



Thriving in the Grove: Building Resilience through Horticultural Therapy



San Francisco, California | October 15-18, 2026

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50+ Years of Leadership Growing What Comes Next.

*Our foundation is strong. Our momentum is growing.
And our members will shape what comes next.*



Kelly Warnick, HTR, JD
President, AHTA

This year brings a defining moment for AHTA and the profession. We gather here on the eve of the first examination window for the Horticultural Therapist – Board Certified (HT-BC) credential, a milestone that has been years in the making. Through board certification, AHTA establishes a rigorous national standard for professional competence, further strengthening the integrity of the field and advancing the quality of practice for the individuals and communities our profession serves.

This has been an exceptionally active year for AHTA. Alongside the considerable undertaking of bringing HT-BC to fruition, we have introduced new initiatives, broadened our public outreach, launched a completely redesigned AHTA website, expanded opportunities to showcase our members and their work, built new internship protocols, developed new strategic partnerships and sponsorships, introduced clearer membership categories, and created a highly experiential Annual Conference program featuring unique offerings and venues.

All of this work shares a common purpose: supporting our members in the important work they do, strengthening the profession today, and creating pathways for those who will carry it forward. Our members fuel this progress. Your knowledge, experience, ideas, and engagement give AHTA its strength.

As we look ahead, we want more of your work to become part of the larger professional conversation. Share your programs and stories. Contribute your perspective. Connect with emerging professionals. Step into leadership. The more our members engage, the stronger our collective voice and impact become.

As we gather here in San Francisco, I encourage you to use these days to connect, exchange ideas, share your expertise, and consider how your own voice can contribute to our continued progress.

Immerse yourself in all that this professional gathering has to offer—exceptional presentations, impactful venues, and signature experiences.

Welcome to the 2026 AHTA Annual Conference. I am so glad you are here!

Schedule at a Glance

All times are in Pacific Daylight Time (PDT).

Thursday, October 15, 2026 Hosted at the Filoli Gardens & Marriott Union Square		
8:15 AM - 4:45 PM	AHTA Board of Directors Meeting	Filoli Historic House & Garden, Room A
12:00 PM - 6:30 PM	Registration	2 nd Floor
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Welcome Reception	Savoy
5:45 PM - 7:30 PM	Moth Up Storytelling	Savoy

Friday, October 16, 2026 Hosted at the Marriott Union Square		
7:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Registration	2nd Floor
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Coffee & Tea Service	2nd Floor
8:30 AM - 8:50 AM	Opening Welcome & Remarks Kelly Warnick, AHTA President	Ballroom
8:50 AM - 9:50 AM	Keynote Presentation - The Healing Inherent in Cultivating Place, The Power of Keystone Gardeners Jennifer Jewell	Ballroom
10:00 AM - 4:50 PM	Special Event - Professional Headshots Register (free)	Cable Car
10:00 AM - 2:15 PM	Special Event - Plants & Paws Immersive Experience: Where Horticultural Therapy and Animal-Assisted Therapy Converge Register (free)	Cable Car

Schedule at a Glance

Friday, October 16, 2026 | Hosted at the Marriott Union Square

10:00 AM - 10:50 AM	Beyond the Garden Wall: Designing Deeper Connections Between Children and Healing Gardens Kayte Kitchen	Sutter I
10:00 AM - 10:50 AM	Research on Behavioral Driving Mechanisms and Dynamic Model Construction in the Implementation Process of Programs of Horticultural Therapy Binxia Xue, Tongyu Li	Sutter II
10:00 AM - 10:50 AM	Rooted in Resilience: Therapeutic Horticulture as a Pathway to Student Well Being and Belonging Elizabeth (Leah) Diehl	Sutter III
10:00 AM - 10:50 AM	Panel: Growing Inside: Prison Gardens Offer Healing and Reconnection Faryn Hart (Moderator), isa peña, Calliope Correia, Sol Mercado, Shelagh Fritz	Ballroom
10:50 AM - 11:00 AM	Break	
11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Improving Quality in a Therapeutic Gardening Program for ICU Employees Seth Lemons	Sutter I
11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Seeds of Healing: Veterans, Sunflowers, and the Power of Community Collie Turner, John Pilat	Sutter II
11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Workshop: Growing Resilience Behind the Gate Gunjan Koul, Paul Mallory	Sutter III
11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Panel: Horticultural Therapy/Therapeutic Horticulture in Cooperative Extension: A Multi-State Panel Gayle Gratop, Alison Brennan, Carmen Ketron, Sarah McCracken	Ballroom

Schedule at a Glance

Friday, October 16, 2026 Hosted at the Marriott Union Square		
11:50 AM - 12:50 PM	Lunch	2 nd Floor
12:10 PM - 12:55 PM	AHTA Membership Meeting & Awards	Ballroom
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Bridges and Blooms: a Land Together Pilot at San Quentin Calloope Correia, isa peña	Sutter I
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Creating Evidence-Based Publications Arushi Sinha	Sutter II
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Cultivating Job Skills and Growing Resilience Through Gardening Lara Wirtz Fahnestock	Sutter III
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Engaging the Healthcare Community through Therapeutic Horticulture Jennifer Smith-Simms	Ballroom
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	Break	
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Horticulture in Pediatrics: Applications, Evidence and the Future Andrew Zeiger, MD	Sutter I
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Inner Ecosystems: Cultivating Resilience Through Therapeutic Nature Practices Antoinette Vasseur	Sutter II
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Growing Together: Building Sustainable Mixed-Needs Therapeutic Horticulture Communities Katie Andrews	Sutter III
2:50 PM - 3:00 PM	Break	

Schedule at a Glance

Friday, October 16, 2026 | Hosted at the Marriott Union Square

3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	Healing Landscapes in Times of War: Therapeutic Gardens for Recovery and Resilience in Ukraine Yuliia Rashkovska	Sutter I
3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	Growing Resilience: Cultivating Horticultural Therapy in a School Community Rebecca Reimer	Sutter II
3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	The Evidence Base for AHTA Therapeutic Garden Characteristics Teresia Hazen, Meghan McKiernan	Sutter III
3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	From Clinics to Parks: Building Resilience Through Nature Prescriptions for Children and Families Shakiba Ghasemi Assl	Ballroom
3:50 PM - 4:00 PM	Break	2 nd Floor
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Poster Sessions (13)	Ballroom
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM	Informal Networking & Dinner	E&O Kitchen and Bar , 314 Sutter St, San Francisco, CA 94108

AHTA Membership Meeting & Awards

Logistics

- Friday, October 16, 2026
- 12:10 PM - 12:55 PM
- Marriott, 2nd Floor, Ballroom

Agenda

- Welcome
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Membership Report
- 2026 AHTA Annual Awards Ceremony

Schedule at a Glance

Saturday, October 17, 2026 Hosted at the San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG)		
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Registration	SFBG
8:00 AM - 9:00 PM	Transportation to SFBG	Marriott Lobby
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Featuring: Pioneers & Pathways and Resilience Lab	Auditorium
9:10 AM - 9:30 AM	Opening Welcome & Remarks Katie Ryzhikov, AHTA President-Elect	Auditorium Stage
9:30 AM - 10:20 AM	Keynote Stephanie Linder, CEO, Gardens of Golden Gate Park	Auditorium Stage
10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Special Event Professional Headshots	Back Garden Area
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Credentialing the Profession of Horticultural Therapy Lana Dreyfuss	Auditorium Stage
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	THAD Global: Using the Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database to Support Culturally Responsive Programming Hsiang-Hua (Melanie) Chen	Rec Room
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Soiled in Beauty: Tending the Inner Garden of Resilience Stephanie Scriven Ramirez	Garden Room
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Special Event Jennifer Jewell's Book Signing	Auditorium
12:00 PM - 12:50 PM	Buffet Lunch	Back Garden Area

