

Dear Colleagues in Horticultural Therapy,

Welcome to the February 2025 newsletter of the American Horticultural Therapy Association! February is here, and for some of us, glimpses of early spring are beginning to brighten our days, just as predicted by Punnett's Law. For others, we are getting more snow. But it is a time for preparation and building, and so that is exactly what we are doing at the AHTA. As violets, primroses, and irises are starting to bloom, new growth at the AHTA is also sprouting. It's an exciting time—a time to branch out and embrace new seasons of growth, connection with Mother Earth, and the continued prosperity of our horticultural therapy programs!

I want you to know that we are making great strides, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our office staff and volunteers who dedicate their time to this association. These individuals are driving initiatives forward across various work teams and task forces.

- So far this year, we've celebrated several important milestones:
- Selection of the 2025 conference theme and date.
 - Nomination of another member of our community to the Board of Directors.
 - Starting a new Task Force to look into more ways we can support the wonderful research in the field of HT.
 - Progress in key discussions on significant topics that all extend the walls of our garden just a bit more every day.

All of these efforts are laying the foundation for continued growth in the year ahead. We are also excited about our renewed focus on membership engagement. We've relaunched community meetings and extended a discount to both prospective and returning members. Our Marketing, Webinars, and Sponsorship teams have been working diligently to enhance our visibility, connecting with potential and current members, sponsors, and partners. These efforts are all vital to strengthening our digital presence and enriching the overall membership experience.

Looking ahead, we will continue focusing on enhancing our educational offerings, expanding membership benefits, and refining our accreditation processes. The work being done by our volunteers in the task forces and work teams is crucial to achieving our goals, and we remain committed to engaging with our members to ensure that AHTA continues to be the trusted resource in the field of horticultural therapy.

- Here's how you can get involved and help us continue to grow:
- Become a member or encourage others to join (Don't leave us hanging!)
 - Join a work team or become a board member
 - Write an article for the AHTA magazine (we're prying for great content!)
 - Connect with AHTA on social media
 - Ask your facility or place of employment to become a sponsor for the 2025 Conference or upcoming "Growing Impact Campaign" Advancing Youth Wellness through Horticulture
 - Plan a webinar for our community (We'll lead the details to you!)
 - Support our planning efforts for the 2025 conference
 - Submit a research article for our Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture
 - Join our community meetings (We grow stronger together!)
 - Learn with us at one of our webinars

There are so many ways for you and the AHTA to grow together. Thank you for being a part of our flourishing community!

Matthew Janson HTR, CTRS
President, AHTA

News and Events

Save the Date! AHTA Annual Conference 2025

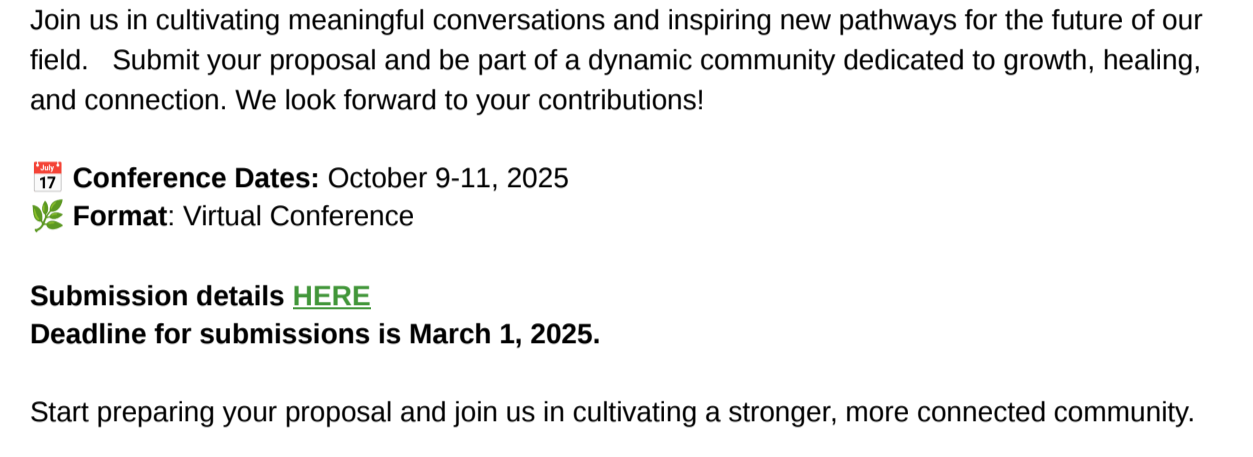
- 📅 October 9-11, 2025
- 🌱 Theme: "Nurturing Community: Planting the Seeds of Our Future"

The AHTA Annual Conference is going virtual! Join us on an exciting interactive platform with new elements designed to connect and inspire:

- 👉 Communities of Practice
- 🌱 Virtual Tours of HT/TH Programs and Educational Institutions

Start planning your presentation and get ready to plant the seeds for our collective future. Stay tuned for more details!

