

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

AHTA

M A G A Z I N E

VOLUME 52 | ISSUE 1

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AHTA Magazine

The AHTA Magazine is published three times a year by the American Horticultural Therapy Association, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The organizational mission of AHTA is to promote and advance the profession of horticultural therapy as a therapeutic intervention and rehabilitative medium.



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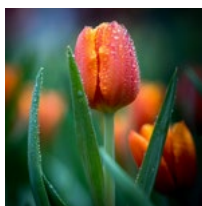
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Editor's Words

Spring is, hands down, my favorite season. And here in New Jersey in early spring, we perch on the cusp of a myriad of miraculous changes. Walking and driving around, I am struck by the joyful, saturated yellow of forsythias, daffodils, and pansies. There's no ignoring these blooms. They make me feel hopeful and excited about what is to come.

This mirrors the optimism growing in me about the future of AHTA. There are positive changes afoot that result from the dedication and hard work of volunteers on work teams and review boards. One of the most promising is The Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner (THP) professional credential, which you can read about on pages 9 and 16. Applications for this new credential will be accepted starting June 1, 2024. Full details will be on the AHTA website soon.

The feature story focuses on a devastating change in our world – climate change and on climate change anxiety or eco-anxiety



PHOTO BY LAURA BILLINGHAM

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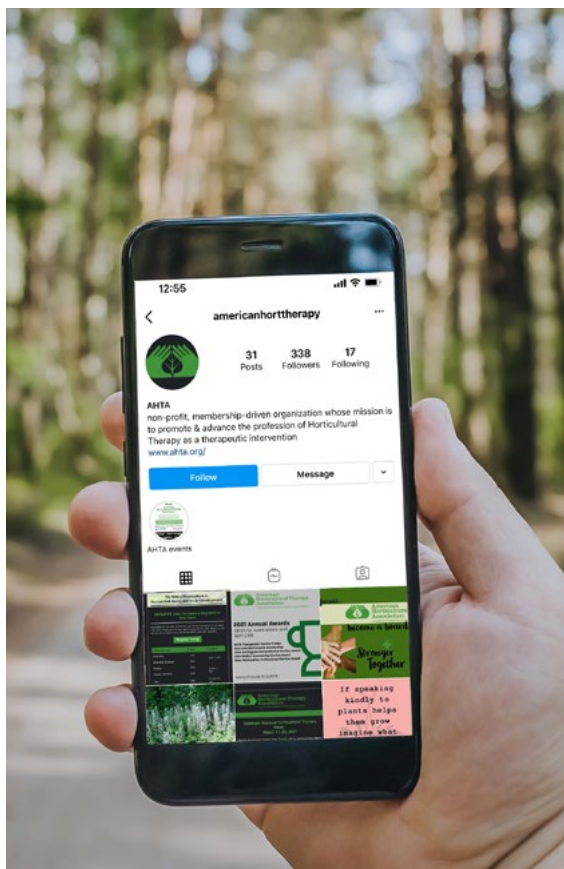
which is affecting people. This piece offers some activities that HT/TH practitioners can use to engage participants to ease climate change anxiety. Bottom line: Taking meaningful action, especially in a group setting, can lessen feelings of helplessness associated with climate change anxiety.

Even though spring is here earlier than it once arrived, which is worrisome, I plan on doing what I can in my personal life and with my HT groups to make a small difference. It all adds up. In the meantime, I'll inhale spring's sweet scents, touch velvety flower petals and delicate

emerging leaves, and feast on all the beauty with my eyes. And I'll watch AHTA grow.

I hope you get caught up in nature's spring miracles, wherever you are,

Linda



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**American
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ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF HORTICULTURE AS THERAPY

HT for Climate Change Anxiety



Mitigating its effects through horticultural therapy (HT) and therapeutic horticulture (TH)

BY Laura Rumpf, HTR

A 2022 study conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication revealed that 64% of Americans were at least somewhat worried about global warming. In the same study, 10% of Americans reported feeling down, depressed, or hopeless for at least “several days out of the last two weeks” because of global warming. Symptoms of climate change anxiety (also referred to as eco-anxiety, eco-grief, or climate doom) can include intrusive thoughts or anxious feelings of distress about future disasters, racing heart, and shortness of breath. However, Yale clinical psychologist Sarah Lowe found that climate change anxiety was linked to symptoms of depression only in those who were not engaged in group activities to address global warming. Taking action on climate change, the study revealed, is one of the most powerful ways to combat hopelessness and helplessness, “especially when done as part of a group,” notes Anthony Leiserowitz, Founder and Director of the Yale Program.

Colleen Griffin and Laura Rumpf are registered horticultural therapists who have been facilitating TH sessions in Southern Maine through their business, Cultivating Well-Being (CW-B), with a focus on mitigating climate change anxiety. Their participants are helping build habitat and regenerate biodiversity, essential to healthy ecosystems that capture and “store tons of carbon,” according to the Global Rewilding Alliance.

Thus far, CW-B’s partners include a community college, library outreach programs, a community garden for youth, and a city land trust. TH activities consist of using native wild seed sourced locally in Maine. Using exclusively native plants is essential because of their adaptive capacity which, “when returned to the places where they once thrived, support resilient communities of diverse life throughout the land we share,” states Wild Seed Project. They will survive with minimal care and will not require excessive

**Pollinators
“make
possible
nearly
one-third
of food
produced
worldwide.”**

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watering. Additionally, they are often sources of nourishment specific to certain species of wildlife. Many states in the US have native plant guides that are helpful in selecting plant species and learning how to propagate them to ensure successful outcomes.

CW-B focuses on wildflower seed that provide backyard habitat and sustenance to native pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, and birds. Pollinators “make possible nearly one-third of food produced

worldwide,” says the World Wildlife Fund. Unfortunately, pollinator habitat is becoming increasingly diminished and fragmented due to factors like the growth of human communities, industry, and transportation corridors. Recent high temperatures and drought, the WWF report found, have reduced the abundance of milkweed. (Milkweed is the only plant on which Monarch butterflies, a currently endangered species, lay their eggs and

is the only source of food for Monarch caterpillars).

