Introduction to Horticultural Therapy

American Horticultural Therapy Association
Horticultural therapy is an active process in which the process itself is considered the therapeutic activity rather than the end product.
Horticultural Therapy

- The engagement of a participant in horticultural-related activities.
- The participant has an identified disability, illness, or life circumstance.
- The activity is facilitated by a registered horticultural therapist.
- The participation is in the context of an established treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational plan.
The Benefits of Horticultural Therapy
Psychological Benefits

- Improve quality of life
- Increase self-esteem
- Improve mood
- Decrease anxiety
- Alleviate depression
- Reduce stress
- Increase self-confidence
Physical Benefits

- Improve fine motor skills
- Improve gross motor skills
- Decrease heart rate
- Promote physical health
- Improve strength
- Improve stamina
- Improve coordination
Cognitive Benefits

- Learn new skills
- Re-learn old skills
- Increase memory
- Increase attention span
- Develop coping skills
- Improve attention to detail
- Structure and sequence brain functions
Social Benefits

- Improve social skills
- Share experiences
- Learn cooperative skills
- Practice communicating
- Learn social boundaries
- Develop relationships
- Practice sharing resources
Horticultural Therapy Program Types
Rehabilitation

Participants may be recovering from:

Stroke
Traumatic brain injury
Surgery
Cardiac complications
Long-term Care

Participants may have:

Alzheimer’s disease
Chronic illness
Physical disabilities
Cognitive disorders
Mental Health

Participants may be receiving services for:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Post traumatic stress
- Substance use
Corrections

Individuals are in vocational training to:

Learn work behaviors
Increase social skills
Learn anger management
Develop coping skills
Vocational

Participants may have:

- Intellectual disabilities
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Physical disabilities
- Neurocognitive disorders
Community

Community programs provide:

Vocational services
Therapeutic groups
Therapy programs
Intergenerational programs
Examples of Horticultural Therapy (HT) Goals
HT with adults recovering from stroke

Goals: To practice eye-hand coordination, to increase strength, and/or to facilitate increased confidence.
HT with children who have intellectual disabilities

Goals: To learn problem solving skills, how to follow directions, and/or provide a sensory experience to increase self awareness.
HT with older persons

Goals: To maintain physical function, increase socialization, and/or to stimulate long-term memory.
HT with youth who have behavioral problems

Goals: To learn job skills, increase self-esteem, learn impulse control, and/or to develop anger management skills.
HT with patients recovering from surgery

Goals: To reduce pain, increase healing, reduce stress, and/or to provide opportunities for exercise.
HT with patients who have mental illness

Goals: To learn coping skills, engage in productive work, to socialize, and/or for personal development.
Examples of Horticultural Therapy Settings
The Greenhouse

Accessible aisles and benches
The Garden

Accessible pathways and raised beds
The Farm