



# First Bloom Gazette

Brought to You by The Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania and Independence National Historic Park | EDITION 2010

## All About Lady Bird Johnson

By the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania's Troop 21133

At First Bloom we are doing Lady Bird Johnson's wishes by planting a garden using native plants.

Lady Bird Johnson was born Claudia Alta Taylor on December 22, 1912. She spent most of her life growing up in Texas. After attending college, she met and married Lyndon B Johnson. Lyndon B Johnson was the Vice President under John F Kennedy. In 1963, Johnson became president after Kennedy was assassinated. Lady Bird Johnson became First Lady and spent most of her time in the White House working towards "beautifying America". She felt that many problems could be solved by making America a more beautiful place.

She helped establish many parks that were added to the National Park Service. These include Big Bend National Park and Redwoods National Park. In fact, Redwoods National Park honored her by naming part of their park "Lady Bird Johnson Grove". After her husband died, Lady Bird helped to establish his home as a national park area named Lyndon B. Johnson National

Historical Park. At Independence National Historical Park, she helped dedicate the 18th Century Garden found between the historical row homes on Walnut Street. Today, our



"... the bounty of nature is also one of the deep needs of man."

First Bloom room is located very close to that garden. Towards the end of her life, Lady Bird Johnson started a Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas for the study of native plants.

In her own words, Lady Bird Johnson explains why she wanted to beautify America. "Some may wonder why I chose wildflowers when there are hunger and unemployment and the big bomb in the world. Well, I, for one, think we will survive, and I hope that along the way we can keep alive our experience with the flowering earth. For the bounty of nature is also one of the deep needs of man."

Lady Bird Johnson is a role model upon all Girl Scouts. Her work teaches us to respect natural and cultural resources in our communities. She worked very hard for most of her life to make America more beautiful. She was a mother, grandmother, wife and First Lady of the United States. Today the Girl Scouts carry on her work at Independence National Historical Park with the planting of a First Bloom garden along Dock Creek.



## In Her Words | When asked why create a First Bloom garden, Girl Scouts responded:

Nature is all about life!

We protect our garden and out world and friends.

animals like nice things. they like a park with things they like. and i think they would like our park, so listen to them.

Most of the world agrees; Animals need a nice park!

## Word Fun

What can you make out of phrases like "First Bloom" and "Girl Scouts"? What about "Flowers"?

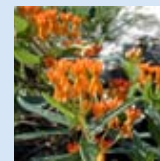
- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Fancy           | Blossoming     |
| Iatrical        | Lovable        |
| Resources       | Outstanding    |
| Sweet           | Original       |
| Talented        | Moving         |
| Beautiful       | Great          |
| Lasting         | Intelligent    |
| Original        | Really Nice    |
| Organized       | Loving         |
| Meaningful      | Special        |
| Fantastic       | Cool           |
| Lunging         | Outstanding    |
| Outstanding     | Unique         |
| Wonderful       | Terrific       |
| Everlasting     | Super awesome! |
| Roses are nice! | Fascinating!   |
| Fantastic       | Lovable        |
| Incredible      | Outstanding    |
| Recreational    | Water them     |
| Stupendous      | Extraordinary  |
| Terrific        | Rejuvenating   |
|                 | Super          |

**First Bloom Plants** Our garden design uses cookies to represent most of the plants we selected. All of the plants are native to Pennsylvania and can be found growing in other parts of the United States as well. The Girl Scouts complied and researched information on four of the perennial plants that will be planted in the First Bloom garden.



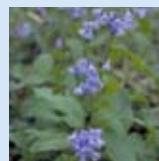
**Eastern Bluestar**  
(*Amsonia tabernaemontana*)  
This perennial

plant looks like blue, star ice. It has blue clusters for flowers with soft spikes that turn yellow in the fall. It is native to Pennsylvania and many other parts of the United States. We assigned this plant the "shortbread" cookie as a symbol on our garden design.



**Butterfly Milkweed**  
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)  
This plant is

very important to us because it attracts butterflies! Butterflies use their proboscis to suck out the butter nectar. This plant is also deer resistant and thrives in the sun. It can be found in almost every state in the United States, including Pennsylvania! The butterfly milkweed is represented by a "Thanks-a-lot" cookie on our garden design!



**Virginia Bluebells**  
(*Mertensia virginica*)  
Whoever named

this plant forgot about the other twenty-five states that it is native in, including Pennsylvania! It has bright blue bell shaped blossoms. You can find it growing wild near woods and rivers. It may have been a plant that originally grew along the historic Dock Creek! We assigned this plant a "peanut butter sandwich" as a symbol for our garden design.



**Smooth Aster**  
(*Symphyotrichum laeve* var. *laeve*)  
Smooth Aster has

cone shaped clusters of violet flowers and grows best in full sun. Butterflies and bees like this plant. It blooms in late summer and fall. It is found in many states, including Pennsylvania. The "carmel delights" cookie is used as a symbol of this plant on the garden design.