#AHTA2025 #NurturingCommunity



Call for Presentation Proposals! 🌱👉

The AHTA Annual Conference 2025 is seeking presentation proposals! This year's theme, "Nurturing Community: Planting Seeds for Our Future," highlights the power of horticultural therapy in fostering growth, connection, and innovation.

This year, we celebrate the growing role of horticultural therapy in shaping a healthier, more inclusive society—where nature-based interventions are recognized as essential to our social and healthcare infrastructure.

We are seeking engaging presentations that highlight the power of horticultural therapy and therapeutic wellness practices in fostering physical, emotional, cognitive, and social well-being across all ages and abilities. Whether you're sharing innovative research, best practices, or hands-on approaches, we want to hear from you!

Join us in cultivating meaningful conversations and inspiring new pathways for the future of our field. Submit your proposal and be part of a dynamic community dedicated to growth, healing, and connection. We look forward to your contributions!

- 📅 **Conference Dates:** October 9-11, 2025
- 🌱 **Format:** Virtual Conference

Submission details [HERE](#)
Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2025.

Start preparing your proposal and join us in cultivating a stronger, more connected community.

#AHTA2025 #CallForProposals #NurturingCommunity

National Horticultural Therapy Week and Green Career Week

Do you or your horticultural therapy program want to be highlighted during Green Career Week or National Horticultural Therapy Week? Both are coming up in March and we would LOVE to show as many HTRs and HT programs as possible. You can submit photos, videos, or essays to the AHTA Marketing Work Team using this link [here](#):

AHTA Annual Awards

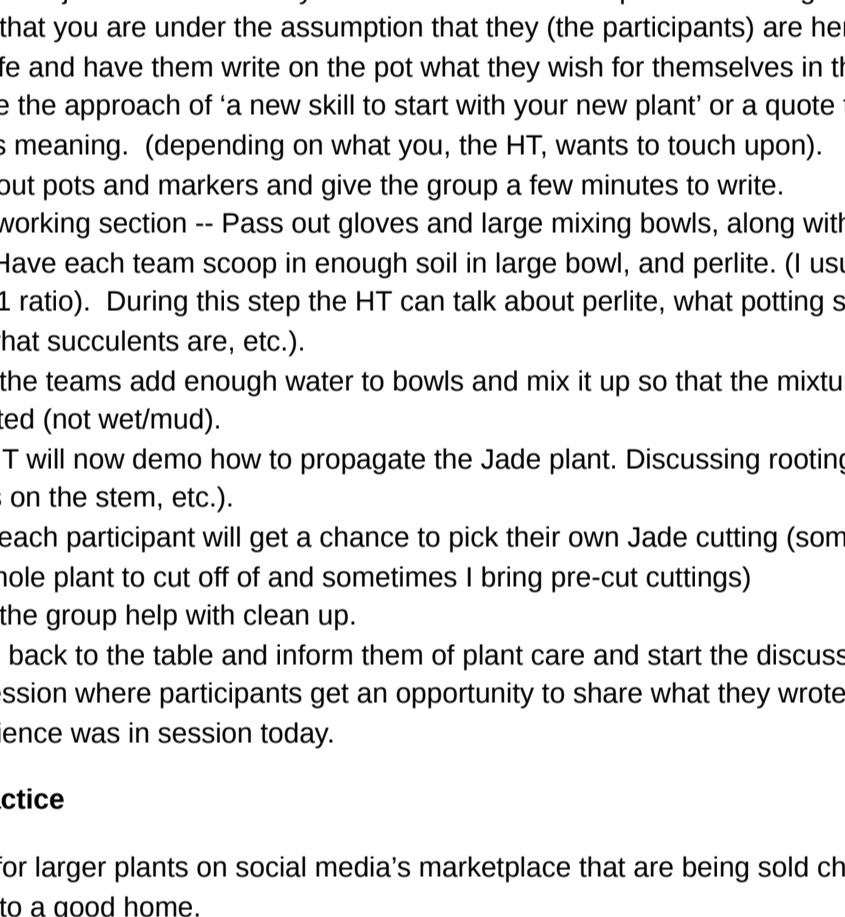
Nominations for the AHTA Annual Awards 2025 are now open! It's time to cultivate recognition for those who are doing outstanding work in our field. Please take a moment to plant your nomination for an AHTA Annual Award:

