

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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THE GARDEN IN MID-WINTER

Even though this midwinter report is of the fall that is just past, I must admit that my thoughts are on next spring: on the condition of the plants now dormant beneath the snow and on their potential for next year. I am optimistic. I question my own optimism some, however, as we experienced a severe drought in late summer and many of our perennials went dormant earlier than usual, but I believe that there was sufficient moisture through the fall and early dormancy is one of the devices nature has built into its own plants to allow them to survive periods of drought.

One indication we have of the soil moisture in the Park is the flow of the water in the spring which I have mentioned in my previous reports. If you remember last year, the spring dried up in midsummer and then started to flow again in mid-November. This year it also dried up in midsummer and this fall I kept a faithful vigil to see when it would run again. It was not yet running when we left the Garden on December 1. At that time, however, I found by pushing a stick into the pipe that the water was less than two inches from the top. On December 5, my wife and I stopped at the Park to fill the bird feeders there and found a trickle of water coming from the pipe at the spring. By Christmas Day the trickle had increased to a significant little stream. It seems obvious that the area's water table has become progressively lower for the last decade or two, but it has remained quite constant for the last year or two so it may have reached, or at least be approaching, its lowest point.

The weather this fall was both good and bad for us in preparing the Garden for the winter season. There are some tasks that must be finished before the ground freezes or the snow falls and this fall was particularly good for those tasks. Since the ground remained unfrozen under the snow for so long, we simply couldn't complete those few things that demand frozen earth and I do wish that I could return for a week to finish them.

There has been some talk in the last few years of keeping the Garden open throughout the entire year since an increasing number of people use the area in the winter. I have felt that if I did stay in the Garden I could contribute a service to our public in keeping the paths open from the parking areas and performing other

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necessary chores. As a small experiment in this direction, I borrowed the garden tractor from the nursery and opened the paths after the snows of late November, and I have received some favorable comments from people who regularly walk in the Park.

Kenneth E. Avery

Curator of the Garden

POTENTIALITY

Covering, hiding, quietly waiting
Smooth or rough, or flying with wings
Little white flowers, and round crimson apples
Oak trees and violets in all the seed things.

In silence, in patience,
In unbirth, in quiet
Great golden pumpkins,
The tree and grass weed
Are hiding, are waiting
In covering seed.

Wait in dark quiet
Wait the Warm sod
In stillness, in patience
Wait the sun god.
Bide till the time comes
Wait for the June time,
Flower and fruit time
Wait till the need,
Long denied to be freed
Breaks open at last
The dark little seed.

Laura Wilson Stewart
1910-1971

COMMON WILD FLOWERS OF MINNESOTA ** A BOOK REVIEW

A compact treasure of information about 300 species of our native wild flowers is contained in "Wommon Wild Flowers of Minnesota" published recently by Minnesota Press.

The introduction, including a county map, and descriptions are by Gerald B. Ownbey, Professor of Botany at the University of Minnesota. Pen and ink drawings of each are well done by Wilma Monserud, formerly artist for the Botany Department at the University. Each flower is given one page with its sketches, approximate size, description and general or specific place where it is seen.

Within each of two large divisions of flora, monocotyledons and dicotyledons, the families are arranged and indexed alphabetically as are also the genera together with each species within the family. The index contains the common as well as the Latin names which makes the book valuable not only to advanced students of Botany but to the nature hobbyist wanting to add to his fund of acquaintance with wild flowers after botanizing or birding on woody paths or river banks.

The 300 most common and conspicuous were chosen by Mr. Ownbey from a known 1800 species extant in our area. The herbarium at the University, assembled over a period of 80 years, was the principal source used to determine the distribution of each species.

The drawings show the habitual appearance of the entire plant, sometimes including the root structure, detail of flowers, leaves, seed or berry. There is also a page of diagrammatic sketches giving the names of all plant parts, as well as a complete glossary of botanic terms used in the text.

The book is a hardback, done on good paper and too heavy to be used as a field guide, but rather as a reference authority in the home.

It is good to know that, according to Mr. Ownbey, no plant species has been exterminated in Minnesota in modern times, though some have become rare. This may be emphasized by the fact that the book lists, for instance, 43 members of the Composite family, 14 of the Orchid and 18 of the Lily family. We are indeed fortunate to have not only the plants available to us, but accurate information about them.

Review by Mrs. Harold Langland

Since our last issue, one new Friend as joined our ranks:

Miss Alice A. Benjamin Minneapolis

With the approach of our spring season, would each of you try to interest your friends in our organization. Perhaps you could share your Gentian with them, tell them what a treasure we have in The Garden, and how they, too, may help perpetuate this lovely spot.

SYMPATHY

Two of our Friends have left us, Ruth Hawkins of Excelsior and Mr. Archie D. Walker of Minneapolis. Mr. Walker had been a member since 1952. Our sympathy is extended to their families.

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Friends of Mrs. Martha Crone will be happy to know that she is gaining strength slowly, and just recently has been able to take her car out for an airing. She is looking forward to returning to her beloved North Shore.

Cay Faragher, our past president, is recovering from still another operation, and has had her crutches put in the basement where she hopes they will stay.

THE HAWKS

Final count of the hawk migration on Hawk Hill in Duluth is not available because Dr. P. B. Hofslund left November 11 for a months stay at Midway Island. However, September 18 was the Minnesota Ornithological Union official hawk count day and the total that one day was 19,000.

Midway Island, where Dr. Hofslund has gone is famous for its albatross population. The albatross wanders the ocean but always returns to its favorite nesting site. He's an interesting fellow, he can, with a wind of only 10 knots, cruise 250 miles a day and circle the globe in 80 days. (Information supplied by Koni Sundquist of the Duluth Bird Club.)

It's not too early to think about being a volunteer in the Martha Crone Shelter at the Garden. The duties are simple, but very pleasant. If interested you may call the secretary, Mrs. Mildred Olson, 825-1464.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR