

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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



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Susan Wilkins

**DEAR FRIENDS,**

Spring greetings! How fine it is to feel the earth warming up, as the days grow longer and brighter. We can forget our snarky, weak winter: it just doesn't matter anymore. Now we have so much to anticipate and appreciate, starting with the search for the earliest ephemerals peeking out of the ground.

This can become a spiritual quest for some of us. Thoreau said, "It will take you half a lifetime to find the earliest flower." And he would surely consider it pure pleasure to spend the time in doing so, even if an actual sighting of flora or fauna remains unachievable. "I hear the hyla (toad) peep faintly several times.... He is the first of his race to awaken to the new year and pierce the solitudes with his voice. He shall wear the medal for this year. You hear him but you will never find him. He is somewhere down amid the weathered sedge and alder bushes there by the water's edge, but where?" (Journal entry, April 1856) And we are left wondering, perhaps sensing that an answer is not important to the nature-loving plant pilgrim, toad-seeker or dedicated birder.

A related kind of dedication inspires the Friends' plans for our 60th year. Our long-term goals remain the same: to secure the well-being of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary with financial assistance, volunteer corps and support for educational programs. A major focus for 2012 is the replenishment of the Student Transportation Grant Fund, which pays for buses to bring students to the Garden for nature-based programming. Hundreds of young people have benefited from this program the past couple of years; its success has depleted the fund, and we are committed to continuing the program into the future. This year we are raising funds with a special event that brings Garden aficionados, old and new, together to celebrate our 60th anniversary, while helping to sustain an important program for our community.

The Friends Garden Party will be held on Sunday, July 22, at the Wirth Park Pavillion above Glenwood Avenue and the south beach of Wirth Lake, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. There will be light summer refreshments, tours of the Garden, other entertainments and a silent auction of items reflecting the spirit and history of the Garden and the Friends. Tickets for the event (\$20, tax-deductible) will be available at [friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) and at the door. We are hoping that every Friends member who attends will bring a friend who is new to the Garden, so that our network of support can be expanded. Members will receive a postcard reminder about this fundraising celebration in June.



Other priorities for the Friends in 2012 include an in-depth review of our financial health and the development of a plan to shift into more web- and internet-based communication, with a reduction of costly printed-and-mailed *Gentian* issues annually. We will also apply ourselves to generating more grant appeals to supplement membership-based income, with a focus on providing more assistance for invasive plant work in South Wirth adjacent to the Garden.

Finally, please join us at our Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, May 19, at 10:30 a.m. in the Community Room at the Kenwood Park Center, 2101 West Franklin, Minneapolis. We will make you most welcome and greatly appreciate your participation.

Wishing you a lovely spring,

Sincerely,

**J. PAM WEINER, PRESIDENT**

*Trientalis borealis* photo by Don Beimbom



## A Note From Susan Wilkins GARDEN CURATOR

The seasonal wheel has turned again. Spring is here, with all of her delicacies and delights, including the unlocked gates at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.

The Wildflower Garden's 105th season is now underway. A great number of wonderful plantings, new projects and dynamic programs are planned. Here are a few highlights.

- Trees, shrubs, wildflowers, sedges and ferns will be planted on both sides of Violet Way trail this spring, thanks to the generosity of the Friends.
- Two Step-Up Teen interns will be on staff this season to assist with gardening tasks and youth programs.
- Art in the Garden events will take place on Saturdays, June through August, in partnership with the Minneapolis Institute of Art.
- The June 16-17 Urban Birding Festival will include many family-focused birding programs and activities at the Wildflower Garden and in Theodore Wirth Park.
- Conservation Corps of Minnesota (CCM) will be assisting staff members with invasive species removal periodically throughout the season. In addition, the CCM crew will be teaching a group of young people from North Minneapolis about invasive plants. Sessions will take place in the classroom and the Garden.
- Several special classes will be offered, including Wildflower Photography, Gardening with Native Plants, Plant Taxonomy and Families, and Medicinal Plants of the Garden.
- Honeybees will be housed at the Wildflower Garden, and pollinator-focused programming will be offered to the public.

