



## American Horticultural Therapy Association®

### Education for Horticultural Therapists

Academic coursework is the foundation for those considering a career in horticultural therapy (HT). Horticultural therapy education is multidisciplinary and encompasses studies in human sciences and plant sciences, as well as horticultural therapy concepts and techniques.

For those interested in pursuing a career in horticultural therapy, the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) offers the only recognized credential for horticultural therapists: HTR, Horticultural Therapist – Registered. The HTR credential may be granted after completing a standardized educational curriculum and an internship supervised by an AHTA Registered Horticultural Therapist. This curriculum is built on the foundation of a bachelor's degree in horticultural therapy, or the minimum of a bachelor's degree with additional coursework in plant science, human science, and horticultural therapy.

The American Horticultural Therapy Association also accredits select certificate programs. Horticultural therapy certificate programs are instructional programs for college credit that are designed to provide a foundation in the theory and application of horticultural therapy for diverse populations. In accrediting these programs, AHTA assures that each program meets nationally-endorsed standards in the profession, and meets the horticultural therapy requirements for AHTA's voluntary professional registration program. It is important to know that upon completion of a certificate program one is not *certified* as a horticultural therapist. Currently, certification is not an option for horticultural therapists; however, work is being done to achieve this for all HTRs.

*The following organizations offer AHTA Accredited Certificate Programs:*

- Delaware Valley University
- Horticultural Therapy Institute (HTI)
- New York Botanical Garden
- Portland Community College
- Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Temple University
- University of Florida

*Colleges or Universities that offer coursework that focus on horticultural therapy:*

- Colorado State University
- Delaware Valley University
- Oregon State University
- Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Temple University
- Tennessee Tech University
- University of Florida
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville

For more information about educational requirements and contact information for the organizations listed above, visit the AHTA website, [www.ahta.org](http://www.ahta.org), or contact AHTA at 206-209-5296.



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### Definition of a Horticultural Therapist

As the American Horticultural Therapy Association strives towards certification for horticultural therapists, public awareness of what is, and what is not, a horticultural therapist is essential for professional recognition.

Horticultural therapists have a foundation of knowledge in plant science, human science, and horticultural therapy principles and experience in the application of horticultural therapy practices. The American Horticultural Therapy Association supports the definition that a horticultural therapist is someone who:

- Has a minimum of a bachelor's degree in horticultural therapy, or the minimum of a bachelor's degree with additional coursework in plant science, human science, and horticultural therapy.
- Has completed a 480-hour internship in horticultural therapy.
- Is professionally registered as a horticultural therapist with the American Horticultural Therapy Association as an HTR, Horticultural Therapist-Registered.

To advance the profession, it is important that the public recognize horticultural therapists as professionals with specific education, training, and credentials in the use of horticulture for therapy and rehabilitation. Professional registration informs the public that the horticultural therapist has met the required education and experience to practice horticultural therapy.

The American Horticultural Therapy Association recognizes that there are individuals without professional credentials who represent themselves as practicing horticultural therapists having completed a certificate in horticultural therapy. While a certificate is of value in providing the horticultural therapy education, a certificate does not provide education in horticulture, human science, nor provide practical experience. The Association does not support the use of horticulture as therapy by individuals who do not have the required educational background nor possess professional credentials.

The Association recognizes that there are professionally credentialed practitioners who use horticulture as a therapeutic tool in their practice. Many credentialed professionals have completed a horticultural therapy certificate program. While the AHTA accredited certificate coursework provides valuable education, to develop a thorough understanding of the discipline, coursework in horticulture and human science is necessary. The Association welcomes, and encourages, credentialed professionals to pursue professional registration with the American Horticultural Therapy Association.