant!' I like to watch them using those skills as the day goes on." Garden Naturalist Maia Campbell agrees,

describing the benefit to children of just being in nature: "There was one group of all girls, and they had a lot of energy, so we spent a lot of time just running on the trails outside the Garden. It was a free-form experience. We're not "teaching"—yes, we are introducing concepts—but it's more about being out in nature and learning that that's a fun thing."

Continuing a Legacy

Eloise Butler grew up in a rural area, where she was able to roam the woods as a child. When she began teaching public school students in Minneapolis' city center, she knew how important it was to introduce them to nature. Over 100 years later, the transportation grant funded by the Friends supports the work of Garden staff to continue the story Eloise started, providing subsidized transportation for low-income youth to experience their park system. Thanks to this support, the Garden is made more accessible and continues to serve as a place where urban kids get to learn through their senses, explore their own questions, and develop relationships with plants and animals without leaving the city. The summer school program with the Minneapolis Public School district at Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary celebrated its 11th season this year. Garden staff continue to build connections with schools, youth groups and youth-focused programs to bring more kids into the wilds of Wirth Park. In fact, since the Garden Program Coordinator position was created in 2007, the number of visiting youth who have participated in programs led by Garden naturalists has grown by over 325%. This is in addition to a variety of new and re-imagined public programs that serve several hundred children and their families. Garden Naturalist strive to open doors to a lifetime of connecting with nature. Kids agree that the first visit is just the beginning. The best part of summer school? Hearing kids say, "I can't wait to come back!"

This article appears courtesy of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.



Photo by Kathy Connelly

Letter from the President

By Kathy Connelly

In late 2019, the MPRB voted to approve a wonderful concept plan developed by its leadership and staff for improvements to the Garden. The proposal for improvements at the Garden is significant. It shows the esteem in which the Garden is held and recognizes the changes in the way the public uses and experiences the Garden.

The need for the project is undeniable. As interest in native plants and natural history (including birds) has become more popular across the country, Garden patronage has increased, and so has demand for programming. Those familiar with the Shelter know that right now, Garden staff's only workspace is in the Shelter's tiny kitchen alcove, and some of the space behind the public counter, with no privacy for scheduling and coordination activities. So the current proposal includes a modest expansion of the Shelter that will reflect the importance of the work of the hardworking, creative and dedicated Garden staff, and allow for the relocation of the Garden Curator's office from the toolshed to the Shelter. With the Garden staff relocated into the expansion, there will be more programming space in the reconfigured Shelter interior. We understand that all of this will be accomplished while preserving the rustic feel and appearance of the Shelter.

With increased popularity and changing environmental conditions, the need for staff and equipment to tend the Garden has increased. The proposal includes the removal and replacement of the toolshed. The critical work of tending the Garden will be better supported in a new location in a new structure, closer to the delivery point of plants and other materials. The Garden fence will be moved slightly to enclose this new building.

During the extensive public engagement process for the project, that was led capably by MPRB senior planner Emma Pachuta, it was recognized that the barbed-wire-topped fence that encloses a portion of the Garden is in poor condition, and in several places runs closely parallel to Garden pathways, making for a discordant experience of a peaceful place. So, another concept that is included in the proposal is the re-alignment of the fence away from Garden paths, slightly expanding the Garden acreage without impacting existing walking paths outside the current Garden boundaries. This re-alignment could encompass areas of the Garden perimeter that have been painstakingly worked on for many years by the Garden's invasives plant group and that were historically included in the Garden.

Another element of the proposal is for the expansion of the rustic toilets to include an accessible family-friendly all-gendered bathroom. The need for such a basic amenity is undebatable and underscored by the Garden's increased popularity with families. Improving the access to the Garden's main entrance gate from the parking lot, and improved signage are also part of the concept plan.

Significant funding for the project will be required. A majority of that funding is expected to come from MPRB funds allocated for Wirth Park, in which the Garden is located. The balance will come from grants and donations. The Friends hope that Garden patrons will be willing to make special contributions to the Friends for the entryway portion of the project. All contributions made for this purpose will be dedicated to the project. More information about the project and opportunities to support it will be available in the months to come.

To learn more, please visit the MPRB project webpage, and sign up for email updates: <https://tinyurl.com/y3sqhmyo>. You can show your support for the Garden by writing and thanking MPRB Commissioners for their unanimous approval of the concept plan. Please let them know how much the Garden means to you and that you will be watching the progress of the project.

