



Kids visit to
the Garden



President's Report Winter 2009

Dear Friends,

The 101st season of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary has come to a close, and we who love the Garden look back at 2008 with satisfaction and gratitude. Visitors, both veteran and neophyte, commented on the Garden's especially glorious beauty this past year. Garden Curator Susan Wilkins planted large numbers of new plants, some of which were funded by the Friends. Despite some bare spots where oaks were lost and large swaths of invasives were removed, fresh new life was apparent as fall approached. In October, the sight of the little Witch Hazel in bloom near the back gate was a lovely promise for the future.

Volunteers were very productive this past year under the excellent leadership of Ann Godfrey, who directed shelter-based volunteers, and Jim Proctor, who led the invasive plant removal efforts. Many volunteers are fellow Friends, and volunteer projects also provide an entry point for new members. The dedication of volunteers is at the heart of our work on behalf of the Garden.

In partnership with Curator Wilkins and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, we honored our volunteers at a gathering November 9. Invitees enjoyed refreshments while mingling with Garden staff members, Friends board members and each other. Many of those in attendance said they were looking forward to April, when they will be back at the Garden to continue their service.

The loyalty, hard work and valuable skills of the Friends board members are another source of satisfaction. Our Friends website maestro Gary Bebeau and Gentian editor Judy Remington have brought the Garden onto the internet and printed page both beautifully and informatively, sharing the Garden with more people than we ever thought possible.

I will introduce other board members in the future; at this time I want to acknowledge Joy Davis, who has been our membership chairperson since 1995, coordinating all aspects of new and renewing registrations, keeping the roster up to date and serving as our own lady of letters, staying in touch with many of you over the years. As you step down from this role in May, Joy, please accept our heartfelt thanks for all your good work and your devotion to the Garden and the Friends. You will be missed with sincere appreciation.

The Friends are looking ahead to the challenges and pleasures of the coming season. I'm especially excited about a new project to support opportunities for urban elementary school students. The Friends will help fund their transportation to the Garden for educational programs created and presented by the Garden's MPRB staff members. I welcome you to join us in making this happen. Your contributions will support new hands-on experiences and education in the natural world for students who would otherwise not have this opportunity.

We are working with the curator to maximize our resources to build and sustain robust plant communities. The funds we commit for new plantings are largely based on membership dollars; your support for the Friends constitutes a direct contribution to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. Thank you

Sincerely,
J. Pam Weiner, President



President's Report Spring 2009



Dear Friends,

Once again, we are glad to welcome spring and another season of beauty and wonder at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. I expect this 102nd year of our treasured Garden will bring both familiar pleasures and some new plants and birds to appreciate. The health and sustainability of the Garden are based on a balance of environmental stability and adaptive change, a principle common to all living things.

And so it is with the Friends and our activities. Some of our endeavors are continuations, while others are innovations. As usual, we will provide shelter volunteers, now under the able leadership of new volunteer coordinator Melissa Hansen, and invasive removal volunteers, led by weedbuster extraordinaire Jim Proctor. And, as we often do, we'll help sustain the plant communities in the Garden by donating funds for new specimens chosen by the curator. The lovely Gentian will come your way each season. As ever, we will promote the Garden and maintain an advocacy role in the community.

Our new initiative this season is a project designed to bring more urban students to the Garden. Board members Ann Godfrey and Gary Bebeau have developed the Garden Visit Program in cooperation with MPRB staff members. Minneapolis public school teachers who want to bring their students to the Garden can apply for transportation funding from the Friends. More information can be found on our website, www.friendsofeloisebutler.org.

Another 2009 focus for the Friends is increasing our membership. You can help by giving a gift membership this year when you renew—or at any time. We're happy to report that people now can join the Friends via our website.

We have a few openings on our board of directors. If you are interested in advancing the mission of the Friends by serving as a board member, please contact me through the website or at 612.377.3573. At the present time, we are actively seeking a new secretary. Please consider getting involved. The Friends need you!

And please join us for our annual meeting on Saturday, May 16, at the Wirth Park Pavilion. This is located across from the (free) Wirth Beach parking lot on the south side of Glenwood Avenue one block east of Wirth Parkway. The meeting starts at 10:00 a.m., but please come at 9:30 for refreshments and a chance to visit with other Friends. Directions are also available on our website. I hope your springtime pleasures will include the Garden and her Friends.