To find out more about current and future happenings at the Garden, visit [www.minneapolisparcs.org/ebwg](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/ebwg).

We look forward to seeing you at the Wildflower Garden soon!

## Green Herons



*Text and photo by Tammy Mercer*

Every Saturday morning a group of birders wanders the prairies, forests and wetlands in and around the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. One old friend we always look for in marshy wetlands is the green heron.

Relatively smaller and with shorter legs than other herons, the green heron is roughly the size of a crow. It can be tricky identifying this heron because when in flight or hunting for food, it scrunches up its neck and looks like a much more compact bird. But when it strikes out at its prey, you will see that its neck is really much longer.

This bird used to be called the green-backed heron. On a cloudy day or while in the shade, it just looks like a dark bird. But when the sun strikes its back feathers, they are iridescent bluish-green. The neck, chest and lower face are a rich chestnut brown, and the crown is a bluish-black. When irritated or threatened, green herons raise their crest.

Unlike other herons, they nest in loose colonies or alone. They may also nest near another heron or egret rookery. They build a rough stick nest in a tree or shrub, usually near water. Both parents incubate eggs and

feed their young by regurgitating partially digested food.

Green herons do not sing, but when startled into flight they emit a short, gruff "skeow."

Green herons sometimes use a small twig, feather, or insect as bait to catch fish! They will arrange their bait on the surface of the water and wait patiently for a fish or frog to investigate. Then they spring forward to grasp or stab their prey.

I hope you will join the Early Birders on our Saturday morning walks and enjoy the many birds of forest, prairie and wetland.

*—Tammy Mercer leads Saturday morning bird walks at the Wildflower Garden.*

### REFERENCES:

- Dunne, Pete. 2006. *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion*. Houghton Mifflin Company. NY, NY.
- Eastman, John. 1999. *Birds of Lake, Pond and Marsh*. Stackpole Books. Mechanicsburg, PA.
- Janssen, Robert B., Daryl D. Tessen, Gregory Kennedy. 2003. *Birds of Minnesota and Wisconsin*. Lone Pine Publishing. Auburn, WA.

# Liz Anderson: A Calling To Be Outside

By Donna Ahrens

When Liz Anderson retired in 2009, after 27 years with the Hennepin County Library System, she had no ready answer to the inevitable question from friends: “What are you going to do now?”

Liz recalls that though she hadn’t quite found the answer, “I was determined to let the game come to me.” It has—and the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden has been a major beneficiary of her decision. Over the past few years, she has stepped up her volunteer work with the Garden, joining the Legacy Volunteer Program and taking on a leadership role with the Friends Invasives Plant Action Group.

Liz had been a frequent visitor to the Garden since the early 1990s, when she bought a house in neighboring Bryn Mawr. Over time, the Garden became a peaceful retreat from a demanding work pace, and a place for meditation and reflection.

Soon after she retired, Liz enrolled in the Master Naturalist program offered by the UofM Extension Service in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The program opened the door to a deep love of and fascination with the natural world. “I realized how much of my life had been spent with a roof overhead, and that where I seemed to want to be, in retirement, was outside,” she recalls.

When she heard about the Legacy Volunteer Program that the Garden was launching, she jumped at the chance to participate. Each legacy volunteer is responsible for a small, designated section of the Garden and commits to removing all of the invasive species in that section for the season. Garden Curator Susan Wilkins trains the volunteers and oversees the project. Liz says a high point has been the relationships she’s developed with Susan and the Garden naturalists:

“They’re incredibly knowledgeable and always happy to share what they know.”

She describes the legacy plot work as “very much seasonal. The two major things we’re looking for are garlic mustard and buckthorn. With garlic mustard, there’s about a two-month window, May and June—the exact time of year that you want to be outside.” She takes a



*Sometimes I’m working in my plot, and I look up and think, ‘Oh my gosh, I get to do this!’*

break during the hottest part of the summer and then zeroes in on buckthorn in the fall, coordinating work on her plot with the invasive group’s buckthorn removal sessions.

