

American  
Horticultural  
Society  
ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2007–June 30, 2008



AMERICAN  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY

*Making America a Nation of  
Gardeners, a Land of Gardens*



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### *Focused on Making a Difference*

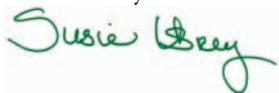
The American Horticultural Society's mission at its core represents a passionate belief that gardening can change lives—and the world—for the better. I am pleased to share that our commitment to that belief is stronger than ever and that we continue to make solid progress in expanding the Society's reach, strengthening our programs and services, and making a positive difference in people's lives through the art and science of horticulture.

Fiscal Year 2008 (July 2007–June 2008) was a year that required exceptional focus and discipline as we worked to address significant changes that were occurring both inside and outside of the organization. Internally, our Board of Directors addressed an important transition in organizational leadership and also took steps to reaffirm our direction with a definitive set of strategic objectives. At the same time, signs of a worsening economic climate challenged the organization to be resilient and adaptable.

I am encouraged that even in challenging times, our work continues to be relevant and purposeful, our volunteer leaders remain committed and involved, and our talented staff continues to be fully dedicated to our cause. As you read through this Annual Report for the 2008 Fiscal Year, I hope you will be proud and inspired.

We are so appreciative of the contributions, involvement, and dedication of our members, donors, volunteers, and partner organizations. Thanks to your support, our AHS national community of gardeners keeps growing!

Susie Usrey



Chair, AHS Board of Directors

The André Bluemel Meadow, completed in the summer of 2008, is a popular destination for River Farm visitors.

COVER: Franklinia (*Franklinia alatamaha*) flowers bloom in summer at River Farm.

**T**HE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (AHS) has been working to promote horticulture and help gardeners across America fully experience the joys of gardens and gardening since 1922. Over the years, the organization has changed and evolved to meet the challenges and opportunities of the times. FY 2008 was no exception as our AHS Board of Directors in January adopted a set of strategic objectives that will help us create a strong foundation for cultivating the next generation of AHS members. Areas of focus in the coming years include expanding the Society's outreach and influence, building organizational capacity, ensuring long term financial stability, and investing time and energy in critical areas such as membership development and infrastructure. To help spearhead these efforts, the Society welcomed a new leader as AHS Director of Member Programs Tom Underwood took the helm as Executive Director mid-year.

## *Helping Americans enjoy the rewards of gardens and gardening*

Although many AHS programs are open to all, membership in the Society provides a variety of benefits, offering quality horticultural resources and inspiration.

The AHS publishes an acclaimed bimonthly magazine, *The American Gardener*, which provides members with in-depth arti-



AHS National Children & Youth Garden Symposium in Minnesota

cles exploring the diverse world of gardening and horticulture in North America. Topics covered in FY 2008 ranged from backyard orchards to composting, designing pathways, hardy terrestrial orchids, and winter-blooming shrubs.

As part of the long-standing tradition of gardeners sharing plants and seeds with one another, the AHS also hosts an annual seed exchange. Hundreds of members participated in the 2008 seed exchange, selecting seeds from 160 kinds of vegetable and flower seeds provided by other members and generous seed companies.

To further the inspiration for gardening, the Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program encourages garden visitation to more than 200 gardens in 43 states, plus Canada and the U.S. Virgin Islands, that provide AHS members free or reduced admission along with discounts on gift shop purchases, parking, and special events.

## *Connecting to tomorrow's gardeners*

The Society celebrated the 15th anniversary of its National Children & Youth Garden Symposium July 19-21, 2007 at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska, Minnesota. This annual train-the-trainer event attracted more than 200 educators, gardeners, garden designers, and youth gardening advocates from 31 states plus Washington, D.C., and Canada. The three-day program focused on the theme of "Widening the Circle," which encouraged youth gardening programs to be inclusive of diverse audiences.

Acknowledging that children and youth are introduced to gardening through various approaches, the Society and the Junior Master Gardeners program jointly present the "Growing Good



Above: AHS Green Garage® exhibit at USBG on the National Mall, summer 2008.



Left: Participants in the AHS Garden School on trees at River Farm learn proper techniques for planting trees.

Kids—Excellence in Children's Literature Awards." Given annually, this award recognizes books that promote an appreciation for gardening, plants, and the environment. The three award-winning books for 2007 are *Josias, Hold the Book* by Jennifer Riesmeyer Elvgren, *Once Around the Sun* by Bobbi Katz, and *A Seed is Sleepy* by Dianna Hutts Aston.

## *Sharing the art and science of horticulture*

The Society offers a variety of programs that allow participants to explore the art and science of horticulture. These range from multi-day workshops and programs at the Society's headquarters and across the nation to web-based presentations and interactive displays at flower shows around the country.

Modeling sustainable practices for the home landscape, the Society's Green Garage® display was part of the United States Botan-

ic Garden's "One Planet—Ours! Sustainability for the 22nd Century" exhibit, which was on display from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. Located adjacent to the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., the exhibit was seen by thousands of visitors from around the world.

The 2007-2008 AHS Garden Schools celebrated the diverse world of horticulture with sessions in the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Rocky Mountain regions. "The Amazing World of Plants," was held at Yew Dell Gardens in Crestwood, Kentucky; "Trees of the American Landscape," was held at George Wash-



William Cullina

ington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens in Alexandria, Virginia; and "Gardening with Native Plants," was held at Denver Botanic Gardens in Colorado. These two-day programs provide an intimate learning opportunity where the participants get to work closely with national experts.