Sincerely,
J. Pam Weiner
President



President's Report Summer 2009



Dear Friends,

As I write in early June, our long-awaited rain is bringing relief from the dry days of May. In the Garden wetland, one clump of *Cypripedium reginae* has begun to bloom. Frequent calls to the Martha Crone Shelter request updates about the "showies." Visitors ask for help finding the right path. Some return in delight, to talk about the exquisite plant in our midst, while staff and volunteers keep tabs and speculate whether more clumps will appear. No matter how many showy Lady's Slippers we have seen before, it is always a wondrous experience.

Minnesota's state flower is a wet-foot-loving native orchid found in woodlands and swamps. The flower is mostly white, with a large pink slipper. Leaves are broad, with prominent veins and hairs that may cause a rash if touched. This native plant was once found throughout the Twin Cities, but the destruction of its habitat here and elsewhere has severely reduced population numbers.

According to Martha Hellander's book *The Wild Gardener* (p. 79), in a 1932 letter to Theodore Wirth, Eloise Butler wrote:

The showy Lady Slipper...is the crowning glory of the Preserve. It is endemic and has increased from year to year, so that there are now hundreds in large clumps making vistas of beauty through a marsh containing a few scattered tamarack....Visitors are so enraptured with the display in my garden that they feel like falling on their knees to worship them.

I close my eyes and conjure the magnificence of hundreds of these glorious orchids along the wetland path. Tomorrow I will stroll through the back gate and with great anticipation make my way to the one beautiful plant I saw yesterday. It is quite enough. I hope that you were able to make the late spring pilgrimage to see the "showies" this year. If not, put it on your calendar for next June!

Eloise had her favorite summer flowers as well. In July of her first year as official curator of the Wild Botanic Garden, she wrote in her weekly *Minneapolis Tribune* column about the calendar-worthy pasqueflower for April, violets for May, roses for June and lilies for July. About her summer favorites, Martha Hellander quotes her in *The Wild Gardener* (p. 134):

Of our native lilies, the Turk's-cap (Lilium michiganense), although not the lily of Palestine, may be said to surpass the glory of Solomon, as it is arrayed in recurved orange-red petals flecked with spots of purple. Sometimes as many as forty blossoms are borne on a single plant.

Troops of Black-eyed Susans boldly stare at roamers over the hillsides. As we return Susan's unblinking gaze we see that her eyes are a velvety, purplish brown instead of black. This cone-flower, Rudbeckia hirta, is a composite. The "eye" is made up of many small, tubular flowers, and each yellow eyelash is also a flower.

These plants and many more are summer bloomers at Eloise's Garden. The wild gardener herself would encourage you to seek out that which pleases you most while appreciating the whole. May your summer be filled with beauty!

Sincerely,
J. Pam Weiner
President



President's Report Autumn 2009



Dear Friends,

As the 2009 season of our special place comes to its conclusion, we can look back with satisfaction on several fronts: the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary is beautiful and healthy, the threat of invasive plants is being countered successfully both within and around the Garden fence and volunteer activity is strong, steady and effective. We can be proud that the Friends continue to contribute to many facets of the Garden's well-being, with funding, human effort, able coordination and advocacy.

One important aspect of our legacy of Garden stewardship has been revived this season in the form of our Student Transportation Grant Program, also known as the "bus fund." This effort, supported by responses to a special appeal to Friends members initiated last November, provides transportation funding for Minneapolis K-12 classes to facilitate their access to the Garden, where the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board naturalists present an age-appropriate curriculum and Garden tour.

Educators among us, as well as Park Board staff members, have stressed the need for this "bus fund"; many times it is transportation expense that keeps a class visit from happening, due to the schools' tight budgets and the families' financial limitations. Many of you have contributed to this endeavor; on behalf of the students and their teachers, we thank you.

The Friends have a long history of supporting educational opportunities in the Garden, with an emphasis on older students and continuing education for naturalists. We have also fostered the development of such educational materials as *The Wild Gardener* book and the current Garden guidebook. Our mission statement declares our purposes: "... to protect, preserve and promote the interests of the Garden 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.*

As you read and enjoy this issue of *The Fringed Gentian*, with its focus on nature and the young, I hope you will agree that our investment in helping students get to the Garden is a natural for the Friends. We can help provide environmental education in this wonderfully nearby, species-rich setting to students who may have little other experience of nature in their lives. We can help to prepare the generation that must secure the Garden's well-being in the years to come. And if a future Eloise Butler or Aldo Leopold is nurtured here, all the better.

Sincerely,
J. Pam Weiner
President