“As a legacy steward, you’re trying to just create enough of a healthy environment so that the plants can do their own thing,” she says. “The special thing about it is that you are making it possible for them to recover and thrive.”

Just two seasons into the legacy program, Liz has seen the rewards of her work. “In 2010, I was there probably five or six hours a week—really flat-out working—for the six or eight weeks of garlic mustard season. What was amazing was that the second year, [the garlic mustard removal work] was no more than half that. And that’s a sign of success.”

Last September, she joined a group of volunteers who spent the day planting more than 200 native trees and shrubs in the buffer zone and legacy plots. Colorful flags designated the various plants. Liz describes the experience as “inspirational, really, seeing my plot fill up where there hadn’t been much there before. It had been choked with buckthorn and garlic mustard, and now there are all these beautiful pink and green and yellow flags, where these new plants will grow. It brought me to tears.”

In addition to caring for her plot, Liz has volunteered for years with the invasive plant group at the Garden. In 2010, she became a co-chair, joining Friends board members Jim Proctor, who had long coordinated the Invasives program, and Ellen Lipshultz. “We hear so much about how you can’t be successful in keeping buckthorn out,” she says. “But we’ve seen here, you can be successful—because it’s a small enough area and because of the incredible determination” of her co-chairs. “It’s been a wonderful thing to do,” she adds.

Reflecting on her volunteer experiences with the Wildflower Garden, Liz comments, “I think some people have a calling to be outside, by yourself, and that’s how it was for me. Sometimes I’m working in my plot, and I look up and think, ‘Oh my gosh, I get to do this!’ I wonder, how am I going to give back to this place—because it just keeps on giving to me.”

By letting the post-retirement “game” come to her, Liz has discovered meaningful ways to give back to the Garden—and to witness the success of her dedicated efforts.

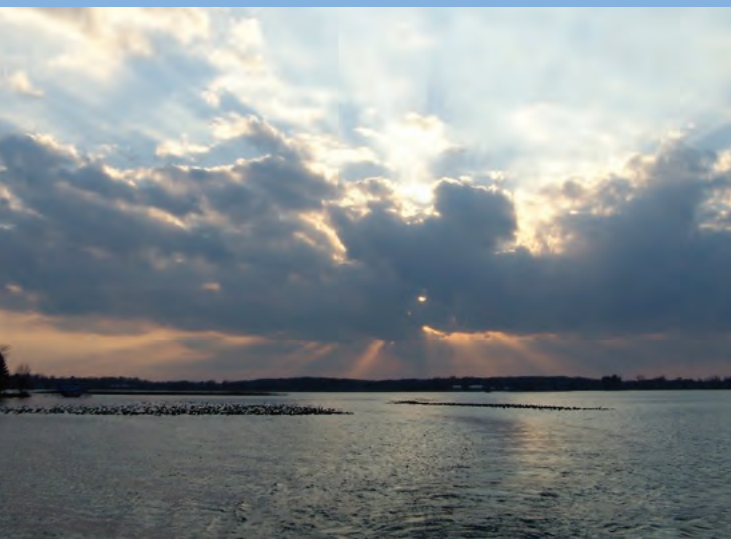
— Donna Ahrens is a member of the Friends board of directors.

# Cloudy Thinking

By Diana Thottungal

... to sail beyond the sunset, and the  
baths of all the western stars...

– Alfred Lord Tennyson



These dark clouds are cumulus, not cumulonimbus. They are dark because the sun is behind them, not because they're producing rain. And, just to spoil the enchantment of their appearance, the sunbeams are called crepuscular rays. Worse yet, sunbeams don't radiate as this picture seems to show. They're parallel, but originate from so far away they seem to meet at a distant point (in this case, the sun), sort of like railroad tracks in a photograph.



This was a miniature rainstorm over Wirth Lake in October 1991. Lower left: basic cumulus; center: cumulonimbus with rain; lower right: anvil cloud.

