

The American GARDENER

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

JUST WHEN most of us in the eastern United States thought spring had arrived, we found ourselves propelled back into winter again. Despite the vagaries of the weather, here at the AHS's River Farm headquarters the most significant indicator of the seasonal transition is our annual spring plant sale taking place, as always, in late April. As I write this, trucks filled with plants are arriving and being unloaded by staff members and volunteers.

It has been an active and productive spring on many fronts. In recent weeks, the AHS Board of Directors has met several times to discuss the implementation of our Master Plan for the foreseeable future. Top priorities include long-awaited improvements to our infrastructure, as well as continued development and expansion of our national education programs. We will also be adding new gardens and renovating educational space here at River Farm. Specific details about these upgrades will be shared with all our members and friends as the plans evolve. It goes without saying that we will be seeking support from the American Horticultural Society's extended family as we undertake this exciting journey.

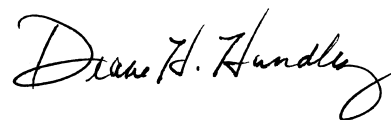
I had intended to use this column to focus on some other critical issues facing the AHS, including developing new revenue streams and enhancing our internship program, but as an alumnus of Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, I feel compelled to address the unfathomable tragedy that occurred there recently.

To show the AHS's support at this dark moment in American history, I attended the convocation service and other activities held at the university in the wake of the shootings. It was truly one of the most poignant experiences I have ever had.

Virginia Tech is one of this country's leading educational institutions and has been, since its inception, committed to the advancement of horticultural education and research as well as the development of groundbreaking new technologies that have benefited the horticulture field. A number of this country's foremost horticultural experts have come through the Virginia Tech program.

The AHS has been a partner with Virginia Tech in the past and we have been working to further strengthen and develop that relationship. In fact, one of the amazing interns currently working here at River Farm is a recent Virginia Tech graduate. As one of the leading organizations in American horticulture, we make a point of supporting, through good times and bad, those institutions that are doing critical work in the field. The work that is taking place at Virginia Tech in the area of horticulture—along with many other educational tracks—is important to the state of Virginia, the country, and the world.

I hope you will join me in keeping the university's faculty, students, and the families of the victims in your thoughts and prayers as they recover from this tragedy. After experiencing their spirit firsthand at the convocation, I am confident the university will emerge stronger and more unified than ever.



—Deane H. Hundley, *President & CEO*



KASSIE BAKER