

# 25|26 ANNUAL REPORT

AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY™

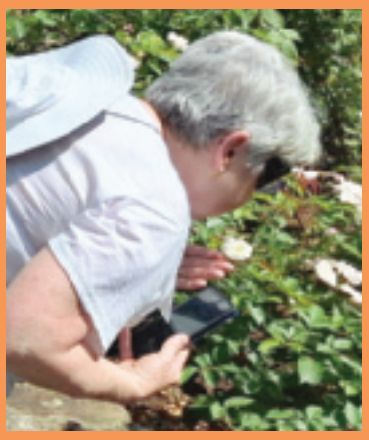
# Financials

| REVENUE AND SUPPORT | REVENUE | % |
|---|---|---|
| Membership | $ 1,301,997 | 15.3% |
| Contributions | 1,227,805 | 14.4% |
| Educational Programs | 700,746 | 8.2% |
| River Farm Rentals | 648,316 | 7.6% |
| Investment Income | 606,803 | 7.1% |
| Net Gain - Sale of Land Preservation Credits | 3,995,486 | 46.9% |
| Other | 34,446 | 0.4% |
| **TOTAL** | **$8,515,599** | **100.0%** |

| EXPENSES | EXPENSES | % |
|---|---|---|
| **PROGRAM SERVICES** | | |
| Communications | $ 923,890 | 21.4% |
| Gardens and Buildings | 967,118 | 22.4% |
| Membership | 791,582 | 18.3% |
| Educational Programs | 663,672 | 15.4% |
| **SUPPORTING SERVICES** | | |
| Development | 523,957 | 12.1% |
| Management and General | 453,361 | 10.5% |
| | **$ 4,323,580** | **100.0%** |

# AHS in ACTION







Through the generous support of the G. Carl Ball Family Foundation, the National Children & Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS) Scholarship Program welcomed scholarship recipients by providing transportation, lodging, and registration at no cost. Among the recipients was North Carolina-based scholar Dr. Delores L. Williams, a distinguished educator, tribal leader, and advocate for cultural preservation and youth empowerment. As CEO of the Generations Forward Learning Farm, she leads initiatives that bring agriculture, STEM, and Indigenous knowledge together to strengthen food security and environmental stewardship. Her work demonstrates the power of garden-based education to connect people with their communities and the environment.

Support from AHS donors also helps make Lifelong Learning possible, giving members opportunities to deepen their horticultural knowledge and apply it in their communities. This year, AHS Lifelong Learning celebrated its first Certificate graduates. The AHS Lifelong Learning Certificates recognize participants who complete AHS LIVE programs, self-paced courses, and a community connection project. Delaware-based AHS Member Lisa King was among the first graduates. For her community project, Lisa developed a phased planting and maintenance plan for her neighborhood garden, beginning with soil testing and continuing through design, volunteer coordination, fundraising, plant selection, and site preparation.

Together, these stories reflect the varied ways AHS donors help people grow their knowledge and share the extraordinary benefits of horticulture with others. AHS is grateful to our community for making these opportunities, and so much more, possible.

# Dear Friends,

Looking back at 2025-26, we couldn't be prouder of our team at AHS and all that they accomplished. This Annual Report tells the story of a year when our work – and our community – grew significantly. In short, we continued to reach new audiences. We curated programs to interest our members. We invested in the organization while keeping an eye on financial sustainability.

We also:

- permanently protected River Farm through a conservation easement,
- added certificates to our educational offerings,
- expanded grants to support school gardens and sensory gardens, and
- brought on five new board members.

Interestingly, the new grants programs resulted from the generosity of donors, for whom we are incredibly grateful. Valerie Rappaport and Tom Byrd funded an endowment to award annual school grants in honor of former AHS Board member, Julia Rappaport. Charlotte Bingham provided funding that allowed AHS to offer eight, $5,000 grants for new sensory gardens. We received almost 200 grant applications.

We also wish to acknowledge other transformational gifts received during the past year. To update and expand the tent at River Farm, positively impacting our revenue streams and improving access to our beautiful gardens, we thank Roger and Mary Bowers, Tim and Christine Conlon, Larry Deaven, Harry and Grace Rissetto, and Katherine Ward.

