



# American Horticultural Society ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2008–June 30, 2009



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

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# American Horticultural Society 2008–2009 Highlights

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Dear Friends,

FISCAL YEAR 2009 (July 2008–June 2009) was a year of renewed focus on our core programs and services. Like many individuals, businesses, and other non-profits, the AHS was affected by the struggling economy that has impacted everyone to one degree or another. At the AHS, we responded from a position of strength by sharpening our pencils, tightening our belts, and honing in on what is truly important. With the goal of ensuring a strong AHS for the future, we have been dedicated to being good stewards of our resources and protecting our key programs and services.

We are pleased to report that our core activities such as *The American Gardener* magazine and our horticultural book program continue to be recognized for their high quality and depth of information presented. And, we continue to gain momentum in a number of notable areas including our members-only webinars, the National Children & Youth Garden Symposium, and our national awards programs. We were particularly honored by the opportunity to share our message of sustainable gardening with tens of thousands of visitors to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in partnership with the United States Botanic Garden.

In addition to our programmatic progress, we have made significant headway in setting the stage for a strategic investment in infrastructure upgrades at our River Farm headquarters. Recognizing the value that River Farm brings to our mission, we are taking steps to improve our aging “behind the scenes” services with systems that offer greater reliability, improved cost effectiveness, and lessen our impact on the environment. These improvements will help to secure the Society’s future operations at River Farm and will benefit the AHS for decades to come.

We remain focused on the long-term strength and success of the AHS. We will continue to improve and adapt so as to best position the organization for the opportunities that we are confident will present themselves in the future as our country recovers and the economy regains momentum.

Challenging times give us reason for introspection. What we see is a passion for gardens and gardening that is stronger than ever. With this annual report, we express our deep gratitude to our members, donors, and volunteers who have supported our work and chosen to be a part of our American Horticultural Society family.

Susie Usrey, Chair  
Tom Underwood, Executive Director



The AHS Annual Seed Exchange, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2009, allows members to share rare, uncommon, and favorite varieties with other gardeners nationwide.

## *Building a National Community of Gardeners*

For more than 80 years, the American Horticultural Society has worked to promote horticulture and help gardeners across America fully experience the rewards of gardens and gardening. The AHS is a community of gardeners—of every age, from every region of the country, and of every level of interest and expertise.

Among the many benefits AHS members enjoy are: *The American Gardener* magazine; the AHS web site; free or reduced admission at many public gardens and flower shows; and, the annual Member’s Seed Exchange. Membership also provides valuable support to the Society’s work to share the importance of plants and gardens with more Americans.



Insightful profiles of individuals who have dedicated their lives to American horticulture are a popular feature of the Society’s magazine, *The American Gardener*. Writer Carole Ottesen captured the vibrant energy of Holly Shimizu, Executive Director at the U.S. Botanic Garden, in the September/October issue.

Readers also enjoy in-depth articles from the country’s most highly regarded garden communicators. In the January/February issue, garden consultant and author Lee Reich contributed an informative and richly illustrated article on pruning deciduous shrubs.



Panayoti Kelaidis, senior curator and director of outreach at Denver Botanic Gardens, was recipient of the AHS's prestigious Liberty Hyde Bailey Award for 2009.



More than 30 flower shows from all over the United States hosted exhibits that won the AHS's Environmental Award for demonstrating the connection between horticulture and the environment. At the 2009 Philadelphia Flower Show, the award was presented to Temple University Ambler's "Green Renaissance" exhibit.

### Encouraging Good Work Across America

American horticulture has advanced because of innovators and leaders who have made significant contributions to our field and who have provided valuable inspiration to others. Many of these champions are unsung heroes, their contributions known only to the most avid gardeners. The Society's awards programs strive to change that, recognizing and promoting the achievements and contributions of individuals and organizations across the entire spectrum of horticulture.

### Helping American Gardeners Explore Their Passion

The AHS provides a variety of opportunities for members to explore the world of gardening and to pursue their passion for plants. Our programs offer the chance to hear from some of the nation's most respected gardening authorities, to visit the world's most renowned gardens, and to gain unparalleled personal enrichment and inspiration.

Throughout its history, the AHS has been a leader in standardizing, communicating, and enriching the language of gardening. Over the years, nearly 100 AHS reference books have found a place on the bookshelves of American gardeners, making the Society one of the most respected sources of authoritative gardening information on all aspects of horticulture.



The Society's highly regarded Travel Study program paid a visit to Baltimore, Maryland, in 2009. Former AHS Board Chair Kurt Bluemel served as host for the program that included a tour of the famous Ladew Topiary Gardens.