Schedule at a Glance

Saturday, October 17, 2026 Hosted at the San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG)		
12:20 PM - 12:50 PM	Special Event Screening: Ep.01 of "Cultivating Place: The Power of Gardeners"	Auditorium Stage
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Letting Go: A Mindful Journey into Seed-Saving Anne M. Meore	Auditorium Stage
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Every Body Breathes! How Breathwork Enhances the Practitioner, Client and Profession of HT Colleen E. Griffin	Rec Room
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Exploring Cultures Through Therapeutic Horticulture Marisol Clark	Garden Room
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	Break	
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Nature Sure Is Awesome—Exploring Awe and Its Uses in HT Practice Matthew J. Wichrowski	Rec Room
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Lessons from a Leaky Greenhouse: Growing HT Programs in Diverse Nonprofit Organizations Jeanne Schultz	Garden Room
3:00 PM - 3:10 PM	Orientation to SFBG	Auditorium Stage
3:10 PM - 4:00 PM	Self-guided Tour	SFBG
4:00 PM - 4:15 PM	Walk to the AIDS Memorial	-
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM	Closing Ceremony Jennifer Jewell	AIDS Memorial Redwood Grove

Schedule at a Glance

Saturday, October 17, 2026 Hosted at the San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG)		
5:15 - 6:00 PM	Wine & Cheese Reception	AIDS Memorial Redwood Grove
6:00 PM	Transportation to Marriott	Lobby

Sunday, October 18, 2026 Hosted at Alcatraz*		
By 9:00 AM	Check out of Marriott (if not staying Sunday night) or store luggage with Marriott for after Alcatraz tour	Marriott
9:00 AM - 9:45 AM	Travel to the Ferry (self service)	Marriott to Pier 33
10:10 AM - 10:30 AM	Ferry Ride to Alcatraz	Pier 33 Alcatraz Landing
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Stewardship on the Rock: Partnerships, People & the Gardens of Alcatraz Shelagh Fritz	Alcatraz
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Garden Tour Docents and Shelagh Fritz Or, self-guided tour	Alcatraz
	Return Ferry arrives every 20 minutes	Alcatraz

*Please register for the Alcatraz Tour in advance, as it is not included in the conference registration.

About Our Speakers

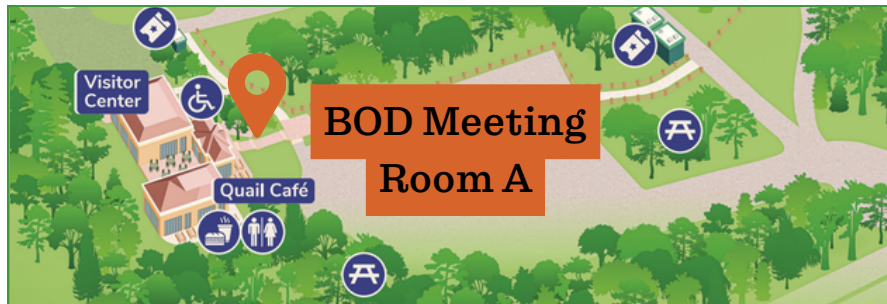


A heartfelt thank you to all of our conference speakers for giving their time and insight to enrich this year's program. For detailed presenter biographies, visit <https://www.ahata.org/2026-conference-speakers>.

Venue Floor Plans

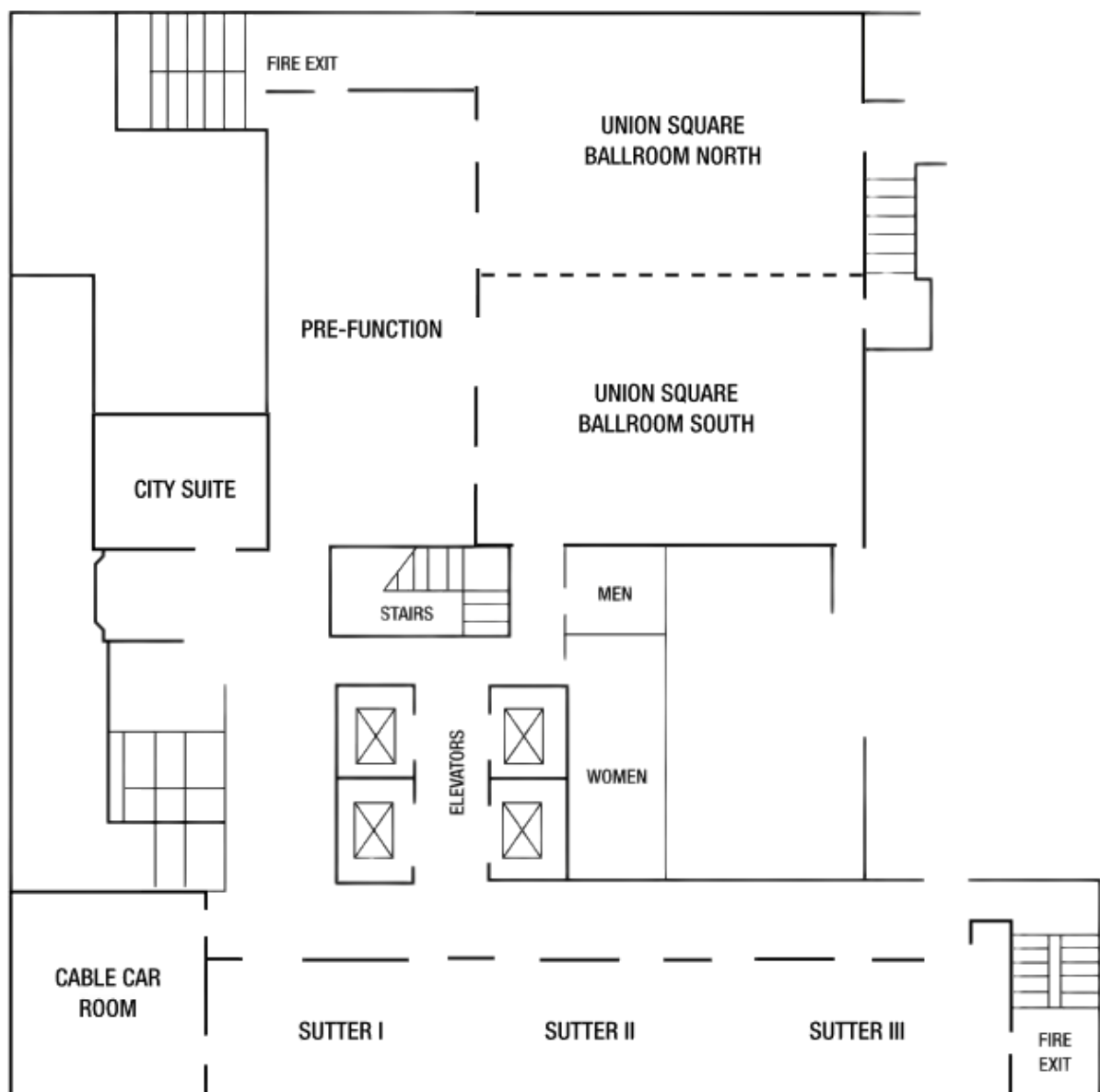
Filoli Historic House & Garden

 View full interactive map: <https://filoli.org/explore/filoli-map/>



Marriott (2nd Floor)

