



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

Horticultural Therapist – Board Certified (HT-BC) 2026 Candidate Handbook



Table of Contents

Contact Information: Reference Guide	4
Candidate Policies	4
Purpose of Certification	5
Eligibility Requirements	5
Pathway 1	5
Pathway 2	5
Pathway 3	6
Content of the Exam	7
Horticulture (34.2%)	7
Treatment Plan (17.3%)	8
Program Planning and Activity Design (27.8%)	8
Managing Human Resources (5.0%)	9
Business Practice, Safety, and Ethics (8.3%)	9
Professionalism and Scholarship (7.3%)	9
Completion of Application	9
Application and Exam Fees	9
Testing Accommodations	10
Exam Scheduling	11
Scheduling Exam Appointments	11
Rescheduling Exam Appointments within a Testing Window	11
Failing to Report for an Exam (No Show)	12
Medical or Personal Emergencies	12
Transferring to a New Testing Window	12
Taking the Exam and Test Center Guidelines	13
Identification Requirements	13
What to Expect at the Prometric Test Center	14
Rules for the Exam	15
Testing Conditions or Exam Feedback	16
Revocation of Certification	16

<i>Preparing for the Exam</i>	16
Sample Exam Questions	16
References	18
<i>Scoring and Results</i>	21
Report of Results	21
Confidentiality of Exam Scores	22
Requesting an Exam Score Verification.....	22
Retaking the Exam	22
<i>Version History & Updates</i>	22
<i>Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement</i>	22

Contact Information: Reference Guide

American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) http://www.ahtha.org (702) 886-1546	• Apply for exam • Obtain general application information • Obtain information about testing policies • Application appeal of denial requests • Request Testing Accommodations • Recertification or renewal • Miscellaneous inquiries
Prometric www.prometric.com/ahtha (800) 741-0934	• Schedule test appointment • Reschedule test appointment (within the same testing window) • Cancel test appointment • Find directions or inquire about test center
Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) www.ptcny.com (212) 356-0660	• Transfer to a new testing window • Request score verification • Question about score reports

Candidate Policies

This handbook contains necessary information about the Horticultural Therapist – Board Certified (HT-BC). It is required reading for those applying for and taking the exam. **All individuals applying for the exam must comply with the policies, procedures, and deadlines in this Candidate Handbook and attest to this by signing the Candidate Attestation found on the application.** Retain this handbook for future reference. This handbook is subject to change.

Important Prometric Test Center Reminder: Accessing cell phones and electronic devices at any time while you are taking the exam is strictly prohibited and will result in termination of exam. You can only access food, liquids, medicine or personal healthcare items from your locker on unscheduled breaks. No backpacks, bags, pocketbooks or clothing can be removed while your exam is in session.

Purpose of Certification

The HT-BC is a formal recognition that an individual has met established professional standards in horticultural therapy. It assures employers, clients, and the public that certified professionals possess the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to practice effectively and ethically. The certification process includes requirements for education, professional experience, and the successful completion of a comprehensive exam.

Eligibility Requirements

Pathway 1

1. Professional Registration:
 - a. Applicants must hold a current Horticultural Therapist – Registered (HTR), or a Horticultural Therapist – Master (HTM) professional registration with the AHTA.
2. Exam:
 - a. Applicants must successfully complete the HT-BC.

Pathway 2

1. Educational Requirements:
 - a. Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree or higher in any field and meet the following course requirements. All coursework specific to the HT-BC requirements must have a passing grade of C minus(C-) or above or a pass for a pass/fail course.
 - b. Required coursework:
 - i. Horticultural Therapy Courses: 9 semester credits in horticultural therapy from an AHTA accredited program (required for all applicants, regardless of degree field).
 - ii. Additional coursework based on degree background. If the degree is not in a human science or plant science field, they must also complete:
 - 12 semester credits required in suggested human science topics, and 12 semester credits required in suggested plant science topics
 - iii. If a degree is in an approved plant science or human science field, applicants are exempt from taking additional undergraduate coursework in that major area. However, they are still required to complete 9 credits in horticultural therapy and 12 credits in the area outside their degree field, as follows:
 - If the degree is in plant science, complete required 12 credits in suggested human science topics.
 - If the degree is in human science, complete required 12 credits in suggested plant science topics.
 - c. Approved Fields:
 - i. Plant Science Degree (examples): Horticulture, Horticultural Science, Plant Physiology, Plant Science, Floriculture
 - ii. Human Science Degree (examples): Therapeutic Recreation/Recreational Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work, Music

Therapy, Counseling, Psychology, Rehabilitation

2. Professional Experience:
 - a. Applicants must have completed a 480-hour internship supervised by a horticultural therapist or have at least 1,000 hours work experience utilizing horticulture as therapy.
3. Exam:
 - a. Applicants must successfully complete the HT-BC.

