1927
History of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

**Winter 1926/1927**

This winter Eloise Butler again traveled to the East Coast to visit her relatives, as had been her custom since she retired from teaching in 1911. Her residence was at 20 Murray Hill Rd, Malden, Mass.

In January she writes to Bill and Martha Crone about her Christmas activities and a letter from Theodore Wirth about the wonderful Winter in Minneapolis. Eloise relates that the Winter in Mass. is the coldest since 1885 and she longs to back in Minneapolis where she can be outside all day. (1)

In late March she returned to her rented quarters at the residence of John and Susan Babcock at 227 Xerxes Ave. from where she could walk to the Garden.

**Spring 1927**

Eloise Butler’s first Garden Log note of the season was on April 1st when she wrote: "Robins, bluebird, song sparrows here.” Many plants were in bloom, she noted *Trillium nivale* [Snow Trillium], sharp-lobed Hepatica, willows, skunk cabbage.

Her first plantings of the year were plants sent from Malden Mass. - 22 asters and a Roundleaf Greenbriar, put in on April 3.

On the night of 21-22 April there was snow and frost. There were thirteen new species introduced this Spring - details below. Besides the sources listed there, she got plants from 2628 5th Ave. So., Minneapolis; Happy Valley near Mendota; Gillett’s Nursery in Southwick, MA; Grand Forks, ND; and Northern Michigan.

Eloise Butler ca. 1930, photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.
Summer 1927

The Showy Lady’s Slipper was just beginning to bloom on June 19, rather late that year. In the summer months Eloise obtained another nine new species for the Garden. Details below.

Other plants came from Mr. Babcock’s Garden; Northome MN; Glenwood Park; Anoka MN; Leffel Lake; Royal NE; Hastings MN; Northern MN; Bryan NE; near the Rum River; Northeast Minneapolis; Fort Snelling; and Mrs. Rook’s Garden.

Autumn 1927

In the Autumn Eloise obtained 5 new species for the Garden, detailed below.

Another example of the large planting of asters that she frequently did was on 11 October and 14 October when 206 *Aster azureus*, Sky Blue Aster, were put in, all from Glenwood Park.

Her last log entry on October 22 read

“planted from from Exeter, N.H., 3 clumps of *Epigaea repens* [Trailing arbutus] under pine tree in Pinetum. One clump contained a root of *Gaultheria procumbens* [Spicy Wintergreen]. Transplanted from purple trillium plantation 1 staminate wild yam to trellis east side of office.”

The experience in the Garden with Trailing Arbutus bears some discussion as it is an example of the dogged determination of the Garden Curators to establish a plant. The plant is native to the NE section of Minnesota which is its most westerly range in the United States. Eloise first brought the plant in during 1916 from Solon Springs Wisconsin, up near Lake Superior. She planted it again in 1917, ’19, ’20, ’22, 27, this year, ’30 and ’31. In her 1926 history Eloise noted that “Only a small percentage (of plants) refuse to flourish. Trailing arbutus, *Viola lanceolata* and *V. rotundifolia* are found to be the least persuasive.” Martha Crone would try to establish it in ten different years between 1933 and 1957. In 1945 should would write in her annual report to the Board of Park Commissioners “An extensive program is being undertaken to re-establish some of the more elusive plants, among them the Fringed Gentian, Trailing Arbutus and various orchids.” In her 1950 annual report she was able to say “After many years of effort success has been gained with such elusive plants as the lovely Fringed Gentian, Trailing Arbutus and various orchids.” She wrote in *The Fringed Gentian™* in July 1959 (vol. 7 no. 3) that “Trailing arbutus, Blueberry and Cranberry are difficult to transplant and apparently are somewhat parasitic upon the roots of other plants. Trailing Arbutus is always found growing in company of Blueberry.” The last of Martha’s plants were eliminated in the late ’50s by mice, so in 1963 and 1964 her successor Ken Avery tried once again. He too gave up after several years.
During the Autumn she also recorded planting a number of other species previously in the Garden from sources such as: Anoka MN; Bryan NE; Glenwood Park; Williams Nursery, Exeter, NH; Royal NE; Mr. Babcock’s yard; Fort Snelling; Riverside Park; and Mrs. Hind’s Garden.

When the Garden closed and the office was locked up she departed for the East Coast to visit her sister Cora Pease as she has done every winter since 1911

In October and November she sends boxes of plants to Martha Crone for her to heel in until Spring when Eloise could transfer them to the Garden. The October box she collected in Ann Arbor Michigan on a side trip from a stop she made in Toledo Ohio, while on her way to Malden. The November box was collected in Malden. She refers to the weather in Malden as the hottest Nov. 2nd in 51 years. (2)

Weather in 1927 was not too unusual - a good year. The late Winter snow was gone before the end of February, except for that mid-April snowfall. Rain was good during the Summer followed by heavy snow in December raising total precipitation for the year above normal - the first time in several years.