 Enlarge: <https://www.marriott.com>

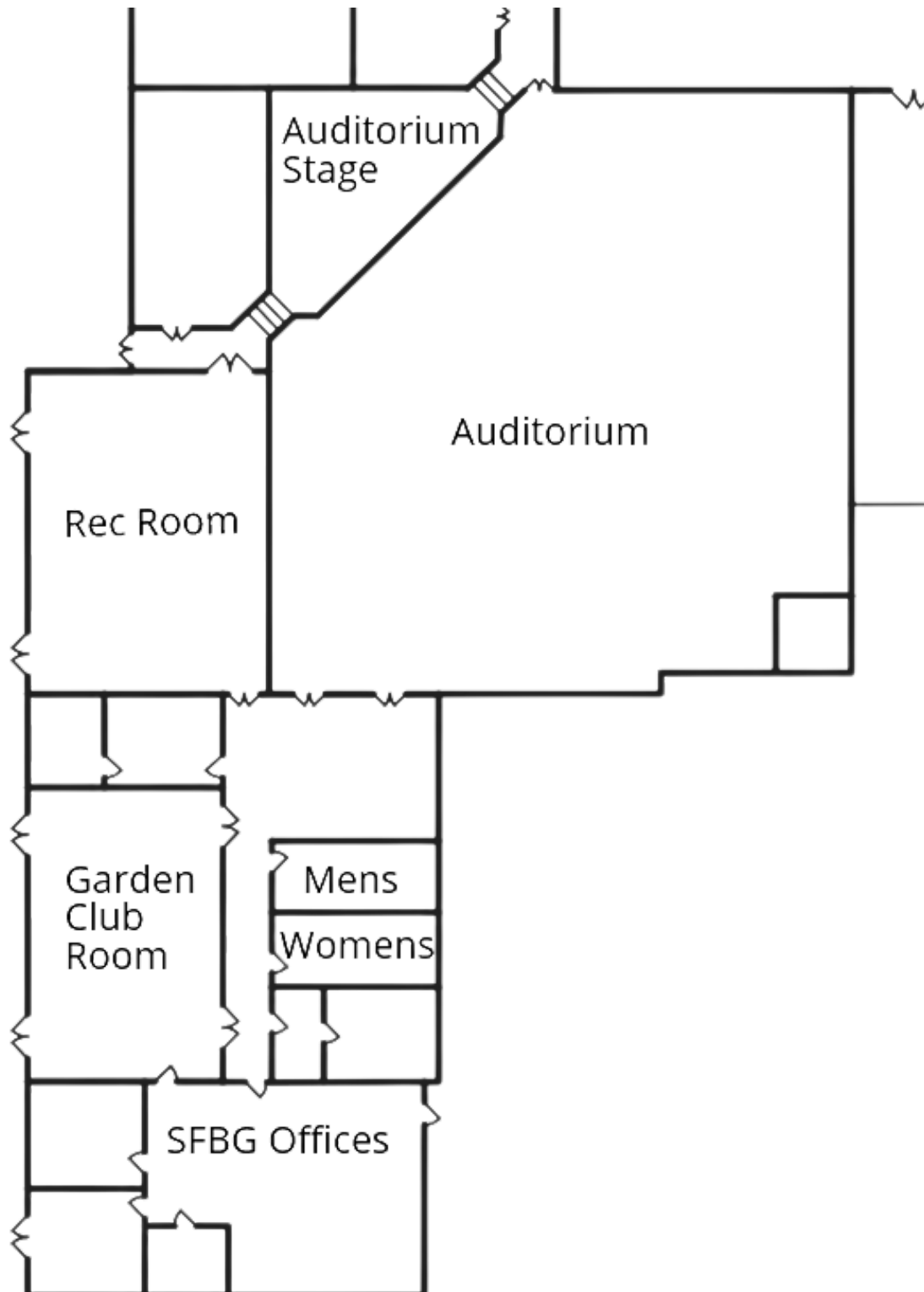


Venue Floor Plans

San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG) - County Fair Building



View the Botanical Garden Map: <https://gggp.org>



Directions

San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG) to National AIDS Memorial Grove

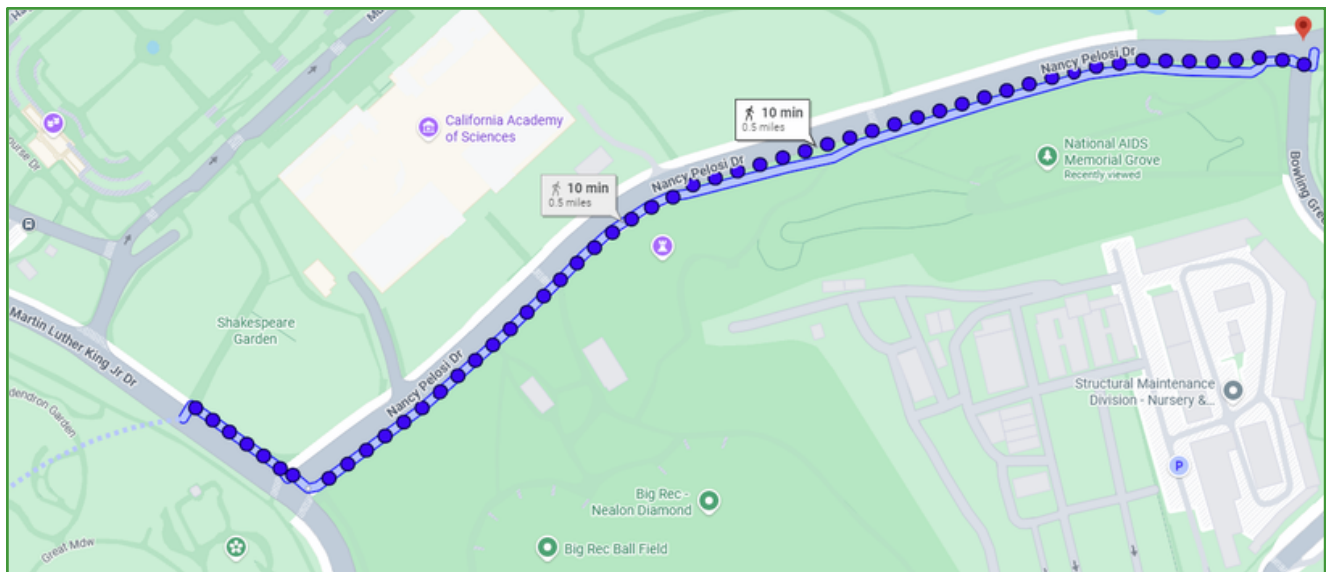


Address:

Nancy Pelosi Drive & Bowling Green Drive
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, CA 94122

Time:

~10 minute walk



Marriott Union Square to Alcatraz Landing Pier 33



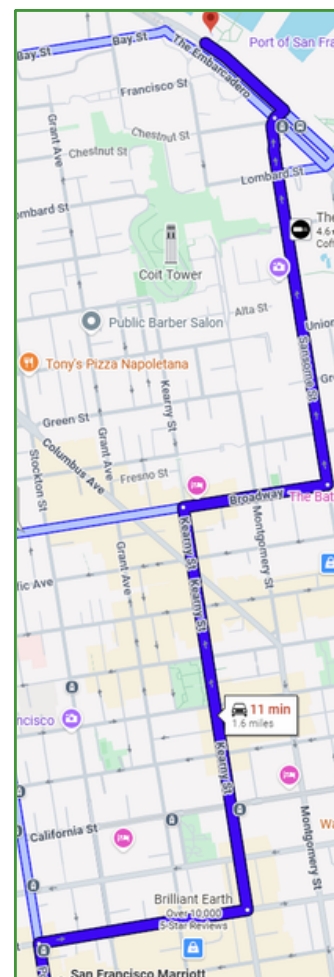
Address:

Pier 33 Ste 200
San Francisco, CA 94111

Time:

~15 minute drive

~18 minute transit



Board of Directors

Executive Leadership



Kelly Warnick
President



Katie Ryzhikov
President-Elect



Matthew Janson
Immediate PP



Lana Dreyfuss
Secretary



Nicole Giron
Treasurer

Board Members

- Binxia Xue, PhD, HTR
- Linda Brown-Kuhn, HTR
- April Ellis, LCSW, HTR
- Jeanne Schultz, M.Ed., CARES, HTR
- Kamyshia Thompson
- Holly Harrison, HTR
- Amy Fee Bruzzichesi, MSW, HTR
- Meghan McKiernan, BS, HTR
- Christopher Banke, LMFT, HTR
- Tina Kocol, LPC, NCC, CGP
- Brooke Moren, HTR
- Danielle Stojan, HTR
- Kenneth Harvey HTR

Work Teams, Review Boards & Committees

Leaders

- Marketing Work Team: Katie Ryzhikov
- Outreach & Strategic Partnerships Work Team: Kelly Warnick, Kamyshia Thompson, Kenny Harvey
- Nominations and Elections Review Board: Lana Dreyfuss (Chair)
- Magazine Work Team: Linda Brown-Kuhn
- Webinar Work Team: Holly Harrison, Danielle Stojan
- Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture Review Board: Matthew Wichrowski (Editor)
- Professional Education Work Team: Amy Fee Bruzzichesi
- Membership Work Team: Christopher Banke
- Conference Work Team: April Ellis (Leader), Meghan McKiernan (Co-lead)
- Professional Review Board: Katie Ryzhikov
- Credentialing Work Team: Lana Dreyfuss
- HT Certificate Accreditation Review Board: Holly Harrison (Chair)

Regional Horticultural Therapy Groups

About



Regional Horticultural Therapy Groups are locally led entities that play a vital role in strengthening the field, creating community, and leading the path forward for horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture within their communities.

Find a Regional Group

- California Horticultural Therapy Network
- Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network
- DMV HT Networking Group
- Florida Horticulture for Health Network
- Michigan Horticultural Therapy Association
- Mid-Atlantic Horticultural Therapy Network
- Northeast Horticultural Therapy Network
- Northwest Therapeutic Horticulture Networking Group
- Rocky Mountain Horticultural Therapy Network
- Southwest Regional Group



Learn more: <https://www.ahta.org/regional-groups> | [Meet in the Exhibit Hall](#)



Continuing Education for National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification

Pre-Approved

Sessions eligible for NCTRC continuing education are identified in the program with the NCTRC CE designation.

Each approved 50-minute session is eligible for 1.0 AHTA CE credit/contact hour.

Verification

Attendees seeking continuing education documentation must complete the [AHTA Continuing Education Attendance Verification Form](#) following the conference and identify the NCTRC pre-approved sessions they attended.

Documentation

Participants are responsible for maintaining their continuing education documentation and determining whether conference activities meet the requirements of their individual credentialing or licensing organizations.

Honoring Clare Cooper Marcus

April 19, 1934 - January 18, 2026

A True Giant in the World of Therapeutic Garden Design

We thank Clare for teaching us how to study people, plants, and places. As an Icon, her work continues to enrich and illuminate our way through nature and the garden to better serve those in our care.

Excerpt from *Cultivating Healing*: “At retirement in 1994, her attention turned to the promotion of the stress relieving benefits of access to nature in healthcare, including for patients, staff, and visitors in hospitals, assisted-living, and facilities for those without disease.

I met Clare in 1996 when she keynoted a Legacy Health Therapeutic Garden conference. Her research and sharing influenced practice, healthcare providers, urban planners, and designers, including:

- Many AHTA members who were recipients of HT information referrals from Clare as she coached students.
- Clare’s 1998, *Healing Gardens: Therapeutic Gardens and Design Recommendations* provided some of the first evidence-based information in the 1990’s.
- In 2014, *Therapeutic Landscapes: An Evidence-Based Approach to Designing Healing Gardens and Restorative Outdoor Spaces* boosted our profession with evidence for healing gardens and therapeutic landscapes from planning to post occupancy evaluation.
- Keynote of the 1998 AHTA conference in Silver Springs, Maryland.
- Recipient of an AHTA Honorary (Lifetime) membership.”

Written by Teresia Hazen, MEd, HTR, QMHP | [Read the Full Article in the AHTA Magazine](#)



Photo Courtesy: UC Berkeley



Photo Courtesy: NSPR

Closing Circle, 10/17

Join us Saturday at the National AIDS Memorial Grove as we gather in Clare’s honor. Clare helped plan this sacred grove, which her husband co-founded as a place of healing, reflection, and community.

Please join us in celebrating her enduring legacy and profound impact on horticultural therapy.

Keynote Speakers



Jennifer Jewell

Creator-Host Cultivating Place: Natural History & The Human Impulse to Garden

Jennifer Jewell is the creator and host of the award-winning national public radio program and podcast Cultivating Place: Conversations on Natural History and the Human Impulse to Garden. She is the author of three acclaimed books, including The Earth in Her Hands and What We Sow, and her work has earned top honors from the American Horticultural Society and Garden Communicators International. A frequent keynote speaker nationwide, Jewell advocates for elevating how we think and talk about gardening as an empowering intersection of environment, culture, and community.

At the Conference

Keynote: Friday, Oct 16, 2026

Screening & Book Signing: Saturday, Oct 17, 2026

Closing Ceremony: Saturday, Oct 17, 2026



Stephanie Linder

CEO, Gardens of Golden Gate Park

As Chief Executive Officer of the Gardens of Golden Gate Park, Stephanie Linder orchestrated the merger of the Conservatory of Flowers, Japanese Tea Garden, and San Francisco Botanical Garden into one of the top ten most visited public gardens in the country. She brings over 25 years of non-profit leadership to the stage, including key roles at the Sierra Club, the Trust for Public Land, and Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. A dedicated advocate for green spaces, she specializes in public-private partnerships, institutional growth, and community-driven land stewardship.

At the Conference

Keynote: Saturday, Oct 17, 2026



Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors



Ball Horticultural Company

Sponsoring: Plants & Paws

About: Ball Horticultural Company is a leader in all facets of horticulture. Our global family of breeders, research and development teams, suppliers, and distribution companies has a strong presence on six continents in 20 countries. We live by our founder's motto: "All the Best and Nothing Else."

Website: <https://www.ballhort.com/>



The Olympia Collective

Sponsoring: Pioneers & Pathways

About: The Olympia Collective swiftly answer SOS signals from nonprofit CEOs, board members, and fundraising leaders who lack the capability, time, or talent to fully realize their mission and/or hit revenue goals. Our mission is to empower our clients to deliver maximum impact to the communities they serve.

Website: <https://theolympiacollective.com/>



University of Florida

Sponsoring: The Resilience Lab

About: The UF Therapeutic Horticulture Program, situated on the University of Florida's Horticultural Sciences Teaching Farm, is based on the belief that an active connection with plants and nature can be a restorative experience and have a profound impact on quality of life.

Website: <https://hos.ifas.ufl.edu/>



Horticultural Therapy Institute

Sponsoring: Opening Reception

About: The Horticultural Therapy Institute is a non-profit institution that trains students from all over the country to use plants and gardening to improve the lives of others, and become leaders in this field. The Institute operates with these in mind: integrity, customer service, community, improving lives, excellence, passion about HT, enthusiasm, and balance in life.

Website: <https://www.htinstitute.org/>

Riva Mental Health

Sponsoring: Professional Headshots

About: Riva Mental Health is an inclusive psychotherapy clinic located in Redwood City, California, that provides in-person and online mental health care for clients ages 3 to 103. Whether you're working through anxiety, depression, or trauma, Riva is here to walk alongside you with understanding, guidance, and care.