Sincerely,

Kathy Connelly

A Thriving Garden

By Susan Wilkins, Garden Curator

It's been a busy season full of people, projects and programs at the Wildflower Garden. It was one of our busiest years on record in the Garden's modern history. It is estimated that 60,000 people visit the Garden each season. In 2019, Garden staff and volunteers recorded 19,643 visitor interactions in the Visitor Shelter during the hours that the building is open and staffed. Each count represents each visit a person makes to the Shelter. It is truly incredible to think that such a significant number of visitors had a meaningful exchange with staff and volunteers; viewed the interesting natural history displays created by Garden staff; participated in a craft activity; interacted with the touch and see table; utilized reference books and field guides, children's books, and more. In addition, 4,091 youth and adults participated in engaging nature focused- programs led by Garden naturalists at the Wildflower Garden and a select number of programs at Regional Parks in the Minneapolis Park System. Each year the Wildflower Garden enchants and inspires more people. The bustle of the 112th Garden season was complemented by a truly gorgeous procession of moderate temperatures and more than ample rainfall. The verdant Garden created an amazing atmosphere and so many visitors took delight in the dynamic beauty and educational opportunities of this extraordinary botanic garden all season long.

Several special programs and projects took place this year along with the on-going schedule of Garden naturalist led nature programming for the public and for organized groups like school groups, youth clubs, garden clubs and more. As occurs every year, rigorous garden care and enhancement was coordinated and implemented by Garden staff. Over 4,000 wildflowers, grasses, sedges, trees and shrubs were selected and added to the plant collections this season. All of this essential work, carried out by skilled Garden staff day in and day out, is thanks to the enduring commitment of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to provide on-going funding and support of this treasured and historic native plant garden and sanctuary for wild birds.

I would like to acknowledge the program

and project highlights from the past season that the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden were involved with. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these efforts. In early spring, before the Garden opened, phase two of the boardwalk project was completed in the wetland garden area. A public ribbon cutting ceremony was held in late April to recognize the generosity of the Friends and to celebrate this much anticipated addition to the Garden. Thank you to each and every Friends member who contributed to this meaningful project. The boardwalk has elevated the wetland garden experience in more than one way!



Susan Wilkins, Ann Godfrey, Tracy Godfrey, Steve Pundt and Sally Pundt view the MPRB improvements plan for the Garden presentation. Photo by Kathleen Connelly

The Friends continue to fund an important transportation grant that provides subsidized transportation to youth attending programs coordinated and led by Garden staff. This grant increases the accessibility of the Wildflower Garden experience to youth from schools who may otherwise find transportation costs to be a barrier. This program has served over four thousand youth in the community since its inception in 2009.

The Friends leadership for two vital volunteer programs at the Wildflower Garden, the Shelter Volunteer program and the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG), has contributed to the success and enhancement of the visitor experience. Thank you to Melissa Hansen, the Shelter Volunteer program coordinator and Jim Proctor and Kari Christianson who co-lead the FIAPG program, for your steadfast volunteer work. The Friends also support volunteers at the Wildflower Garden by hosting a beautiful volunteer appreciation banquet each autumn. The event has blossomed over the years and is the perfect way to acknowledge the contributions of the 80+ on-going Garden volunteers. It also

brings closure to and a sense of shared joy for the work carried out by Garden volunteers for the season that has just passed.

The Friends also funded two special planting projects to enhance Garden areas where extensive invasive plant removal work has been carried out by Garden staff in past years. This season 257 trees and shrubs were planted in both the wetland and woodland garden areas by Garden staff thanks to the generous donation of funds by the Friends. Staff are preparing, once again, for another meaningful year of work at the Wildflower Garden and to another season full of opportunities for visitors and volunteers to explore, enjoy, contribute and learn in this treasured public garden.

A heartfelt thank you for all that you do to support the Wildflower Garden.

This article appears courtesy of the MPRB.

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Magic In The Sky

By Diana Thottungal

Sundogs

This photo was taken on a cold day with lots of ice crystals high in the air. Like snow, ice crystals tend to have hexagonal shape, but, being composed of clear ice, act like prisms and break up the light. The reason they're called "dogs" is because they're paired, one on each side of the sun like a dog that follows his master.



Sundogs between Rochester and Twin Cities on December 18, 2010. By Diana Thottungal

Belt of Venus

Nothing to do with the planet Venus, this phrase refers to the pinkish glow just above the horizon. It shows up just a bit after sunset or before dawn, and, since it can be seen as a band, unlike a sunset cloud, it gets called a girdle. It's pinker and stronger in the winter, which makes it a nice winter nature event for those of us who prefer dawn to be later in the day. In mythology, the girdle of Venus, who was also known by the ancients as Aphrodite, was considered magical and inspired love.