Along with the Society's members-only webinars, the AHS Garden School program offers participants the opportunity to get first-hand insights into a variety of timely topics such as creating a water-thrifty garden and gardening with native plants.



The AHS's Green Garage display was part of the U.S. Botanic Garden's "One Planet—Ours!" exhibit on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

### Joining Hands with Like-Minded People

Forging alliances with organizations that share the Society's values offers opportunities to further our mission, leverage our resources, and heighten our visibility. The synergies resulting from strategic partnerships with academia, horticultural businesses, industry and professional associations, government entities and other non-profits create unique opportunities for our voice to be heard, result in valuable in-kind support, and open the door for meaningful AHS member involvement.

To help promote earth-friendly landscapes, the AHS has become a participant in the Sustainable Sites Initiative. A collaborative effort between the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and the United States Botanic Garden, this initiative was created to encourage sustainable land development and management practices. Just as green building standards provide guidance and motivation to reduce the environmental impact of buildings, the initiative is developing comprehensive guidelines and criteria for creating sustainable landscapes.

In the interest of furthering a national agenda in support of outdoor learning for kids, the AHS has joined the No Child Left Inside Coalition. The coalition, comprising more than 600 educational, environmental, and other groups across the United States, supports the development of programs and activities focusing on getting children actively engaged with the natural world around them.

## Opening the Door to the Next Generation of Gardeners

Since the first National Children & Youth Garden Symposium in 1993, the AHS has been a leader in promoting and supporting the inclusion of gardens in children's lives. Not only are plants and gardens important to play, learning, and quality of life, but early outdoor experiences can help to shape positive environmental attitudes and values that last a lifetime.



Poster session participants from Clemson University at the 2008 National Children & Youth Garden Symposium. Hosted by Longwood Gardens, the Camden Children's Garden, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and Winterthur Museum & Estate, the symposium was headquartered at the University of Delaware's Newark campus.



With its charming children's garden and plenty of opportunities for exploration and discovery, engaging outdoor experiences at the Society's River Farm headquarters have been a part of young people's lives for more than three decades.



Dar Hosta, author and artist, speaks to AHS symposium attendees about cultivating creativity in young people. Dar's book, *If I Were a Tree*, was one of four recipients of the 2008 Growing Good Kids—Excellence in Children's Literature Awards.



Norm Lownds, visiting scholar at River Farm, meets a group of school children on a field trip. "Dr. Norm" is an associate professor in the horticulture department at Michigan State University and curator of the university's acclaimed 4-H Children's Garden.

## River Farm as the Hub of Activity and a Living Laboratory

Once owned by George Washington, River Farm's 25 acres of lawns, meadows, and formal gardens surrounding the Estate House combines historic significance with contemporary relevance. Since the AHS acquired River Farm for its national headquarters in 1973, the property has been a meeting place for horticultural and community groups and a green space for families to enjoy. It also serves as a national platform from which to promote horticultural innovation, practical experimentation, and conservation.



Since the first phase of planting began in 2004, the André Bluemel Meadow at River Farm has come into its own as a dramatic example of sustainable gardening.

## American Horticultural Society Financial Summary

With net assets worth more than \$2.5 million and debt-free ownership of its headquarters property, River Farm, the American Horticultural Society is in a solid financial position to fulfill its mission. A loyal membership and generous donors make it possible for continued enhancement of programs, services, and outreach efforts.

### Statement of Financial Position Year ended June 30, 2009

ASSETS	
CASH ACCOUNTS	\$69,658
PLEDGES RECEIVABLE	190,180
OTHER ASSETS	33,798
INVESTMENTS	2,071,289
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET	1,012,177
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,377,102</b>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES	\$216,189
DEFERRED REVENUE AND SUPPORT	614,048
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$830,237</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	
UNRESTRICTED	1,799,677
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	477,469
PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	269,719
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,546,865</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,377,102</b>

### Statement of Financial Activities Year ended June 30, 2009

REVENUE SUMMARY	
MEMBERSHIP	\$760,517
CONTRIBUTIONS	471,153
PROGRAMS	175,283
FACILITY RENTALS	260,289
BOOKS, SERVICES AND OTHER INCOME	56,915
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$1,724,157</b>
EXPENSES SUMMARY	
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS	435,261
GARDENS AND BUILDINGS	391,373
EDUCATIONAL AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS	315,156
MEMBERSHIP	288,818
MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL	386,649
FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT	283,163
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,100,420</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(\$376,263)</b>
<b>NET INVESTMENT INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<b>(\$343,192)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS – BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$3,266,320</b>
<b>NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$2,546,865</b>

The financial data presented here are derived from the American Horticultural Society's June 30, 2009 audited financial statements. A copy of the complete audit report is available upon request.

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The 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, 2008 and December 31, 2009.

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