Land-use changes in the United States, combined with the widespread use of herbicides, also contributed to the loss of milkweed and other nectar-rich plants, essential to feeding adult monarchs. For that reason, CW-B decided to prioritize the cultivation of milkweed.

CW-B participants learn how to scarify common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) seed which helps ensure germination. Scarifying - in this case, roughing the seed up with sand, offers metaphors for how periods of friction can be opportunities for growth. Other seed that CW-B includes are native aster, goldenrod, coneflower, and lupine (on which the Karner Blue butterfly, also endangered, exclusively feeds). In fall and winter, particular seed is sown into pots and set outdoors during the coldest months to stratify, a freeze/thaw process, necessary for certain species to germinate.

Seed that does not require scarification nor stratification may be planted in spring, but the winter-sowing activity also provides metaphors for building resilience while enduring colder and darker periods, cultivating "hope" in anticipation for



Monarch butterfly caterpillar on milkweed.
PHOTO BY LAURA RUMPF, HTR



Separating and sowing milkweed.
PHOTO BY LAURA RUMPF, HTR

warmer, brighter periods. "Seed balls" are also made by embedding seed into balls of a clay/compost mix. These balls are allowed to air-dry then "launched" into ideal sites where the area will not be mowed or disturbed and where the launcher can watch the clay naturally break down in snow or rain, providing an ideal environment for the seeds to germinate.

Not only does building biodiversity employed as an HT/TH tool to mitigate climate change anxiety have vocational, physical, and cognitive benefits, but also psychosocial/emotional benefits:

- **Connection** – Sowing wild, native seed helps foster a sense of belonging by developing the understanding that humans are part of nature, experiencing cyclical development and decay. Seed is planted and propagates new seed to be sown for following generations. When humans feel more connected to nature, they are more likely to become its steward, critical to ensuring a resilient ecosystem.
- **Inclusion** – "We are all in this together." When community works collectively with a diversity of attributes toward a common good, a sense of camaraderie results. Inclusion mitigates feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- **Altruism** – Creating climate-resistant landscapes helps participants feel that they are giving something back. Although it seems impossible for humans not to contribute to the

SIDEBAR

What is Climate Change Anxiety?

By Marsha Vaughn, PhD, LMFT

Prevalence rates for anxiety disorders have increased in the last few years. They are the most common mental illnesses diagnosed in the United States, impacting almost 20% of adults every year.¹ Climate change anxiety, or eco-anxiety, is not officially diagnosed as a mental illness. While it shares common characteristics with clinical anxiety, it also differs in significant ways which horticultural therapy can help address. Anxiety as a clinical diagnosis is directed toward an uncertain future or an imagined, impending threat. People dealing with clinical anxiety may deny, avoid, or overprepare for that threat. With climate change anxiety, the threat is quite real, as indicated by the preponderance of evidence about climate change.²

Climate change anxiety also differs from clinical anxiety in that climate change is related to, and often worsens, other mental and physical health problems. Anxiety about the planet's future, rather than just one's personal future, poses an existential threat.³ The sheer scale of climate change prompts not only feelings of anxiety, but frustration and anger with institutions that are responsible and fail to correct it. Many contributors to climate change are directly related to institutional practices, such as deforestation and air pollution. The scope of climate change pushes the topic into public spaces, where people feel they have less influence. About half of Americans report hearing about global warming in the media at least once a month.⁴

Climate change anxiety is also accompanied by feelings of helplessness and grief. And yet, most Americans feel a personal sense of responsibility to address climate change and believe that individual actions can make a difference.⁵ When treating clinical anxiety disorders, the goal is to “resolve” symptoms by minimizing their impact or developing rational beliefs that the undesirable, imagined outcome is unlikely to happen.⁶ Professionals hoping to mitigate climate change anxiety could focus not on dismissing anxious emotions and thoughts, but creating opportunities for local, collective action to restore our small corner of the planet.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Marsha Vaughn is a Professor in the Couple and Family Therapy Department at Adler University in Chicago, Illinois. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) with the Counseling Center of Arlington Heights (IL). She completed a residency as a hospital chaplain and the Certificate in Horticultural Therapy from the Horticultural Therapy Institute (CO).

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deterioration of the environment, they can also participate in the rebuilding of their world. The rewards of this altruistic work proliferate in the exhilarating arrival of pollinators and the profusion of second-generation seeds.

- **Resilience** – Using native wild seed in an HT/TH practice can be what Climate Aware Therapist, Wendy Greenspun, PhD with the Climate Psychology Alliance of North America emphasizes is needed to “build emotional resilience (taking action, creativity, self-care, building community and processing emotions).”

Maine psychotherapist Lillian Harris, LCPC states, the process of building a healthy, climate-resistant ecosystem through the use of wild native seed “is an opportunity to cultivate patience, fortitude, reciprocity, and humility; all qualities that are the foundation of good psychological health.”

Doug Tallamy, renowned entomologist and co-founder of Home Grown National Park, encourages everyone to build biodiversity in their communities. He states that we now must ask our gardens to not only provide beauty, healing, and feeding pollinators, but to also “sequester carbon and manage water.” He goes on to say that “we can



Making seed bombs.

PHOTO BY LAURA RUMPF, HTR

each make a measurable difference almost immediately.” Incorporating the use of wild, native seed into our HT/TH practice can be a powerful means of alleviating the growing rate of anxiety and depression attributable to climate change. HT/TH practitioners are poised to be among those on the forefront of developing innovative techniques but also utilizing age-old methods of ensuring biodiversity to mitigate the effects of this existential crisis.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Rumpf, HTR has been practicing HT/TH since 2015. She currently serves clients in Southern Maine with Cultivating Well-Being, LLC in partnership with Colleen Griffin, HTR.

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PHOTO BY ERIN HAWORTH

HTR PROFILE

Sarah Thompson

HTR

INTERVIEWED BY

Linda Brown-Kuhn

Tell us about your background and education. Have you always worked in the field of horticultural therapy?

My background has been rooted in horticulture for over two decades. The plant world has been my constant, providing a sense of connection and solace. My journey began with planting a simple herb garden. I delved into crafting teas, salves, balms, and other items from these herbs, solidifying my passion for working with plants.