New 1927 Plants

Eloise brought into the Garden a number of plants that are not listed today on the Garden census. Many of these were native to Minnesota and a few were not. Here is a listing of most of those plants introduced this year to the Garden for the first time - the common and botanical names listed first are names she used followed by other common names for the same plant and the newer botanical classifications, if any; then follows her source for the material. 1927 is the first year the following list of plants occur in her log. "Native” indicates the plant is considered native to Minnesota (here at European Settlement time) or if introduced, long established. "Non-native” indicates it is not known to exist in Minnesota in the wild. "Introduced” means not native to North America. "Extant” indicates the plant is present in the Garden today. Botanical classification: Over the years Botanists have reclassified many plants from the classifications in use at the time Eloise Butler wrote her Garden Log or when Martha Crone prepared her census. I have retained the nomenclature that Eloise Butler or Martha Crone used and then provided the more current classification as used by the major listings in use today, particularly Flora of North America, the University of Minnesota’s Checklist of the Vascular Flora of Minnesota, and as a fall-back source - the USDA Plants Database.

Spring 1927

- Argemone intermedia, [Argemone polyanthemos], Crested Prickly-poppy, not native, from Royal Neb., April 25.
- Geranium pusillum, Small geranium, not native, from Gillett’s Nursery, Southwick MA, May 13-14.
- Gilia linearis [Collomia linearis] Tiny Trumpet, native, from Royal Neb. May 31, again on 9 June, same source
- Happlopappus spinulosus, [Machaeranthera pinnatifida], Lacy Tansyaster, native, from Royal Neb. May 7.
- Ipomoea leptophylla, Bush Morning-glory, not native, seeds from Royal Neb. , April 20. Again on August 22, 2 plants, same source.
- Lathyrus ornatus, [Lathyrus brachycalyx ssp. brachycalyx], Bonneville Pea, not native, from Royal Neb. April 30.
- Linum rigidum? Stiffstem flax, native, from Royal Neb. May 24. The "?” is in the log - she was unsure of the plant.
• *Lomatium orientale*, Northern Idaho Biscuitroot, Desert Parsley, native, from Royal Neb. April 15.


• *Opuntia rafinesquii*, [Opuntia humifusa], Devil’s tongue Prickly Pear, native, from Royal Neb. April 15. Martha Crone planted this in. 1934 and 39, photo below.

• *Psoralea esculenta*, [Pediomelum esculentum] Large Indian Breadroot, native, from Royal Neb. May 24. Martha Crone noted the plants blooming in 1938 and planted it in 1946 and 47.


**Summer 1927**


• *Campanula rapunculoides*, European Bellflower, introduced, from Mrs. Rook’s Garden, August 24-25, photo below. Extant.

• *Hedeoma hispida*, Rough False Pennyroyal, native, from sand dunes northwest of Minneapolis. July 14.

• *Hydrangea arborescens*, Wild Hydrangea, not native, from Iowa, August 9.

• *Myosotis arvensis*, Field Forget-me-not, introduced, from vicinity of Hastings, MN, June 21.

• *Knautia arvensis*, Field Scabiosa, Bluebuttons, introduced, from Northern MN July 11.

• *Lesquerella argentea* - one of the Bladderpods, no MN listing, from Bryan Neb. July 12

• *Melampyrum lineare*, Narrowleaf Cowwheat, native, from Northern MN, July 8-9.

• *Psoralea tenuiflora* var. *floribunda* [Psoralidium tenuiflorum] Slimflower Scurfpea, N, from Bryan Neb., July 12

• *Streptopus amplexifolius*, Claspleaf Twisted Stalk Lily, native, from Northern MN, July 8-9.

Martha Crone planted it in 1947, 54, and Ken Avery in 1963

**Autumn 1927**

• *Habenaria fimbriata* [Platanthera grandiflora], Greater Purple Fringed Orchid, not native, from William’s Nursery, Exeter NH. Sept 30/Oct. 1st


• *Lysimachia quadriflora*, Prairie Loosestrife, native, from William’s Nursery, Exeter NH. Sept 30/Oct. 1st, photo below.

• *Sedum triphyllum* [Hylotelephium telephium ssp. telephium] Live-forever, Witches Moneybags, introduced. From vicinity of Anoka, photo below. This is the first definite introduction of Live Forever into the Garden by Eloise Butler. It’s possible that the first occurrence could have been Oct. 21, 1910 when she brought in a plant she named "Aaron’s Rod" without giving a botanical name. That name however, has been applied to several plants including Common Mullein, *Verbascum thapsus*. Since her 1910 source was Glenwood Springs,
right near the Garden, we believe her 1910 plant was Mullein. Martha Crone was to plant it a number of times - 1933, ’35, ’36, ’52, ’53. Extant. Photo below.


**Photo top of first page:** The front garden at 20 Murray Hill Road, Malden MA, where Eloise spent Winters. Seen here in 1989, photo courtesy Martha Hellander.

Notes:
(2) Postcard to Martha Crone Oct. 29, 1927.
Postcard to Martha Crone 3 Nov. 1927.

References:
*Garden Log - Native Plant Reserve*, Glenwood Park, Minneapolis, MN by Eloise Butler
Martha Crone’s *Garden Log* and her 1951 Census of plants in the Garden.
Various papers and correspondence of Eloise Butler in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.
Historical Climatology of Minneapolis-St. Paul Area by Charles Fisk.

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