



**American Horticultural Therapy Association®**



**CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN**

**2010 American Horticultural Therapy Association Conference  
in collaboration with  
Chicago Botanic Garden 13th Annual School Garden Conference**

**Request for Proposals**

**In Our Nature**

**OCTOBER 13-16, 2010**

Recent research on psychological development and education has demonstrated the positive influence of exposing individuals of all ages and abilities to the natural world and plant rich environments. The Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) and the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) will address the programs and benefits of interaction with nature at the 2010 AHTA Annual Conference / Chicago Botanic Garden 13th Annual School Garden Conference. Specifically, the conference program will focus on how nature, horticulture, and environmental studies are integrated in a variety of contexts to support educational, vocational, social, and therapeutic goals. Individuals with special challenges are recognized as an increasing segment of the general population, particularly as early diagnoses, medical technologies, and “mainstreaming” or “inclusion” programs improve. Welcoming individuals of all abilities, particularly those with special challenges – physical, cognitive, and behavioral – to a plant rich environment poses particular challenges to educators, therapists, and human services workers alike. This conference will provide the theoretical knowledge and practical applications that will enable participants to provide all individuals with the benefits of experiences with the natural world.

Presenters will be selected from proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposals by a peer review panel (AHTA and CBG 2010 Conference Work Team). Please submit your proposal by e-mail with this form completed to [martha@ahata.org](mailto:martha@ahata.org) or by fax to 610-225-2364 by **April 15, 2010**. Notification of decisions will be sent to proposers by **June 15, 2010**.

Please make sure your submission includes **all** of the following information and that your name and contact information appear on all pages of your submission.

### **Proposal Submission Guidelines**

1. Completed Proposal Submission Coversheet
2. A biographical summary (one page maximum) with professional credentials for each participant, highlighting competency in subject matter. These summaries will be used to introduce each speaker.
2. Briefly explain why this session should be at the AHTA/CBG national conference. Indicate where and when this presentation was previously given (if applicable).
3. Brief description of session: Limit 30 words. If your proposal is accepted, this will be inserted into the conference program to describe your session.
4. Learning outcomes: Three learning outcomes should be provided that are measurable and indicate what the audience will learn by participating in this session. State, for example: “Participants will be able to . . .”
5. Session content and methodology: Please be brief - yet thorough and descriptive.

# Proposal Submission Coversheet

## 1. Primary Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Country (if other than U.S.) \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Session (10 words or less) \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Type of Session (choose one)

- Presentation – 30 minute (may be grouped with one or more presentations on related topics)
- Presentation – 60 minute
- Panel Discussion – 90 minute (3-5 participants)
- Workshop – 90 minute
- Extended Workshop – 120-180 minutes
- Poster

*Presenters are responsible for providing handouts for their session.*

## 3. Session Topic (choose one. For descriptions, please see full rfp)

- A. The People
- B. The Program
- C. The Place

## 4. Target Ages (choose as many as apply)

- Early Childhood
- Primary
- Secondary
- Adult
- Late Life

## 5. Skill level of your session (choose one)

- Basic
- Intermediate
- Advanced

## 6. Audio Visual Equipment

- LCD projector (laptops will be provided, please bring presentation on a thumb drive)
- Overhead projector
- VCR/TV
- Flip Chart
- Microphone

*If you have a MAC Power Point presentation, you must bring your own laptop.*

## 7. Room style (choose one)

- Lecture
- Classroom
- U-shape
- Group work

## Topic Descriptions

**A. The People** will focus on the physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of the individual and the ways in which contact with nature, both in structured and unstructured environments supports the healthy emotional, physical, social and intellectual development of early childhood through adulthood. This track establishes the context in which nature based activities and learning spaces are developed. Speakers might include child life therapists, social service providers, psychologists, therapists, and medical specialists. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

1. The importance of experiences and interaction with nature for all, whatever their physical, cognitive or emotional abilities. What experiences are most important? At what age?
2. Defining (dis)ability: investigate the social construction of disability and how it impacts the social psychological development and growth of special challenges individuals.
3. Consider the broad-spectrum definition of “disability” and discuss the importance of addressing the needs and appropriate interactions with nature for different diagnoses individually and collectively (ADD, ADHD, autism, MS, retardation, developmental disabilities, obesity, other behavioral, neurologic or orthopedic disabilities).
4. Discuss current research on the specific symptoms and requirements of various physical and developmental disabilities that would/should influence the design of learning environments.

**B. The Program** will focus specifically on how to provide a supportive and effective educational or therapeutic setting, teaching methods and pedagogy, and available, evidence based programs and materials. Speakers might include special educators, psychologists, curriculum developers and horticultural therapists who instruct on the latest research, program models, evaluation strategies etc. Topics might include:

1. Working with integrated populations and supporting multi-ability activities.
2. Combining educational and therapeutic goals.
3. Bringing nature into the learning environment.
4. Working with all populations in nature - What are the most influential gardening and nature related activities and experiences that demonstrate positive physical, cognitive and psychosocial outcomes?
5. “How to” program workshops.
6. Existing program presentations and demonstrations.
7. Research base to support garden programs.

**C. The Place** will focus on the learning environment, including the classroom, natural landscape, or designed outside resources. It will identify important features of a safe and effective natural learning, and therapeutic environments. It will address how to modify existing, and/or develop new nature based environments that are universally accessible. Speakers might include world renowned children’s garden designers, play experts, school architects, or landscape architects. Topics might include:

1. Nature in the Classroom.
2. Gardening with People (different groups, kids, hospice, rehabilitation, etc.).
3. Using existing natural areas as a teaching context.
4. Reconsidering design: Responding to the needs of different populations– Matching design to meet the needs of different ages, conditions, and contexts.
5. Garden Design: universal design, creative planning processes, plant selection, evidence guided design, model installations, cost effective factors, etc.
6. “How to” garden construction workshops.
7. Research base to support gardens in health and human services.