Pathway 3

1. Current License/Certification: Applicants must hold a current license or certification in an approved profession accepted by the AHTA as follows:
 - a. Mental health or related professions:
 - Social work, clinical - LCSW, LMSW
 - Certified Rehabilitation Counselor – CRC
 - Professional counselor/therapist, licensed - LPC, LCADC, LMFT
 - Board Certified Behavior Analysis – BCBA
 - b. Allied Professions:
 - Occupational therapist, registered or licensed - OTR, OTR/L, OTD
 - Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist - CTRS
 - Speech and Language Pathologist - SLP
 - Art therapist, registered or certified - ATR, ATR-BC
 - Music Therapist, MT-BC
 - Physical therapist/assistant, licensed - PT, PTA
 - Activity professional, certified - AAP-BC
 - Nursing - LPN, RN, BSN, NP
 - Medical Doctor – MD
 - c. Education professions: State licensure or certification*
 - Career and technical instructor
 - Vocational instructor
 - Alternative education teacher
 - Special education teacher
 - d. Horticulture professions:
 - Professional horticulturist, certified - CPH
 - Landscape architect, licensed – RAL, PLA
 - Arborist, certified – ISA

*If your license or certification is not listed [contact the AHTA](#) for consideration.

Certificates of attendance, employer-based training, short-course certificates, or credentials that do not require independent professional practice, ethical oversight, and ongoing renewal do not meet Pathway 3 requirements.

2. Educational Requirements:
 - a. All applicants must hold a bachelor's degree or higher in any field.
 - b. All applicants must also complete 9 semester credit hours of horticultural therapy coursework from an AHTA accredited program (required for all applicants, regardless of degree field).
3. Professional Experience:

- a. Applicants must have completed a 480-hour internship supervised by a horticultural therapist or have at least 1,000 hours work experience utilizing horticulture as therapy.
4. Exam:
 - a. Applicants must successfully complete the HT-BC.

Content of the Exam

The HT-BC is a computer-based exam composed of a maximum of 175 multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of 3.5 hours and a total appointment time of 4 hours.

The questions for the exam are obtained from individuals with expertise in horticultural therapy and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the AHTA.

Exam questions are developed using United States industry standards, regulatory frameworks, and regional climate classifications. Candidates are expected to answer questions based on these U.S. reference standards.

The AHTA, with the advice and assistance of the PTC, prepares the exam. The content for the exam is described in the Content Outline below.

The HT-BC will be weighted in the following manner:

Horticulture (34.2%)

A. Plant Propagation and Maintenance

- Select appropriate plant materials
- Set planting/plant maintenance schedules
- Identify possible sources for seeds/plants and other materials for program
- Propagate plants and seeds/stem cuttings/root cuttings
- Maintain plants throughout their life cycles
- Prepare and apply soil amendments
- Prepare and apply plant nutrients
- Develop and implement watering schedules
- Identify, prevent, and manage plant diseases
- Identify and manage common weeds
- Develop and implement an integrated pest management plan
- Transplant plants
- Prune/trim/train plants
- Harvest food, plant material, or flowers
- Plan for proper disposition of harvest

B. Indoor/Outdoor Plant Environments

- Manage greenhouse/nursery/outdoor gardens
- Create and maintain indoor plant environments
- Design gardens and landscapes in keeping with therapeutic horticultural design concepts

- Coordinate maintenance of non-plant-related landscape features, hardscapes, and program sites
- Use tools (such as shovels, rakes, spading forks, trowels, small pruners, etc.) demonstrating appropriate and safe use
- Maintain/repair tools and equipment
- Maintain equipment and supply inventory
- Maintain a compost system/properly dispose of yard, garden, and greenhouse waste

Treatment Plan (17.3%)

- Review charts/documentation of participant
- Participate in treatment team meetings with practitioners of other modalities
- Develop and co-facilitate collaborative services with other treatment providers
- Conduct and document assessment
- Develop and document individualized intervention plan
- Review intervention plan with participant
- Identify and write measurable goals and objectives
- Monitor goals and objectives of individual intervention plan and document participant's progress
- Revise/update individualized plan

Program Planning and Activity Design (27.8%)

A. Program Development

- Develop and schedule the ongoing program, session plans, and/or lesson plans
- Integrate therapeutic, academic, vocational curricula
- Implement individual, group sessions/programs

B. Program Evaluation

- Evaluate program effectiveness for participants and facility
- Identify strategies for program improvement
- Generate periodic program reports
- Incorporate implementation best practices

C. Activities

- Utilize activity analysis and task analysis
- Understand presenting issues, strengths, needs, and safety requirements of participants
- Match tasks to participant needs (considering task analysis, material preparation, safety concerns, etc.)
- Adapt and/or modify (grade) activities and/or instructions
- Adapt tools and equipment
- Perform task analysis on horticultural and gardening activities/exercises
- Create a "toolbox" or manual of activities for months/seasons
- Identify new activities appropriate for population or individual

