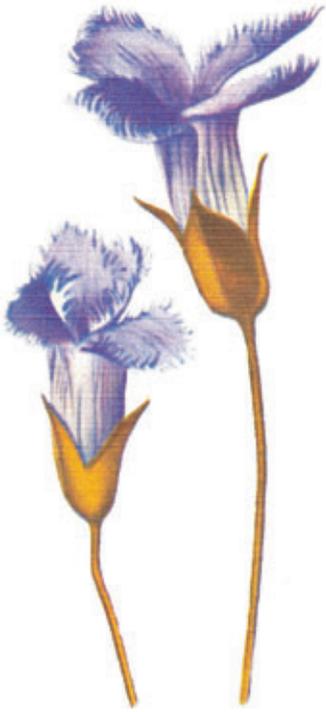


# THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

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



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### GARDEN CURATOR, EX OFFICIO

Susan Wilkins

**DEAR FRIENDS,** Another wonderful year has gone by at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. The Garden was as lovely as ever in 2010, with good spring rains providing ample moisture for the exquisite ephemerals and fabulous summer blooms.

An important step was taken this year when Curator Susan Wilkins and MPRB's MaryLynn Pulscher completed a five-year management plan for the Garden. This extensive document formalizes and details the activities that are necessary to sustain the health of the Garden. Based on an ecologically astute approach and a deliberate emphasis on the Garden's value to the community, this plan will be a conceptual and practical guide for staff members, volunteers and concerned users into the future.

The 2010 season was a robust year for volunteer activity. Strong teams of Shelter docents and invasive plants action group members contributed generously to the ethos of the Garden by enriching the experience of visitors and securing the health of native plant communities in and around the Garden. Extensive replanting of areas where invasive plants were removed took place this year, bringing scores of new wildflowers, woody plants and trees into the Garden habitats. The annual Volunteer Appreciation Event was well attended and much enjoyed by all. The Board is determined to demonstrate our gratitude to the loyal volunteers, whose time and effort are truly the backbone of the Friends commitment to the Garden. Friends board members are also volunteers, and their advocacy and initiative are essential to the Garden's ongoing status as a jewel of the Minneapolis park system.

The long-awaited reconfiguration of the Loppet ski trail away from the Garden's northeastern boundary was accomplished this fall. Friends past president Steve Pundt initiated this effort about eight years ago when the Loppet first appeared in

South Wirth. Several other individuals and groups also were instrumental in the achievement of this important change. MPRB's Michael Schmidt directed the process, and Andrea Weber, also of MPRB, lent her expertise. City of Lakes Nordic

Ski Foundation Executive Director John Munger was an active supporter of the

concept and a creative force on the required tasks. The Bryn Mawr

Neighborhood Association was supportive and very helpful

in keeping the community informed about the project.

Closer to home, Garden staff members were consistently

optimistic and patient about the multi-year wait for this

adjustment. A special thank-you goes to naturalist and birder

extraordinaire Tammy Mercer, whose knowledge of resident and

migratory raptors and songbirds and their

habitat requirements was and is an important impetus to help secure the buffer zone around the Garden as a preserve area.

The new trail alignment is situated much closer to the eastern boundary of South Wirth, so I wish to acknowledge and thank the neighboring Bryn Mawr residents, especially those on Xerxes Avenue, who will hear the grooming machines and encounter the ski racers much more than previously. They unselfishly supported this change out of concern for the integrity of the Garden and its immediate buffer zone.

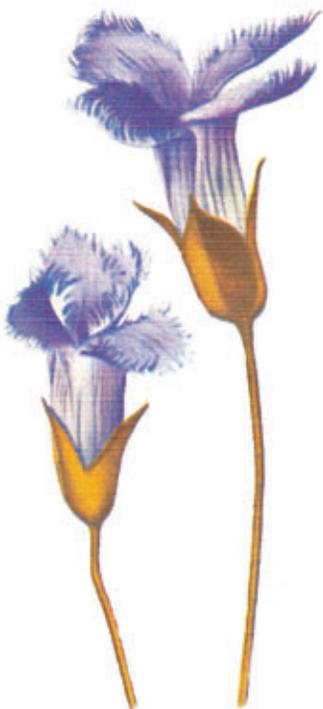
And so another season has ended, and we begin the anticipation of what next year will bring. On behalf of the Board, thank you for your membership, which allows us to work on behalf of the treasured "Wild Garden." Please accept our best wishes for a Happy New Year. ✨

J. PAM WEINER, PRESIDENT

Photo by Judy Remington

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## DEAR FRIENDS,

The anticipation of spring is a pleasurable kind of waiting, especially for those of us who mark our seasons in sync with the Garden.

