



# Notes from River Farm

## Summer School for Gardeners

by David J. Ellis

**I**F YOU READ the AHS News section in this issue of the magazine (page 12), you will have seen that River Farm was among the Washington, D.C., area gardens recommended to travelers in the June/July issue of *Garden Design* magazine. Often described as a “hidden jewel,” River Farm is starting to attract more attention because the grounds are now open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In addition to opening up the grounds from April through October, the AHS horticultural staff have put together an exciting program special gardening programs on Saturdays this summer and fall. Gardening experts among the AHS staff and volunteers as well as special guest speakers are presenting the “Saturday Hort-Takes” programs, which kicked off in April and will continue into October (see schedule in box, far right).

According to Marianne Polito, manager of the Society’s Gardener’s Information Service and volunteer coordinator, the talks held so far have proven extremely popular, especially a hands-on session on building with bamboo presented by Ed Raduazo, who is an AHS volunteer. “Ed knows everything there is to know about bamboo and he has a knack for being able to pass his knowledge along to gardeners with all levels of experience,” says Marianne. “Participants in the program not only learned how to split bamboo to make a variety of gardening structures such as trellises, cages, and fences, they learned why some bamboos become invasive and how to select varieties that are easier to control.”



During a recent Hort-Takes on building with bamboo, AHS Volunteer Ed Raduazo discusses the plant’s potential invasiveness while displaying a section of bamboo roots.

Many of the upcoming programs tap into the expertise of Peggy Bowers, AHS Landscape Gardener, who has a particular interest in gardening with native plants and providing a garden environment that will attract beneficial wildlife.

### Saturday Hort-Takes

All programs start at 9 a.m. and last for an hour. They cost \$8 for AHS members (\$10 for non-members) and tend to fill quickly, so make reservations early. For reservations, or to find out more about the upcoming programs, call Marianne Polito, Gardeners Information Service Manager, at (800) 777-7931 ext. 124.

**July 13** “Nifty Native Plants”  
by Peggy Bowers

**August 10** “Design: What Works in the Landscape” by Peggy Bowers

**August 24** “Maintaining Your Perennials” by Bill Johnson

**September 21** “Attracting Birds to Your Garden” by Peggy Bowers

**October 5** “Selecting Trees and Shrubs for Winter Interest” by Katie Burney

Her enthusiasm for gardening is contagious, and no one leaves one of her presentations without an extensive—and eventually expensive!—list of “must-have” plants. Bill Johnson, a horticulturist at Hillwood Museum Garden in Washington, D.C., will be a guest speaker on August 24, and additional programs are likely to be added; check the AHS Web site at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org) for details.

If you are planning to travel to the Washington, D.C., area this summer, please consider attending one of these sessions. In addition to the educational value, it’s a wonderful opportunity to tour one of the best-kept secrets in our nation’s capital—River Farm.

*David J. Ellis is editor of The American Gardener.*