

The American GARDENER

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

WELCOME TO THE many new members of the American Horticultural Society who have joined in the past few months. We are growing, thanks to each of you. As AHS reaches out to gardeners in this great land of ours, we are pleased to have many new AHS Horticultural Partners joining us and taking advantage of the opportunity to offer membership in the American Horticultural Society as a special bonus to their own members.

In addition to our very first AHS Horticultural Partner, the Oklahoma Horticultural Society, we now add to the list the Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium, Cox Arboretum in Dayton, Ohio, Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia, the Center for Plant Conservation based in St. Louis, the International Master Gardener Conference, and the Michigan State Master Gardener Conference.

For those of you who are new to AHS, we hope you enjoy this special issue of *The American Gardener*, which contains the 2003 update of the USDA Plant Hardiness Map featured prominently at the centerfold! We also encourage you to take advantage of the many benefits of membership and get actively involved in the various programs sponsored by the AHS.

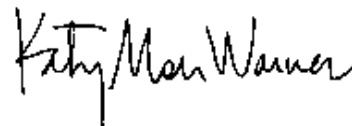
As a long-time champion of youth gardening in America, AHS has for many years sponsored the annual National Children and Youth Garden Symposium. This year's symposium—to be held here in the Washington, D.C., area—will focus on ideas for anyone interested in teaching and learning in a garden setting. Whether you are an educator, a parent, or a community leader dedicated to making a difference for children, this is your moment for inspiration! Please join us. Turn to page 7 for more information and for registration instructions.

If you cannot physically be here for the symposium but believe connecting children and plants is important, consider “playing” with us through an exciting new AHS youth gardening initiative called The Growing Connection. Thanks to a unique partnership AHS has established with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, NASA's Science Balloon Program Office, the EarthBox Co., the Ball Horticultural Co., and seed producers from around the world, young people in schools in America and abroad will be growing food for themselves and their families while at the same time discovering science and learning communications skills.

Some of the vegetable seeds they will be growing are being sent up into the stratosphere in a huge science balloon so that the effects of solar radiation, cold temperatures, and differential gravity can be explored. A team of educators are developing a series of innovative projects and lesson plans using a Growing Connection Kit.

How can you help and have a little gardening fun yourself? Well, if you buy a Growing Connection Kit for yourself (which will include all The Growing Connection seeds, soil, fertilizer, project sheets, and a specialized self-contained planter called an EarthBox™), your purchase will directly benefit the program. Turn to pages 10 and 11 to learn more about this creative program. Let's grow food together, encourage children everywhere, and then share our successes!

Happy Gardening!



—Katy Moss Warner, *AHS President*