In warm weather, there's nothing quite like lying on your back and looking up at the clouds. Infinite in shape and color, they inspire relaxation, poetic thought and, in some, an urge to classify.

The relaxation has to be gotten firsthand, but I can help with the classification. To begin: What is a cloud? Mostly it's water, in either liquid or solid form. The high, wispy *cirrus* clouds are made of ice, and the lower, rain-producing clouds are made of the water they're dumping all over us.

But here's a surprise: many clouds contain bacteria that act as "seeds" on which the rain droplets grow. And one kind, *Pseudomonas syringae*, which lives on crop plants, spreads itself this way. To help itself along, it produces a chemical that makes water freeze at above normal freezing temperatures. When the ice particles hit (and damage) crop plants, the bacteria have found a new home and source of food. And that's just one example of many.

Anything else besides water and bacteria? Dust. A dull sky that has no excuse (like fog or rain) is probably a dusty sky, with much of the dust in the clouds as well as free floating. If the dust is from a volcano, the particles float very high and can produce spectacular sunset light and clouds.

If you're interested in learning more, the best resource I can suggest is *The Weather Wizard's Cloud Book* by Louis D. Rubin and Jim Duncan (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1989). Almost as good, and a great supplement, is *The Cloud Collector's Handbook* by Gavin Pretor-Pinney (Chronicle Books, 2011).

As for classification, in 1803 Luke Howard invented a system with only three basic kinds of cloud and broke that up into three heights at which they are seen. It's still in use, and here is my handy-dandy, super-easy key based on that:

## Three Kinds of Clouds

This picture of the sky over a prairie very cooperatively shows the three basic forms of cloud.

Lower left: stratus  
Center: cumulus  
Center to upper right: cirrus.



## PHOTOS:

All photos are by Diana Thottungal, except "Sunset Over Water" (above) by Pegi Palmes and "Sky Over Prairie" (right) by Judy Remington.

NEXT TIME: Some spectacular, unusual and weird clouds.

### Three Basic Kinds of Cloud

*Cumulus*: lumpy, puffy and bumpy.

*Stratus*: elongated and/or featureless.

*Cirrus*: high and relatively wispy or thin enough that the sun gets through fairly well.

Of course, as for many plants, there are hybrids at the borders. For instance, a *cirrus* cloud that is slowly sinking becomes a *cirrostratus*. What it does best, since it's pretty boring and featureless to look at all by itself, is form haloes around the sun and, if there's not too much wind to disturb the hexagonal ice particles, sundogs.

### Sorting Out the Varieties

#### CLOUDS IN THE SKY

If it's raining, is there thunder and lightning, or at least some heavy rain?

If yes, then the clouds are *Cumulonimbus*.

If no, then the clouds are *Nimbostratus*.

If it's not raining, if the clouds are:

High, wispy? Then they're *Cirrostratus*.

Not wispy? Then they're:

*Cumulus* if they're puffy and bumpy;

*Cirrocumulus* if they're small;

*Alto cumulus* if they're medium;

*Cumulonimbus* if they're large.

*Stratus* if they're elongated or uniformly covering the sky with features muted to non-existent.

*Nimbostratus* if they're gray or opaque. They may produce bits of rain but no thunder or lightning; low in the sky.

*Altostratus* if they're gray to gray-blue with muted features; sun can be seen.

#### CLOUDS NOT IN THE SKY

If the clouds surround you, then it's fog.

Naturally, there are lots of Latinate subdivisions like *spissatus*, *uncinus*, *perlucidus*, which I'll conveniently ignore.

*Diana Thottungal is a naturalist at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.*



*Orderly ranks of altocumulus clouds that no one writes poetry about because they're so neat they look artificial.*

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,  
A travelling flake of snow  
Across a barn or through a rut  
Debates if it will go.

—Emily Dickinson



*These are the gloomy drizzle clouds. The clouds in the picture are actually stratocumulus. Pure stratus show virtually no structure or shading.*



*Air moving from west (right) to east carries moisture which mountains cause to precipitate out, forming cumulus clouds.*

*Sometimes one of the cluster breaks away, as seen below.*



I wandered lonely as a cloud that  
floats on high o'er vales and hills...