Website: <https://rivamh.com/>



Special Experiences

Friday

October 16, 2026

10:00 AM - 2:15 PM

Cable Car



Plants & Paws | Immersive Wellness

Bring together the healing power of plant engagement and animal-assisted therapy to support calm, connection, and restoration.

What to expect:

- ✓ Discover research behind plant- and animal-bonds.
- ✓ Experience calming plant and animal interactions.
- ✓ Reduce stress through sensory engagement.
- ✓ Learn practical horticultural therapy applications.



Registration required (free): [Plants & Paws Sign-up Form](#)

Saturday

October 17, 2026

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Auditorium



Pioneers & Pathways | Exchange Hub

Celebrate the leaders who built the foundation of horticultural therapy while impactfully guiding emerging professionals forward, reinforcing the field's growing professional standards, credibility, and visibility.

What to expect:

- ✓ Trace horticultural therapy's historical evolution.
- ✓ Explore Board Certification Station information.
- ✓ Connect seasoned professionals with emerging talent.
- ✓ View visual tributes honoring foundational leaders.

Special Experiences

Saturday

October 17, 2026

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Auditorium



Resilience Lab | Experiential Learning

Experience a space for thought leadership engagement, shared understanding and research, and impactful reflection around what it truly means to be resilient.

What to expect:

- ✓ Discover evidence based resilience research.
- ✓ Hear inspiring thought leadership testimonials.
- ✓ Explore botanical science seed principles.
- ✓ Learn practical human resilience analogies.

Thank you to Our In-Kind Donors



Visit the Exhibitors

Saturday, October 17, 2026 | 9 AM - 3 PM

SF Botanical Gardens, County Fair Building, Auditorium

The HT Path: From Learning to Professional Practice

Walk the path followed by those entering the horticultural therapy profession—from **education and training to internships, professional practice, and certification**. Explore the different pathways and credentials, meet the people who help you discover the steps that can help guide your own journey in HT and therapeutic horticulture.

Horticultural Therapy Certificate Programs

Discover **AHTA Accredited Horticultural Therapy Certificate Programs** that provide college-level coursework and a foundation in the theory and application of horticultural therapy with diverse populations. Meet representatives and learn about educational pathways through programs including **UCLA Extension, College of DuPage, University of Florida, Oregon State University, and Horticultural Therapy Institute**.

CCSF Environmental Horticulture & Floristry

Learn how **City College of San Francisco's Environmental Horticulture & Floristry Department** can be part of your educational pathway toward horticultural therapy. Explore horticulture and human sciences coursework that can help meet the educational requirements for the HT-BC pathway.



Thriving in the Grove Photo Booth

Gather your friends—old and new—and capture the moment! Stop by the Thriving in the Grove photo booth to celebrate connection, community, and your AHTA conference experience.

The Growth Grove Lounge

Connect. Learn. Mentor. Grow. The Growth Grove is an intentional space connecting seasoned professionals with the next generation of horticultural therapy practitioners. Learn about internships and supervision, explore opportunities to become a supervisor, connect with mentors and peers, and take a moment to relax and recharge.

Jennifer Jewell Book Signing

Meet conference keynote speaker Jennifer Jewell and have your books signed! Jennifer will be available at her table 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM.

Visit the Exhibitors

Saturday, October 17, 2026 | 9 AM - 3 PM

SF Botanical Gardens, County Fair Building, Auditorium

Regional Groups

Discover how **AHTA Regional Groups** are building community and strengthening horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture locally. Meet regional leaders, find your local group, connect with practitioners and students, and learn how you can get involved in growing the field in your own community.

California Horticultural Therapy Network Refreshment Table

Stop by for a refreshment and learn about the **California Horticultural Therapy Network (CHTN)** and the growing community of horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture practitioners, students, and supporters throughout California.

HT-BC Exhibit & Activity Area

Follow The **HT Path** to its culmination at the HT-BC exhibit. Learn about the **Horticultural Therapist–Board Certified (HT-BC)**, professional standards, eligibility, and the certification exam through educational displays and activities.

Activities include:

- Plant a seedling and write an intention for your next step on your HT/TH journey.
- Make a calming botanical sachet to take with you, especially helpful for anyone feeling a little exam anxiety!
- Celebrate your certification journey with a photo at our HT-BC photo station.

Seed Portrait Activity

Create a one-of-a-kind **self-portrait using seeds and natural materials** in this hands-on exploration of identity, growth, and resilience. Sponsored by **THAD**, this creative activity invites you to see yourself, and your potential for growth, through the language of plants.

Seeds of Strength Educational Exhibit

Explore the science and symbolism of seeds as powerful examples of resilience. This educational exhibit examines how seeds survive, adapt, remain dormant, and ultimately grow, offering a fascinating connection between plant resilience and our own capacity to thrive.

AHTA Membership Table

Discover the benefits of being an **AHTA member**, including membership levels, professional resources, networking, education, and opportunities to become more involved in the field. Bring your completed conference bookmarks to the table for a chance to **spin the Giveaway Wheel!**

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

- Registration | 2nd Floor

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM

- Coffee & Tea Service | 2nd Floor

8:30 AM - 8:50 AM

- Opening Welcome & Remarks | Ballroom

Kelly Warnick, AHTA President

8:50 AM - 9:50 AM

- Keynote: The Healing Inherent in Cultivating Place, The Power of Keystone Gardeners | Ballroom

Jennifer Jewell [[Post-session survey](#)]

10:00 AM - 4:50 PM

- Professional Headshots | Cable Car | [Register](#) (free)

10:00 AM - 2:15 PM

- Plants & Paws Immersive Experience: Where Horticultural Therapy and Animal-Assisted Therapy Converge | Cable Car | [Register](#) (free)

10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

- Lecture: Research on Behavioral Driving Mechanisms and Dynamic Model Construction in the Implementation Process of Programs of Horticultural Therapy | Sutter II

Kayte Kitchen [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This presentation will highlight a paediatric hospital's therapeutic horticulture initiative known as 'Garden Therapy.' It will provide a thorough overview of the program, including narratives and case studies, as well as the challenges, opportunities, and insights gained. It is no longer best practise to just provide beautiful, therapeutic spaces for patients. This program provides patients and families with a deeper connection with gardens, fostering a greater love for nature and better clinical outcomes. Attendees will hear unique experiences and will find inspiration at macro, program design, and implementation levels.

- Lecture: Beyond the Garden Wall: Designing Deeper Connections Between Children and Healing Gardens | Sutter I

Binxia Xue, Tongyu Li [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This presentation examines how participant behavior shapes the implementation of horticultural therapy programs across healthcare, community, and university settings. Using behavioral change theory and system dynamics, it identifies drivers of engagement, immersion, and sustained participation. The session is relevant to horticultural therapy practice because it addresses common barriers to program success. Attendees will gain a dynamic framework for improving program design, participation, and therapeutic effectiveness.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

- Lecture: Rooted in Resilience: Therapeutic Horticulture as a Pathway to Student Well Being and Belonging | Sutter III

Elizabeth (Leah) Diehl [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Therapeutic horticulture (TH) offers a promising, evidence based approach to supporting student mental health. This session shares findings from a multi semester study of a structured TH program for university students, demonstrating significant reductions in stress and anxiety and meaningful increases in resilience, academic resilience, and belongingness. Participants will gain insight into program structure, outcome measures, and implications for campus mental health strategies, highlighting the role of nature based interventions in fostering student well being and academic success.

- Panel: Growing Inside: Prison Gardens Offer Healing and Reconnection | Ballroom

Faryn Hart (moderator), isa peña, Calliope Correia, Sol Mercado, Shelagh Fritz [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This panel features facilitators, formerly incarcerated participants, and reentry coordinators from gardening programs at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, Central California Women's Facility and Alcatraz Gardens. Presenters will explore how horticultural therapy supports rehabilitation, skill-building, reentry preparation. Attendees will gain insight into program design, institutional challenges, and participant impact. The session highlights lived experience and offers practical guidance for developing or strengthening garden-based programs in correctional settings.