- Rhea McCandless Professional Service Award
- Alice Burlingame Humanitarian Service Award
- John Walker Community Service Award
- Ann Lane Mavromatis Scholarship
- AHTA Therapeutic Garden Design Award

Nominations will be accepted until **April 1, 2025!** Let's grow the spirit of excellence in our community!

[Learn More Here](#)

2025 Webinar Update



Discover the Healing Power of Nature: Missouri Botanical Garden's Therapeutic Horticulture Programs

Join Jennifer Smith-Simms, HTR, as she explores the transformative impact of therapeutic horticulture at the Missouri Botanical Garden. For over 22 years, the Garden's Therapeutic Horticulture (TH) team has been dedicated to fostering deep, meaningful connections with nature across the St. Louis community. Through strong partnerships, they provide innovative programs that support individuals of all ages—from children and adults impacted by cancer to seniors in memory care.

Expanding beyond healthcare and senior living, the TH team now collaborates with social service agencies and corporate wellness initiatives, bringing the benefits of nature to even more individuals. Learn how their work continues to evolve, creating accessible, engaging, and life-enriching experiences for all. Don't miss this opportunity to gain insight into the power of plants to heal, connect, and inspire!

Free for members
 \$35 for non members

Nominations for AHTA Board of Directors are now open!

AHTA is a member-driven organization, and we need those with a passion for our field to help grow AHTA into the next 50 years! We value your rooted expertise in areas like marketing, social media, sponsorship and partnership development, magazine editing, webinar development, membership growth, conference planning, and exam development. Help plant the seeds for the future of AHTA and the profession by volunteering!

Nominations will be open until **April 1, 2025.** Let's sprout new ideas and cultivate success together!

[Nominate Here](#)

Jades for your practice

By Erin Virzi, CRC, HTR
 Northeast Horticultural Therapy Network, President

Jade plants symbolize good fortune and prosperity for new beginnings and are well suited for HT sessions, especially when working in a rehabilitation facility where most patients are wanting to start a new life. Using Jade plants in my practice was possible because of their meaning and they are an easy succulent to care for, propagate and grow. Jades can be repotted or propagated for the patients to take home. Since propagation is making a new plant, I would link the discussion to new skills or link it to the meaning and what they wish for themselves in their new beginning.

Materials needed:

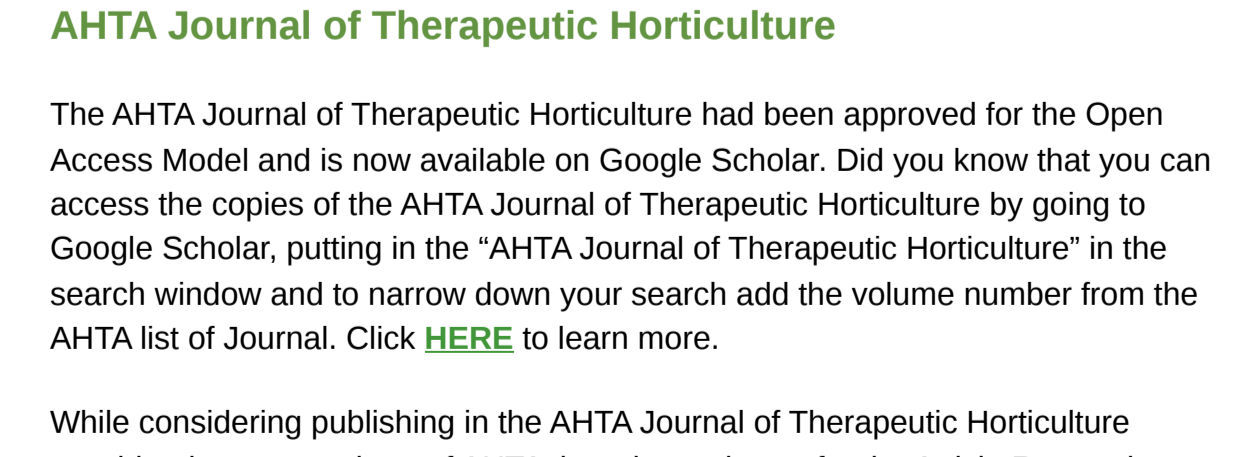
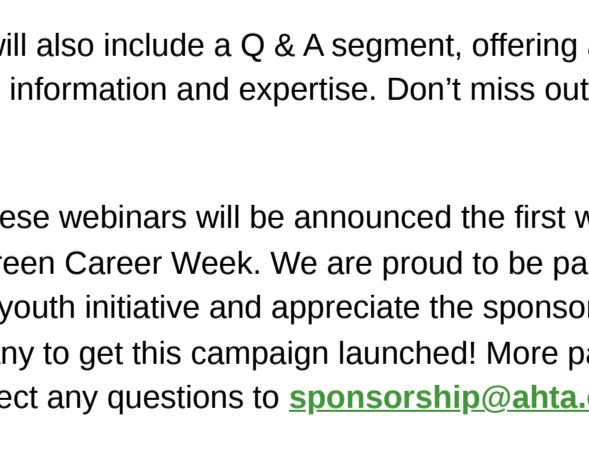
- Potting soil & Perlite
- Table cloth/room
- Pots (white)
- Permanent markers
- Water
- Soil bins/large bowls/scoop
- Gloves
- Jade plants
- Rooting hormone
- Seasonal décor (decorative rocks, sand, heart sticks, etc.)
- Scissors
- Shallow dish

