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7931 East Boulevard Drive

Alexandria, VA 22308

(703) 768-5700

EDITORIALE-MAIL: editor@ahs.org**ADVERTISING &
CORPORATE
PARTNERSHIPS**E-MAIL: advertising@ahs.org

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

WHETHER IN OUR daily lives or in our gardens, the New Year is a good time to take stock of our progress, reassess our direction, and establish new short- and long-term goals. This is something the staff and Board of the American Horticultural Society does every year, based on feedback from our members and our own evaluation of our accomplishments. As part of this ongoing process, in 2009 we are rededicating ourselves to serving you, our members, with exceptional programs, valuable benefits, practical and inspiring gardening information, and meaningful outreach.

For instance, this year we've expanded the number of gardens participating in our Reciprocal Admissions Program to more than 230. We will also be continuing our popular webinar series, exclusively for members, with online presentations from four more of America's top horticultural experts. Our 17th annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, in July and we have added several new domestic offerings to our highly regarded Travel Study Program. The annual *AHS Member Guide* included in this issue of *The American Gardener* contains an overview of these and many other AHS member benefits and programs. Be sure to read and save this guide, because your AHS membership is more valuable than ever before!

With this issue of *The American Gardener*, we continue the tradition of starting the year with a look at new plants and emerging gardening trends. Get the scoop on what to look for in 2009 starting on page 14. You can also delve into the fascinating and continually evolving science of botanical nomenclature—complete with an update on recent and potential changes in plant names—and learn how to prune a wide range of deciduous shrubs.

One of the clear trends over the past year has been the resurgence of interest in vegetable gardening as a source of healthy, locally grown food. For new as well as seasoned gardeners, this issue has practical advice on how to create, plant, and maintain a vegetable garden. And, to take your mind off winter's chill, discover why the rewards of growing citrus plants in containers are worth the challenges.

When it comes to challenges, there is no doubt we are surrounded by them in our world today. If there's one constant we are able to draw strength from during difficult times, it is the positive influence of plants and gardening in our lives and in our communities. As we enter this New Year, there is a palpable sense of optimism in the air, thanks in part to a renewed passion among Americans for environmental and social issues. As a long-standing proponent of the important role of plants and gardens in environmental stewardship, the American Horticultural Society is well positioned for these changing times. We are glad you are on this journey with us and look forward to seeing and hearing from you this coming year.

Our best wishes for a rewarding New Year, and happy gardening!

Susie Usrey, Chair, AHS Board of Directors

Tom Underwood, Executive Director