10:50 AM - 11:00 AM

- Break

11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

- Lecture: Improving Quality in a Therapeutic Gardening Program for ICU Employees | Sutter I
Seth Lemons [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Stress and burnout in nurses are critically elevated and associated with increased occupational turnover and reduced quality of care. To mitigate these issues, a therapeutic gardening program was established for ICU nurses at a rural hospital. In 2025, the program underwent a quality improvement initiative to increase employee engagement and establish quality performance metrics. The QI initiative successfully increased engagement, collected baseline data on stress and burnout, and employees reported the program as being beneficial.

- Lecture: Seeds of Healing: Veterans, Sunflowers, and the Power of Community | Sutter II

Collie Turner, John Pilat [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: The Sunflower Farm at Pennypack, powered by Heroic Gardens, is an urban horticultural hub advancing Veteran reintegration and community health. Through therapeutic horticulture, fresh food production, and intergenerational engagement between Veterans, neighbors, and families, the farm addresses health equity and social connection. In 2025, volunteers and Veterans helped distribute more than 450 bags of fresh produce to the surrounding community. Attendees will learn how this model integrates horticultural therapy with community farming to cultivate wellbeing, purpose, and neighborhood resilience.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

- Workshop: Growing Resilience Behind the Gate | Sutter III

Gunjan Koul [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This interactive workshop explores therapeutic horticulture programming within a correctional facility serving incarcerated adult men. Through structured garden and kitchen-based activities, participants cultivate resilience through routine, sensory engagement, and shared responsibility. Attendees will examine how plant-based practices support adaptive capacity during incarceration and reentry, while engaging in facilitated dialogue around an expanded question: What if second chances begin with restored access to life's simple, sustaining pleasures?

- Panel: Horticultural Therapy/Therapeutic Horticulture in Cooperative Extension: A Multi-State Panel | Ballroom

Gayle Grato, Alison Brennan, Carmen Ketron, Sarah McCracken [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Cooperative Extension systems within U.S. land-grant universities are increasingly integrating horticultural therapy/therapeutic horticulture (HT/TH) into community programming that promotes health and well-being. In this panel discussion, Extension professionals from University of Arizona, Clemson University, University of Illinois, Colorado State University, and Montana State University will share how HT/TH programs serve diverse populations, including youth, individuals with disabilities, and older adults, while discussing interdisciplinary collaboration and engaging participants in dialogue about HT/TH in Extension systems.

11:50 AM - 12:50 PM

- Lunch | 2nd Floor

12:10 PM - 12:55 PM

- AHTA Membership Meeting & Awards | Ballroom

1:00 PM - 1:50 PM

- Lecture: Bridges and Blooms: a Land Together Pilot at San Quentin | Sutter I

Calliope Correia, isa peña [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Attendees will learn about Land Together (LT), a 48-week program which tackles nature deprivation in prisons by introducing participant-designed gardens. Integrating therapeutic horticulture and mindfulness, LT promotes personal growth, benefitting both residents and staff. One specific program at San Quentin Prison will demonstrate how access to nature, with alumni and staff support, is vital for genuine rehabilitation and healing. Attendees will understand how gardening within a prison improves relationships, health, and helps support safer communities.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

1:00 PM - 1:50 PM

- Workshop: Creating Evidence-Based Publications | Sutter II

Arushi Sinha [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Generating peer-reviewed discourse is key to participating in scientific discourse. Peer-reviewed manuscripts in horticultural therapy require blending clinical precision with behavioral data, grounded in established literature, while showcasing clinical outcomes. Formulation depends upon a robust methodology, including randomized controlled trials. The session will emphasize presentation of data visualization, adherence to guidelines (such as CONSORT), and ensuring rigor for evidence-based practice, particularly relevant when studying vulnerable subgroups, as well as the submission and review process.

- Workshop: Cultivating Job Skills and Growing Resilience Through Gardening | Sutter III

Lara Wirtz Fahnestock [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Gardens are spaces for reflection, renewal and food access. They are also powerful places for learning practical life skills. In this interactive presentation, Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) will share about their therapeutic garden program and a 10-week group horticultural therapy program that taught resilience and job skills for youth impacted by trauma.

- Panel: Engaging the Healthcare Community through Therapeutic Horticulture | Ballroom

Jennifer Smith-Simms, Liz Byrde [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Discover the variety of ways the TH staff at Missouri Botanical Garden works in the healthcare community from bedside and outpatient to wellbeing support for staff drop-in style and programmed support groups. Learn about creative nature-based activities that can be used with a variety of populations along with the background of partnerships, funding, and benefits of each program. Panelists will share information on their unique background and the various healthcare partners they support.

1:50 PM - 2:00 PM

- Break

2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

- Lecture: Horticulture in Pediatrics: Applications, Evidence and the Future | Sutter I

Andrew Zeiger [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: As horticultural therapy evolves into a key health profession in the U.S., it is important to assess its impact on pediatric care. This talk will showcase pediatric health care sites that currently incorporate horticulture; present the existing evidence base for horticultural interventions in pediatric populations; and facilitate dialogue about the future of horticulture in pediatric care. This talk aims to excite the audience about ways horticulture can improve healthcare for our children.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

- Lecture: Inner Ecosystems: Cultivating Resilience Through Therapeutic Nature Practices | Sutter II

Antoinette Vasseur [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This presentation explores resilience through an ecological lens using Inner Roots, a 12-week horticultural program grounded in permaculture principles. Participants will engage with the concept of the “inner ecosystem” and learn how therapeutic nature-based practices can support adaptability, self-awareness, and growth. This session offers practical tools, real-world examples, and an integrative framework to help individuals and communities cultivate resilience through connection with natural systems.

- Lecture: Growing Together: Building Sustainable Mixed-Needs Therapeutic Horticulture Communities | Sutter III

Katie Andrews [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: When a Therapeutic Horticulture programme for people experiencing mental ill health faced recruitment challenges, Ridgeline Trust (Reading, UK) broadened access through community partners and social prescribing. The resulting group brought together a companionship garden of adults aged 19 to 90 with diverse cognitive, physical and emotional support needs.

2:50 PM - 3:00 PM

- Break

3:00 PM - 3:50 PM

- Lecture: Healing Landscapes in Times of War: Therapeutic Gardens for Recovery and Resilience in Ukraine | Sutter I

Yuliia Rashkovska [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This presentation examines the role of therapeutic gardens in supporting psychological and physical recovery during wartime. Drawing on real projects in Ukraine, including healing gardens created for children and veterans, it highlights how nature-based design can foster resilience, reduce stress, and support trauma recovery. Participants will gain insights into practical design strategies and therapeutic applications of horticultural environments that promote healing, emotional restoration, and community resilience in healthcare and rehabilitation settings.

- Lecture: Growing Resilience: Cultivating Horticultural Therapy in a School Community | Sutter II

Rebecca Reimer [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Using the presenter’s personal experience developing horticultural programming in a school setting, this presentation explores how horticultural therapy principles can support student well-being, resilience, and engagement. Participants will learn about hands-on initiatives including composting systems, pollinator gardens, hydroponics, aquaponics, student-led plant sales, and a lettuce subscription program. Attendees will gain practical strategies for creating collaborative, low-cost horticultural therapy programs that cultivate both ecological literacy and student growth.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

3:00 PM - 3:50 PM

- Lecture: The Evidence Base for AHTA Therapeutic Garden Characteristics | Sutter III

Teresia Hazen, Meghan McKiernan [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This presentation examines the AHTA Therapeutic Garden Characteristics (TGC). It explores levels of evidence and selection of the best evidence to support each characteristic. It highlights the benefits of updating and refining AHTA TGC to help address Standards of Practice and the best plan of care for each client. By analyzing relevant research, the talk highlights our role in updating content regularly and focusing on systematic identification, evaluation, and consolidation of practice-changing information.

