

NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

ONE OF THE greatest joys of gardening is the opportunity to witness firsthand the natural patterns of planting, growth, and maturity. It is a rhythm that plays out before our eyes every year, fostering a sequence of events that gives rise to a range of emotions—anticipation, wonder, surprise, satisfaction, pride, and, occasionally, disappointment. We plant, we watch, we learn, and then we get a chance to do it all over again!

It was surely this fresh start that occurs in the garden each year that Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States and an avid horticulturist, had in mind when he wrote: “But though an old man, I am a young gardener.” Jefferson was devoted to his garden and was a student of the science and art of horticulture. A keen observer, he kept detailed records of what happened in the garden, knowing that he only had to wait out the cycle of the seasons for the opportunity to start over again and apply his newly acquired knowledge.

Like Jefferson, each of us has the chance every spring to be a young gardener. The awakening garden offers a blank slate upon which to build on our past experiences, try new things, and demonstrate our horticultural prowess. With the prospect of another gardening season right around the corner, there is certainly no better time than the start of a new year to embrace a spirit of optimism and enthusiasm for things to come.

To help you get thinking about the opportunities that the New Year brings, this issue of *The American Gardener* offers an assortment of articles sure to provide inspiration. Start with a preview of some of the new plants being introduced this year and a look at emerging gardening trends observed by knowledgeable people in different sectors of horticulture and gardening. Whether you are considering adding backbone or detail to your garden, two features that will offer help with selecting the right plants are “All-American Oaks” and “Plants on the Rocks.” And don’t miss the cover story by noted landscape design consultant and author Rick Darke, who offers insights on letting nature take its course in the home garden.

As we begin a new year, we’d like to know what you, our members, are looking forward to most in your gardens for 2010. Is there a new plant you are particularly excited about? Are you planning to design a new garden or create a new border? Will you introduce a child or grandchild to the joys of gardening? Send your personal account of what makes you a “young gardener” this year—no more than 500 words, please—to us at membership@ahs.org and you will be entered in a drawing to win a brand new garden journal that will arrive just in time to record your observations on the new gardening year! Entries must be received by February 15, 2010.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the magazine and wish you a healthy, happy, and rewarding New Year in your garden!

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



CONTACTS FOR AHS PROGRAMS, MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS & DEPARTMENTS

For general information about your membership, call (800) 777-7931. Send change of address notifications to our membership department at 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308. If your magazine is lost or damaged in the mail, call the number above for a replacement. Requests for membership information and change of address notification can also be e-mailed to membership@ahs.org.

THE AMERICAN GARDENER To submit a letter to the editor of *The American Gardener*, write to The American Gardener, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308, or send an e-mail to editor@ahs.org.

DEVELOPMENT To make a gift to the American Horticultural Society, or for information about a donation you have already made, call (800) 777-7931 ext. 118.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM The AHS offers internships in communications, horticulture, and youth programs. For information, send an e-mail to education@ahs.org. Information and application forms can also be found in the River Farm area of www.ahs.org.

NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH GARDEN SYMPOSIUM For information about the Society’s annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium, call (800) 777-7931 ext. 137 or visit the Youth Gardening section of www.ahs.org.

RECIPROCAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM The AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program offers members free admission and other discounts to more than 250 botanical gardens and other horticultural destinations throughout North America. A list of participating gardens can be found in the Membership area of www.ahs.org. For more information, call (800) 777-7931 ext. 132.

RIVER FARM The AHS headquarters at River Farm is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays year-round (except Federal holidays), and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays from April through October. Admission is free. For information about events, rentals, and directions, visit the River Farm section of www.ahs.org.

TRAVEL STUDY PROGRAM Visit spectacular private and public gardens around the world through the Society’s acclaimed Travel Study Program. For information about upcoming trips, call (703) 650-5262, send an e-mail to ahs@mcnairtravel.com, or visit the Travel Study section of www.ahs.org.

WEBSITE: www.ahs.org The AHS website is a valuable source of information about the Society’s programs and activities. It is also an important resource for finding out about gardening events in your area, and linking to other useful websites. To access the members-only section of the website, this year’s password is **oak** (the new password for 2010 will take effect February 1). Until that date, the password is **seeds**. The username is always **ahs**.