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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

WE GARDENERS regularly witness new beginnings. We plant bulbs in the fall and eagerly await the first sign of growth. We carefully plant seeds and watch for the waking of a new favorite treasured plant. We plant trees and shrubs in new locations and hope that the soil and sunshine and heat and cold will be in the perfect combination for ideal growth in their new home. Each of these beginnings offers us an opportunity for joy and satisfaction.

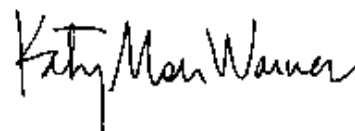
As we welcome this New Year, I hope you will join us at the AHS in planning a few of your own new beginnings. One great opportunity is through the AHS annual seed exchange, which has enjoyed a surge in participation over the last two years. This year there are seeds of more than 160 different plants waiting for you to give them life. If you haven't taken advantage of this program in the past, I encourage you to try it this year. Order some seeds, plant them and watch them grow. You might be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is. With so many wonderful plants now available from nurseries and garden centers, we often miss the special joy of growing our own plants from seeds.

Another beginning we'd like you to be an integral part of is the launch of the AHS Garden School. This program, which will debut during Washington Blooms! in April, will feature three different gardening schools with exceptional instructors sharing how-tos and why-tos and can-dos with innovative technique and personal interaction (for more details, see the ad on page 31). It is our plan that each of these schools will eventually expand beyond Washington Blooms!, and that the entire AHS Garden School will expand through the launch of additional courses of study.

And in this New Year, I hope you will also support us as we unveil some grand new beginnings for the AHS and for horticulture in America. As I have shared with you in previous columns, we are focusing a great deal of attention on our headquarters at George Washington's River Farm. Our nearly-completed new Master Plan envisions development of exciting garden areas, including a new children's garden and restored meadow and woodland areas that reinforce the importance of protecting natural lands. The Master Plan also incorporates renovated offices for the staff of the AHS; new facilities for the AHS Garden School, *The Growing Connection* and other AHS educational programs; and new meeting space that will allow us to convene horticultural organizations throughout America so that we can work on important issues together.

Each of these improvements at River Farm will help us more effectively achieve our vision of "making America a nation of gardeners, a land of gardens." Each of these improvements will help us more effectively reach out across America with programs that connect people to plants and gardens. Please help us plant the important seeds that will let the AHS grow. We need gifts big and small. We need each of our AHS friends to help us realize this dream of a new American Horticultural Society. Feel free to contact me personally with your thoughts and offers of support.

Happy Gardening in this New Year!



—Katy Moss Warner, *AHS President*