



Horticultural Therapy as Profession and Practice

Horticultural Therapy (HT) and Therapeutic Horticulture (TH) use plants, gardens, and the natural landscape to improve cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.

Horticultural Therapy is a formal practice that uses plants, horticultural activities, and the garden landscape to promote well-being for its participants. HT is goal oriented with defined outcomes and assessment procedures. HT sessions are administered by professionally trained Horticultural Therapists. Research indicates that HT is proven to be beneficial in a variety of healthcare, residential, school, and rehabilitative settings.

Therapeutic Horticulture is the purposeful use of plants and plant-related activities to promote health and wellness for an individual or group. A TH program leader is trained to use horticulture to promote well-being but specific objectives and measurable outcomes for individual clients are not clinically documented.

Both HT and TH recognize the evidence base and positive benefits arising from interactions between people and plants, gardens, and the natural landscape. In Canada, horticultural therapy has been used increasingly as an evidence-based practice over the past sixty years. Care of hospitalized war veterans after World War II greatly expanded the use of gardening and horticultural activities in structured, rehabilitative programs. Now a discipline taught and practiced throughout the world, HT is used in diverse settings and cultures and with people of all ages and abilities.

The Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association

The Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association (CHTA) is a volunteer managed, non-profit organization incorporated in May, 1987. The CHTA works to promote and advance HT education and practice across Canada. It has a membership base of 160 individuals and institutions located in Canada, the United States, and internationally.

Benefits include a quarterly newsletter, annual conference, voluntary professional registration process, published standards for HT core skills and competencies and guidelines for HT education programs and HT internships. The CHTA Goals are to:

- a) promote and advance the use of horticultural therapy in Canada
- b) develop guidelines for TH and HT education programs
- c) provide a source of information about TH and HT
- d) manage support services for its members such as voluntary professional registration

The CHTA holds an annual general meeting concurrent with its annual conference. In 2014, the conference will be held Friday, September 12, at The Riverwood Conservancy in Mississauga, Ontario.

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