



AMERICAN
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

**CONTACTS FOR AHS PROGRAMS,
MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS &
DEPARTMENTS**

For general information about your membership, call (703) 768-5700. 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@ahsgardening.org.

AHS RECIPROCAL GARDEN NETWORK
The AHS Reciprocal Garden Network offers members free admission and other discounts to over 380 botanical gardens and other horticultural destinations throughout North America. A list of participating gardens can be found on www.ahsgardening.org/ahsgardennetwork.

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@ahsgardening.org.

DEVELOPMENT To make a gift to the American Horticultural Society, or for information about a donation you have already made, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 144, or e-mail ktukey@ahsgardening.org.

E-MAIL LISTS To subscribe to specific e-mail lists for updates on programs and events, visit <http://connect.ahsgardening.org/email>.

NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH GARDEN SYMPOSIUM For information about the Society's annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium, e-mail programs@ahsgardening.org, or visit www.ahsgardening.org/ncygs.

RIVER FARM The AHS's River Farm headquarters in Alexandria is open to visitors Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (December–February) and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (March–November). For information about facility rentals, call (703) 768-5700, ext. 114 or e-mail rentals@ahsgardening.org.

TRAVEL STUDY PROGRAM Visit spectacular gardens around the world through the Society's acclaimed Travel Study Program. For information about upcoming trips, visit www.ahsgardening.org/travel.

WEBSITE: www.ahsgardening.org
The AHS website is a valuable source of information about the Society's programs and activities. Users must set up a username and password to access the members-only sections.

News from the AHS

November / December 2024

PROGRAMS • EVENTS • ANNOUNCEMENTS

\$5 MILLION ZECH DONATION ESTABLISHES AHS ENDOWMENT

The American Horticultural Society has received a transformative \$5 million gift from long-time board member **Marcia Zech** to establish an endowment for AHS. The gift was officially announced during the annual fundraising gala held on September



Marcia Zech receives the AHS Gold Medal from Board member Tim Conlon.

21 at AHS's River Farm headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Zech made the donor-restricted gift to ensure the long-term financial stability of the AHS. The gift will remain vested, with the opportunity for other donors to make contributions to help AHS reach an endowment goal of \$10 million. **Jane Diamantis**, a former AHS Board member, and her husband, **George**, made the first additional contribution to the endowment with a \$75,000 gift.

Zech, who served on the AHS Board for 13 years before retiring in June, was awarded the prestigious AHS Gold Medal at the gala for her unwavering leadership, dedication, and transformational impact on the organization. Zech's contributions have been instrumental in championing the mission of the AHS, ensuring its financial sustainability, and safeguarding its River Farm headquarters, a 26-acre site that is part of George Washington's original farmlands. In 2021, her extraordinary commitment was exemplified by a monumental \$1 million donation to stabilize the organization after she and four other board members averted the sale of the historic property.

According to **Suzanne Laporte**, AHS President and CEO, Zech's gift will amplify AHS's impact on gardening and horticulture through its national outreach and education programs. "Beyond her significant financial support, Marcia embodies legendary status through her passion, strategic insight, wisdom, and kindness," says Laporte. "We are extremely grateful for her leadership and support."

NEW BOARD MEMBERS ANNOUNCED

Three new members have recently joined the AHS Board of Directors. They are Bryant Smith of Baltimore, Maryland; Kathryn Acerbo-Bachman of Acton, Massachusetts; and Panayoti Kelaidis of Denver, Colorado.

Currently CEO of the Baltimore Tree Trust, **Bryant Smith** has been involved with the urban forestry industry for more than three decades with the U.S. Forest



Bryant Smith



Kathryn Acerbo-Bachman



Panayoti Kelaidis

TOP: STEPHEN BOBB PHOTOGRAPHY

AHS EVENTS CALENDAR

LIFELONG LEARNING

To learn more, visit ahsgardening.org/lifelong-learning-2/. Unless noted, all events are virtual.

NOV. 15. **Drought-Tolerant Garden Design.** Cheryl Salatino. 1–3 p.m. ET.

NOV. 21. **Leave the Leaves.** Kathy Connolly. 2–3 p.m. ET.

TRAVEL STUDY 2025

To learn more, visit ahsgardening.org/travel.

APR. 15–24. **Dutch Waterways by Private River Barge.**

MAY 21–29. **Garden Wonders of Southern Italy.**

MAY 29–JUNE 8. **Scottish Highlands & Norwegian Fjords.**

Service, Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, and other regional environmental nonprofits. Bryant is a past Warnock Foundation Fellow and a licensed commercial pilot who founded an organization in 2015 to fly relief missions to victims of natural disasters.

Kathryn Acerbo-Bachman is the founder of Experience Curation, a marketing consulting firm that works with a wide range of organizations including public gardens, museums, and other nonprofits. Earlier in her career she held senior roles in museums and non-profits, including director of programs and audience engagement at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Massachusetts.

Panayoti Kelaidis is a plant explorer and public garden administrator who has spent much of his career with Denver Botanic Gardens (DBG), where he is currently director of outreach. Through plant hunting trips around the world, he has expanded DBG's collections and introduced hundreds of plants to general horticulture.

AHS MAGAZINE GARNERS AWARDS FROM GARDEN COMMUNICATORS INTERNATIONAL

The AHS's membership magazine, *The American Gardener*, received three awards from Garden Communicators International (GardenComm). **David J. Ellis**, the long-time editor of *The American Gardener*, was inducted into the GardenComm Hall of Fame, the organization's highest honor. Two contributing writers were honored with the Laurel Media Awards. **Marianne Willburn** received the gold medal for her 2023 "In Defense of..." gardening opinion column, while **Gail Hudson** was awarded a silver medal for her article, "Kicking the Plastic Pot Habit," which appeared in the July/August 2023 issue.

HARTFORD ANNOUNCED AS 2025 NCYGS HOST SITE

The AHS's 33rd annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS) will be held in Hartford, Connecticut, from July 8–11, 2025, headquartered at the Connecticut Science Center. Full details and registration will be available in January.

The AHS is now accepting session proposals for the Symposium. Review the proposal guidelines at ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/youth-gardening/ncygs/ncygs-2025 and submit your session proposals by Friday, January 3, 2025. ■

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 8 and October 8, 2024.

\$1,000+ Gifts

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