The Society brings horticultural learning experiences to members' homes and offices through its webinar program—a series of online garden seminars presented by noted horticulturists and garden designers. During the second year of this popular series,

William Cullina of the New England Wild Flower Society spoke about "Native Ferns, Mosses, and Grasses" and plant explorer Dan Hinkley presented "New and Underused Woody Plants for American Gardens."

## Showcasing and demonstrating the best of American horticulture

River Farm, the AHS's 25-acre national headquarters along the banks of the Potomac River, provides a unique platform to showcase and demonstrate the best of American horticulture.

After four years, the process of creating the André Bluemel Meadow at River Farm was completed in June 2008. The four-

acre meadow features more than 100,000 native flowering plants and grasses provided by Kurt Bluemel Inc., a nursery in Maryland.

To enhance the meadow experience, a stone Meadow Overlook was installed in January 2008. The overlook is designed as a place for reflection and a gathering space for small groups, while offering sweeping River views of the meadow and across the Potomac.

views of the meadow and across the Potomac was made possible by the generous support of AHS President's Council member Pauline Vollmer of Baltimore, Maryland.



AHS Board member Kurt Bluemel, left, and AHS Executive Director Tom Underwood, right, with Presidents Council member Pauline Vollmer at the Meadow Overlook.

## Providing practical and authoritative information

Through partnerships with prominent publishers, the American Horticultural Society has published more than 100 gardening books since the Society was founded in 1922, including popular references such as the *AHS A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* (2004) and the *AHS Encyclopedia of Perennials* (2006).

The AHS website ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)) offers a wide array of horticultural information and resources, including access to hundreds of gardening articles published in back issues of *The American Gardener*, seasonal gardening tips, links to Master Gardener programs nationwide, gardening zone maps, and lists of gardening events around the country.

## Recognizing horticultural achievements

Each year, the American Horticultural Society honors individuals and organizations for outstanding achievements in various fields in horticulture through the Great American Gardeners Awards. Twelve awards were presented in 2008, including the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award—the AHS's highest honor—which went to Harold Pellett, the executive director of the Landscape Plant

### 2008 GREAT AMERICAN GARDENERS AWARD WINNERS

#### Liberty Hyde Bailey Award

Harold Pellett

#### H. Marc Cathey Award

Thomas G. Ranney

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David Salman

#### Landscape Design Award

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Betty Brown Casey



#### Jane L. Taylor Award

Mike H.C. Devlin and Valerie R. Frick

#### Teaching Award

Laura Deeter

#### Urban Beautification Award

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Development Center in Chanhassen, Minnesota. (For a complete list of the 2008 winners, see the box above.)

The Society recognizes outstanding gardening books published in North America with its annual Book Award. The 2008 winners are: *Foliage* by Nancy J. Ondra; *A Natural History of North American Trees* by Donald Culross Peattie; *Perennial Vegetables* by Eric Toensmeier; and *Viburnums* by Michael Dirr. Also, two AHS Citations of Special Merit to recognize a book series or regularly revised reference books were awarded to Brooklyn Botanic Garden's *All-Region Guide Series* and the *Sunset Western Garden Book*.

# American Horticultural Society

## Financial Summary

With assets worth more than \$4 million and debt-free ownership of its headquarters property, River Farm, the American Horticultural Society is in a strong financial position to fulfill its mission. A growing membership and generous donors make it possible for continued enhancement of programs, services, and outreach efforts.

### Statement of Financial Position

#### Year ended June 30, 2008

ASSETS	
CASH ACCOUNTS	\$141,550
PLEDGES RECEIVABLE, NET	103,320
OTHER ASSETS	54,302
INVESTMENTS	2,649,431
PLEDGES RECEIVABLE, NON-CURRENT PORTION	136,000
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET	961,818
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,046,421</b>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES	\$197,829
DEFERRED REVENUE AND SUPPORT	582,272
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$780,101</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	
UNRESTRICTED	2,437,861
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	571,500
PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	256,959
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,266,320</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,046,421</b>

### Statement of Financial Activities

#### Year ended June 30, 2008

REVENUE SUMMARY	
MEMBERSHIP	\$836,240
EVENTS AND SERVICES	413,561
CONTRIBUTIONS AND GALA	636,314
RIVER FARM RENTALS	259,877
NET INVESTMENT INCOME (LOSS)	(129,002)
ROYALTY AND OTHER INCOME	10,868
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$2,027,858</b>
EXPENSES SUMMARY	
MEMBERSHIP	\$427,470
EDUCATIONAL EVENTS	532,390
COMMUNICATIONS	572,411
DEVELOPMENT	393,166
MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL	463,711
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,389,148</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(\$361,290)</b>

The above numbers have been excerpted from the American Horticultural Society's June 30, 2008 audited financial statements. A copy of the complete audit report is available upon request from the American Horticultural Society national office.

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**T**he American Horticultural Society is grateful to all who help advance our mission through financial, in-kind, and volunteer support. While space limitations do not allow us to honor all donors by name, we would like to express special thanks to the following donors who made contributions of \$100 or more between July 1, 2007 and December 31, 2008.

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