

# 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





The American Horticultural Therapy Association

[www.ahta.org](http://www.ahta.org)