Belt of Venus. By Diana Thottungal

Red Moon

On the night of November 8-9 of 2003 there was a total eclipse of the moon. It's no surprise that the bright full moon - it's always a full moon when there's an eclipse - gets darkened. The surprise is that it grows red. Wherever does that come from? The Earth



Red Moon. By Diana Thottungal

in fact is responsible. During totality the only light reaching the moon has passed through the Earth's atmosphere and gotten bent as happens with a prism. All that's left to reach the moon is the red part.

Rainbows

This lovely rainbow was spotted over the Garden in May of 2006 by Garden Naturalist Jodi Gustafson. Rainbows are magical enough all by themselves, but look again...there are two! And the sky between the two is darker than the sky on either side. Even more...the colors are reversed in the second (dimmer) rainbow. What's going on is that below the lower arc is where the sun is setting behind the person looking at the rainbow, so it makes sense that the sky is brighter. But what about between the bows? Where did that light go? Away! The bright rainbow is water droplets acting like prisms. The darker area between gets its own name, Alexander's band, and it is just that, the area where the light is escaping and not being reflected back to you as the viewer.

The reversal of colors in the dimmer rainbow results from the little raindrop prisms reflect the light twice, giving off a mirror effect.



Rainbow photographed outside Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden May 13, 2006. By Jodi Gustafson

Another tidbit to think about is how much brighter the right side is than the center. If you Google rainbow photographs, you can see that having one end brighter than the middle is not an infrequent occurrence. It may be the source of the "pot of gold at the end of the rainbow" legend, although that is usually attributed to the rainbow technically not having an end, since it is actually a circle cut off by the land.

Sunbeams

Those are cirrus clouds (the very high, sort of wispy ones) covering the sun and they give that impression, but, if you look carefully, there are a handful of sunbeams radiating out from the sun in the lower half of the picture. And there's even a tiny sundog. In the upper left. But the parallel white areas are those cirrus clouds aligned with the wind direction at their high altitude.



Sunbeams By Diana Thottungal



Elgin Botanic Garden, painter unknown.

American Eden: A Book Review

By Bruce Jarvis

American Eden: David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic
By Victoria Johnson

Have you ever wanted to see the musical “Hamilton” but never had the chance? Or perhaps you just like the music. Do you sometimes wonder if that scoundrel Burr could have had any friendships? It might surprise you to learn that the physician in reluctant attendance at that time of that infamous duel was actually a friend of both of them. He was also the founder of one of the first botanical gardens in America, an internationally-known botanist who trained in both Edinburgh and London, and a teacher of the Linnaean taxonomic system in the US. He was even a neighbor of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s great grandfather and much more. Surely, we must have heard of this luminary; but that is doubtful, unfortunately.

David Hosack, MD FRS was a tireless student, educator and promoter of botany, patron of the arts, and civic booster for the young New York City in the early to mid 1800s. His favorite flowering plant was the Boneset [*Eupatorium perfoliatum*], which was used to treat fevers, especially dengue, in an era before anyone understood the



David Hosack.

role of mosquitoes in carrying disease. At the time yellow fever, in particular, was rampant most summers in New York City. In fact, Hosack saved the life of one of Hamilton’s sons, Philip, by treating him with “Peruvian bark,” which was actually *Cinchona*, containing what we now know as quinine. The only pills available in that era were made locally by apothecaries, who ground up parts of plants to make a desired medicine.

Rather than depend upon an erratic supply of this Andean plant and numerous others in the pharmacopeia of early America, Hosack decided to obtain seeds or plants from his global network of contacts and then grow them in his Elgin Botanic Garden, which he funded entirely by himself. That

garden stood on the site of the present day Rockefeller Center and had a huge hot house [see figure] equipped with a heating system in order to raise tropical plants. There, he trained medical students from Columbia College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons [that later merged] in medicinal botany.

Hosack [Hosackia] personally knew the contemporary botanists, whom we now recognize in the names of various genera of plants: Banks [Banksia], Curtis [Curtisia], and Kalm [Kalmia], to name a few. Others are cited by the plants they discovered and were named after them, for example, Bartram and Michaux [Michx]. Hosack also played a crucial role in the transition from colonial America to a functioning republic of these United States. He founded numerous cultural and scientific organizations in New York City. He was the first to propose a national network of gardens for horticultural research, a vision not realized until the late 1800s with the USDA Agricultural Research Service. In a very real sense, his generation was to the practical start of early American institutions what the World War II generation was to the flowering of global democratic institutions of the 20th century.