I went on to earn an associate degree in Horticulture and began employment at a greenhouse. Here, my role extended beyond horticulture into the realm of human connection. I was facilitating on-the-job training for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

I witnessed how working closely with plants became a catalyst for personal and professional growth for these individuals. Over the years of employment there, I advanced to a Program Coordinator role, overseeing training programs across multiple states.

I earned a Bachelor of Applied Science and deepened my commitment to HT by completing the certificate program with the Horticultural Therapy Institute (HTI).



Coleus in the Memory Care Garden.

PHOTO BY SARAH THOMPSON, HTR

How did you get your start in horticultural therapy? When did you become a horticultural therapist?

I was tasked with writing a persuasive paper in one of my classes. I seized the opportunity to propose a therapeutic horticulture program to a local rehabilitation hospital. During my research, I discovered HTI. This is when I set my sights on becoming professionally registered.

In 2018, I enrolled in my first HT class. November of 2022 marked the completion of my academic requirements and internship, and then I became professionally registered.

How did you combine your interests within the horticultural therapy profession?

Combining my background in horticulture, program coordination, and education in horticultural therapy, I've integrated my passion for plants with a mission to enhance the well-being of others.

What has been your experience in developing a career in HT?

Embarking on a career in HT has been the most gratifying journey in my professional life. In a town (Boise, Idaho), where

the profession was initially unfamiliar, and formal programs were scarce, my path required extensive networking and advocacy. Today, my career in HT continues to evolve.

Can you describe the steps you took and the resources you utilized throughout your career to develop HT programming?

A combination of networking, continued education, involvement with professional associations, and reference materials has been the cornerstone of my efforts to develop HT programming. The AHTA conferences and resources have significantly contributed to my growth.

In addition, my approach to HT has been shaped by the program participants. Their influence has become an invaluable source of inspiration and learning.



From summer to fall. Welcoming the season transition.

PHOTO BY SARAH THOMPSON, HTR

How did HT develop at your facility and what is the present status of this program?

As I was seeking internship opportunities, I came across a Facebook post looking for someone with woodworking skills for building raised garden beds for an assisted living facility's garden program. Despite lacking woodworking skills, I responded, explaining my background as a horticulturist studying TH. This led to the start of my internship and partnership with The Terraces of Boise and a pivotal connection with Pam Catlin, HTR, who became my internship supervisor and mentor.

We are currently focusing on enhancing the therapeutic garden. We hope to boost accessibility for both facilitated activities and independent exploration.

Do you have some favorite plants and activities you use in your HT programs?

Fragrant herbs top the list. They become a focal point in many of our sessions. We also like to propagate coleus cuttings and plant them in the garden once they are ready. Some of my other favorites include

crafting cut flower mandalas, flower pressing, and dry flower arrangements.

Do you accept HT Interns? How does your internship work at your facility?

We are open to incorporating internship opportunities as the program continues to flourish.

Do you have personal perspectives to share with present or future horticultural therapists?

In the realm of HT with older adults in memory care, adaptability is a cornerstone. It's imperative to remain flexible with session plans, recognizing the unpredictability of each participant's experience on any given day.

Wearing a name tag has proven to be a subtle yet powerful tool in fostering personal connections. It provides participants with the ability to address me by name, creating a sense of empowerment and familiarity.



Cut flower mandalas.

PHOTO BY RACHEL GORRINGE

ANNOUNCING A NEW PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL

Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner

BY **Leigh Anne Starling, LPC, CRC, NIT, HTR** & **Lana Dreyfuss, LPCC, LCADC, SEP, HTR**

The American Horticultural Therapy Association recognizes that the practice of therapeutic horticulture is becoming a widely accepted and important component in healthcare, rehabilitation, residential programs, and community settings. The AHTA is pleased to announce a new professional credential – The Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, THP.

The THP is intended for practitioners who provide therapeutic horticulture services aligned with the AHTA definition. The AHTA identifies the components of a therapeutic horticulture program as:

- 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.

Eligibility for the Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner

To be eligible for Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, an applicant is required to:

1. Be a member of AHTA as an Associate Level One (1) or as an Associate Level Two (2)-year 2.
2. Have completed all nine semester credits of horticultural therapy coursework.
3. Have a minimum of 500 hours of work experience in therapeutic horticulture and related services. Hours may be paid or unpaid and may include employment and/or volunteer service.

Work Experience Hours

Work experience is defined as a combination of therapeutic horticulture service delivery, non-direct client services,

and supporting horticulture responsibilities. Therapeutic horticulture service delivery is defined as direct client contact utilizing horticultural activities as the primary modality.

Of the 500 hours, a minimum of 60% must be in therapeutic horticulture service delivery, or 300 hours, and a minimum of 40% of the total hours, or 200 hours, may be client-related responsibilities and/or supporting horticulture services.

Examples of the hours in each category include:

1. Direct client hours providing therapeutic horticulture services to clients in a group or one-on-one.
2. Non-direct client services such as client documentation, program planning and preparation for client activities and/or groups, and client or multi-disciplinary team meetings.
3. Horticulture responsibilities such as gardening, greenhouse and/or landscape maintenance, and pest management.

Applicants granted professional registration as a Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner will be required to renew annually at the Professional level and must maintain their membership in good standing to use the professional designation THP.

Reclassification for the HTR, Registered Horticultural Therapist

Currently the AHTA awards the professional designation Horticultural Therapist-Registered, HTR. The HTR requires coursework in plant science, human science, and horticultural therapy, in addition to a horticultural therapy internship or equivalent work experience. An important professional option available to the Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner is the ability to advance to Horticultural Therapist-Registered, HTR, under a reclassification option.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Portland Memory Garden

*A Time-Tested Therapeutic Resource
Supporting Health for Individuals with
Memory Challenges and the General Public*

Portland Memory Garden, sited in a city of Portland public park, has been serving the needs of long-term care and dementia populations in every season for over twenty years.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEGACY HEALTH

BY Kelly Warnick

In May 2024, the Portland Memory Garden, located in Ed Benedict Park in Southeast Portland, Oregon, will turn 22 years old. For years, this cherished garden has been effectively serving the needs of long-term care and dementia populations in every season. But the garden's reach goes well beyond that. Sited in a city of Portland public park, Portland Memory Garden is open year-round to the general public as well, offering a restorative lush environment of well-maintained botanical plants carefully designed to give all visitors a sensory-stimulating, health-boosting experience.

