About the Garden

The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary is a spectacular 15-acre public wildflower garden in Minneapolis with trails meandering through woodlands, wetlands, and oak savannas. The natural setting showcases over 500 plant species and 140 migratory birds.

The Garden was founded in 1907 by Eloise Butler, a botanist and Minneapolis Public Schools teacher. The Garden offers environmental education programming for preschool through high school students. Younger students can hone their observational skills, and older students will be able to express themselves through games, hikes, and more.

Our field trips are for EVERYONE!

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is committed to making all of its programs accessible to anyone. All MPRB programs are considered inclusive and welcome everyone. The Therapeutic Recreation staff will work with program staff, families, and individuals to provide support using individualized techniques and resources to enhance program participation without fundamentally altering the program. If you or someone you know has a disability and is interested in learning more about programs for people with disabilities and how to access MPRB programs, please contact Sarah Thorsen, Therapeutic Recreation and Inclusion Coordinator at 612.230.6478 or sthorsen@minneapolisparks.org. For language translation services, please contact Elise Niedermeier, Community Engagement Coordinator at 612.230.6541.

4th - 6th Grade — Igniting Critical Thinking

Wildflower Wonders (Botany)
Get up close and personal with wildflowers! Learn about the parts of a flower by sketching plants in your own nature journal (provided). Compare different types of flowers, and look for the animal pollinators.

Be a Bird (Ornithology)
How (and why?) do birds come in all shapes and sizes? Let’s find out! We’ll learn about different adaptations by looking at types of bird beaks, go for a birding hike with binoculars, and check out different birdcalls.

Quaking Bog Adventure (Ecology)
The Quaking Bog (the only one left in the Twin Cities) is more than 3,700 years old and features unique plants and animals, including carnivorous plants. Learn about the bog plants and animals while hiking through a rare and unique ecosystem.

7th - 12th Grade — Becoming Stewards

Introduced Species (Botany)
Have you heard of Buckthorn? Garlic Mustard? Why are these plants unwanted? We’ll learn to identify the plant species that can dominate a landscape and hike to flag these species just like ecologists do.

Count Your Birds (Ornithology)
Learn how to use a field guide to identify bird species. Students will divide into groups to count birds in the Garden and then submit the bird count data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Ecosystem Conservation Crew (Ecology)
Explore the three ecosystems at the Garden—forest, wetland, and prairie. Students will make observations and guess at identifying a “mystery object” related to a conservation-themed activity in each location. For high school students (or if requested for other ages), this program highlights professions in the environmental field.
Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are available for groups of children including preschools, homeschool groups, day care centers, after school groups, summer camps and more! Field trips are organized by age-appropriate topics.

When can our group schedule a field trip?
Field trips are available Tuesday–Fridays between 9am and 4pm during the Garden’s season, April 15–October 15. Please schedule your field trip at least two weeks in advance.

How much do field trips cost?
The cost is $5 per student. Adults and chaperones are free.

Can I apply for a scholarship or funding?
Yes! Some scholarships are available to reduce the cost per student or subsidize bus transportation costs. Please note your interest in the ‘special requests’ section of the Special Tour Interest Form. You may also wish to check out the Student Transportation Grant offered by the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden at https://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org/pages/funds/schoolvisit.html

How to schedule a field trip
Complete the Special Tour Interest Form at: www.minneapolisparks.org/ebwg or call the Garden’s Program Coordinator at 612.499.9244.

How long are field trips?
Field trips last one hour.

Do I need to bring chaperones?
Yes. We ask that you have one adult per 10 students (teachers count as one chaperone).

How big will our groups be?
We aim for a ratio of 10 students per Garden Naturalist. Groups may be larger or smaller, but no larger than 15 students per Naturalist. Our minimum is four students per field trip.

Who will lead our field trip?
Our knowledgeable and experienced Garden Naturalists will lead your field trip. It’s no exaggeration to say our experts bring their passion and excitement to the Garden every day!

Will we be outside?
Yes! Please dress for the weather and to walk outdoors. We will only cancel or reschedule programs in the case of severe weather (thunder/lightning/tornado warnings). You will be contacted if we are concerned about weather.

Can I request a special program not listed here?
Yes! We are happy to work with your group to customize tours that works best for you.

We can adapt the programs listed in this brochure to fit other age groups and can also lead field trips on subjects not listed, such as fungi, insects, the seasons, and more.

Is there a place to eat lunch or a snack?
If you don’t mind sitting on grass, yes! Unfortunately we do not have picnic tables, but we do have a large grassy area that can be used as a lunch gathering place. We are happy to share lunches with on field trips, but we do not have space to keep lunches or snacks refrigerated.

We are located near the Theodore Wirth Park beach pavilion area, which has picnic tables. We’re happy to provide more information about the location.

Pre-K–Kindergarten—Cultivating Curiosity

Plant Explorers (Botany)
Students will find plants in every color of the rainbow, and we’ll use magnifying glasses to study them up close. Students will gain a basic understanding of the parts of a plant and the diversity of the plant kingdom.

Feathered Friends (Ornithology)
The Garden is a ‘hotspot’ for birding in the Twin Cities, with great opportunities to see many types of birds—woodpeckers, goldfinches, and warblers, among others. We’ll learn to use binoculars, hear bird calls, and then touch some real feathers and maybe even an owl wing.

Sensory Nature Hike (Ecology)
Use your senses to explore the natural world! We might see exploding seeds, feel fuzzy leaves, sniff a sweet-smelling flower, or hear a hooting owl. We’ll do a scavenger hunt while we hike, and stop at the Visitor Shelter to check out the ‘Touch & See’ table of natural objects.

1st-3rd Grade—Laying the Foundation

Tree-ology (Botany)
In this program, students learn about the tree life cycle. We’ll hike the Garden to find trees in different stages of life, discover animals that might live in a tree, and play a tree game to learn the parts of a tree!

Birding 101 (Ornithology)
How can we tell the difference between a cardinal and robin? In this class, you will find out! Learn the basics of birding while using binoculars, listening to bird calls, and checking out different types of nests.

Food Web Frenzy (Ecology)
Have you heard of a food chain? A food web? Explore the Garden while learning about how plants, animals, and fungi interact. We’ll go on a scavenger hunt to find animals and plants, and then play a group game to make our own food web.