Managing Human Resources (5.0%)

- Conduct on-the-job training for other HT staff
- Recruit, train, educate, supervise, and/or evaluate volunteers and students
- Develop, implement, and/or maintain horticultural therapy internship program
- Recruit, train, educate, supervise, and/or evaluate interns
- Educate non-HT team members on horticultural therapy techniques and interventions

Business Practice, Safety, and Ethics (8.3%)

- Develop, monitor, and maintain safety plan
- Document occurrences relating to health and safety
- Prepare, implement, evaluate, and/or monitor budget
- Promote the agency, horticultural therapy services, and the profession through marketing and public relations
- Follow HIPAA regulations and other rules and regulations of location, employer, etc.

Professionalism and Scholarship (7.3%)

- Support research programs or special projects
- Establish and maintain network with organizations and advocates
- Provide education to the community
- Develop proposals for funding and grants
- Participate in professional events (e.g., conferences, job fairs, etc.)

Completion of Application

Application and Exam Fees

Fees are paid to the AHTA during the application process. Applications cannot be processed without payment. All fees and/or outstanding debts to the AHTA must be paid in full. All required fees are non-refundable and are in US dollars (USD).

HT-BC Application Fee	Price	Annual Maintenance Fee
AHTA Members	\$450 USD	\$50 USD
Non-AHTA Members	\$595 USD	\$95 USD

Additional fees for rescheduling and transferring apply. See the [Exam Scheduling section](#) for details.

Testing Accommodations

The AHTA and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will take steps reasonably necessary to make testing accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. According to the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, or walking) or a major bodily function (such as neurologic, endocrine, or digestive system).

The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and test accommodations is confidential and is not included in scoring or reporting.

All approved testing accommodations must maintain the psychometric nature and security of the exam. Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature or security of the exam will not be granted. Note that accommodations for an exam (test accommodations) may not be the same as accommodations provided by your employer for your job. You can find more information about testing accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (www.ada.gov).

The Request for Test Accommodations Form must be uploaded with the candidate's application and fees at least 8 weeks before the start of your testing window. Missing information or incomplete forms will result in a delay in processing. If your form is incomplete and/or not received at least 8 weeks before the start of the testing window, we cannot guarantee that we can make these test accommodations in time for you to test, and you may need to transfer to another testing window and pay the transfer fee.

To request test accommodations, follow these steps:

1. Contact the AHTA (info@ahta.org) for the Request for Test Accommodations Form. The form is also available during the application process.
2. Complete the Request for Test Accommodations Form at least 8 weeks prior to the testing window.

Prometric is not authorized to approve test accommodation requests. All requests for test accommodations must be submitted to the AHTA on the Request for Test Accommodations Form.

If you need to use your cell phone or another electronic device to monitor a medical condition, such as diabetes, be sure to include this on the Request for Test Accommodations Form so that we can notify Prometric in advance.

If you are a nursing parent and will need to use a breast pump during your exam, include this on the Request for Test Accommodations Form and submit it at least 8 weeks before your testing window to allow time to make suitable arrangements at the test center.

Only approved test accommodations will be permitted on the day of the exam. Test center personnel are not authorized to make any changes to the test accommodations on the day of the testing session, and any such change may result in your exam score being canceled.

Pre-Approved Items

Some items do not require a test accommodation. Prometric test center administrators will visually inspect your pre-approved item(s) without directly touching them and without asking you to remove the item, unless otherwise stated below. [Access a list of pre-approved items on Prometric's website.](#)

Exam Scheduling

The HT-BC is administered daily during an established 2 week testing window, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities globally managed by Prometric. Once AHTA submits the candidates eligibility to PTC they will receive a Scheduling Authorization email from PTC with instructions in 5-10 business days.

Scheduling Exam Appointments

Follow the steps on your Scheduling Authorization email to schedule your exam appointment with Prometric.

Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization from PTC. If you do not receive it within 4 weeks prior to the start of the window contact PTC www.ptcny.com/contact. Candidates who wait until the last minute run the risk of missing out on their preferred date, time, and/or test center. Candidates unable to schedule an appointment will forfeit their fees.

After you make your test appointment, Prometric will send you a confirmation email with the date, time, and location of your exam. Check this confirmation carefully and [contact Prometric](#) if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment. International candidates can follow the same scheduling process.

Rescheduling Exam Appointments within a Testing Window

Candidates can reschedule their exam appointment within the same testing window as long as the request is submitted within the timeframe described below. Candidates can reschedule within the permitted time frame by [contacting Prometric](#).

Time Frame	Reschedule Permitted?	Stipulations
Requests submitted 30 days or more before the original appointment	Yes	None
Requests submitted 29 to 5 days before the original appointment	Yes	Candidate must pay Prometric a rescheduling fee of \$50 USD.