# First Bloom: Planting the Seeds of Conservation

By Holly Johnson, First Bloom Program Manager at INHP

Remember the first time you took a walk in the woods as a child or learned about the food chain in school? Do you remember how exciting it was to learn our connections to nature? First Bloom does just that in the best setting imaginable—national parks. Across the country children between grades 4th and 6th are learning about the important natural resources through First Bloom. First Bloom also allows these children a chance to give back

even more green acreage around the historical buildings of Independence National Historical Park. While the wildlife here is limited, it does exist in form of birds, butterflies, bees, and squirrels. Red tail hawk commonly frequent the tower of Independence Hall. Eastern swallow-tail butterflies have been regularly spotted in Washington Square and other areas of the park. Who knew such an abundant source of wildlife existed in this urban environment!

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to the national park in their communities with a planting project. First Bloom participants learn the importance of using native plants to keep the balance in the natural world.

Here in Philadelphia, it is hard to imagine a vast natural experience with so much human impact in form of streets, buildings and traffic. Philadelphia has always been a green city though. William Penn originally set aside green space in his design of the city. Most of that space still exists and has been renamed including Washington Square, Logan Square, Rittenhouse Square and Franklin Square.

In the mid-twentieth century, the National Park Service added

To add to this, the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania are planting a native garden along the historic Dock Creek. Originally creeks flowed through the center city area of Philadelphia, between the Delaware and the Schuylkill rivers. Unfortunately by the end of the eighteenth century, most of these creeks were so polluted that they had to be filled in. The Girl Scouts learned the importance of taking care of natural resources, even in an urban environment.

During a trip to the Academy of Natural Sciences, they learned that butterflies will only eat and lay their off-spring on certain types of native plants. In the First Bloom classroom

on Walnut Street they learned the importance of the National Park Service and what scenic, cultural and natural resources it protects. In the archeology lab at the Living History Center, they learned why it is important to preserve the cultural resources and what things they can tell us about the past. Through walks of the park, the girls learned that early colonists may have brought their own plants from parts of Europe, Asia and Africa, but they also learned to use and appreciate the native plants already here. All of these meetings together have prepared them for the important task of planting a native garden. The native plants will attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies which in turn provide a food source for birds in the park. In this urban setting, they are insuring a little nature is preserved.

It is not likely that the Girl Scouts are learning the important balance of nature and lessons of conservation for the first time by participating in First Bloom. However, First Bloom gives them a chance to put these lessons in to action in their community. For them, the most obvious award is earning a much desired “eco-action badge”, but later on they will be able to come back and visit their garden and feel a really connection to their national park. All the fun they have had in First Bloom this year has not only planted seeds of conservation in each of these girls, it has allowed those seeds to germinate into a true appreciation of the scenic, natural and cultural resources of the national park in their community.

## Invasive Species: Test Your Knowledge!

Test your knowledge of invasive species. Can you answer all of the following questions and get a perfect score?

- A species that occurs in the region in which it evolved is called:
  - an invasive species
  - a natural species
  - a native species
  - an exotic species
- Why do we need to maintain native plant populations?
  - Clean air and water
  - Soil stability
  - Food and shelter for wildlife
  - All of the above
- Pennsylvania has approximately 3,400 different kinds of plants growing wild in the state. How many of them are non-native, that is, they are from another state or country?
  - 43
  - 225
  - 1130
  - 2,450
- Why are non-native plants brought into Pennsylvania?
  - medicinal use
  - erosion control
  - accident
  - All of the above
- All non-native, or exotic, plants are invasive.
  - True
  - False
- Invasive plants are usually characterized by:
  - Fast growth rates
  - High fruit production
  - Rapid spread
  - All of the above
- All invasive species are plants.
  - True
  - False
- Zebra mussels, an invasive species that is pushing local species of freshwater shellfish to extinction, were introduced to the Great Lakes by:
  - Migrating Native Americans
  - Teenagers playing a prank
  - Ballast water (sea water that ships carry for stability and then discharge)
  - None of the above
- Purple loosestrife invades approximately how many acres of wetlands each year? Hint: it's an area the size of Rhode Island!
  - 500,000 acres
  - 1,000,000 acres
  - 3,000,000 acres
  - 5,000,000 acres
- Each year, invasive species are estimated to cost the U.S. economy:
  - \$12 million
  - \$120 million
  - \$12 billion
  - \$129 billion

### Quiz Scoring Guide

#### 0–2 Correct

Hmmm... You still have a lot to learn. Visit [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) to check out the basics.

#### 3–5 Correct

You are getting there. Visit [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) to find out which invasive plants may be lurking in your own backyard!

#### 6–8 Correct

Nearly a pro! Visit [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) to check out additional ways to combat invasive and sharpen your skills.

#### 9–10 Correct

Excellent work! Now visit [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) to find out how you can to take action!

### Quiz Answers

Are you an invasive species expert?

10. b

5. b

Compare your answers against those on the right, then check the scoring

9. d

4. d

guide above to see if you're

8. c

3. c

a seasoned pro or still a bit green.

7. d

2. d

6. c

1. c