—William Wordsworth

## Invasive Plant Action Group

Winter was not as quiet as usual for the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG). Our coordinators walked the buffer zone outside the Garden several times, taking stock of our progress and planning this year's activities. In mid-February, Garden Curator Susan Wilkins, Friends President J. Pam Weiner and FIPAG representatives Jim Proctor, Ellen Lipschultz and Liz Anderson met with MPRB's Marcia Holmberg to discuss strategies for our continuing collaboration on invasive species removal in South Wirth Park and around the Garden.

In 2010, a two-phase strategy was launched in the buffer zone, and we're seeing good results from it. The FIPAG volunteers do the first phase—the initial, intensive clearing of invasive plants—area by area. Once an area has been cleared, it is ready for phase two work by legacy volunteers, who keep it clear of returning invasive plants. We're finding that a single legacy volunteer can successfully maintain a large area that took intensive work by many volunteers to clear initially. The progress is real, the results visible.

Most of the buffer zone on the west side of the Garden (to the left of the front gate) is now under the stewardship of legacy volunteers. Take a walk that way and see the colorful flags marking the new trees and shrubs planted last September. On the east side, the FIPAG volunteers, aided by groups of corporate, church and other volunteers, made good progress last year. In 2012, we will continue on the east side, working toward the back gate. Our goal is to finish what remains of the first intensive clearing. It's both ambitious and possible, and will be the culmination of many hours of work over numbers of years.

This spring we have scheduled six events for garlic mustard removal:

- Saturday April 21, 2:00-4:00
- Saturday May 12, 10:00-12:00
- Sunday April 29, 2:00-4:00
- Sunday May 20, 2:00-4:00
- Saturday May 5, 2:00-4:00
- Sunday June 3, 2:00-4:00

## Guidelines

- Come for as much or as little time as you have. We provide snacks about halfway through the work.
- Follow the signs at either Garden gate to the pull site.
- The Garden has a small, metered lot. You can also park along the road leading up to and away from the Garden.
- Wear appropriate shoes and clothes that can get dirty. We supply gloves.
- If weather is questionable, call the Shelter at 612-370-4903 during the hour before the event.
- If you can help, please let us know so we can plan. Contact us at our email address: [invasives@friendsofeloisebutler.org](mailto:invasives@friendsofeloisebutler.org).

Please join us in this rewarding effort. And bring a friend! It's a very pleasant way to spend an hour or two outdoors in beautiful surroundings.

Additional volunteer information is available at [friendsofeloisebutler.org](http://friendsofeloisebutler.org). Thanks!

– Jim Proctor, Ellen Lipschultz, Liz Anderson,  
Invasive Plant Action Group Co-chairs

## Memorials and Donations to the Friends

### Memorials Received

- For Jane Selfridge Anquist from  
Melissa Hansen
- For Dorothy Hemmerling from  
Wendy Hughes
- For Shelley Kraines from  
Jerrold Gershone
- For Doris Pearl Martin from  
Mary Tyson
- For Helen DeLong Woodward from  
Karol Gresser
- In honor of Larry Gravitz from  
Elana Gravitz
- In honor of Ann Lebens from  
Mary & Matt Abbott
- In honor of Sharon Bobgan from  
Michael T. Anderson

- Community Foundation of Sarasota Cty  
from the Elizabeth B. Cole and Wm.  
H. Roe Charitable Foundation Fund
- Hilda Gasiorowicz
- Janet and Cary George
- Jeffery Haines
- Jeremy Nichols
- John Benson
- Judith Morgan
- Julie M. Larsen
- Kathy Julius
- Marie Vorlicky
- Mary Jane Pappas
- Mary Jo Schifsky
- Mary Louise Mathison
- Mary Stanley
- Michael Welch & Elaine Eschenbacher

Your 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 2012 your gifts are designated for the Cary George Wetland Project if you choose that project; otherwise, they are used for the purchase of wildflowers, small shrubs and ferns for Violet Way and for canopy and understory trees for the Woodland Garden. Project update information is on the Friends website.