- Workshop: From Clinics to Parks: Building Resilience Through Nature Prescriptions for Children and Families | Ballroom

Aisha Siddiqui [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Nature-based interventions are increasingly recognized as powerful tools for promoting health and resilience. This session introduces SHINE (Stay Healthy in Nature Everyday), a park prescription program at UCSF that connects families from disinvested communities to guided nature experiences. Participants will explore how nature fosters resilience, identify facilitators of access, and engage in a brief interactive activity to design equitable, strengths-based nature prescriptions that can be integrated into clinical and community settings.

3:50 PM - 4:00 PM

- Break

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

- Poster Sessions (13) | Ballroom

- Poster: Therapeutic Horticulture Study Abroad Course

Cynthia M. Domenghini [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Studying abroad broadens student perspectives by fostering global awareness of food systems, human wellness and culturally responsive practices. Students from Kansas State University's therapeutic horticulture program collaborated with educators in Panajachel, Guatemala during a short-term service-learning trip. Students designed and delivered therapeutic horticulture activities at an elementary school for youth with learning disabilities and their teachers. The initiative addressed regional educational inequities, educator burnout and social stigma while promoting participant well-being, engagement and cross-cultural learning.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

- Poster: Vocational Horticulture Therapy within a State Forensic Psychiatric Hospital

Corynne Mahlstedt [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This poster presentation explores how five pillars of horticulture therapy—cognitive growth, social connection and community building, physical health and movement, connection to nature, and emotional and psychological wellbeing—are implemented within a vocational greenhouse program at a state forensic psychiatric hospital. Through structured horticultural activities, patients engage in meaningful work that supports recovery, skill development, and therapeutic engagement. Attendees will learn practical strategies for applying this framework within secure clinical environments and institutional treatment settings.

- Poster: Beyond the Garden: Tracking Whole-Person Wellness in HT

Fatemeh G Haghighi [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This poster presentation evaluates a structured horticultural therapy (HT) intervention delivered within a Veterans Affairs Whole Health (VA WH) program using the WH-Personal Health Inventory (WH-PHI) as a tool for measuring whole-person outcomes. Findings from 172 Veterans show large reductions in stress, depression, pain, and loneliness across sessions ($d > 0.8$), alongside improvements in several WH-PHI well-being domains. Attendees will learn practical approaches for integrating holistic outcome measures into HT programming and evaluating multidimensional impacts of therapeutic gardening interventions.

- Poster: Seeds of Strength: Building Resilience Through Horticultural Therapy

Srividya "Sri" Krishnan [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This poster highlights how horticultural therapy fosters resilience by connecting individuals with the cycles of growth, renewal, and recovery in nature. Through innovative program modules, participants learn to rebound from setbacks, adapt to challenges, and thrive within supportive communities. Attendees will gain insights into practical applications of plant care, seasonal metaphors, and reflective exercises that strengthen emotional endurance. Key takeaways include strategies for integrating resilience-focused activities into therapeutic Horticulture.

- Poster: The Wellness Garden Project – Creating Horticultural Experiences with Design Thinking

Lisa Perrine [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This poster session introduces Design Thinking methods for co-creating horticultural experiences that enhance well-being. Participants in the Wellness Garden Project include 24 diverse individuals with wide-ranging wellness goals. Examples of their co-created wellness experiences illustrate the variation of horticultural activities that create physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These examples also reveal some common threads between each experience and show how such an approach can be used to design horticultural therapies with a diverse group of clients.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

- Poster: Cultivating the Next Generation of Horticultural Therapists

Alexa Rennie [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: My presentation uses research and personal experience to analyze why horticultural therapy often fails to attract and retain young professionals. I will illustrate the problem and provide suggestions for how to reach people under age 40. Ensuring generational diversity is vital for our field's long-term viability, as fresh perspectives are required to evolve key research and modernize practices. Takeaways include an analysis of this demographic disparity and practical engagement solutions for younger populations.

- Poster: Living Grief, Recognizing Hope

Tracy Wilson [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This poster presents a pilot horticultural therapy intervention designed to support couples grieving the loss of a potential or unborn child. Through the creation of a living or imitation plant picture-frame memorial, couples engage in symbolic meaning-making to name grief, honour hope, and explore differing personal and cultural perspectives on loss. Preliminary observations from three participating couples suggest the activity may facilitate communication, strengthen relational resilience, and support the integration of love, hope, and grief within the mourning process.

- Poster: Access to Nature for Older Adults

Susan Rodiek [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: An overview of how the physical environment in long-term care settings can encourage or discourage residents from spending time outdoors in therapeutic settings.

- Poster: Vocational Horticultural Therapy

Amanda Lacey Feneis [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Horticultural therapy techniques for vocational skills training and learning to manage fatigue of work related stress through horticultural activities. Key takeaways include learning how to handle everyday work related stressors through horticultural therapy sessions and services; and using horticultural therapy for vocational training.

- Poster: Therapeutic and Vocational Gardens: Theory, Context and Components

Kristine Kelley [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: When designing therapeutic and vocational gardens, there are a number of considerations before implementing and using the gardens. In order to achieve good design in any garden that serves wide array of people, a network of specialists need to identify, evaluate and assemble a number of perspectives and factors before putting a design to paper. A therapeutic and vocational garden environment comes with uniquely considerate details in order to successfully address diverse populations and support interactive engagement.

Detailed Schedule



Friday, October 16, 2026 | PDT | Marriott Union Square

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

- Poster: The Power of Care Farms: Evidence for Inclusive Farm Employment

Sarah Sorci [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Care farms integrate agriculture, nature, and meaningful work to promote health, well-being, and belonging. This presentation shares findings from a mixed-methods study examining care farm employment for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Interviews across six northeastern U.S. farms reveal long-term employment stability, continued adult development, improved well-being, and strong community connections. The session explores how farm environments build resilience and offers practical insights for horticultural therapy practitioners integrating employment-based nature programs.

- Poster: Facilitating Physical, Mental, and Cross-Cultural Trauma Healing

Deidre Schultz, Kenneth Powell Wilson [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This interactive presentation provides TH/HT techniques, strategies, and activities that support and facilitate healing processes with and for people living with physical, mental, and/or cross-cultural trauma. Presenters will identify similarities among these trauma types, distinguish their differences, and explore how to modify approaches when working with clients living with these traumas.

- Poster: Increasing Tolerance to Nutritious Foods through Garden-Based Interventions

Lara Wirtz Fahnestock [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Children with developmental disabilities often face challenges with dietary habits and nutrition. In the summer of 2025, the Director of Therapeutic Gardens at Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) and a behavioral therapist at Firefly Autism collaborated on a 6-month study to determine if gardening can increase tolerance for nutritious foods among children diagnosed with autism and other related developmental disabilities. The findings were significant. This presentation will cover the study's methods and results.

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

- Informal Networking & Dinner | E & O Kitchen and Bar, 314 Sutter St, San Francisco, CA, 94108

Informal Networking & Dinner | Oct 16, 2026 | 5:30 - 8:00 PM

Think of this as our unofficial AHTA evening gathering spot—a place to relax, grab a drink, enjoy some delicious food, and spend time with friends old and new. E&O has a lively but comfortable atmosphere, a full bar, and a menu of modern Asian dishes that are great for sharing and accommodates most dietary preferences.

