Therapeutic Horticulture

Master Gardeners Filling a Gap

Ohio State University Extension
January 27, 2021

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NC STATE EXTENSION
Master Gardener | Wake County
Gold in Your Own Back Yard!
Gold in Your Own Back Yard!

Networking group across NC and SC  Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network
Today’s talk
- What, Why and Who of Therapeutic Horticulture (TH)
- What the Wake County NC EMG TH Program looks like
What is Therapeutic Horticulture

Promoting health and healing through creating positive connections between plants and people.
Therapeutic Horticulture benefits run deep

it improves overall well-being ...in S.P.E.C.tacular ways!

- Social
- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
P: Purposeful – taking part in meaningful experiences with useful results

L: Life Focus – Being mindful of life in the present and forward thinking

A: Acceptance – Being accepted by others and accepting ourselves

N: Nurturance – Giving back, caring for another living being

T: Together – Making connections to people and the world around us

S: Safety – Feeling comfort, familiarity and security

Source: Sally Haskett, HTR
Intro to Therapeutic Horticulture - online course
People who have experienced challenges in life due to conditions, situations, life experience, or other factors
Special Populations or Settings

- Rehabilitation
- Mental Health
- Hospice
- Assisted Living
- Immigrants
- Exceptional Children
- Community Gardens
- Correctional Institutions
- Long term care
Therapeutic Horticulture vs. Horticultural Therapy
Definition of a Horticultural Therapist

Horticultural therapists have a foundation of knowledge in plant science, human science, and horticultural therapy principles, and professional 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 supervised by a professionally registered horticultural therapist.
- Is professionally registered as a horticultural therapist with the American Horticultural Therapy Association and is designated by the professional credential HTR, Horticultural Therapist-Registered.

To ensure participant’s safety, it is critical for horticultural therapists to have appropriate education, professional training, and continue to develop skills through professional development and continuing education.

Practice Definitions

Two definitions of practice directly support the role of a horticultural therapist:

- **Horticultural Therapy**
  - Horticultural therapy is the participation in horticultural activities facilitated by a registered horticultural therapist to achieve specific goals within an established treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational plan. Horticultural therapy is an active process which occurs in the context of an established treatment plan where the process itself is considered the therapeutic activity rather than the end product.

- **Therapeutic Horticulture**
  - Therapeutic horticulture is the participation in horticultural activities facilitated by a registered horticultural therapist or other professionals with training in the use of horticulture as a therapeutic modality to support program goals. Therapeutic horticulture is the process through which participants enhance their well-being through active or passive involvement in plant and plant-related activities.

Program Definitions

Two program definitions directly support the role of a horticultural therapist. Program types are differentiated on the basis of individual goals or program goals.

- **Horticultural Therapy Program**
  - Horticultural therapy programs are found in a wide variety of healthcare, rehabilitative, and residential settings. Horticultural therapy programs document outcomes for the participant(s) on an individual or group basis. The components of a horticultural therapy program are:
    - The engagement of a participant in horticultural-related activities.
    - The participant has an identified disability, illness, or life circumstance requiring services.
    - The activity is facilitated by a registered horticultural therapist.
    - The participation is in the context of an established treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational plan.

- **Therapeutic Horticulture Program**
  - Therapeutic horticulture programs are found in a wide variety of healthcare, rehabilitative, and residential settings. The components of therapeutic horticulture program are:
    - The engagement of a participant in active or passive horticultural-related activities.
    - The participant has an identified disability, illness, or life circumstance requiring services.
    - The activity is facilitated by a registered horticultural therapist or other professional with training in horticulture.
    - The participation is in the context of the goals and mission of the organization.

Garden Definition

AHTA developed the first therapeutic garden characteristics in 1995. Specific to the use of horticulture as a therapeutic modality, the therapeutic garden serves both program types.

- **Therapeutic Garden**
  - A therapeutic garden is designed for use as a component of a treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational program. A garden can be described as being therapeutic in nature when it has been designed to meet the needs of a specific user or population. It is designed to accommodate participant’s goals and to facilitate people-plant interactions.
  - A horticultural therapist uses a therapeutic garden as a tool to engage a participant in horticultural activities. Therapeutic gardens incorporating the AHTA Therapeutic Garden Design Characteristics are gardens designed to provide a horticultural therapy environment.

source: American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA)
Therapeutic Horticulture (TH) Program

- person with training in horticulture (…Master Gardener)
- activities based on goals and mission of the organization (…Extension Master Gardener Program and partnering organizations)

Horticultural Therapy (HT) Program

- horticultural therapist (…no professional certification or licensure board but generally trained through a university program and may voluntarily register with AHTA)
- activities based on established treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational plan (…like a physical therapist)

Extrapolated from AHTA 2017 Definitions and Positions Paper
What are programs offered by Master Gardeners called?

- Therapeutic Horticulture
- Extension Program

We are THE program.
Other names.....

• Garden Therapy
• Gardening Therapy
• Therapeutic Gardening
There is a gap that Master Gardeners can fill.
Potential Participants

Professional TH/HT programs

MG
Why is there a gap?

Paid HT Positions are Not Prevalent

- Organizations not aware of TH/HT
- Organizations not willing to pay *because*.....
  - not aware of the impact of a program

**THIS IS WHERE MGs CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE...if we do it right**
EMG TH Programs can facilitate the need for a bigger pot

- MGs are the original pot with a small plant
- Roots are your TH program
- HT professionals are the new bigger pot

Network, network, network
Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network
National EMG Mission

Extension Master Gardener programs educate people, engaging them in learning to use unbiased, research-based horticulture and gardening practices through a network of trained volunteers directed and supported by land-grant university faculty and staff.

