

## Time to Grow: Looking Ahead to 2020

by Dr. H. Marc Cathey

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, but I have been involved in horticulture for more than 50 years now. For most of that time, I have had some connection to the American Horticultural Society. It started in 1959, with the first article I had published in the AHS magazine, and expanded into roles as a board member, president (twice!), book author, and now president emeritus. Over that time I have seen amazing accomplishments in all areas of horticulture, from technology to plant selection, environmental awareness, and conservation.

Based on my long career as a research horticulturist, educator, garden radio host, and administrator, I know that an exciting and challenging future lies ahead for those of us who are involved with gardening and the green industry. Looking ahead to the year 2020, here are my predictions for what gardening will do for America and the world, and some challenges that all of us must address.

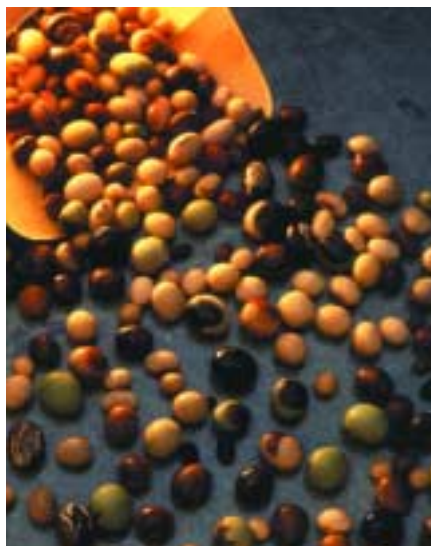
### BY 2020, GARDENING WILL BECOME:

- The most profitable segment of American agriculture.
- The major employer and career option in the Green Industry economy.
- A key element of educational programs from elementary schools to colleges.

### BY 2020, GARDENING WILL PROVIDE:

- Increased property values for home and commercial real estate.
- Health benefits resulting from greater availability of nutritious food and opportunity for exercise.
- A worldwide exchange of information, plants, and design ideas through the Internet and travel.

After more than 50 years of affiliation with the AHS, Dr. H. Marc Cathey is retiring in June. He and his wife, Mary, are moving to North Carolina, where Dr. Cathey will continue to work on several book projects. An article highlighting Dr. Cathey's career will be published in the July/August issue of this magazine.



Preserving plant diversity, as shown by these soybeans from the National Soybean Germplasm Collection in Illinois, is a top priority.

- A new breed of public garden where science, education, conservation, and entertainment carry equal weight.

### A GARDENING AGENDA FOR 2020:

- **Saving Germplasm.** There's an urgent need to preserve newly discovered plants—as well as threatened or endangered species—in seed banks and by *in situ* conservation. These plants hold incredible potential for medical and pharmaceutical breakthroughs.
- **Healing the Earth with Plants.** Through the science of phytoremediation, plants and biological agents can become an important resource for cleaning up sites contaminated with

hydrocarbons and heavy metals.

- **Fostering Sustainability.** By emphasizing natural and organic gardening methods and products, we can maintain productivity while minimizing further harm to the environment.

- **Conserving Water.** We must do more to preserve our most critical natural resource—water.

- **Conservation and Ergonomics.** Manufacturers should make safety and energy efficiency priorities in the design of gardening tools, equipment, and products.

- **Ethical Bio-Engineering.** Genetic engineering holds tremendous promise, but this science must be used in responsible and ethical ways.

- **Pest and Disease Control.** Innovative, safe methods must be found to prevent and control new pests and diseases that are attacking our most widely grown landscape and food plants.

### WORKING TOGETHER

No individual or organization can face these challenges alone. It will take the coordinated passion and skills of all our non-profit organizations, government agencies, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, public gardens, university programs, horticultural businesses, and home gardeners to ensure we overcome the obstacles and make the world a greener and better place for our children and grandchildren. Remember, green is the color of hope.

*Dr. H. Marc Cathey is president emeritus of the American Horticultural Society.*