If you want to expand your awareness of the history of our Republic as well as its botany, medicine and the arts, this fascinating book by Victoria Johnson, a scholar at Hunter College, provides a great read. Name any one of our nation’s well-known founders, and that person undoubtedly, at some point, turned to David Hosack for botanical advice.



The upper Garden in fall. Photo by Bob Ambler

Volunteering Growth

By Jim Proctor

As I write this I'm basking in the glow of one of the most rewarding, successful weeding events we've ever held. Over 20 volunteers came out to the woods of Wirth Park on a beautiful fall Sunday afternoon to pull and dig out buckthorn. I saw smiles everywhere on the faces of our regular volunteers and the family, friends, and out-of-town guests they brought with them.

The spot we chose on the upper edge of the valley we call the maple bowl, still has a lot of native shrubs and tree seedlings. Pagoda dogwood, grey dogwood, black cherry, choke cherry, and oak seedlings, all under a canopy of mature white oaks, will quickly fill the understory. We all enjoyed the enhanced view of this beautiful spot when we finished for the day. I'm so pleased that we have such good seed sources on site that will help naturally revegetate the lower slopes of the valley that are currently so bare due to recent buckthorn removal.

Together with the MPRB, the Friends began this project almost 15 years ago inside the Garden. Today we maintain a large area around the Garden, and we are expanding further into what we call the Volunteer Stewardship Area (VSA). If we continue to have such great participation, we hope to finish the initial clearing of buckthorn and garlic mustard in the maple bowl in two to three years. If the Friends can recruit enough volunteers to adopt these cleared areas, perhaps the work can even expand further.

There is great ecological value in creating a large contiguous area reserved for native plants. Greater planting area allows for more species, larger populations of those species, more room for them to shift as conditions change, and more chances for all the known and unknown interdependencies to occur that create rich habitat. This is our best bet to reverse some of the negative effects of habitat loss and fragmentation.

What began as an effort to protect a century of work and commitment to make Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary a haven for native species has grown into an attempt to create an even more significant landscape.

If I were to give it a name, I would call the Garden and the VSA the Greater Eloise Butler Nature Area." Official designation or not, we see the value of what we are doing every time we walk the garden and its surroundings. With everyone's support, we plan to protect and continue the progress we've made.

Thanks to all who have participated this year in helping us to reach these goals!

Jim Proctor has volunteered at the Garden for almost 20 years. He started the Friends volunteer invasive species weeding program 14 years ago, and has served on the Friends board much of that time. He can be found at other buckthorn busting events from time to time around the Cities as well. He is also an artist whose work incorporates acorns, nutshells, winged seeds, roots, thorns, and other plant materials to create fictional life forms.

Memorials & Donations

Memorials and donations to the Friends are tax deductible and constitute an important part of keeping the Garden a special place for generations of people to enjoy. In 2020 undesignated donations will be used for the Student Transportation Grant Program. Project update information is on The Friends web site. An acknowledgment of donation will be provided to all donors. Note on Memorials: Please give a name and address for the person honored, or their family, so that we can acknowledge to them that a memorial has been received. Memorials and donations should be sent to: 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 web site <https://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org>.

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Please consider a gift in your estate plan to benefit the Garden. Gifts to Friends of the Wild Flower Garden are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by Minnesota and federal law for gifts to charitable organizations. Friends of the Wild Flower Garden has been approved by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization since 1953.

Gifts can be made through your will, revocable living trust, retirement plan or life insurance. Leave a gift for the Garden in your will or revocable living trust by a provision such as "I give \$_____ to Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., to benefit the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden." Or name Friends of the Wild Flower Garden as a beneficiary of a portion of your life insurance or retirement account.

If you have questions, please call Friends Board member Steve Pundt at 612-333-1900 or email steven@pundtlaw.com. Thank you for helping us fulfill our mission to preserve and protect the Garden! 🌸

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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, established in

1907. The 15 acre site is located within the city of Minneapolis and is owned and operated by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. The Garden is open from April 1 through October 15 from 7:30 A.M. to a half hour before sunset. Weekends only October 15 to October 31.



Garden Naturalists Maia Campbell and Kara Snow with Friends board member Lauren Husting at the annual volunteer appreciation event October 27, 2019. Photo by Maggie Tuff.

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 or email address, please email or write Membership Coordinator Christi Bystedt at: membership@friendsofeloisebutler.org or mail to: Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Membership, P.O. Box 3793, Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793.

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