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**MACARTHUR GENIUS FELLOW WILL ALLEN TO PRESENT KEYNOTE AT
THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S
2009 NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH GARDEN SYMPOSIUM**

HOSTED BY THE CLEVELAND BOTANICAL GARDEN FROM JULY 23-25

Alexandria, VA (July 6, 2009) If anyone knows what a profound difference plants can make in the life of a child, it's **Will Allen**. A 2008 MacArthur Genius Fellow, Allen is the founder of **Growing Power**, a national organization dedicated to growing healthy food for healthy communities in urban areas. A key part of this organization is involving inner city youth in growing plants for food, which helps them understand the vital connection between the fruits of their labors and its influence on their communities.

Since Growing Power's inception in 1993, Allen has worked with thousands of young people between the ages of 10 and 18 to teach them not only gardening skills, but also the value of nutrition, being responsible, and making a positive difference in their communities. Allen will share his experiences and passion for engaging young people in growing food during a keynote presentation at the American Horticultural Society's 17th annual **National Children & Youth Garden Symposium**, "Common Ground: Gardens for a Greener Tomorrow." Hosted by **Cleveland Botanical Garden** from **July 23 to July 25**, this event will explore how to bring together diverse communities and foster curiosity, wonder, beauty, understanding, and acceptance through gardens and plant-based learning.

The Symposium will also feature more than 30 educational sessions on topics ranging from strategies for reaching diverse audiences through meaningful plant-based learning opportunities to designing and funding children's gardens. Participants also will have the opportunity to explore Cleveland Botanical Garden's **Hershey Children's Garden**, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary, as well as the Garden's **Green Corps Urban Youth Program**, which works with high school students who tend urban farms in vacant lots across Cleveland.

As a grand finale to the Symposium, Cleveland-area youth will present a theatrical production of *Seedfolks* by Newbery Medal-winning author **Paul Fleischman**. The play chronicles how an impromptu community garden brings the residents of a diverse Cleveland neighborhood together on common ground.

Space is limited so early registration is recommended. Discounts are available for AHS members, students. Visit http://www.ahs.org/youth_gardening/national_youth_garden_symposium.htm or call (703) 768-5700 ext. 132 for more information.

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The **American Horticultural Society** (AHS), founded in 1922, is a non-profit, 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*. The mission of the AHS 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.

For nearly eighty years, **Cleveland Botanical Garden** has been one of Northeast Ohio's treasures. It is a sanctuary for those who live and work in the city; a source of inspiration and information for gardeners; a living laboratory for students, teachers and researchers; a healing presence for those with special needs; and a catalyst for urban revitalization. The Garden is helping to shape the next generation by introducing youth to the appreciation, use, and conservation of plants. A 10-acre urban garden, the main campus includes the Eleanor Armstrong Smith Glasshouse and ten acres of formal and informal gardens featuring both native plants and plants from around the world.