Portland Memory Garden was created as part of the "100 Parks, 100 Years" Centennial Celebration of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). The garden was unique from the start, being only one of two memory gardens

in the country to be built on public land. Creators of the garden strategically sited it in an underserved, low-income neighborhood of single-family houses with adult foster care facilities nearby. This area has benefitted greatly from the garden's presence. Tucked away from other 13-acre Ed Benedict Park activity and significant traffic noise, Portland Memory Garden is an integral, high-functioning therapeutic resource regularly used by the community.

A Teaching Model for Horticultural Therapists

Portland Memory Garden is a shining example of how registered horticultural therapists, working with teams of allied professionals, can create specialized therapeutic public gardens that provide a vital service to the community.

For this garden, a skilled team of diverse professionals united to meet the health needs of the community. Professionals came from ASLA, The Center of Design for an Aging Society, Legacy Health, Portland Parks and Recreation, the Oregon-Greater Idaho Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, and Portland State University/ School of Urban Studies and Planning. Teresia Hazen, Registered Horticultural Therapist (HTR) and Coordinator of the Therapeutic Garden Program and HT at Legacy Health from 1991-2020, was a key leader on this interdisciplinary team.

Born out of this collaborative process was an innovative, evidence-based therapeutic memory care garden that trailblazed best practices for helping memory-compromised individuals support their health. The Portland Memory Garden



Public gardens need to be more accessible to meet essential needs of our growing older adult population. Portland Memory Garden serves as a time-tested therapeutic public resource that supports accessibility.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEGACY HEALTH

provides a secure, nurturing, sensory-stimulating environment for participants. Simultaneously, caregivers can find respite and rejuvenation while their loved ones safely engage with the garden. With the garden being open to the public, a collective community experience is fostered which improves connection and sense of purpose for all involved.

A Teaching Model for Therapeutic Garden Design

Portland Memory Garden is designed in a circular pattern, with looped pathways diverging off the main path to offer many ways for visitors to explore the garden. The circular concept ensures that individuals do not get lost. Inasmuch as “dead ends” may create confusion with the dementia population, the curving sub-pathways always lead the visitors back to the main circular path. A two-tone color scheme on the edge of the wide paths helps visitors identify the walking areas. Gates and fencing, softened by lush plantings, ensure that memory-compromised individuals do not wander away from the premises.

At the front of the garden is a beautifully designed, eye-catching pavilion. It provides dappled shade and unique charm, but also serves as a wayfinding marker visible throughout the garden. Visitors can orient to the entrance of the garden, providing reassurance to those who may be uncertain about where in the garden they are.

A variety of the surrounding park's larger trees — Douglas Firs, Silver Maples and Bigleaf Maples — provide structure, awe, and soft enclosure to the garden. A profusion of four-season ornamental trees, shrubs, herbs, annuals, and perennials are equally present, designed to stimulate senses and spark memories. The raised garden beds of varying heights give individuals of all abilities a close-up opportunity to experience the texture, smell, and look of the vegetation. There is ample seating placed near the plantings for optimum benefit, as well as in the inner circle of the garden for group conversation.

Portland Memory Garden is a reflection of the American Horticultural Therapy Association's (AHTA) benchmark [*Therapeutic Garden Characteristics*](#). As

such, the garden has served as a model resource for decades. Brian Bainson, lead Landscape Architect for the Portland Memory Garden, comments that many participatory design teams “have incorporated the lessons of Portland Memory Garden” in creating garden environments that support treatment therapies, care of people, and restorative engagement.

The Sustainability of the Garden

For decades, The Friends of the Portland Memory Garden have conducted high-quality, innovative horticultural therapy (HT) programming at the Portland Memory Garden – programming that has aligned seamlessly with the beauty and seasonal changes of the lush plant setting. Several HTRs serve in this Friends group and on various committees to organize and conduct therapeutic sessions and events.

The year-round therapeutic programming generates opportunities for individuals with memory impairment to support health through connection with nature.



Portland Memory Garden reflects AHTA's benchmark Therapeutic Garden Characteristics and, for decades, has served as a model resource for the world.

PHOTO BY WWW.PORTLAND.GOV

Hazen emphasizes, "HTRs continue to be the driving force for programming and sustainability. We are the organizers, engagers, and leaders for implementing the evidence base and best practices to serve seniors and their families in this nature setting."

The Need for More Public Therapeutic Gardens to Support the Expanding Older Adult Population

The older adult population is growing at an unprecedented rate. By 2030, all baby boomers will reach the age of 65 or above, signifying that one in every five Americans will then be of retirement age. Many older adults will experience a broad spectrum of cognitive function challenges, ranging from mild decline, to dementia, to Alzheimer's disease. In fact, Alzheimer's cases are predicted to escalate to 11 million by 2040.

HT programming resonates deeply with the people experiencing dementia. Participatory activities enhance cognitive function, encourage positive emotion and engagement, promote relaxation, and diminish agitation. The benefit of outdoor time for participants — and all older adults — is significant. The proper amount of quality daylight can dramatically improve sleep cycles, boost absorption of Vitamin D, and improve calcium absorption, as pointed out by Eunice Noel-Waggoner,

President of the Center of Design for an Aging Society.

As such, there is a growing demand for non-pharmacological interventions such as horticultural therapy and therapeutic gardens for individuals living with memory

challenges. As Bainnson points out, "public gardens can be more accessible to our aging populations." Portland Memory Garden will continue to serve and inspire as a time-tested therapeutic public resource that furthers health in communities.



The Portland Memory Garden was the recipient of the 2011 AHTA Therapeutic Garden Design Award

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Kelly Warnick, BA, JD, AAS Horticulture, Certificate in Horticultural Therapy. Kelly has a multi-faceted background in greenhouse, garden center, landscape design and floriculture settings, as well as evidence-based outcomes and legal advocacy. She has just completed her AHTA professional registration internship with the Chicago Botanic Garden.

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Rehabilitation Gardens in Ukraine

BY **Rashkovska Julia Vasylivna**

I am a mother and founder of the Charitable Fund Rehabilitation Gardens. For more than three years my colleagues and I have been creating a rehabilitation garden at the Ukrainian Okhmatdyt National Children's Hospital, the largest children's hospital in the country. This hospital treats the most difficult diseases and saves children with severe war injuries.