Requests submitted less than 5 days before the original appointment	No	Candidates who do not arrive to test for their appointment will be considered a No Show and all their exams fees will be forfeited. Candidates will need to reapply and pay full exam fees for a future testing window.
---	----	---

Failing to Report for an Exam (No Show)

If you fail to report for an exam scheduled at Prometric, you will forfeit all fees paid to take the exam. A completed application form and exam fee are required to reapply for the HT-BC.

Candidates are considered “No Show” if they:

- Do not appear for an exam appointment
- Arrive for their exam more than 15 minutes after the exam start time
- Do not cancel the exam appointment at least 5 days before the scheduled exam appointment
- Do not have proper or valid identification
- Do not schedule an exam appointment with Prometric for the test window period for which an exam fee was paid

Medical or Personal Emergencies

Medical or personal emergencies are defined as unplanned events affecting the candidate or an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent or grandparent) that arise within 5 calendar days of the scheduled exam appointment and prevent the candidate either from taking the exam or from rescheduling, transferring, or cancelling an exam appointment. An event that can be anticipated or planned is not defined as a medical or personal emergency. A candidate's inability to take the exam due to work commitments or insufficient or inappropriate preparations is not defined as a personal emergency. If this should arise, contact the AHTA (info@AHTA.org) for consideration and review of documentation as requested to reschedule.

Transferring to a New Testing Window

Candidates unable to take the exam during their scheduled testing window may request a one-time transfer to a future testing window within a year. There is a transfer fee of \$150 USD. After you have transferred once by paying the \$150 USD fee to the AHTA you will need to pay the full exam fee to transfer a second time; so plan carefully. The transfer fee is based on costs and is not punitive in nature. The transfer fee must be paid at the time the request is approved.

Requests to transfer to a new testing window must be received within 30 days of your originally scheduled testing window.

Candidates wishing to transfer to a new testing window or have questions regarding the transfer process should first contact AHTA for transfer instructions. Upon completing the process/payment AHTA will notify PTC.

Transferring your exam only refers to instances when a candidate is unable to take their exam during a testing window for which they have already applied. Candidates who did not pass their exam and are retaking the exam need to pay the full exam fee.

If the candidate is unable to attend the exam on the date for which they registered and elect not to transfer to another testing window, the application will be closed, and all fees will be forfeited. Funds are not refundable.

Taking the Exam and Test Center Guidelines

Identification Requirements

All candidates will be required to provide proof of identity in the form of 1 valid (non-expired) original government issued photo ID with signature. The first and last name on the identification must be the same as the first and last name that appears in a candidate's Scheduling Authorization email.

Acceptable Identification (non-expired):

- Valid driver's license with photo
- Valid passport with photo
- Military ID card with photo
- National ID card with photo

If the ID being used does not have a photo or signature, a second form of ID **MUST** be provided that contains the missing information. The name on the secondary ID must match the name on the primary ID.

Acceptable Alternate Identification (non-expired):

- Valid driver's license
- Valid passport
- Military ID card
- National ID card
- Student ID card
- State/province ID card
- U.S. passport card

Unacceptable Identification:

- ID with no photo (unless accompanied by another form of ID with photo)
- Expired driver's license or passport
- Draft classification card
- Letter of identity from a notary
- Social Security card
- Credit card or bank card of any kind
- Employee identification

If a candidate does not have the proper ID when checking in to take an exam, a candidate may not be allowed to test. If a candidate is unable to test due to insufficient proof of identity, the candidate will forfeit their exam fee.

What to Expect at the Prometric Test Center

Candidate Check-In

- Candidates will be asked to:
 - Present their IDs.
 - Empty and turn out their pockets.
 - Walk through a metal detector or be wanded.
- Eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be inspected.
 - Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
 - Leave these at home or place them in your locker.
 - Meta glasses and other recording devices are strictly prohibited.
- Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room; however, it is subject to inspection by test center staff.
- Prometric provides lockers to store purses, backpacks, mobile phones, jackets, food, liquids and medical supplies.
- Water in a clear plastic container (no labels) may be brought into the testing room.

During the Exam

- No breaks are scheduled during the exam.
- Candidates are only permitted to leave the testing room to use the restroom or access food, drink, or medicine from their assigned locker. The exam timer will NOT be paused.
- Smoking is prohibited at the test center.
- All exams are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video formats.

Miscellaneous

- Other exams will be administered at the same time as your exam.
- You may hear ambient noises, such as typing, coughing, or people entering and exiting the testing room that cannot be avoided.
- Prometric is unable to provide a completely noise-free environment.
- Headphones may be requested to minimize the impact of ambient noise.
- Proctors will periodically walk through the testing room as part of their monitoring process.
- See [Prometric's website](#) for more information about what to expect on testing day.

Before Test Day Check List

- ☐ Confirm the ID being used for the exam is not expired. Expired ID's will not be accepted.
- ☐ Does the first and last name on your ID match the first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization?