We also recognize the extraordinary generosity that strengthened AHS and River Farm through major investments beyond annual giving this past year from the G. Carl Ball Family Foundation, Jane and George Diamantis, Debbie Driesman and Frank Islam, the White House Farm Foundation, and the Estate of John D. Jacobs.

Finally, thank you to our members who keep us hopeful about the future of gardening, horticulture and the positive impact plants can make in our communities and beyond. We hope you enjoy reading all the exciting happenings that last year brought.

**Suzanne B. Laporte**
President and CEO

**Scott C. Plein**
Board Chair

## 2025 - 2026 Highlights



**AHS grant programs drew a record number of applications for new School and Sensory Gardens.**



**Two galas in one fiscal year brought together AHS supporters from near and far.**



**We celebrated a new conservation easement at River Farm to protect our historic headquarters for future generations.**

**Special Thanks to our Pro Bono Legal Counsel:** Thomas Connally, Jeffrey Korn, Joseph Lambert, Ben Shellhorn, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader

# AHS Membership



## 30% Growth

AHS is growing — and so is our community. We expanded our presence at conferences and flower shows, increased our social media reach, offered new educational courses, shared more of our work through our publications and the national press, and grew our membership by 30%.

## AHS MEMBER MAGAZINE

# 85

**More than 85 horticulturists, scientists, designers, gardeners, writers, and other experts were featured in *American Gardener* this year, making the magazine a growing forum for the people, ideas, and perspectives shaping horticulture today.**







## AHS PUBLICATIONS

**AHS Essential Guide to Ecological Gardening**

**AHS Sensory Garden Examples and Resources**

**AHS Internet Password Logbook**

**AHS Weekly Planner**

## AHS TRAVEL PROGRAM

# 187 Travelers traveled with us

**187 travelers joined nine AHS travel programs in Santa Fe, South Africa, Japan, Costa Rica, Spain, Texas, the Netherlands, the Brandywine Valley, and France & Italy.**




AHS
LIVE
LIFELONG LEARNING
1,692
People registered for 37 AHS LIVE programs
821
People registered for Self-Paced Online Courses
34
Speakers represented 18 states plus Canada and the UK

# AHS National Program Highlights

## GREAT AMERICAN GARDENERS AWARD WINNERS



**Dr. John Dole**
**Lifetime Achievement**

**Liberty Hyde Bailey Award**
Dr. John Dole

**Rising Star Award**
Michael Guidi

**Jane L. Taylor Award**
Sam Ullery
Lisa Whittlesey

**Garden Sustainability Award**
Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

**Scientific Award**
Dr. Silvia Alvarez-Clare

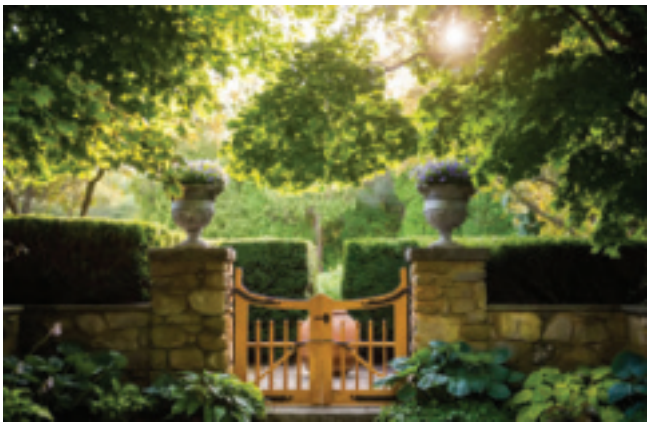
**Horticultural Innovation Award**
Ian Ford-Terry

**Community Greening Award**
ReGreen Springfield

## AHS GARDEN NETWORK

**401** **network gardens** **are now available** to AHS Members.

**21** **new gardens** **joined our network,** setting a new record for one year.



Fuller Gardens, North Hampton, New Hampshire

## 2 AHS BOOK AWARDS

**Pansies** by Brenna Estrada (Timber Press)

**Hidden World: The Survival Systems of Plants** by Kevin Tarner and Rachel Hughes (University of Georgia Press)




## NCYGS HARTFORD

**114** Youth Educators from 30 states plus Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands attended the **National Children and Youth Garden Symposium**, hosted at the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford in July 2025.

