Bouquets of vibrant flowers outshined the gray clouds and rain at the American Horticultural Society’s annual Gala on September 23. Despite the inclement weather, more than 250 members, neighbors, elected officials, horticultural experts and gardening enthusiasts from across the nation joined the AHS in celebrating 50 years at River Farm. Themed “Simple Pleasures of the Garden,” the magical night raised $350,000 for River Farm’s maintenance, critical improvements, beautification, and preservation and reaffirmed AHS’s enduring commitment to its beloved historic headquarters.

Led by Gala Chair and AHS Board Member Laura Dowling and Gala Co-Chairs Cindy Conner and AHS Board Member Amy Golden, the celebratory evening featured a cocktail reception, magnificent dinner, and dancing. Renowned designer, author and philanthropist Charlotte Moss, who served as the Gala Honorary Chair, was awarded the prestigious AHS National Achievement Award. Guest of honor Claire Sawyers, director of the Scott Arboretum in Pennsylvania, accepted the 2023 AHS Liberty Hyde Bailey Award, AHS’s highest award for significant...
lifetime achievements across numerous horticultural fields. Emcee Barry Dixon skillfully conducted the night’s activities, and auction host and local Alexandrian Bill Coffield’s high energy and humor kept the audience entertained, resulting in enthusiastic participation during the live auction and paddle raise. For the first time, the Gala featured an After Party, hosted by Young Friends After Party Chair Cameron Hardesty and Co-Chair Pamela Wurst Vetrini, concluding the evening on a sweet note with desserts and dancing.

**NEW RAP GARDENS ANNOUNCED**
Several new gardens have joined the AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP) over the summer:

**W.J. Beal Botanical Garden** (East Lansing, Michigan). Established in 1873, the W.J. Beal Botanical Garden is the oldest, continuously operated university botanical garden in the United States. Featuring a collection of over 2,000 plants, this beautiful five-acre garden is situated in the heart of Michigan State University’s campus along the Red Cedar River.

**Hortus Arboretum and Botanical Gardens** (Stone Ridge, New York). This 21-acre arboretum is home to four gardens, with two more currently in the works. With the goal of creating a “living textbook” of plants that can be grown in the Hudson Valley, these gardens are home to native trees, unusual plants, and shrubs for you to explore.

**The Houston Botanic Garden** (Houston, Texas). A 132-acre urban oasis and living museum with 1,000 taxa inspires and connects visitors. The curated collection of tropical, sub-tropical, and arid plants from around the world reflects the city’s rich cultural and ethnic diversity.

**Spiegel Grove** of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums (Freemont, Ohio). The 24-acre Spiegel Grove is home to more than 90 species of trees—some dating back to President Hayes’ time—along with a beautiful variety of other plants accessed by trails to make exploring fun and easy.

Be sure to add these gardens to your must-see list or find other RAP gardens near you at [www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap](http://www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap).

**AWARD NOMINATION FOR MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTOR MARIANNE WILLBURN**
Marianne Willburn, a garden communicator whose “In Defense of...” opinion columns have been a regular feature in *The American Gardener* over the last two years, has been short listed as Garden Writer of the Year by the Garden Media Guild (GMG) in the United Kingdom. Willburn, who lives in Virginia and is an award-winning book author and contributor to the Garden Rant blog, submitted three of her 2023 columns for the AHS magazine in her award nomination. The winners of the 2023 GMG awards will be announced following an awards lunch in London on November 17.
SAVE THE DATE FOR NCYGS 2024

The American Horticultural Society’s 32nd annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS) will be held on Chicago’s North Shore from July 8–11, 2024, in partnership with the Chicago Botanic Garden. Sponsors include Ball Horticultural Company and Chicago Botanic Garden. Full details and registration will be made available in January.

The AHS is now accepting session proposals for the Symposium. We encourage youth garden educators from across fields to apply. Please review the proposal guidelines at www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/youth-gardening/ncygs/ncygs-2024 and submit your session proposals by Friday, December 1, 2023. We will respond to all proposals in January 2024.

Written by AHS Staff

GIFTS OF NOTE

In addition to vital support through membership dues, the American Horticultural Society relies on grants, bequests, and other gifts to support its programs. We would like to thank the following donors for gifts received between August 3 and October 11, 2023.

$1,000+ Gifts

University of Tennessee
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated
Crosby Designs LLC
G. Carl Ball Family Foundation
American Color Inc.
Davenport & Company LLC
White House Farm Foundation
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Terrance Adhlock and Jeffrey Hunter
Deborah Akerson
Leslie S. Ariail
Doug A. Barker and Sam Kilpatrick
Lauren Bishop
Debbie and Jeffrey Blount
Brian Branton
Nancy M. Bull
Henrietta Burke and Taylor Burke, III
Leonard and Mary Calvert
Katherine and David Cheek
Tammy Chincheck
Scott Collins
Timothy and Christine Conlon
Torrey Matheson Cooke
Courtney Cox
Katharine and Richard Davison
Laura Dowling and Robert Weinhagen, Jr.
Geneva Durana
William and Ann Edwards
Linda and Robert Fiscus
Elisabeth French
Kenneth Garr
Ashley Greer and Will Willis
Martha B. Guy
Cameron Hardesty
Ellen Hatton
Whitney Hayes
Adrienne Hensley
Holliday L. Hurd
R. Walter Jones, IV
Charlene Kennerknecht
Nancy McNerney
Rosalie and Neil Morris
Tyler Murrell
Marty Nichols Vecchiola and Tom Vecchiola
Lynne and Greg O’Brien
Cindy and Rob Odgers
Michael Patrick
Scott C. Plein
Ashley Quamme
Anne and Steve Reed
John and Jordan Richards
Elizabeth Roberts
Houston Sanford
Claire Sawyers
Joan Shannon
Margot and Gates Shaw
Holly and Osamu Shimizu
Clare Siegel
Laura Simmons
Regina Smith
Philip Tabas and Helen Hooper
George and Patricia White
Corinne Winburn
Marcia and Klaus Zech

In Memory of Nancy Chenoweth
Christine Howell

In Memory of Julia Rappaport
Charles Byrd
Richard Byrd
Janis Carrasco
Joan Chapel
Carol Gaetano
Darrellyn J. Melilli
Julie and Michelle Kamps Ojeda
Orange County Chinese Cultural Club
Anne Rawlinson
Robert Schultz
Sandy Smith
Jason Stern
Richard Ward

In Memory of Charlotte Moss
Margot and Gates Shaw

In Memory of Chieu T. Nguyen
Jennifer Ferry
Darrellyn J. Melilli
Julie and Michelle Kamps Ojeda
Orange County Chinese Cultural Club

In Memory of Adelaide Novak
Sheila Kremer
Anne Fafara

In Memory of Lowell Schuetze
Anne Fafara

In Honor of Charlotte Moss
Margot and Gates Shaw

In Honor of Pamela Vetrini
Stephanie Kapsis

If you would like to support the AHS, please call Katie Tukey, Director of Development and Engagement, at (703) 768-5700 ext. 144.