- ❑ Check your Scheduling Authorization and Prometric Appointment Confirmation email to ensure that everything is accurate (i.e., your first and last name, exam name, appointment date, time, and location).
- ❑ Staff at the Prometric test center will refuse admission to candidates with that do not meet the identification requirements. Candidates will be marked as No Show and will forfeit their exam fees.
- ❑ Familiarize yourself with the location of your test center and parking options and check the weather and traffic conditions before you leave for the test center. Allow plenty of time as late arrival may prevent you from testing.
- ❑ In the event of inclement weather, [check the Prometric website for site closures](#).
- ❑ Review [Prometric's website for information on what you can expect on your test day](#), including a walkthrough of check-in and security procedures.
- ❑ Use the [Content Outline](#) and [References](#) to help you start studying for the exam.
- ❑ Review the [Prometric Software Tutorial](#) to familiarize yourself with Prometric's testing software.
- ❑ Review [Rules for the Exam](#) before your test appointment.

Rules for the Exam

You are responsible for adhering to the exam rules while at the test center.

- You may **not** access the following at any time during your exam or breaks: papers, books, any reference materials; electronic devices **including your cell phone**. Any candidates observed doing so at any time during exam or breaks **will result in termination of exam**. Candidates may access the following items from their locker: snacks, drinks, medicine, or other personal healthcare items.
- A **zero-tolerance cell phone policy is in effect at Prometric testing centers**. You must power off your cell phone and store it in your assigned locker before testing. You may not access your phone at any time during the examination nor during an unscheduled break. If you access your phone for any reason, your exam will be terminated immediately, will not be scored, and all examination fees will be forfeited. AHTA will be notified of the incident and may take additional action.
- No questions concerning the content of the exam may be asked during the exam session. Carefully read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the exam session.
- You are prohibited from leaving the testing room while your exam is in session, except for going to the restroom. Candidates who do go to their lockers or the restroom will need to repeat the security screening before being permitted to reenter the testing room. Candidates who leave the center will have their exams terminated.

Prohibited Items

These items are strictly prohibited at the test center. Leave these items in your car or your assigned locker:

- Cell phones and all other electronic devices
- Watches
- Jackets/coats/bulky clothing such as sweatshirts
- Hats (except hats worn for religious reasons)
- Jewelry, including watches

- Smart glasses, Meta glasses and wearable technology

Exam Security

Candidates seeking admission to take the exam do so for the purpose of pursuing certification, and for no other purpose. Because of the confidential nature of the exam, candidates may not make or keep copies, excerpts, or notes of exam materials, and may not use or divulge information learned from the exam. The exam is the exclusive property of the AHTA, and candidates may not use exam information in any way without the express prior written consent of the AHTA.

The AHTA exam is confidential. Candidates are required to sign a confidentiality agreement ([Appendix A](#)) prior to the start of the exam.

Candidates agree to abide by the test rules in effect at the time of their test appointment. The AHTA, PTC, and/or Prometric staff may refuse a candidate admission to the exam if they do not have the proper identification as detailed in the Candidate Handbook. Candidates who do not abide by the testing rules may have their exam terminated during the test administration, to maintain a secure and proper exam administration, and/or their exam scores invalidated.

Testing Conditions or Exam Feedback

Any candidate who feels that the exam effort was negatively impacted by the test center conditions should notify the proctor immediately. The situation should also be reported to PTC at www.ptcny.com/contact within 14 calendar days of the close of the assigned test window.

Any comments about the HT-BC test content should be reported to PTC at www.ptcny.com/contact within 14 calendar days of the close of the assigned test window.

Revocation of Certification

The HT-BC will be revoked for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsification of an Application.
2. Revocation of current license in approved field.
3. Misrepresentation of certification status.

The Appeals Committee of the AHTA provides the appeal mechanism for challenging revocation of the HT-BC. It is the responsibility of the individual to initiate this process.

Preparing for the Exam

Sample Exam Questions

The following sample questions illustrate the style, format, and difficulty level of the live exam. They are provided solely to familiarize candidates with how content is presented and will not appear on the actual exam. These items do not constitute a full practice test or study guide.

