

The American GARDENER

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

EACH NEW YEAR holds the joyful hope and promise of a new beginning, and for gardeners this rings even more true. Over the course of the holiday season, we heard from many of you. You inspired us and energized us with your kind thoughts and generosity. Thank you for your friendship, your financial support, and your good works. We look forward to 2006 as a bright new year of growth and accomplishment at your AHS.

At this time of year, we focus our attention at the AHS on our member benefits. Through the annual *Member Guide* included in this issue, we share with you some of the very special opportunities you have as an AHS member to explore the breadth of horticulture in America and share the joy of gardening.

This year, 190 public gardens have joined our Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP), entitling you to visit these places of beauty and inspiration across America at little or no charge. I encourage you to search out these gardens near your home as well as in places you may visit across the nation. You might be interested to note that no fewer than 14 public gardens were affected by the severe hurricanes last year (for more on this, see the article on page 12). Please help these gardens directly by visiting them, patronizing their gift shops, and offering financial support if you can.

Major flower shows in America are also part of our member benefits, and your AHS membership card gives you free or discounted admission to many of these shows. Flower shows are some of the best places to experience the first burst of spring and collect ideas for the growing season to come. Treat yourself to a memorable weekend experience by traveling to one of these great American flower shows! This year, the AHS will debut a special exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show based on our new Green Garage® educational program. Be sure to visit us there and bring your friends!

The *Member Guide* also includes the 2006 AHS Seed Exchange, a listing of seeds supplied by AHS members across the country that you can try in your own garden. Seeds offer special magic and I encourage you to order some seeds this year and watch a new life sprout and grow. And, if you can, share the magic of seeds with a child. I think back to how my dear friend, nurseryman Vic Carlson, shared the magic of a tiny begonia seed when I was 14. It changed my life!

In addition to these unique AHS member benefits, there are many more. Whether you live close by our headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, or in some other community across America, the AHS offers numerous opportunities for you to connect to the fascinating science of horticulture...to the fine art of the garden...to the compelling nature of our world. This year, we have a particularly outstanding lineup of educational events scheduled around the country and I hope you will consider joining us at one or more of them.

And so we start the New Year with the conviction that together we can connect ever more people with plants in this great land of ours.

Happy gardening,



—Katy Moss Warner, AHS President