We expect lots of AHTA conference attendees to be here, making it an easy place to continue the conversations from the day, meet someone new, or simply relax with colleagues.



Bar • Dinner • Networking • Relaxing

- E & O Kitchen and Bar, 314 Sutter St, San Francisco, CA 94108
- Just one block from the conference hotel

Detailed Schedule

 **Saturday, October 17, 2026 | PDT | SF Botanical Gardens**

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

- Registration | SF County Fair Building

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

- Exhibit Hall | Auditorium

9:10 AM - 9:30 AM

- Opening Welcome & Remarks | Auditorium Stage

Katie Ryzhikov, AHTA President-Elect

9:30 AM - 10:20 AM

- Keynote | Auditorium Stage

Stephanie Linder, CEO, Gardens of Golden Gate Park

10:30 AM - 3:30 PM

- Professional Headshots | Back Garden Area | [Register](#) (free)

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

- Lecture: Credentialing the Profession of Horticultural Therapy | Auditorium Stage

Lana Dreyfuss [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: “Credentialing the Profession of Horticultural Therapy” will introduce the Horticultural Therapist-Board Certified (HT-BC) credential. Launching Fall 2026, the HT-BC sets a new benchmark for clinical excellence, professional accountability, and industry credibility. This presentation will review these main points: What is certification, The difference between certification and certificates, Why certification matters, AHTA's history of resilience with certification, How AHTA is thriving today in the process of certification, The 6 domains of the exam, Who should get certified, Eligibility pathways and FAQ.

- Lecture: THAD Global: Using the Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database to Support Culturally Responsive Programming | Rec Room

Hsiang-Hua (Melanie) Chen, Elizabeth (Leah) Diehl [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: As therapeutic horticulture expands worldwide, practitioners require adaptable, culturally responsive resources that translate across diverse communities and environments. This workshop introduces the Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database (THAD), a structured, evidence-informed tool for designing nature-based activities rooted in horticultural therapy principles. Presenters will highlight THAD's international relevance through applications in the United States, Taiwan, and Singapore, followed by a hands-on cultural adaptation exercise that equips participants to tailor activities for varied populations, traditions, and global practice settings.

- Workshop: Soiled in Beauty: Tending the Inner Garden of Resilience | Garden Room

Stephanie Scriven Ramirez [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Step into an experiential blend of horticultural therapy and parts work to cultivate resilience. Through reflection, dialogue, and a hands-on art activity, participants will explore and tend their inner landscape.

Detailed Schedule

 **Saturday, October 17, 2026 | PDT | SF Botanical Gardens**

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

- Special Event: Jennifer Jewell's Book Signing | Auditorium

12:00 PM - 12:50 PM

- Buffet Lunch | Back Garden Area

12:20 PM - 12:50 PM

- Special Event: Screening first episode of new series "Cultivating Place: The Power of Gardeners" by Jennifer Jewell | Auditorium Stage

1:00 PM - 1:50 PM

- Workshop: Letting Go: A Mindful Journey into Seed-Saving | Auditorium Stage

Anne M. Meore [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: The THRIVE program at NYBG welcomes veterans from the J.J.Peters VAMC's Resilience & Wellness Center for a (4) session cohort experience in therapeutic horticulture. Hands-on engagement in plant-related activity, from seed-sowing to sifting compost, are offered, with the tenets of mindfulness as a framework. Session 3 focuses on "Letting Go," utilizing metaphor as a tool to draw the parallel between the "destructive" act of seedhead harvesting and the discomfort/pain of making deep, lasting personal change.

- Workshop: Everybody Breathes! How Breathwork Enhances the Practitioner, Client and Profession of HT | Rec Room

Colleen E. Griffin [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: This unique workshop will focus on the positive powers of breath. Attendees will learn how breathing can be used and modified to ground program participants and set the stage for a successful HT/TH session. Five different breathing techniques will be introduced, demonstrated and then performed by attendees. Modifications for each technique will be introduced as well. Each attendee will take home a description of the breathing techniques and modifications used during this workshop.

- Workshop: Exploring Cultures Through Therapeutic Horticulture | Garden Room

Marisol Clark [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Horticultural therapy gives space for everyone to have a space in the garden to identify with and share with others, this not only strengthens relationships but builds resilience within the community. In this presentation, we will explore linking diverse cultures with horticultural therapy practices. Participants will learn techniques to incorporate HT into cultural celebrations, beliefs, and practices to build empathy, connection, and appreciation for cultures outside of our own.

1:50 PM - 2:00 PM

- Break

Detailed Schedule

 **Saturday, October 17, 2026 | PDT | SF Botanical Gardens**

2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

- Lecture: Nature Sure Is Awesome—Exploring Awe and Its Uses in HT Practice | Rec Room

Matthew J. Wichrowski [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: The experience of awe often results from experiencing the wonders of nature. New research supports physiological and psychosocial benefits from this experience. This session covers definitions, characteristics, and applications of awe in clinical practice.

- Workshop: Lessons from a Leaky Greenhouse: Growing HT Programs in Diverse Nonprofit Organizations | Garden Room

Jeanne Schultz [[Post-session survey](#)]

Description: Presenter will share experiences of delivering Horticultural Therapy in a public middle school garden, a vocational program at a mental health treatment center and at various nonprofit groups focusing on adults and children challenged by mental health illnesses, substance use disorder, domestic violence, home and food insecurity. Emphasis will be placed on real world lessons learned from a newly registered horticultural therapist.

3:00 PM - 3:10 PM

- Orientation to SF Botanical Gardens | Auditorium Stage

3:10 PM - 4:00 PM

- Self-guided Tour | SF Botanical Gardens

4:00 PM - 4:15 PM

- Walk to AIDS Memorial | SF Botanical Gardens to AIDS Memorial

4:15 PM - 5:15 PM

- Closing Ceremony | AIDS Memorial Redwood Grove

Jennifer Jewell, John Cunningham

Description: Discovering the healing journey of the AIDS Memorial Grove with John Cunningham, a community made mandala honoring Claire Cooper Marcus, and a Closing Ceremony with Jennifer Jewell.

5:15 PM - 6:00 PM

- Wine & Cheese Reception | AIDS Memorial Redwood Grove

6:00 PM

- Transportation to the Marriott Union Square | Lobby

Land Acknowledgement

The American Horticultural Therapy Association acknowledges that we occupy the unceded Ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. We recognize that the Ramaytush Ohlone understand the interconnectedness of all things and have maintained harmony with nature for millennia. We honor the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples for their enduring commitment to Mother Earth. As the Indigenous protectors of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost, nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. We recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. As uninvited guests, we affirm their sovereign rights as First Peoples and wish to pay our respects to the Ancestors, Elders and Relatives of the Ramaytush Community. We recognize to respectfully honor Ramaytush peoples we must embrace and collaborate meaningfully to record Indigenous knowledge in how we care for San Francisco and all its people.

Continue the Conversation

Ways to Get Involved

- Become a Member: [Join the AHTA](#) to access the member directory, receive journals and magazines, get discounts on annual conferences, and unlock free webinars.
- Volunteer: Offer your time by [contacting the association](#) to join one of the AHTA work teams or review boards.
- Join a Regional Group: Connect with local practitioners, students, and supporters by participating in [Regional Groups](#) for local events and networking.
- Pursue Credentials: Work toward designations like the Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner ([THP](#)) or Horticultural Therapist-Board Certified ([HT-BC](#)) to formalize your expertise.
- Attend Conferences & [Events](#): Participate in annual conferences and educational programs to build connections with leading professionals in the field.

Future AHTA Annual Conferences

Mark Your Calendar

2027

Virtual (Remote)
October 15-16, 2027

2028

Chicago, Illinois
October 2028





Thriving in the Grove:
Building Resilience through
Horticultural Therapy

