

The American GARDENER

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

SUMMER IS A special time to share a love of plants and a passion for gardening—not to mention all those extra zucchinis and tomatoes! I have a big family scattered all around America, and each summer I try to catch up with some of them to find out what they are doing. As usual, they are busy planting and growing and sharing the joy of gardening with those around them.

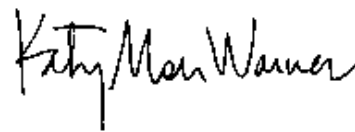
I recently visited my brother, John, who lives in an apartment in New Jersey. He proudly showed me his collection of plants, including the 'Inky Fingers' coleus he had raised from a cutting given to him by our mother. Perched on a window ledge, his plant is growing vigorously and showing the rich burgundy patterning on its leaves that looks like a hand with outstretched fingers. In fact, his plant now looks better than mom's plant. With this increased confidence in his gardening prowess, he's ready to learn how to root a cutting so that he can give one back to her! I guess I will have to send him a copy of our *AHS Plant Propagation*.

My sister Susie lives in upstate New York. She shares her love of gardening and the outdoors with children and is working closely with the local elementary school to create a garden full of beauty and discovery. She is often happily surprised by just how deeply the children are affected by plants and nature. Recently, some of the first graders were helping her plant sunflowers and gourds. In the middle of the project, one of the children stopped, looked up at her, and said, "When I grow up, I want to take care of the earth just like you." She was so touched. She will be coming to the AHS Children and Youth Garden Symposium this July at River Farm, so please join her to share your own successes with children and gardening. She is looking for ideas as well as the opportunity to meet those who share her passion.

My brother-in-law, Tom, grows vegetables in Maine. He has great luck with tomatoes but has found the growing season is generally too short for peppers to be successful. This year, inspired by AHS's The Growing Connection project, he is experimenting by growing peppers in an EarthBox™ and comparing the results with peppers grown in the ground. He is also comparing organic fertilizer with a synthetic chemical fertilizer. So far, the peppers in the EarthBox are winning and the peppers grown with organic fertilizer need less water than the ones fed with a chemical fertilizer. But the summer isn't over yet!

Many of you will also be visiting family and friends this summer and I'm sure you will be sharing similar stories of gardening successes and inspirational moments. After all, summer is the time for plants and gardens. Visit, plant, share, enjoy! And, if you encounter friends or family members who share your love of gardening or are looking for ways to become more involved, give them a gift of membership in the American Horticultural Society. Let's keep them inspired!

Happy gardening!



—Katy Moss Warner, *AHS President*



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