A year before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, my colleagues and I began this rehabilitation garden with the support of the Guild of Landscape Architects of Ukraine and the hospital. At that time, my child was

undergoing treatment at the Okhmatdyt. I was also a landscape designer and architect. In these roles, I knew this type of project was necessary for children and parents to undergo better rehabilitation and recovery.

During the war and hostilities, we worked even harder to get this garden established and in 2023 opened the therapeutic garden for physical and psychological rehabilitation of children, parents, and medical personnel. This garden covers almost a quarter acre of land which for many years was covered with construction materials. We developed this garden with the intent of giving children a beautiful

slice of nature that might help them emotionally and physically, to facilitate improved recoveries.

The garden was planned with different functions in mind. There are locations for sports and games as well as more private places for parent and child. Children run barefoot on the grass, feeling the soft blades of grass, the temperature of the ground, the moisture of the grass cover. They play, have fun, and nothing hurts anymore. They return to the wards in good moods, which we have often observed. Children also receive physical therapy outside in the garden when it is warm.

An assortment of plants was selected,

Birdseye view of the therapeutic garden.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR



which allow children to touch them, smell their aroma, and delight in the seasonal color changes. We paid special attention to topiary plants and created a green fairytale zoo. Children discover green animal sculptures by moving around the entire area, interacting with the topiary plants while getting exercise and enjoying themselves through the exploration of different plant forms and textures.

There are plenty of seats and benches for resting and enjoying the multi-sensory experiences. Some of the seating is embellished with decorative stones, echoing the whimsical character of the garden.

This charitable project continues to develop and has expanded to four locations: the two largest children's hospitals in Ukraine, a military hospital, and a park for fallen heroes in cooperation with relatives of fallen heroes. The war continues to

cruelly affect children and adults in Ukraine, and we have an urgent need to create spaces to support physical and mental recovery. My colleagues and I are sincerely grateful for all who continue to support us in developing these beautiful and healing places.



[Click here for the original story in Ukraine.](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vasylyvna is Founder of the Charitable Fund Rehabilitation Gardens and an Engineer of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture. She is also a post-graduate student in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Phytodesign at the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine and a member of the Guild of Landscape Architects of Ukraine.

Translation made possible thanks to Emilee Weaver, Maryna Hrudii and Google Translator.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

1-4 Children play and have fun in the therapeutic garden.

5 Roman is rehabilitating with his doctor, exploring the sensations of touching the grass. He looks very pleased.

6 Mariyka survived a rocket explosion in Kherson. She underwent surgery to receive a prosthetic limb and is rehabilitating in the garden without fear of falling and hurting herself.

7 Mariyka and I planted a Sakura tree. This is her tree which she cares for and observes each time she comes for rehabilitation.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR

HTI Training Reaches Across The World

BY Christine Capra



Students at the recent Horticultural Therapy Techniques class complete an experiential exercise at the Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CAPRA

A recent student said of the Horticultural Therapy Institute (HTI) classes, the HTI certificate program provided a map for going through each of the steps to create a successful horticultural therapy practice. The student said they gained confidence and knowledge to move forward and that receiving the certificate was empowering and added credibility to their work. This idea is the root of what the Institute has offered since 2001. HTI's values continue to shape the educational offerings—they include integrity, customer service, building community, improving lives, excellence, passion about HT, enthusiasm, and balance in life.

How do those values translate into a horticultural therapy educational program? We take to heart what our students tell us and provide the highest quality curriculum and instruction, inspiring over 560 graduates to make a difference in their own communities by bringing people and plants together to improve lives in many ways. It's also about taking on new challenges as an organization to expand the benefits of horticultural therapy across the world. To that end, HTI is a co-sponsor and its director, Rebecca Haller, HTM is a co-convenor for the upcoming 16th International People Plant Symposium in Reading, England, July 10-12, 2024. The theme of this symposium is "Cultivation of Human Health through Horticulture: from Gardening Lifestyle to Professional Intervention". The event is hosted by Thrive and the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS).

A THP may apply the 500 hours of work experience in therapeutic horticulture toward the required 2000 hours work experience option for the HTR. With an additional 1,500 hours of work experience, a THP would have the required hours.

A THP also has the option to complete the 480-hour horticultural therapy internship required for professional registration as an HTR.

Education is valued at both the THP and HTR professional levels. For reclassification to the HTR, a baccalaureate degree is required. The degree may be 1) in horticulture with a concentration in horticultural therapy or 2) a degree in another field and the additional required 24 credits in plant science and human science. The required plant science and human science coursework may be in fulfillment of a degree or may be completed in addition to an existing degree.

When working toward future professional registration at the HTR level, therapeutic horticulture practitioners should review the AHTA Professional Registration Policy and [Procedures for Horticultural Therapist-Registered](#).

Beginning June 1, 2024, the AHTA will begin accepting applications for this new credential. Full details and information will be available on the AHTA website soon.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Leigh Anne is a past AHTA President, served on the AHTA Board for 14 years, and is currently the AHTA Professional Registration Review Board Chair.

Lana Dreyfuss, LPCC, LCADC, SEP, HTR. Lana is the AHTA President and currently serves as the AHTA Credentialing Work Team Leader and is on the AHTA Professional Registration Review Board.

Horticultural Therapy Working Group.

It's a unique opportunity to join with others across the world to learn, discuss, and connect with others who care about the people/plant connection.

Topics explored during the conference include:

- The impact of gardening for health and wellbeing
- Prescribing gardening for healthcare
- Healing garden design
- Therapeutic use of horticulture in healthcare and human services
- Horticultural therapy or social and therapeutic horticulture across wellness, vocational and therapeutic models

In addition to the symposium, HTI staff and faculty are embarking on a third edition of the textbook, *Horticultural Therapy Methods: Connecting People & Plants in Health Care, Human Services and Therapeutic Programs* published by CRC Press (Taylor & Francis Group). It's exciting to update this essential tool that horticultural therapy students around the world can use in the study of this field. A publication date is pending.