1. Which method is commonly used to prevent plant diseases during the growing season?
 - a. Avoiding fertilizers

- b. Overwatering the plants
 - c. Removing dead or infected plant material**
 - d. Planting the same crop in the same location every year
- 2. Which is an example of biological control in Integrated Pest Management (IPM)?
 - a. Applying chemical repellents to deter wildlife
 - b. Setting up physical barriers to prevent pest entry
 - c. Pruning damaged plant parts to prevent pest spread
 - d. Using natural predators, like ladybugs, to control aphids**
- 3. In an indoor horticultural therapy program, which of the following materials would be used to add nitrogen to a compost system?
 - a. Wood chips
 - b. Coffee grounds**
 - c. Dry grass clippings
 - d. Shredded newspaper
- 4. An individualized intervention plan
 - a. compares the individual to those with similar diagnoses.
 - b. considers the long-range goals and wishes of the individual.**
 - c. relies on the experience of family members to determine goals.
 - d. requires that the horticultural therapist use medical terminology.
- 5. Which is an example of a measurable objective that may be found in a horticultural therapy social wellness program?
 - a. Participants will make several new friends among program participants
 - b. Participants will regularly attend sessions in a community or senior center
 - c. Participants will attend four 90-minute sessions each week for a two-month period**
 - d. Participants will self-report feeling better at the conclusion of the program than at its start
- 6. What is NOT a method for modifying/grading a horticultural therapy activity?
 - a. Increasing the challenge level
 - b. Decreasing the challenge level
 - c. Altering the type of instruction given
 - d. Changing the expected activity outcome**
- 7. Attendance in a horticultural therapy program has dropped significantly due to the sessions being "too difficult". Which strategy should the horticultural therapist implement FIRST to improve the program?
 - a. Schedule shorter session times to reduce participant fatigue and frustration
 - b. Survey current participants to identify specific barriers and activity preferences**
 - c. Increase marketing efforts to recruit new participants to replace those who left
 - d. Reduce the complexity of all horticultural activities to ensure participant success
- 8. A horticultural therapist discusses an activity and models the series of steps. This is an example of which facilitation method?
 - a. Numbering
 - b. Assembling

- c. Simulation
 - d. **Demonstration**
9. Which of the following BEST promotes inclusive and effective communication for a horticultural therapist working with diverse staff and volunteers?
- a. Providing directions in the same manner to all staff and volunteers
 - b. Understanding that nonverbal communication is universally interpreted
 - c. Using written materials to convey information to all staff and volunteers
 - d. **Using clear language, active listening, and adaptive communication styles**
10. The horticultural therapist is conducting a site safety assessment. Which of the following actions should be prioritized to maintain a safe treatment space?
- a. ensure all irrigation systems are working properly and delivering adequate moisture
 - b. remove debris from planted containers to decrease potential for pests and disease
 - c. **ensure that pathways are even and clear of debris and garden equipment**
 - d. confirm that there are adequate materials available for the scheduled activity

References

The AHTA has prepared a suggested reference list to assist in preparing for the HT-BC. Inclusion of certain textbooks on this list may not constitute an endorsement by the AHTA of specific professional literature which, if used, would guarantee candidates successful passing of the HT-BC.

All reference materials and climatic data align with U.S. standards.

AHTA Resources

AHTA. (2024). *Internship handbook*. https://irp.cdn-website.com/c876b665/files/uploaded/AHTA_Internship_Handbook.pdf

AHTA. (2025). *Code of ethics*. <https://irp.cdn-website.com/c876b665/files/uploaded/AHTA+Code+of+Ethics+2025+final.pdf>

AHTA. (2024). *Standards of practice*. <https://irp.cdn-website.com/c876b665/files/uploaded/HT+Standards+of+Practice.pdf>

AHTA. (2013). *Therapeutic garden design characteristics*. https://irp.cdn-website.com/c876b665/files/uploaded/therapeuticgardencharacteristics_ahtareprintpermission.pdf

Books

Adams, C., Brock, J., Francis, D., Early, M. (2025). *Principles of horticulture* (8th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003581260>

Agrios, G. N. (2024). *Agrios' plant pathology* (6th ed.). Academic Press.

Arteca, R. N. (2015). *Introduction to horticultural science* (2nd ed.). Cengage Learning.

- Capon, B. (2022). *Botany for gardeners: An introduction to the science of plants* (4th ed.). Timber Press.
- Cranshaw, W., & Shetlar, D. (2018). *Garden insects of North America: The ultimate guide to backyard bugs*. Princeton University Press.
- Davies, F., Geneve, R., & Wilson, S. (2018). *Hartmann & Kester's plant propagation: principles and practices* (9th ed.). Pearson.
- Dirr, M. A. (2009). *Manual of woody landscape plants: Their identification, ornamental characteristics, culture, propagation, and uses* (6th ed.). Stipes Publishing.
- Etherington, N. (2012). *Gardening for children with autism spectrum disorders and special education needs: Engaging with nature to combat anxiety, promote sensory integration and build social skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Gough, R. E., & Moore-Gough, C. (2011). *The complete guide to saving seeds: 322 vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruits, trees, and shrubs*. Storey Pub.
- Haller, R. L., Kennedy, K. L., & Capra, C. L. (Eds.). (2019). *The profession and practice of horticultural therapy*. CRC Press.
- Haller, R. L., Kennedy, K. L., & Capra, C. L. (Eds.). (2025). *Horticultural therapy methods: Connecting people and plants in health care, human services, and therapeutic programs* (3rd ed.) CRC Press.
- Marcus, C. & Sachs, N. (2014). *Therapeutic Landscapes: An evidence-based approach to designing healing gardens and restorative outdoor spaces*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Nelson, P. (2012). *Greenhouse operation and management* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- White, R. E., & Bertola, G. (2006). *Principles and practice of soil science: The soil as a natural resource* (4th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Winterbottom, D. M., & Wagenfeld, A. (2027). *Therapeutic gardens: design for healing spaces* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003619192>
- Wise, Joanna (2015). *Digging for victory: Horticultural therapy for veterans for post-traumatic growth*. Routledge.

