



For Immediate Release April 25, 2011

The Green Heart of Pittsburgh

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### **American Horticultural Society Honors Phipps' Executive Director with Professional Award**

Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens executive director **Richard Piacentini** has been named the 2011 recipient of the American Horticultural Society's Professional Award. The award is one of twelve Great American Gardeners Awards that the AHS presents annually to individuals, organizations, and businesses that represent the best in American gardening. Each of the recipients has contributed significantly to fields such as scientific research, garden communication, landscape design, youth gardening, teaching, and conservation. The Professional Award is given to a public garden administrator whose achievements during the course of his or her career have cultivated widespread interest in horticulture.

Executive director of Phipps since 1994, Richard Piacentini has led the institution's transformation into a model of green building practices and environmental awareness. Since breaking ground on the first LEED® certified visitor center at a United States public garden in 2003, Phipps has endeavored to "green" all of its gardens, displays, programs, and operations. Most recently, construction began on the Center for Sustainable Landscapes, which will comply with the world's highest green building standards. Piacentini has also served as president and treasurer of the American Public Gardens Association, executive director of the Leila Arboretum Society in Michigan, as executive director of the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Washington, and assisted in the development of the Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection.

On Thurs., June 9, 2011, the AHS will honor Piacentini and the other 2011 award recipients during the Great American Gardeners Awards Ceremony and Banquet, held at the Society's headquarters at River Farm in Alexandria, Virginia.

Images are available upon request. For more information on the overall Great American Gardeners Award program, please contact Maren Seubert at 703/768-5700 ext. 132, or [mseubert@ahs.org](mailto:mseubert@ahs.org).

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The American Horticultural Society (AHS), founded in 1922, is an educational, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that recognizes and promotes excellence in American horticulture. One of the oldest and most prestigious gardening organizations, AHS is dedicated to **making America a nation of gardeners, a land of gardens**. Its mission is to open the eyes of all Americans to the vital connection between people and plants, to inspire all Americans to become responsible caretakers of the Earth, to celebrate America's diversity through the art and science of horticulture; and to lead this effort by sharing the Society's unique national resources with all Americans.



#### ABOUT PHIPPS

Built by Henry W. Phipps in 1893 at the height of Pittsburgh's industrial prowess, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has evolved from the nation's first teaching conservatory to a distinguished eco-champion among America's 500 public gardens.

Phipps' mission is to inspire and educate visitors with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and worldwide biodiversity through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse.

Phipps is open daily from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fridays until 10 p.m. Adults, \$12; Seniors 62 and older and students with valid ID, \$11; children 2-18, \$9; children under 2, free.

For more information, call 412/622-6914 or visit [phipps.conservatory.org](http://phipps.conservatory.org).