Directions: (may vary depending on # of participants)

1. Discuss objective of the activity and talk about the Jade plant's meaning.
2. State that you are under the assumption that they (the participants) are here to start a new life and have them write on the pot what they wish for themselves in their new life. Or use the approach of a new skill to start with your new plant or a quote that reflects Jade's meaning. (depending on what you, the HT, wants to touch upon).
3. Pass out pots and markers and give the group a few minutes to write.
4. Teamworking section -- Pass out gloves and large mixing bowls, along with potting soil. Have each team scoop in enough soil in large bowl, and perlite. (Usually put 3:1/4:1 ratio). During this step the HT can talk about perlite, what potting soil consists of and what succulents are, etc.).
5. Have the teams add enough water to bowls and mix it up so that the mixture is semi hydrated (not wet/mud).
6. The HT will now demo how to propagate the Jade plant. Discussing rooting hormone, nodes on the stem, etc.
7. Then each participant will get a chance to pick their own Jade cutting (sometimes I bring the whole plant to cut off and sometimes I bring pre-cut cuttings)
8. Have the group help with clean up.
9. Come back to the table and inform them of plant care and start the discussion portion of the session where participants get an opportunity to share what they wrote and how their experience was in session today.

Tips for Practice

1. Look for larger plants on social media's marketplace that are being sold cheaper or given away to a good home.
2. In general, connect with others on the multi-disciplinary teams such as the social worker to learn about what goals patients are working towards.
3. Jades are durable and can be reused if patients leave them behind.
4. This session can be used with other plants that have meanings behind them that connect to the participants' lives.



Photos by Erin LB Virzi, CRC, HTR

Poll: Vote For an Updated Name for the AHTA Magazine

Don't worry -- We're not losing the name AHTA Magazine, just freshening it up for spring and for all the healing HT/TH work yet to come.

We invite you to have a say and select your favorite from a list of 10 potential names dreamed up by the Magazine Work Team. Make sure to read the spring issue to see which name topped the rest.

[Vote Here](#)

New Member Benefit: A Virtual Book Club

With so many wonderful, thought-provoking books (both new and old) about nature, gardening, plants, horticultural therapy/ horticulture therapy, basically, all things green, AHTA is starting an online book club!

We will meet via Zoom, 7-8 pm EST, every other month beginning on **Thursday March 6, 2025.** Karin Bailey and Linda Brown-Kuhn will host the club, which is a free, member benefit. Share your love of reading and the natural world with others.

The first book will be *The Serviceberry, Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*, by Robyn Wall Kimmerer's latest in her iconic book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Sign up below. See you there!



Photo by Karin Bailey

[Register Here](#)

AHTA 'Growing Impact' Campaign: Advancing Youth Wellness Through Horticulture

Click [here](#) to access the 2025 AHTA 'Growing Impact' Youth Campaign Brochure, giving you key information on why this campaign is so important for young people and how AHTA is joining the movement to empower youth with important tools that (1) nurture the many dimensions of their health and (2) cultivate mindful, ecologically attuned leaders.