Now the travails of this past winter are becoming a faint memory, as we thrill to the trout lilies, the trillium and the songs of spring migrants overhead. Every year we experience the same relief, but the wonders of warm sunshine and delicate green life always mark a rebirth. To complement these seasonal gifts, you will find much spring-themed pleasure in these pages.



I am excited to announce that the Friends Board of Directors has unanimously decided to initiate a fundraising campaign for the Cary George Wetland Project. Cary George was garden curator from 1987 to 2003. The project plan is to replace the bridge next to Mallard Pool and the nearby wooden walkways south of Lady's Slipper Lane. These trail segments are very much in need of restoration.

For Cary, as for Eloise, the wetland has been the heart of the Garden. The 1932 creation of Mallard Pool, originally a much larger feature, was Eloise's last creative effort in her Wild Garden. Near the end of her life, she fulfilled a long-lived dream of establishing an area of open water for "aquatics" and her beloved orchids, crossed by a rustic bridge of tamarack poles. (To see a photo of Eloise Butler on her bridge, visit [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org), click on

Eloise Butler in the left hand column and scroll down to the Last Major Project.)

We believe that this project in honor of our fourth gardener will be a testimonial to his service as well as to the founder and her vision. Project details will be sent to all Friends members, and complete information will be posted on our website, [friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://friendsofthewildflowergarden.org).

Please mark your calendars and join us for the Friends 2011 annual meeting. To welcome

a larger number of members to this informative and friendly event, we have set the date earlier and secured a larger venue. We will meet in Kenwood Park Center's Community Room, 2101 West Franklin Avenue (around the corner from Kenwood School), on Saturday, April 30, from 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Brief reports from board members and the latest from the curator will be accompanied by light refreshments. We would love to meet you and hear your ideas about improving our organization. Please contact me at 612.377.3573 or [drjpw@earthlink.net](mailto:drjpw@earthlink.net) if you have any questions about this event. Until then, see you in the Garden.

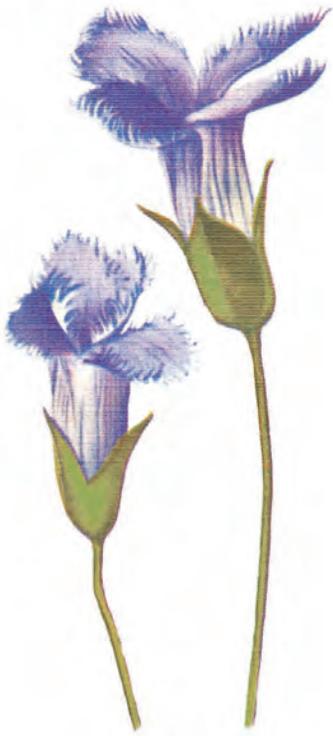
Happy Spring!

**J. PAM WEINER, PRESIDENT**

*Photo by Don Beimbom*

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Susan Wilkins

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Summer is a time of abundant blooms and rich deep colors at the Garden. There are the blues and purples of the prairie asters, sunny swaths of yellow composite flowers... the deep shade of the woodland under the maples, with cool green ferns above the wild ginger carpet...the treasures of the wetland, after the showy ladyslipper fades... acres of jewelweed and the ancient water horsetail with the feathery tamarack branches overhead...I hope you will visit to see these wonders.

Some years, summer is a time of recovery too. On May 22, a tornado ravaged parts of Wirth Park and some neighborhoods to the north. Coming from the west, it ripped through the intersection of Glenwood and Theodore Wirth Parkway and felled many trees around the Garden. Parkboard crews worked long hours to clear debris and provide safe roads and pathways in the South Wirth area, and the Garden reopened on June 4. Inside the gates, damage was mild, but this has not always been the case. In the mid-1920s, tornadoes were plentiful around Minneapolis. In the fall of 1925, Eloise wrote about that year's season:

*A MOST UNUSUAL SEASON – spotted, indeed, if due to sun spots. In April, very hot weather that unduly stimulated vegetation. Then late frosts – ice forming May 26 – that nipped aspiring flower buds. Some things were frozen four times. Therefore, no wild grapes, no May apples, nor several flowers. During May, heavy rains and cold weather, so that we said, “We’ll not complain when the sun roasts us.” June 2 a tornado swooped upon us from the northwest, uprooting*