The symposium was generously sponsored by the G. Carl Ball Family Foundation.

## 192 GRANT APPLICATIONS

**Julia Rappaport Growing Gardeners Endowment Grant**

107 educators applied for the 2026 Youth Garden Grant, a 270% increase in applicants over last year.

**The 2025 Youth Garden Grant Recipient**

Congress Park School in Brookfield, IL, created a container butterfly garden as part of an interdisciplinary initiative about ecosystems, migration patterns, and cross-cultural understanding and geography of the Americas.

**Anna I Snyder Sensory Gardens Grants**

85 public gardens, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and municipalities applied for five grants to support the creation or expansion of sensory gardens that are open to the public.

# AHS AT HOME

RIVER FARM
ALEXANDRIA, VA



## PROTECTING RIVER FARM

It's a story with a happy ending. The fight that saved River Farm came full circle when the AHS Board placed a conservation easement on the property in the fall of 2025. The conservation easement, held by the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, ensures that River Farm is permanently protected from development and will remain publicly accessible for generations to come.

Friends and supporters of River Farm celebrated the completion of a permanent conservation easement over River Farm with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in May.

Featured speakers and honored guests included State Senator Scott Surovell, Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, State Senator Dave Marsden, Delegate Paul Krizek, and representatives from the offices of U.S. Senator Tim Kaine and U.S. Congressman Don Beyer.

# AHS at RIVER FARM

## ACCESSIBILITY



### TENT

This spring, thanks to our generous donors, we installed a new tent in the garden, enhancing River Farm's capacity to host events celebrating life's special moments.



### RESTORED WALKWAY

We restored the brick walkway around the oval in front of the house, further improving accessibility at River Farm.



### CONSTRUCTION

Construction began on new accessible restrooms at River Farm, set to open in spring of 2027, thanks to a grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## NATURE and HORTICULTURE



### GARDEN

Members of the Perennial Garden Club awarded AHS a $25,000 grant and many hours of volunteer time to install plants in our new native garden.



### LIBRARY

Over 175 individuals visited the Children's Nature Library and Reading Room last summer, enjoying story time and crafts.



### SPRING GARDEN MARKET

Nearly 2,500 people visited River Farm during our annual Spring Garden Market.



# The People of AHS

Every achievement begins with people.
Our progress this year reflects the talent, care, and commitment of the staff, board members, volunteers, and interns who bring AHS to life.

# It TAKES A Garden

Many hands help AHS grow. We celebrate the people whose dedication makes our work—and our success—possible.

**Governance**

Five new members joined the Board of Directors:

**Debbie Driesman, Dr. Janet Fender, Richard Hayden, James McGrath,** and **Camille Paulsen.**
We recognize **Bryant Smith,** who concluded his Board service.
We honored **Scott C. Plein** for his outstanding four years of leadership as the AHS Board Chair at our June Gala.

## 2025-2026 Board of Directors

Scott C. Plein, Board Chair (VA)
Kathryn Acerbo-Bachmann (MA)
Doug Barker (DC)
Tim Conlon (IA)
Dr. Larry Deaven (NM)
Debbie Driesman (MD)
Dr. Janet Fender (VA)
Dr. James Folsom (FL)
Amy Golden (VA)
Richard Hayden (NY)
Panayoti Kelaidis (CO)
James McGrath (CT)
Camille Paulsen (WA)
Holly Shimizu (MD)
Philip Tabas (DC)
Suzanne B. Laporte, President and CEO, ex officio (MD)

## Horticultural Advisory Council

Dr. James Folsom (FL)
William McNamara (CA)
Dr. Mary Hockenberry Meyer (MN)
Claire Sawyers (PA)
Keith Tomlinson (VA)

## *American Gardener* Editorial Advisory Board

Kathryn Acerbo-Bachmann (MA)
Lorene Edwards Forkner (WA)
Panayoti Kelaidis (CO)
Daria McKelvey (MO)
Rebecca McMackin (CT)
Kelly D. Norris (IA)
Jessica Walliser (PA)