Helpful Journal Series

Acta Horticulturae, International Society for Horticultural Science, Working Group Horticultural Therapy - https://www.actahort.org/books/byscw/scwcode_uh1.htm

Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture - <https://jth.scholasticahq.com/articles>

Journal Articles

Armstrong, A., Nolan, C., Cremin, K., Turner, N., & Lawlor, G. (2024). The relationship between horticulture, recovery and occupational therapy in mental health: A scoping review. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, 40(4), 345–370.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0164212X.2023.2262762>

Detweiler, M. B., Murphy, P. F., Myers, L. C., & Kim, K. Y. (2008). Does a wander garden influence inappropriate behaviors in dementia residents? *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*, 23(1), 31–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1533317507309799>

Farkas, V., Simon, A., Sztruhár, I. J., Gyombolai, Z., & Kovács, É. (2024). Effect of horticultural therapy on static, dynamic balance and gait speed among institutionalized older adults with cognitive impairment. *Journal of Complementary & Integrative Medicine*, 21(3), 375–383. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jcim-2024-0100>

Lee, A.-Y., Park, S.-A., Park, H.-G., & Son, K.-C. (2018). Determining the effects of a horticultural therapy program for improving the upper limb function and balance ability of stroke patients. *HortScience*, 53(1), 110–119. <https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTSCI12639-17>

Park, S.-A., Lee, A.-Y., Park, H.-G., & Lee, W.-L. (2019). Benefits of gardening activities for cognitive function according to measurement of brain nerve growth factor levels. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(5), 760. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16050760>

Scartazza, A., Mancini, M. L., Proietti, S., Moscatello, S., Mattioni, C., Costantini, F., Di Baccio, D., Villani, F., & Massacci, A. (2020). Caring local biodiversity in a healing garden: Therapeutic benefits in young subjects with autism. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 47, Article 126511. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2019.126511>

Sharififar S, Sein M, Diehl E, Tham SY, Nixon RM, Sheppard C, Bolling J, Majid M, Apfelbaum C, Vincent HK. Pilot study on therapeutic horticulture for chronic low back pain: A mixed methods study. *Altern Ther Health Med*. 2024 Apr;30(4):10-17.

Stanhope, V., Yoo, N., Matthews, E., Baslock, D., & Hu, Y. (2024). The impact of collaborative documentation on person-centered care: Textual analysis of clinical notes. *JMIR Medical Informatics*, 12, e52678–e52678. <https://doi.org/10.2196/52678>

Wichrowski, M. J., & Moscovici, M. (2024). Horticultural therapy for individuals coping with dementia: Practice recommendations informed by related non-pharmacological interventions. *Healthcare*, 12(8), 832. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12080832>

Other Resources

Koziol, N. (n.d.) *Denizens of the dark: indoor plants for low-light spaces*. Chicago Botanic Garden. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from <https://www.chicagobotanic.org/plant-information/smart-gardener/denizens-dark-indoor-plants-low-light-spaces>

MacKenzie, J. & Grabowski, M. (n.d.). *Saving vegetable seeds*. University of Minnesota Extension. Retrieved May 29, 2026, from <https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/saving-vegetable-seeds>

NC State Extension. (2025, May 29). *Safety in therapeutic horticulture*. <https://therapeutic-hort.ces.ncsu.edu/safety-in-therapeutic-horticulture/>

New York Botanical Garden. (2026, April 3). *Carnivorous plant care: American pitcher plant*. <https://libguides.nybg.org/c.php?q=654975&p=4597450>

New York Botanical Garden. (2026, February 17). *Rain gardens: home*.

