

The American Gardener

Writer's Guidelines

The American Gardener is the official publication of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), a nonprofit national membership organization for gardeners founded in 1922. Through its educational programs, publications, and awards the AHS advocates earth-friendly gardening practices, promotes plant-based outdoor education programs for children, recognizes leaders in American gardening, and showcases the art and science of horticulture.

A 64-page, four-color magazine, *The American Gardener* goes out bimonthly to the more than 25,000 members of the American Horticultural Society.

EDITORIAL CONTENT

The American Gardener is primarily free-lance written, and its content differs considerably from that of other gardening publications. Our readers are mainly experienced amateur gardeners; about 20 percent are horticultural professionals. Articles are intended to bring this knowledgeable group new information, ranging from the latest scientific findings that affect plants, to the history of gardening and gardens in America. We introduce readers to unusual plants, personalities, and issues that will enrich what we assume is already a passionate commitment to gardening.

Among the topics of particular interest to us are profiles of individual plant groups; innovative approaches to garden design; profiles of prominent horticulturists whose work has a national impact; plant research and plant hunting; plant conservation, biodiversity, and heirloom gardening; events or personalities in horticultural history; people-plant relationships (horticultural therapy, ethnobotany, and community gardening); environmentally appropriate gardening (choosing plants suited to one's region, using native plants, conserving water, etc.); and plant lore and literature. We also seek articles that describe and show how to construct simple garden features such as ponds or paths, or illustrate useful gardening techniques such as grafting, pollarding, or propagation.

We stress environmentally responsible gardening practices, including minimizing use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, conserving water, preventing illegal collection of plants from the wild, and avoiding plants with the potential to escape and damage natural ecosystems.

SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE PROPOSAL

We prefer that authors send us a proposal before developing a manuscript. **Please note: We do not accept proposals by phone, fax, or e-mail; nor do we accept simultaneous submissions.**

A self-addressed stamped envelope must accompany queries. Queries should also include a description of the proposed topic and an explanation of why it is of interest to a national audience of knowledgeable gardeners, as well as an outline of the major points to be covered in the manuscript.

When querying for the first time, authors should submit relevant writing samples, and briefly describe their personal experience with the subject matter they are proposing to cover. We look for writers who have some gardening experience or training, but who also have an ability to write in a strong journalistic style, complete with lively quotes from interviews or written sources. While ideas for articles are evaluated separately from photographs or artwork, it is helpful to the evaluation process for submissions to include information on possible sources for relevant photographs or illustrations.

Acceptance of an idea outlined in a query does not constitute acceptance of an article. All contributors to *The American Gardener* are sent a formal contract outlining the rights being purchased, payment terms, and deadlines.

Feature articles run 1,500 to 2,500 words, depending on subject and assignment.

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DEPARTMENTS

The American Gardener has three departments for which freelance submissions are encouraged:

- **Homegrown Harvest.** In this department we are looking for authoritative information on growing edible plants delivered in a personal, reassuring voice. Each issue focuses on a single crop, such as carrots, blueberries, or parsley. Runs 800-900 words.
- **Natural Connections.** Explains a natural phenomenon or symbiotic relationship—plant and pollinator relationships, plant and fungus relationships, plant and soil relationships, parasites, etc.—that may be observed in the garden or in nature. Runs 750 to 1,000 words.
- **Plant in the Spotlight.** An in-depth profile of a single plant species or cultivar, including a personal perspective on why it's a favored plant. Runs 600 words.

POLICIES

We make every effort to report back to authors within 90 days of receiving a query. Accepted articles are scheduled and published at the discretion of the editorial staff.

We will not consider manuscripts simultaneously submitted to other publishers, and we rarely purchase second rights to articles.

The staff of *The American Gardener* retains the right to edit manuscripts as deemed necessary for clarity, style, length, and accuracy. We do not as a matter of policy provide authors with revised manuscripts prior to publication, but this can sometimes be negotiated at the time an article is accepted.

Although all work submitted to *The American Gardener* is handled with great care, the Society cannot accept responsibility for any materials that are lost or damaged.

PAYMENT

Payment for feature articles ranges from \$300 to \$500 on publication, depending on the article's length and complexity, and the author's background and publishing experience. Reimbursement for travel and other expenses can sometimes be negotiated at the time an article is accepted. Payment for departments ranges from \$100 to \$250.

We pay a 25-percent kill fee in those instances where an author has completed revisions of the text requested by our editorial staff, and the article is still for any reason considered unacceptable.

All contributors receive three complimentary copies of the issue in which their work is published. Additional copies are available to contributors at a reduced rate of \$1 each when ordered in advance; shipping fees are charged for contributor orders of 10 copies or more.

RIGHTS

Information on specific rights acquired is included in a contract sent to all contributors. All articles in *The American Gardener* are published simultaneously in PDF format in the members-only section of the American Horticultural Society's website (www.ahs.org).

SAMPLE COPIES AND BACK ISSUES

Sample copies of the magazine are available for \$5; specific back issues are available for \$8. Send checks, payable to AHS, with your request for sample issues or back issues to the address below; some back issues can also be ordered by credit card from the AHS website (www.ahs.org). Photographer's guidelines are available by e-mail to editor@ahs.org or on the website.

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American Horticultural Society
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