## Staff

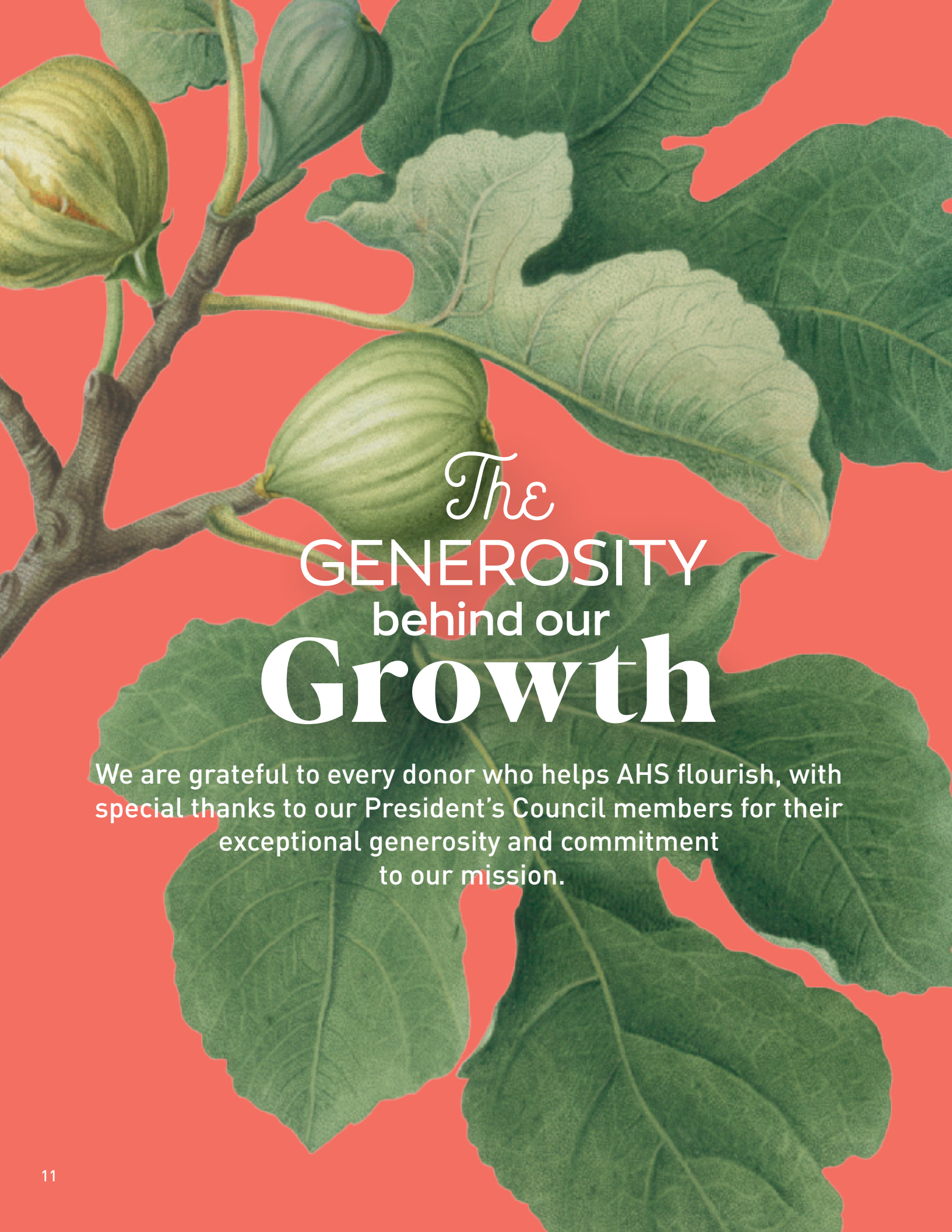
Courtney Alsua, Director of National Programs
Sydney Bard, Associate Events Manager
Tammy Burke, Horticulturist, River Farm
Kate Cordle, Events and Rentals Manager
Leslie Fetty, Senior Associate, Membership and Development
Rochelle Greayer, Editor of *American Gardener*
Ed Harrington, Gardens and Grounds Manager
Suzanne B. Laporte, President and CEO
Allyson Liu, Development Manager
Matt Mattus, Senior Director of Horticulture
Maggie McCollom, Accounting Manager
Melissa McElhenny-Fife, Assistant Gardener
Jane Morrison, General & Events Receptionist
Philip Saville, Manager of Membership Operations
Krista Kjellman Schmidt, Senior Editor of *American Gardener*
Peter Tajat, Managing Director, Property Operations
Sheri Thorpe, Director of Finance
Johanna Tschebull, Communications Manager
Katie Tukey, Director of Development and Engagement
Lillie Tynch, Assistant Editor of *American Gardener*
Daniel Vincent, Director of Membership and Partnerships
Mary Yee, Managing Editor of *American Gardener*
Albert A. Zani, Director of Travel Programs

