

The American GARDENER

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7931 East Boulevard Drive
Alexandria, VA 22308
(703) 768-5700
E-MAIL: advertising@ahs.org

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

AMAZING THINGS happen when talented people grab hold of an idea and envision a world where they can make a difference. In this issue of *The American Gardener* you'll read about 12 such individuals as we unveil the 2006 Great American Gardeners—the winners of the American Horticultural Society's annual awards (starting on page 12).

All the award winners are inspiring leaders who through their work have elevated public awareness of plants, gardens, and horticulture in America. They share their passion by connecting people to the artistic expression and scientific wonderment inherent in gardening. They celebrate the very best in our human spirit and give us confidence that we can protect the natural beauty of our land and at the same time enhance the designed environments in which we live.

We will be honoring the 2006 award winners for their unique contributions at the Great American Gardeners Awards Celebration, which will be held on June 2 right here at George Washington's River Farm, our national headquarters. I extend to you and all AHS members a special invitation to meet these horticulture heroes and join us at River Farm for a festive evening in a magical setting.

Greatness, of course, is not reserved for a special few. Each of us can envision a better world and do something significant to make a difference. With inspiration and determination, little things become big things. Routine tasks become joyful memorable moments. Simple sentences become inspired poems. Recycling in your home becomes a project for the whole community. Planting seeds with your students evolves into an outdoor classroom for science, reading, and art. Hanging a beautiful flowering basket on your porch inspires a neighborhood lined with flowering hanging baskets. Donating a crape myrtle to a local park turns into an annual crape myrtle festival. It's an incredible feeling when a whole movement is born from one seemingly small individual effort!

You will notice that the *AHS Annual Report* for fiscal year 2005 (July 2004 to June 2005) is included in this issue of *The American Gardener*. Each year in the *Annual Report*, we recap our programs and projects, summarize our financial picture, and thank our donors. As you can tell from reading about our achievements, we aspire to greatness at the AHS. But everything we do starts with your important efforts and contributions.

Some of you are members of the green industry who partner with the AHS to showcase the very best garden plants at River Farm. Some of you are participants in our AHS Travel Study Program who act as ambassadors by sharing our appreciation for the art of the garden at destinations around the world. Some of you are inspiring lecturers who share your knowledge and inspiration at our AHS Garden Schools and symposia. Some of you are educators who attend our Children & Youth Garden Symposium in order to introduce a whole new generation to a love for plants and nature. What we have in common is that all of us are gardeners trying to make the world around us a little better. You have started something important at the AHS. Together, I feel confident, we are headed toward something great!

Happy Gardening!



—Kathy Moss Warner, *AHS President*