EMG TH Programs fulfilling the EMG Mission

- educate
- trained
- volunteers
What does the Wake County NC EMG TH Program look like?
Overview of Wake Co TH Program

2000 a desire for a program, 2004 first program volunteering began

For the past 3 years:

• 30% of our MGs volunteer with TH

• Maintain 10 -12 active sites per calendar year

• Average of 150 events per year

• Average of 1,500 contacts per year
Sites within our county
Environments for Older Adults

- Retirement Communities
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Nursing Care Facilities
- Memory Care Facilities
High School Exceptional Children Class

Bucket Gardening

• Easily mobile
• Work individually
• Work as a group
• Ability to take the garden home
Day Program for Individuals Living with Mental Illness

Participant Quotes...

• “That plant is alive because of me!”

• “Our group is a team!”

• “I’m so proud to show the others. I am teaching them something!”
Residential Addiction Recovery Program

Two Campuses
• Men’s Campus
  • Vegetable Garden
  • Healing Garden
• Women’s Campus
  • Vegetable Garden
  • Pollinator garden
Women’s Campus Butterfly Habitat Garden
Women’s Campus Family Programming
Men’s Campus Healing Garden
Life Participation Group for Individuals with Aphasia
(aphasia is an acquired language disorder)

Partnership between

• EMG TH program
• Local food pantry garden
• Organization that serves individuals with aphasia

Garden Group name - TAPRoots
• Food Pantry - Holly Springs Food Cupboard; Organization that serves individuals with Aphasia - Triangle Aphasia Project Unlimited
Group’s Annual Plant Sale

- Fully funds this group's operation
- Participants interact with patrons
- Grow plants for other TH groups
- Funds community outreach projects
In addition to growing plants

- Take field trips
- Attend lectures
- Manage a website/blog where participants are bloggers
- Expose others to the people-plant connection
- And support one another
Day Program for Women Experiencing Homelessness

3 places for programming

• Big garden
• Little garden
• Indoor programming

Women’s Center
What about COVID

Educate and enable participants' circle of people

• Instructional videos
• Activity kits
• Zoom
• Combination
Top 3 Recommendations for starting or growing a TH program

• Educate Yourself
• Collaborate
• Grow under the leadership of a team
Educate Yourself

- Online Classes
- Extension Trainings or Workshops
- Certificate Programs
- University Programs
Networking

- Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network
Why do programing?

...because T.H.E. P.L.A.N.T.S. are S.P.E.C.tacular
As of 12/7/2020

- [https://chadwickarboretum.osu.edu/our-gardens/learning-gardens/horticultural-therapy-garden](https://chadwickarboretum.osu.edu/our-gardens/learning-gardens/horticultural-therapy-garden) The Chadwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens Horticultural Therapy Garden


- [http://summitmastergardeners.org/programs/](http://summitmastergardeners.org/programs/) Regina Health Center Volunteer program

- [https://www.htinstitute.org/carole-usaj-otr-htr/](https://www.htinstitute.org/carole-usaj-otr-htr/) completed the Horticultural Therapy Institute certificate course in the spring of 2004

network within your state
Therapeutic Horticulture & Horticultural Therapy in North Carolina

Key:
- TH/HT programs
  - expressed interest in starting TH/HT program

NC Cooperative Extension Therapeutic Horticulture Page
https://therapeutic-hort.ces.ncsu.edu/
Bibliography

1) American Horticultural Therapy Association Research Bibliography
   hundreds of research articles organized by main categories through 2012

2) North Carolina Botanical Garden Therapeutic Horticulture Bibliography – Books
   over 40 recommended books organized by main categories

3) Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Ellison Chair in International Floriculture Teaching, Research, Extension and Service
   links to 5 summary publications and 15 popular websites summarizing plant benefits
Educational Opportunities

• **Introduction to Therapeutic Horticulture** (6-week online learning program; next class begins March 1, 2021; registration open now; discount for MGs)

• Search for workshops put on by local (or not) EMG TH Programs and Extension specialists in Therapeutic Horticulture;
  • NC offerings will be listed on [Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network](#) page

• Search for certificate programs within your area (or not)

• **Certificate Programs** AHTA accredited (Delaware Valley University, University of Florida, Horticultural Therapy Institute, New York Botanical Garden, Portland Community College, Rutgers, Temple University)

• **University Programs** Horticultural Degrees with concentrations or independent studies in HT
Top Recommended Resources:

**BOOKS:**


**WEBSITES:** [Texas A&M Ellison Chair in International Floriculture](#)

**COURSES/CLASSES/WORKSHOPS**

- [Intro into Therapeutic Horticulture](#) Collaboration between NC State University Department of Horticultural Science, NC Extension Gardener Program, and North Carolina Botanical Garden at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; fully online, self-paced, non-credit 6-week course.
- NC Extension Master Gardener offerings will be listed on [Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network](#) page

**RESEARCH BASED ARTICLES:** Depend on topic

- [AHTA Research Bibliography](#)
- resources listed in Haller and Stuart-Smith books, noted above.

Happy to share list of resources I know of based on specific populations and settings upon request ([rieppeh1@gmail.com](mailto:rieppeh1@gmail.com))