*trees and laying everything flat with wreckage. ... The damages cannot be repaired in years. Through August and not yet fairly broken, the most protracted drought ever recorded in Minnesota. The hillsides in the Reserve have suffered severely, but the asters are holding their own fairly well. The usual crop of mushrooms is a complete failure.*



Eloise reports losing many tamaracks in the wetland during those years. With their wide, shallow root systems, suitable for their preferred boggy base, they have been difficult to establish securely over the years, challenging the Garden's curators up to the present time. Fortunately, none of these lovely specimens was lost in this storm. Now that the tornado clean-up is nearly complete in the Garden, the Friends can focus on our 2011 goal: The Cary George Wetland Project – which will replace the boardwalks and bridge in the wetland area.

This project was created in honor of our fourth gardener, who was dedicated to the wetland and its plants, including the sensitive tamaracks. You can expect a strong, beautiful installation that will give many years of service. To date, we have raised almost a third of our \$15,000 goal. Please visit [friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) for more about the plan and give generously to help us fulfill our mission of substantive assistance to the Garden.

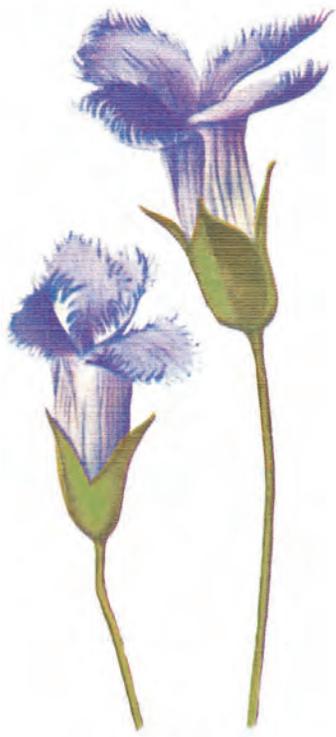
Sincerely,

J. PAM WEINER, PRESIDENT

photo by Don Beimbom

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Susan Wilkins

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Verlaine and Yeats found melancholy at the heart of autumn, but I must protest. Is it not a time of true loveliness? The ripeness of the harvest bounty, the brilliance of the turning leaves, the sunny days followed by cool, clear evenings ... it's just about perfect. If one is so fortunate as to have loved school as a youngster, those first weeks with a new class and new material (and maybe even a new outfit) were full of stimulation and discovery.

To best appreciate the Garden in the fall, Eloise instructs: *...we must turn to the floodplains and meadows still glorious in the white, blue and gold of the moisture-loving asters, gentians, lobelia and sunflowers, tricked out here and there with the deep red of the cardinal flower—the purest red found in nature.* I hope you have been to the Garden to see these colors for yourself.

As well as being so delightful, fall is the season when the Friends' time in the Garden begins to wind down. It's a time to celebrate the months just past when we walked the trails, enjoying the plants and birds. It's also a time to recognize the people who made a difference this year.

Along with Curator Susan Wilkins, we will host our annual event in honor of the dedicated volunteers who have served the Garden and the visitors, including Melissa's shelter docents, Jim and Ellen's invasive plant removal corps and the legacy stewards who protect their Garden plots with tender care. Naturalists and interns will be our special guests, and some of us will share our favorite stories from the 2011 season at the Garden.

Not all the remembrances will be about flora and fauna ... (Did you see that triple stroller on the woodchip path? How about those sunbathers in the prairie?)



We remain focused on the fulfillment of the Cary George Wetland Project, restoring the bog footpaths in the northwest quadrant of the Garden and commemorating the service of the fourth Gardener. At the present time, the Friends have raised about \$6,000 toward the project. Board member Emily Anderson is spearheading our maiden voyage into the land of fundraising beyond our membership. We will submit several grant

requests to appropriate foundations this fall, hoping to receive additional funds for this most worthwhile Garden improvement in tribute to Cary. But you, our members, are still our best resource. Please consider a contribution, even a second one, to help us reach our goal of \$15,000. More details can be found on our website, [friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://friendsofthewildflowergarden.org). If you have questions, I welcome your call (612.377.3573) or email ([drjpw@earthlink.net](mailto:drjpw@earthlink.net)).

May your fall season be a lovely time of beautiful colors and other delights!

Sincerely,

J. PAM WEINER, PRESIDENT

photo by Don Beimbom