While these new endeavors are taking place, the core classes and certificate program continue. This fall, the Institute will offer an in-person Fundamentals of Horticultural Therapy class at Elkus Ranch in Half Moon Bay, CA. This four-day intensive (Oct. 30-Nov. 2, 2024) in a horticulturally rich environment is the perfect opportunity to begin a horticultural therapy journey where students will also hear from other professionals in the area. Two additional sections of the Fundamentals class will be offered in a synchronous online format (Oct. 21-24 and Dec. 4-7, 2024). All these beginning classes filled last year, so we encourage

those interested to enroll early.

The Fundamentals of Horticultural Therapy class introduces the profession, practice, and types of programs utilizing horticultural therapy, as well as the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical goals for the varied people served. Students review and discuss professional literature in the field and are exposed to resources for further exploration, as well as learning skills crucial to the profession.

For those considering a career in HT, think about joining like-minded students in California for this certificate class. Face-to-face training offers extra benefits due to the interaction and constant learning that takes place amongst the class participants. The three advanced classes in the certificate program will take place in 2025 with HT Techniques, HT Programming and HT Management. Each of the remaining classes will be offered in both face-to-face and online formats. Dates will be available later in 2024.

For more information on Fundamentals of Horticultural Therapy, the entire HT certificate program, or to enroll, visit www.htinstitute.org or email program manager Christine Capra at ccapra@htinstitute.org.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christine Capra co-founded the Horticultural Therapy Institute in 2003 with Rebecca Haller, HTM. She is the program manager at the Institute and has served as co-editor of Horticultural Therapy Methods: Connecting People and Plants in Health Care, Human Services, and Therapeutic Programs and The Profession and Practice of Horticultural Therapy. She has served on numerous work teams for the AHTA.

AHTA 2024 CONFERENCE

Collective Effervescence, Honoring Collaboration in Times of Change

BY Sara Rodriguez

The AHTA Conference Work Team (WT) is developing an exciting conference for attendees. As a reminder, this conference is scheduled for Friday, October 18 and Saturday, October 19, 2024, in Raleigh, North Carolina. Additionally, pre-tours will be offered on Thursday, October 17, preceding the launch of the conference. The WT has been exploring several locations for tours and is in the process of solidifying knowledgeable and dynamic speakers to enrich your conference experience. As information and updates become available, they will be presented to our readers via our website, newsletters, AHTA magazine articles and more, so please stay tuned to receive the most up-to-date information regarding our 2024 in-person conference.

The theme of “Collective Effervescence, Honoring Collaboration in Times of Change” is depicted in the logo designed for this year’s conference. When AHTA annual conference attendees meet as a group to share knowledge, passions and struggles, there is a palpable energy that permeates the air. Merriam Webster defines effervescence as “an appealingly lively quality.” The conference logo also depicts the dogwood flower and the honeybee, North Carolina’s state flower and insect respectively. The honeybees are joined by an array of other insects, creating their own effervescence as they pollinate the dogwood flower.

Excitement is growing with a much anticipated in-person

conference, and the energy it will bring through socialization and networking. While we look forward to making face-to-face connections, AHTA intends to provide virtual options for attending future conferences as well. By allowing for in-person events, we can boost oxytocin levels as we socialize with joy; we can network face to face as humans crave to do; and we can make connections that benefit us both professionally and personally.

Likewise, when considering accessibility and inclusion, it is vital that virtual options are also welcomed in the future. Young and aspiring practitioners of horticultural therapy, therapeutic horticulture, and allied fields may not be able to generate funds to attend in-person events. Therefore, maintaining both virtual and in-person options in the future is a viable way to prioritize inclusivity for all. We look forward to connecting with you all as we honor collaboration in times of change.



SOURCES

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<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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OCTOBER 18-19, 2024 | RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA



North Carolina Raleigh-Durham green space under cityscape.
PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.VISITRALEIGH.COM

Celebrating National Horticultural Therapy Week

March 13-17, 2024

BY Linda Brown-Kuhn

The American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) looks forward to this week each year as a time to shine a light on the powerful work that we do. Hosting special activities and events increases awareness of and appreciation for our profession. Here's a sampling of how some local and regional groups marked the occasion, including the Carolinas Horticultural Therapy Network where North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, issued a Horticultural Therapy Week proclamation.

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

Thanks to the efforts of Laura DePrado, New Jersey is the first state to have a law passed (in 2015) stating that the third week of March is designated as "Horticultural Therapy Week" in New Jersey. The law reads that the purpose of this designation is "to increase public awareness of the importance of horticultural therapy in improving the quality of life for all and increasing opportunities to experience the endless benefits of the people-plant connection." Check out [a piece](#) DePrado wrote about this year's HT Week.



The Somerset County commissioners issued a proclamation celebrating Horticultural Therapy Week, March 17-24, this year. From left, Kaitlyn, Katzer, principal, planner, Somerset County, Agricultural Development Board; Laura DePrado, president, Final Touch Landscaping, Somerset County Agricultural Development Board; Commissioner Melonie Marano; former state Sen. Christopher "Kip" Bateman; Lori Jenssen, executive, director, New Jersey Nursery Landscape Association; and Chris Edwards, CEO, Somerset County Business Partnership.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOMERSET COUNTY



A Joint Resolution from The New Jersey Senate and The Assembly for Horticultural Therapy Week, Women in History month highlighting women in horticulture, was also presented by the Camden County Police Department.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMDEN COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



The Garden lead, Genevieve Wanucha (pictured), shows off the signature tea mixes created with medicinal herbs growing in the garden. She has since led an herbal tea workshop for people living with dementia and their caregivers.

PHOTO BY PEACH JACK

This HT Week, we celebrated our second anniversary of the Memory Hub, a nationally unique community center for people living with memory loss or dementia and their caregivers, located in First Hill, Seattle. The Memory Hub is home to Maude's Garden, Washington State's first public therapeutic memory garden. We offer the Garden Discovery Program, a nature engagement program for people living with dementia and their caregivers. The TH program features a garden exploration and a creative hands-on project. These projects awaken the senses and engage hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and long-term memory, skills that remain intact for longer. The projects are meant to bring about mindfulness, communal joy, and a sense of satisfaction and pride. Maude's Garden is also open to the public Tuesdays through Thursdays, 9am-3pm. For more information, [check out our website](#).