## Consulting Staff

Rebecca McMackin, Lead Horticulturist

## Volunteers

Mahrou Akhundzadeh
Susie Ashton
Anne Beamer
Amy Brisendine
Ray Burke
Theresa DeFluri
Grace Endres
Diann Frantz
Martha Harris
Geri Hirai
Bridget Kraft
Jean Lough
Jennifer O'Connor
Nancy Olney
Nicole Pagett
Annette Pigott
Cliff Routh
Mary Scanavy
Jeri P. Schoenfeld
Anna Smith Lacey
Sharon Steeg
Dan Straub
Lisa Twedt
Kathy Tyler
Linda Wilson



# The GENEROSITY behind our Growth

We are grateful to every donor who helps AHS flourish, with special thanks to our President's Council members for their exceptional generosity and commitment to our mission.

# President's Council DONORS

**Founder's Circle ($25,000+)**
Ball Horticultural
Katharine and Richard Davison
Jane and George Diamantis
Debbie Driesman and Frank F. Islam
Elisabeth C. Dudley
Richard Stepakof
Marcia Zech

**Liberty Hyde Bailey Circle ($10,000-$24,999)**
Anna Ball
Charlotte Bingham
Tim and Christine Conlon
Larry L. Deaven
Karen and Dan DuVal
Scott C. Plein, through the support of his family's White House Farm Foundation

**Haupt Circle ($5,000-$9,999)**
Doug Barker and Sam Kilpatrick
Nancy M. Bull
James R. Cargill, II
Amy Fowler
Joyce and Don Godsey
Aubyn Merie
Harry and Grace Rissetto
Helen Wineland

**Sustainer's Circle ($2,500-$4,999)**
Sherran S. Blair
Kory B. Farkas
Linda L. Horsley
Suzanne B. Laporte
JoAnn R. Luecke
Scott McGrath
Jainel and Peter Morris
Deborah and Keith Pitts
Craig and Pat Ruppert
Stephanie Russo
Ellen Delman Rydell and Bill Rydell
April and Charles Walton
Katherine Ward

