

CAREERS IN HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

As professional members of rehabilitation teams, horticultural therapists involve participants in all aspects of plant-related activities, such as propagating, planting, growing, gardening, and harvesting, as a means to enhancing the health and wellness of each individual.

The demand for trained horticultural therapists has prompted universities, colleges and other organizations to offer degree and certificate programs in the field.

Visit AHTA's website at www.ahta.org for more information including a list of colleges, universities, and organizations offering education and training in horticultural therapy.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF AHTA?

Visit www.ahta.org/membership to learn more about rates, member levels, and AHTA member benefits.



HORTICULTURAL THERAPY PROMOTES MANY BENEFITS

Cognitive Development

- Teaches new skills and vocabulary
- Increases attention span and concentration
- Develops creativity
- Improves ability to work independently, solve problems and follow complex directions
- Allows for memory recall

Psychological Improvement

- Increases self-esteem through nurturing living things
- Enhances a sense of hope and altruism
- Relieves stress, anxiety, and depression
- Increases mindfulness and improves cognition

Social Growth

- Forms positive relationships
- Develops appropriate social behaviors
- Offers opportunities to assume responsibility and learn vocational skills

Physical Improvement

- Incentive to exercise and retain muscles
- A chance to adapt tools and methods to individuals' abilities
- Growth in coordination, balance and endurance

Plants possess life-enhancing qualities that encourage people to respond to them. In a judgmental world, plants are non-threatening and non-discriminating.

They are living entities that respond directly to the care that is given them, not to the intellectual or physical capacities of the gardener. In short, they provide a benevolent setting in which a person can take the first steps toward confidence."

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Advancing the Practice of Horticulture as Therapy

WHO IS AHTA?

Established in 1973, the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) is the only national US organization advocating for the development of the horticultural therapy profession and the practice of horticulture as therapy for human well-being. AHTA supports the professional development, education, and expertise of horticultural therapy practitioners. Individuals and organizations located across the US and beyond are members. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership driven organization with the mission to promote and advance the profession of horticultural therapy as a therapeutic and rehabilitative modality.



HORTICULTURAL THERAPY AS A PROFESSION AND A PRACTICE

Horticultural therapy (HT) is a time-proven practice. The therapeutic benefits of working with plants and peaceful garden environments has been understood since ancient times.

In the 19th century, Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and considered to be the "Father of American Psychiatry," reported that garden settings held curative effects for people with mental illness.

Rehabilitative care of hospitalized war veterans in the 1940s and 1950s greatly expanded the practice of horticultural therapy. Today, research indicates views of, access to, and immersion in nature improves medical outcomes.

Horticultural therapy is recognized as a practical and viable treatment with wide-ranging benefits for people in therapeutic, vocational, and wellness programs. Horticultural therapy is now taught and practiced throughout the world in a rich diversity of settings and cultures.

DESIGNS THAT SHARE THE SECRET OF THE GARDEN

The American Horticultural Therapy Association is a champion of barrier-free, therapeutic gardens that enable everyone to work, learn, and relax in the garden. Horticultural therapists are skilled at creating garden spaces that accommodate people with a wide range of abilities. People with physical, emotional, or intellectual disabilities benefit from gardening experiences as part of horticultural therapy programs while engaging in specifically designed activities for each individual.

Some techniques include:

- Creating sensory-stimulating environments with plants selected for fragrance, texture, and color
- Utilizing accessible greenhouses that bring the garden indoors for year-round enjoyment
- Constructing accessible entrances and paths in compliance with ADA regulations
- Utilizing raised beds and containers
- Adapting tools to maximize ability



WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION?

The American Horticultural Therapy Association recognizes and registers horticultural therapists through a voluntary professional registration program. The designation Horticultural Therapist-Registered signifies that professional competencies have been achieved based on standardized academic requirements and professional training.

Professional registration information is available on our website, www.ahta.org, or by calling AHTA at (206) 209-5296.

