

# The American GARDENER

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*The American Gardener* (ISSN 1087-9978) is published bimonthly (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December) by the American Horticultural Society, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308-1300, (703) 768-5700. Membership in the Society includes a subscription to *The American Gardener*. Annual dues are \$35; two years, \$60. International dues are \$50. \$10 of annual dues goes toward magazine subscription. Periodicals postage paid at Alexandria, Virginia, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Please send Form 3579 to *The American Gardener*, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308-1300.

Botanical nomenclature is based on *The American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*, on *A Synonymized Checklist of the Vascular Flora of the United States, Canada and Greenland* and on the *Royal Horticultural Society Index of Garden Plants*. Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Society. Manuscripts, artwork, and photographs sent for possible publication will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We cannot guarantee the safe return of unsolicited material. Back issues are available at \$8 per copy.

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## NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR destinations at River Farm is the children's garden. Complete with its boat garden, maze, and imaginary bat cave, this garden has delighted children and adults alike for 15 years. As gardens go, it is not fancy or elaborate, but nonetheless it has had a tremendous and positive impact on the lives of thousands of young people.

Across America, parents, teachers, and informal educators are discovering the important role that gardens and outdoor experiences can play in fostering positive environmental values and kindling a sense of wonder and curiosity in children. Teachers are using hands-on experiences in gardens to supplement traditional classroom studies. Parents are appreciating the opportunity for physical activity that gardens provide. Youth leaders and public garden educators are promoting the benefits of vegetable gardening to encourage healthy food choices and social responsibility.

The American Horticultural Society is proud to have been a leader in promoting children and youth gardening since 1993 when the first National Children and Youth Garden Symposium was held in Chevy Chase, Maryland. This summer, hundreds of educators will once again converge for three days of learning, sharing, and inspiration on the University of Delaware's campus in Newark. We are tremendously honored to have four outstanding institutions in the greater Philadelphia area hosting this year's symposium—Camden Children's Garden, Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and Winterthur Museum & Country Estate. Look for a preview of the symposium on page 12.

But the National Children & Youth Garden Symposium is only one of several wonderful AHS programs on the horizon. In early June, we will gather at River Farm for our Great American Gardeners Awards ceremony. At this annual event, we recognize individuals and organizations that are making outstanding contributions to American horticulture and their communities. Later in the month, the AHS travels to Denver, Colorado, where "Gardening with Native Plants" will be the topic for our second AHS Garden School of the year (see page 7 for more details).

We hope that you will plan to join us at one of these upcoming events. In the meantime, we invite you to spend some time exploring the pages of this issue of *The American Gardener* where you will discover how to grow your own tree fruit and integrate vines into your garden. You'll also learn about intriguing impatiens and hardy low-maintenance geraniums that will provide a long season of color. You'll even meet a lily grower and collector in Idaho whose passion for this genus knows no bounds.

As spring unfolds at River Farm and across the country, we encourage you to take advantage of this special time of year to introduce someone new to gardening. They will surely thank you for the richness and satisfaction that the pursuit of gardening will bring to their lives.

Happy gardening!

Susie Usrey, Chair, AHS Board of Directors  
Tom Underwood, Executive Director