**Council Member ($1,000-$2,499)**
Appreciation of Earth & Animal Foundation Inc.
Cathy Abbott
Carol F. Ackerman
Terrance Adlhock and Jeffrey Hunter
Douglas L. Airhart
Carole K. Anderson
Emilia Arana
Azade Ardali and Robert Covington
Catherine and Paul Armington
Marion and William Atkins
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Rachel M. Ballard
Marion Bardman
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Eliza Bowen
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Antoinette Cindrich
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Dave and Beth Cohen
Fern D. Cohen
Elaine K. Coleman
Marilyn Coleman
Jennifer Condo
John and Phyllis Conkle
Deborah Kennedy Coster
Judy and Andy Daniel
John and Ann Davis
Doyce and Bill Deas
Gayle Dellinger
Deborah Denenberg
Andy Detterline
Sue Dobie
John Dole
Meghan Donahue
Eve Dorfzaun
Anne Dremluk
David Dussinger
William and Ann Edwards
Kathleen P. Ellison
Bradley K. Evans and Diane Donley
Michele R. Evans
Patricia Evans
Karen Fagelman
Janet Fender and John Otten
Elizabeth Fenwick
Ned Fenwick
Deborah Ferguson and William Glover
Susan and Gary Fine
Linda and Robert Fiscus
MaryAnn Franklin
Diann and David Frantz
Deborah Freund
Margaret and David Gardner
Malisa and Michael Gatje
Keith and Norma Gavard
Terry Gigliotti
Laura Godown
Amy Golden and Michael Trauberman
Alan Goulty
Bean R. Granger
Diana Graves
Lee Guerry and Witney Schneidman
Frances and Steven Gylling
Rod Haenni and Ann Priestman
Susan Hamel and Martin Finn
Suzanne Hamilton
Michele and Robert Hanss
Martha Harris
Becky and Bobby Hartness
Richard Hayden
Carolyn and Keith Hayward
Janet Hazelbaker
Alison Head
Kendall Henson
Valerie J. Hicks
Elizabeth Hilpman and Byron Tucker
Leigh Ann and Patrick Hines
Larry and Kathy Hirsch
Laura and Keith Hoffman
Saxon and Mary Holt
Glynda D. Hurley
Joanne Idell
Laura Inge
Janet Jenkins
Elizabeth L. Johnson
Karen Jolley-Gates
Christina and Leonard Jones
Jane and Mal Jozoff
Donna and Kurt Kauffman
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Sharon Morris
Pauline G. Myers
Susan Myers
Myung Nam and James Hamilton
Georgia Nassikas
Jeff Nelson and Paul Mahan
Jared and Kate Newton
Christie Nix
Sunshine and Ben Norwood
Kathryn Norwood
Chris and Steven Nott
Anne Odell and Leo Bevon
Stan and Jean Ogden
Julie Overbeck
Jerry H. Pailer
Sharon and Kirk Parr
Nancy and William Paternotte
Davidson Perry-Miller
Gail and Robert Pless
David and Daisy Podmeyer
Valerie Rappaport and Tom Byrd
Anne and Steve Reed
Mary Lou Reidy
Lynn C. Rhomberg
Lyn F. Richards
Ruth Robbins and Dave Evans
Melinda and Steve Rosen
Sheila Rowan
Nancy Ruffner
Charles Ryan
David B. Ryan
Janet and Randy Santoro
Lori and David Schaeffer
Sandra Schlachtmeyer
Cynthia Schlattmann
Mark H. Schonwetter
Patricia J. Schraff
Aaron Sekulov
Anne M. Sheffield
Anne Shelton
Charlotte and Todd Shelton
Katherine and James Shepherd
Holly and Osamu Shimizu
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Jane-Ashley Skinner
Julie Small and John Gorski
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Steven Smith and Christine Luckscheiter
Kathleen Smithgall
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Nellie Stager
Delphine and Charles Stevens
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Lisa and Kent Volz
Connie Walsh
Melanie Walton and Clancy Smith
Katy Moss Warner
Karen Warren
Nettie Wheatstone
Reese Wheatstone
Sandra Wheeler
Dudley B. White
Patti and George White
Elizabeth Whiteley
Margaret Winters
Peggy Wood
George Wu
Barbara Wyckoff
Dianne E. Young







# SEPTEMBER 2025 GALA DONORS

On September 20, 2025, nearly 300 guests gathered at River Farm for an evening designed to spark surprise, delight, and joy. Guests enjoyed a whimsical pop-up sculpture garden presented in partnership with Nepenthe Gallery. We honored 2025 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award winner Brian Kemble and 2025 AHS Meritorious Service Award winner Skipp Calvert. AHS thanks 2025 Honorary Gala Chair Henrietta Burke and the generous donors who made the Gala a success, raising more than $225,000 for AHS and River Farm.

## GARDEN

Debbie Driesman and Frank F. Islam
Marcia Zech, in honor of Skipp Calvert

## BOUQUET

Larry L. Deaven

## BLOOM

Charlotte Bingham
Henrietta and Taylor Burke
Skipp and Mary Calvert
Skip and Tori Calvert
Jane and George Diamantis
Laura Simmons
Katherine Ward

## BLOSSOM

David Calvert
Jane and Mal Jozoff

## BUD

Doug Barker and Sam Kilpatrick
Nancy Bull
Anne and Steve Reed
Lynn Rhomberg
Grace and Harry Rissetto, in honor of Skipp Calvert