BRONX, NEW YORK

In celebration of National Horticultural Therapy week, on March 23rd, the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) Continuing Education program hosted the 7th annual collaborative networking event for the Therapeutic Horticulture Certificate program community and the Mid-Atlantic Horticultural Network (MAHTN). The event included six presentations related to the topic, "Therapeutic Horticulture in Our Community" followed by ample time to "nosh & network."

"This wonderful event provided an excellent opportunity for students and interns to network with practicing HTs and THs," said Megan Fainsinger, Acting NJ VP MAHTN. She added, "We all learned of the thriving and innovative programs in our area which reach a diversity of populations, showing the adaptability and inclusivity of HT goals."



Presenter Lori Sherman, TH Intern, spoke about the T.H.R.I.V.E Horticulture program at NYBG and showed a Veteran attending this program, harvesting fresh flowers to make a "Thank you" bouquet for his mother.

PHOTO BY MEGAN FAINSINGER



Sex and the Garden

How Horticultural Therapy Helps Survivors of Trauma

BY **Brendan Yukins, LSW**

Sex therapy may be the last mental health field where you would expect to find horticultural therapy, but flowers, herbs, and other scented plants are key to my work as a sex therapist!

I work with people who struggle to find sexuality and intimacy in the wake of violence. This could be sexual assault, abuse, intimate partner violence, or gender- or sexuality-based hate crimes. Many people who come to me struggle with an exaggerated startle response; one of the common symptoms for posttraumatic stress disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). This “jump” can cause distress when my clients try to get physically close to their partners. Clients may report embarrassment, “feeling crazy,” fear that their loved one is plotting against them, or even pain. For some, the fear that sensual experiences will turn violent is a terrible reality that has been proven again and again throughout their life.

What I do is set out a sampling of stimuli in front of the client and their loved ones. In this picture, you can see a smooth rose quartz stone, a fan, dried lavender, dried yarrow, coffee candies, a dried rose bud, and an orchid flower. I have participants

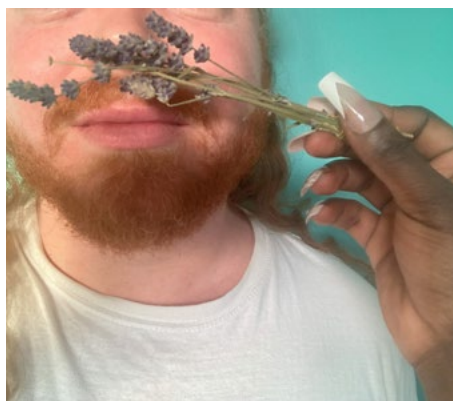


A sampling of positive stimuli from the garden.

take the following steps in turns:

1. Explore a scent, touch, or taste on themselves while describing it aloud.
2. Ask permission and share the sensation with their partner.
3. Whether their bid is rejected or accepted, practice receiving feedback with patience.
4. Whether you accept or reject the sensation, practice doing so with patience.

This process helps expose the client to playful, collaborative pleasure-making and decreases the trigger response, in alignment with other somatic interventions (Almas, 2017). With flowers and herbs, clients can feel sensual again. Like smelling a warm breeze through a scented garden, they remember how pleasure can feel with people they trust.



The author receiving lavender from his girlfriend.

PHOTOS BY BRENDAN YUKINS, LSW

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brendan Yukins (he/his) is a licensed social worker in Chicago, IL. He specializes in trauma therapy for survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence. Brendan proudly serves as a board member for the American Horticultural Therapy Association and gardens bonsai on his back porch.

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Pediatric Weight Management in the Garden

A Role for Horticultural Therapists on the Healthcare Team



Children receiving instructions about planting in a raised bed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DUKE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

BY **Andrew Zeiger**

The rapid rise in obesity among children and adolescents, from a 5% prevalence in 1978 to 19.3% in 2018, is one of the most serious public health challenges facing the United States.¹ Nearly every system in a child's developing body is affected by obesity, which puts them at increased risk of disease and disability throughout their life.² Today, gardening as a health intervention, which held great promise as a therapeutic modality at the founding of our nation,³ is poised to be added to our collective toolkit for preventing and managing obesity.

One pediatric obesity treatment program, [Duke Healthy Lifestyles](#) in Durham, NC, has used gardening activities through their community partner, Bull City Fit, to promote

physical activity habits and improve participants' nutrition. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything.

"[The program] would have gardening days where kids would go out to our community garden and be guided in thinking about what they are eating," says Jared Mathewson, Program Coordinator at Bull City Fit. This program is free for a year to clinic patients with a body mass index above the 95th percentile for their age and gender. The pandemic changed programming from six days a week of in-person activity at multiple sites to mostly virtual. Their community garden at the Edison Johnson Recreation Center went untended.

When Jared joined the team midway through 2023, Bull City

OBESITY AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE U.S.¹





Child carefully handling a plant.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DUKE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Fit was just beginning to return to capacity. Jared, who has a Master of Public Health from the University of North Carolina and previously worked at a local food access organization, helps manage the programming and deliver fresh fruits and vegetables (from food banks) in the clinic. He is part of a much larger clinical team that includes physicians, dietitians, physical therapists, and behavioral specialists. Their approach to pediatric obesity, which connects healthcare with community Parks and Recreation services, was published in 2023.⁴

Currently, Bull City Fit has no horticultural therapist on the team. However, Jared is excited about the work ahead: "Reclaiming the garden would be fantastic for the kids here. All the beds are there, but it's weedy and full of vines." He plans on reincorporating the garden into programming over the coming months. "They can do it as long as someone is there to help," added Jared.

Clinical programs like Bull City Fit, which aim to support healthy and engaged youth into adulthood, may be more effective with horticultural therapists on staff to maximize nature-related programming. Similar Family Healthy Weight Programs exist in communities all over our country.⁵ The season is ripe to integrate horticultural therapists into these healthcare settings.

As we barrel toward the summer of 2024, know that groups of children in leafy Durham will be deep in the garden beds, clearing away old vines and planting seeds from older generations. Let's follow their lead.