Memorials and gifts are tax-deductible. When sending a memorial, please provide the name and address of the family being honored so 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, 2433 Sheridan Hills Curve, Wayzata MN 55391. Checks are payable to: Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Or donate at [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org).

– Gary Bebeau, memorial chair

### Gifts Received

in support of our programs from  
Arlene Alm

## Website Notes

Our website has been active for four years. Thanks to many of you for browsing the site and using it to renew your membership and make donations. The monthly page views this past year were 95% above the prior year. The quarterly "History of the Garden and the Friends" continues with the Spring seasons of 1912, 1937, 1962, 1987 and 2002. The history of 17 past years is now archived on the site. We are in need of copies of *The Fringed Gentian*<sup>TM</sup> for the years 1973 to 1995 to scan for the site archive. If you have any of these and can spare them for a month, please let us know. Access the site from either [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) or [www.friendsofeloisebutler.org](http://www.friendsofeloisebutler.org).

– Gary Bebeau, website coordinator



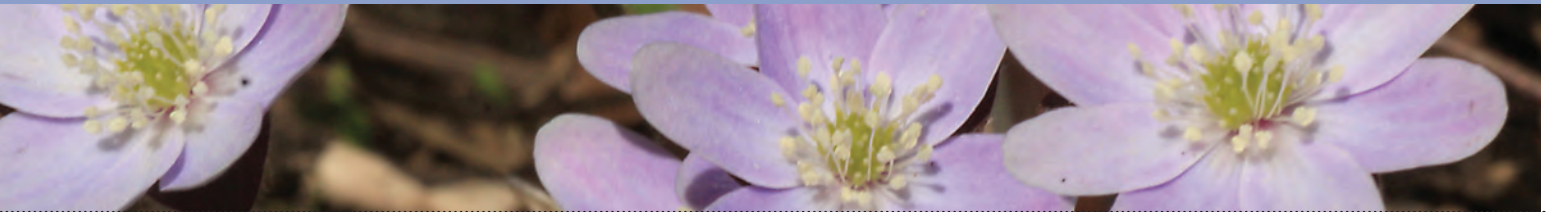
The Urban Birding Festival is organized by the St. Paul Audubon Society. For more information on the festival and the activities at other sites visit the city of St. Paul website at [www.stpaul.gov](http://www.stpaul.gov) or follow this link: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=4813>

# June 16 and 17

## Theodore Wirth Park and Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

- Binoculars and how to use them
  - Bird Game Trail
- Spotting scopes with Naturalists available to talk to
  - Bird x Bird art display
  - Touch and See table
- Birding by ear and by canoe
- Birding basics and walks
- Family projects and story time

OUR WEBSITE: [FRIENDSOFTHEWILDFLOWERGARDEN.ORG](http://FRIENDSOFTHEWILDFLOWERGARDEN.ORG)



## Membership Form

Individual \$15     Family \$25     Sponsor \$100     Life \$500     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships can be ordered online at [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) or mailed with a check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
Membership  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

*Please specify if the membership is a gift.  
Each membership is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Donation Form

Donations of gifts or memorials may be made at [www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org) or mailed with a check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

In Honor/Memory of:  
\_\_\_\_\_

*All gifts are tax-deductible.*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Also Acknowledgement to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for helping to sustain the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.*

## THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793  
[www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit  
Organization  
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Permit No. 90251

*The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary is comprised of 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.*



*Snow Trillium photo by Don Biemborn*

*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 quarterly for members and supporters of the Friends. The editor is Judy Remington, who welcomes your comments and suggestions at [judy@temenosgardens.com](mailto:judy@temenosgardens.com) or 612.377.4491. For changes to your mailing address for *The Fringed Gentian*, please write Membership Co-Chair Susan Dean at [members@friendsofeloisebutler.org](mailto:members@friendsofeloisebutler.org) or 602 Thomas Ave. So., Mpls, MN 55405.*

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