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## NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

SO MUCH has transpired in the last couple of months that when I sat down to write my first column for *The American Gardener*, I was initially at a loss on how to begin.

Let me lead off by saying how honored I am to have been selected as the 33rd president & CEO of this venerable institution. The American Horticultural Society's Board of Directors has entrusted this organization to my staff and me at a very exciting time in its history. Together, we are going to work to secure the future of the AHS and move our initiatives in education and horticultural "best practices" forward.

As we look ahead, it is important to understand our past. I am not sure that the small group of dedicated horticulturists and plant scientists who gathered in the auditorium of the Old National Museum in Washington, D.C., in 1922 to form the American Horticultural Society had any idea how the organization would evolve.

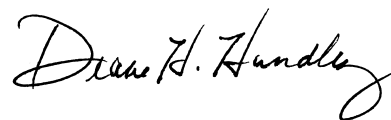
Yet here we are today, with a beautiful national headquarters at George Washington's River Farm, more than 25,000 members worldwide, and a host of successful programs, partnerships, and publications that are described in the *Annual Report* that is bound into this issue. We are truly the beneficiaries of the wisdom and vision of all those who came before us.

Despite the success and growth we have enjoyed, we must not become complacent. We should not be lulled into a false sense of security that charitable dollars will just come. Today, all successful charitable organizations recognize that they are viewed as legitimate businesses. Yes, philanthropy is at an all time high in this country. But with increases in support, a greater accountability for the use of the resources is also needed. People are amazingly supportive of places that have strong commitments to their missions and do a superb job of cultivating and stewarding their loyal supporters.

As an organization with a national mission and audience, it is imperative for us to diversify and expand upon our collaborations with partners and colleagues across the country and throughout the world. To reach this widespread audience with our educational programs, we must embrace the effective use of technology. In the weeks and months ahead, we will be announcing innovative new educational programs such as the three online seminars that AHS Board member Allan Armitage will be hosting this year (see page 9 for more details).

If you are receiving this magazine, then I know you are one of the many members, friends, and partners who already support our mission and the programs by which we accomplish it. In the weeks, months, and years ahead, I look forward to getting to know as many of you as possible. On behalf of everyone at the AHS, I thank you for caring about what we do and who we are.

If I can ever be of any assistance to you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by e-mail at [dhundley@ahs.org](mailto:dhundley@ahs.org) or by phone at (800) 777-7931.



—Deane H. Hundley, *President & CEO*



KASSIE BAKER