In Spring 2025, we will be rolling out our 'Growing Impact' Youth Wellness Webinar Series, bringing to you and the general public a wide range of experts on the following topics:

- **State of the Union on Youth Health & Well-Being / Meeting the Growing Need for HT/TH Interventions in Child Healthcare:** Andy Zeiger, M.D., Resident Physician and Post-Doctoral Fellow, Department of Pediatrics, Columbia University.
- **Connecting Youth with Plants: A Detailed Evidence-Based Look at the Emotional and Mental Benefits That Stem from This Essential Connection.** Dr. Charles R. Hall, Professor & Ellison Chair in International Floriculture, Texas A & M University.
- **Mindfulness for Youth: Nurturing Their Holistic Health Through Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Practices via Plant Engagement & Plant-Rich Settings.** Kneleee Bismar, Representative to the United Nations, MBSR Certified Instructor, CEO of AHAM Education Inc., and Piero Falci, Author, Educator, and Certified MBSR Instructor.

This 3-Part Series will also include a Q & A segment, offering an interactive opportunity to share information and expertise. Don't miss out on these engaging discussions!

Specific dates for these webinars will be announced the first week in March, in coordination with Green Career Week. We are proud to be partnering with Seed Your Future for this youth initiative and appreciate the sponsorship of Ball Horticultural Company to get this campaign launched! More partners and sponsors to follow! Please direct any questions to sponsorship@ahta.org.

Announcing the THP, Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner!

The American Horticultural Therapy Association recognizes the practice of Therapeutic Horticulture is becoming a widely accepted and important component in healthcare, rehabilitation, residential programs, and community settings. The AHTA is pleased to announce that the new professional credential - Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, THP - is now available for applications! The Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner is intended for practitioners who provide services aligned with the AHTA definition of therapeutic horticulture. Visit the [THP webpage](#) to find out more information regarding eligibility and the process of applying.

[Learn More](#)

AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture

The AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture had been approved for the Open Access Model and is now available on Google Scholar. Did you know that you can access the copies of the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture by going to Google Scholar, putting in the "AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture" in the search window and to narrow down your search add the volume number from the AHTA list of Journal. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

While considering publishing in the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture consider that as members of AHTA there is no charge for the Article Processing Charge (APC) while nonmembers pay \$300. Another great way to become a member! Hoping to see more submissions that will go out to all!

Supporting AHTA

Your generous support makes it possible for our organization to grow and thrive. Your contributions help keep us going, including helping with the expenses of our annual conference, increasing our ability to work toward credentialing, offsetting the cost of our journal and other outreach publications, and connecting to colleges and universities, facilities, prisons, hospitals, and agencies that need the [profession of horticultural therapy](#). Our [2025 Partnership Guide](#) is now available!

In keeping with the forward growth of AHTA, we have redesigned our [2025 Partnership Guide](#) to include new "à la carte" sponsorship opportunities! These options can be selected independently of AHTA sponsorship packages or added to enhance them. The goal is to offer sponsors greater flexibility in shaping their partnership opportunities to better align with their specific needs and objectives, resulting in a more tailored and impactful collaboration. Sign up to become a sponsor today! Your support fuels our mission to continue advancing the development of horticultural therapy and making an impact nationally and worldwide.

[Ways to Support AHTA](#)

[View 2025 Partnership Guide](#)

AHTA HTR Database Search Option

AHTA HTR Database Search Option AHTA has a Horticultural Therapist-Registered (HTR) directory located on our website. This directory allows members or the general public to search for HTRs near them. The benefits for HTRs may include employment, consultation work, presentation/information sharing opportunities, advocacy for the profession of horticultural therapy and more! Any HTR member has the opportunity to opt-in or opt-out of the database. We request that HTR members update their profile with this indication. To update: 1. Log into the Member Center 2. Select "My Profile" 3. Select "Edit Profile" 4. Check "Opt-in" or "Opt-out" We would like to use this as a reminder for all members to refresh their profiles with any other updates as well.

Become a Member

Not a member of AHTA? Join today! AHTA's membership is comprised of individuals who are passionate about the unique benefits of horticultural therapy as a therapeutic modality. Members are committed to the growth of the profession. Membership in the AHTA will keep you up to date on the latest in horticultural therapy news, as well as give you access to outstanding educational and networking opportunities.

Did you know? AHTA members benefits include free webinars and free article processing fees for the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture! Another two new reasons to join!

[Join Today](#)