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ACTIVITY

Teacup Gardens

BY **Laura DePrado, HTR**

Teachup gardens are timeless, fun, and easy to make, and can be as simple or as complex as their creator wishes. Participants can bring their own teacup, or you, as the horticultural therapist, can supply a variety of options from cups with no handles, cups with handles, or providing the tea kettle itself. This activity can be incorporated into almost any HT program including participants on the spectrum of dementia, and with or without medical complications. Teacups can break, so care must be taken for those who may self-harm or anyone who may ingest something that may harm them.

This activity is wonderful for multigenerational gardening as well, and has no limit to the finished product, the types of

nature-based materials available and used, and the times of year it can be offered as a program. Seasonally appropriate blooming flowers are wonderful to include, as they are aesthetically pleasing, and can be changed throughout the year. Additionally, the contents of the teacup garden can be changed anytime.

On the East Coast, the months of March, April, and May are my favorite months to engage participants with teacup gardens as spring is in the air, Mother Earth is awakening, our seasonal rhythms are responding to nature, and we in turn are responding to her care. This offers participants a look to the future, and to hope.

This is what I typically tell my group members: "Join me as we

Teacup gardens are a wonderful multigenerational activity.
PHOTOS BY LAURA DEPRADO, HTR

engage in a multisensory activity in the present, exploring material from Mother Earth to use in our teacup gardens, and choosing material to create the teacup gardens."

Encourage participants to feel, smell, listen, and touch the materials. The look and textures of the materials will vary greatly. As the facilitator, participate fully going through the sensory experience with them. Allow for responses, both verbal and nonverbal. Allow and encourage everyone to go at their own pace. Do not interrupt their sensory experiences.



Many nature-based materials can be used in teacup gardens.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Teacups and/or tea kettles, any size, shape, material.
- Soil and stones (size is a matter of preference and the size of the container).
- Horticultural charcoal, (carbon), to increase the airflow and aeration of the soil.
- Lichens, moss, groundcovers (periwinkle, viola, perennial geraniums. Ivy, lamb's ear, grape hyacinth, sedums).
- Decorative props like faux birds, (cardinals, bluebirds, any native bird from your area).
- Decorative assorted faux butterflies, bees, pollinators can be added.

As with any HT activity, seek approval for the materials from the facility person or team with whom you are working.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add stones to cover the bottom of teacup (size of stones is a matter of preference and the size of the container).
2. Cover with a bit of horticultural charcoal, (carbon), to increase the airflow and aeration of the soil.
3. Select your plant materials. Soil may be added; however, the fresh plant material may have soil with roots already attached. The order of plant placement is up to the creator.
4. Add moss, lichens, and select your decorative props like faux birds, (cardinals, bluebirds, any native bird from your area), faux pollinators such as decorative butterflies, or bees for example.
5. Provide instructions for horticultural care.

Leaning Toward Light: Poems for Gardens & the Hands That Tend Them

Edited by Tess Taylor with Forward by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

REVIEW BY
Karin A. Bailey

Leaning Toward Light: Poems for Gardens & the Hands That Tend Them is a unique collection of garden-themed poetry. This assemblage features the works of several contemporary writers, including Camille T. Dungy, as well as pieces from well-known traditional poet Robert Frost, and 16th century poet Matsuo Basho. The poems reflect feelings of loss, pain, and hardship, and they often make use of metaphors. Just as we see how plants bend toward light in the process of phototropism, the poets reveal how their connections with nature through their gardens have drawn them to the “light” of strength, forgiveness, and resolution.

The various chapters of poetry are arranged as themes, each related to tasks and processes familiar to those who spend time in the garden. In the introduction to each chapter, the reader comes upon a personal reflection or memory from a featured poet, that relates to the respective theme. This poet’s shared garden experience is then paired with a food recipe related to that reflection. For example, in the introduction to the section entitled “Planting and Sprouting,” poet Ashley M. Jones shares her memory of the care and protection she felt from her father

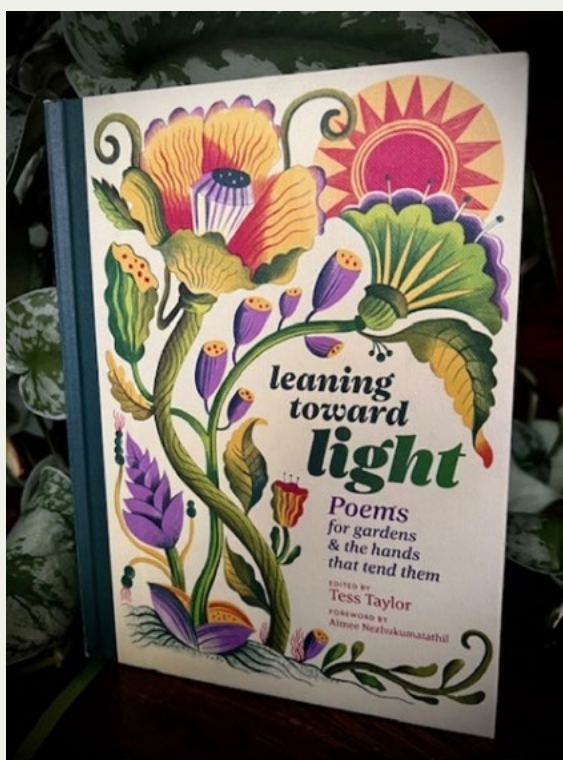


PHOTO BY KARIN A. BAILEY

during the pandemic. Presented alongside this story is a recipe for glazed carrots, which reflects part of the garden harvest that her father provided for his family.

Attention to detail and interesting surprises can be discovered by the reader throughout the book, including a welcome green ribbon bookmark and beautiful artwork by English and Columbian illustrator Melissa Castrillón. Through her artwork, Castrillón conveys the theme for each section. The primary print font used for the book, Arno Pro, was designed by Robert Slimbach and named after the Arno River. This river flows through Florence, Italy, known as the capital of the Renaissance. At the end of the book, a thoughtful and well-organized section highlights biographical information on each poet.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karin Bailey is a member of the AHTA Magazine Work Team and is currently enrolled in the Horticultural Therapy Institute and Colorado State University. She resides in Franklin, TN.



AHTA

M A G A Z I N E

MAGAZINE SUBMISSION DATE:

July 8, 2024

We are always looking for fresh voices to be heard in the AHTA Magazine so send us your stories by submitting them [here](#).

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