## SEED

Leslie Ariail
Marion Ballard
Ellen Boer
Katherine and David Cheek
Greg and Christie Coppola
Ann and Bill Edwards
Janet Fender and John Otten
Elisabeth French
Susan Hahn and Ron Hudak
Betsy and Bob Huffman
Stephanie and James Kapsis
Panayoti Kelaidis and Jan Fahs
Nancy and Christopher Marzilli
Penny C. Morrill Trust
John and Stephanie Parkes
Jordan and John Thorpe Richards
Marco Rini and Tim Cuppett
Cliff and Jan Routh
Holly and Osamu Shimizu
Phil Tabas and Helen Hooper
Corinne Winburn








## JUNE 2026 GALA DONORS

On June 6, 2026, we welcomed more than 250 friends and supporters to River Farm for a Starlit Garden Gala under our stunning new tent. We honored 2026 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award winner Dr. John Dole and 2026 AHS Meritorious Service Award winners Tim Conlon, Laura Dowling, and Holly Shimizu. AHS thanks 2026 Gala Chairs Roger and Mary Bowers and the generous donors who made the event a success, raising nearly $250,000 to support AHS and River Farm.

### GARDEN

Roger and Mary Bowers

White House Farm Foundation

### BOUQUET

G. Carl Ball Family Foundation
Doug Barker and Sam Kilpatrick
Jane and George Diamantis, in honor of the Faithful Five
Debbie Driesman and Frank F. Islam
Jane and Mal Jozoff

### BLOOM

Charlotte Bingham
Jared and Kate Newton
Katherine Ward

### BLOSSOM

Joyce and Don Godsey
Becky and Bobby Hartness
Leigh Ann Hines

### BUD

Nancy Bull
Katherine Edwards
Penny C. Morrill Trust
Parry Labs – John and Stephanie Parkes
Robert and Leigh Ann Pusey
Anne and Steve Reed
Lynn Rhomberg
Grace and Harry Rissetto
Susan Sheehan, in honor of James McGrath
Lyn Tomlinson
Campion Hruby

Burke & Herbert Bank

Northern Virginia Conservation Trust

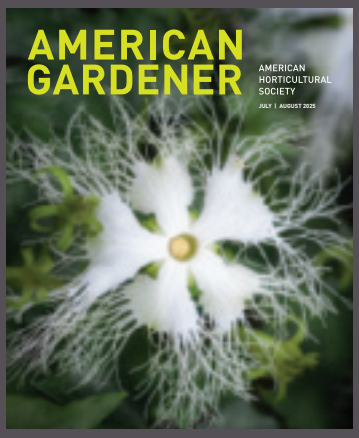
Wegmans

### SEED

Leslie Ariail
Frank and Allison Bacelli
Barbara Becker
Suzanne and Richard Bissell
Debbie and Jeffrey Blount
Henrietta and Taylor Burke
Jenny Rose Carey
Janet Fender and John Otten
Elisabeth French
Mary and David Giachetti
Panayoti Kelaidis and Jan Fahs
Ryan and Katie Meerstein
Georgia Nassikas
Camille and Dirk Paulsen
Sara and Arne Paulson
Brett and Kenton Quick
Jordan and John Thorpe Richards
Marco Rini and Tim Cuppett
Yacht Brokers of Annapolis – Matthew and Deanna Sansbury

Hartley Botanic

REVISITED EXCERPTS FROM **/LAST WORDS** *AMERICAN GARDENER* MAGAZINE




**... I worry that advocating for native plantings perpetuates the fantasy that ancient ecological systems can be destroyed, and then reassembled in our front yards...Something is lost when we destroy these systems that took a millennium to organize.**

**Rebecca McMackin - July/August 2025**




**I keep coming back to ecological citizenship — the simple but radical idea that caring for the land is also caring for each other.**

**Rochelle Greayer - November/December 2025**




**We must think about our gardens not as a *collection* of plants, but as plant systems — communities of plants that, through shared or complementary attributes, support the health and vitality of their neighbors.**

**Richard Hayden - May/June 2026**

AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY™

7931 East Boulevard Drive
Alexandria, VA 22308

ahsgardening.org