<https://libguides.nybg.org/raingardens>

Pettinelli, D. (n.d.). *Plant pH preferences*. University of Connecticut Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory. Retrieved March 28, 2026, from <https://soiltesting.cahnr.uconn.edu/plant-ph-preferences/>

Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership. (2018). *Qualified water efficient landscaper reference manual*. https://www.qwel.net/files/QWEL_Reference_Manual_SMSWP_INTERACTIVE.pdf

Steil, A. (n.d.). *How do I sanitize my pruning shears?* Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Retrieved May 29, 2026, from <https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/faq/how-do-i-sanitize-my-pruning-shears>

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. (2023, September 29). *Espalier gardening*. The Real Dirt. <https://ucanr.edu/blog/real-dirt/article/espalier-gardening>

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2023). *USDA plant hardiness zone map*. <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). *Summary of the HIPAA privacy rule*. Retrieved May 29, 2026, from <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/laws-regulations/index.html>

University of Florida. (n.d.). *Integrated pest management*. UF/UFAS Extension. <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/pests-and-diseases/pests/management/integrated-pest-management/>

University of Missouri Extension. (2022, May). *Drying flowers and foliage for arrangements*. <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6540>

Walkling, P. & Lang, K. (2024, May 1). *How to store leftover garden seeds*. South Dakota State University Extension. <https://extension.sdstate.edu/how-store-leftover-garden-seeds>

Wen, C., & Van Rossum, J. V. (2013). *Making and using compost in the garden*. University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension. <https://learningstore.extension.wisc.edu/products/making-and-using-compost-in-the-garden-p1700>

Scoring and Results

Report of Results

All candidates will be notified via email by PTC, of their official scores (scores on the major areas of the exam and on the total exam will be reported) within approximately 4 weeks of the close of the testing window. This time is necessary to allow for the psychometric review and administration time required to ensure accurate and reliable scores.

Official scores will not be released at the Prometric test center. Candidates will receive a Notice of Completion via email once the exam is submitted at the test center.

Confidentiality of Exam Scores

The AHTA will release the individual exam scores in writing only to the individual candidate. Any questions concerning test results [contact PTC](#).

Requesting an Exam Score Verification

Candidates who fail the HT-BC may request a score verification of their data file. Score verification is a manual check of the data file by the testing service to determine if there have been any errors in scoring. Although the probability of such an error is extremely remote, this service is available.

Requests for score verification must be received by PTC no later than 90 days after the date of the exam by completing and returning the Request for Exam Score Verification form on www.ptcny.com with payment of \$50 USD. Candidates who fail the exam will not be permitted to see the exam questions. For reasons of test security, no candidate is allowed to review the exam or any of its items.

To ensure correct reporting of results, PTC automatically performs score verifications of exams of candidates who score within 3 points of passing as a quality control measure. Thus, it is extremely doubtful that any exam results will change from “fail” to “pass” through score verification.

Retaking the Exam

The HT-BC may be taken as often as desired, upon filing of a new application and fee. There is no limit to the number of times the exam may be repeated; however, candidates may not retest during the same testing window.

Version History & Updates

New versions of this handbook will be published as needed. Applicants should check the current version before applying to ensure they adhere to the latest requirements. Below candidates will find a listing of the most recent versions and updates that were made in each.

- Version 8.27.2026 (Current Version)
 - Added clarification on [Pathway 2 eligibility](#)
 - Added [Prometric's zero tolerance policy](#)
- Version 8.2026 (Current Version)
 - Added [Sample Questions](#)
 - Added statements regarding the US Standards to [Exam Content](#) and [Exam Prep](#)
 - Added clarification on [Pathway 3 eligibility](#)
- Version 7.2026
 - Released the HT-BC Candidate Handbook

Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement

HT-BC Candidate Acknowledgement Statement

Candidates are reminded that they have an ethical and legal duty to protect the security and integrity of the Horticultural Therapist – Board Certified (HT-BC) Examination. The following statement is presented during the application process and again prior to the start of the examination. Candidates must acknowledge their understanding of this statement before proceeding.

By taking this examination, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the following:

1. I have an ethical duty to protect the security, integrity, and validity of the Horticultural Therapist – Board Certified (HT-BC) Examination.
2. The disclosure, dissemination, reproduction, or transmission of any examination content, including specific questions, answer choices, topics, scenarios, or other examination materials, to any person, organization, company, or other entity by any means constitutes a violation of professional ethics and examination security. Any such violation may result in invalidation of examination scores, denial or revocation of certification eligibility, revocation of certification status, and prohibition from future participation in AHTA certification programs.
3. The HT-BC Examination and all examination materials contained therein are the exclusive property of the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA).
4. Unauthorized copying, reproduction, disclosure, theft, attempted theft, or misuse of examination content may result in legal action, civil liability, professional sanctions, denial or revocation of certification, and recovery of damages and associated legal costs incurred by AHTA in protecting its rights.
5. The HT-BC Examination and all examination materials are protected by applicable copyright and intellectual property laws and constitute proprietary and confidential information of AHTA. No part of the examination may be copied, reproduced, recorded, photographed, memorized for disclosure, distributed, or otherwise shared in whole or in part by any means without prior written authorization from AHTA.
6. Participation in any examination irregularity before, during, or after the examination, including but not limited to receiving or providing unauthorized assistance, possessing prohibited materials, engaging in misconduct, or violating examination administration rules, may result in termination of the examination session, invalidation of examination results, denial or revocation of certification eligibility, revocation of certification status, and any other action deemed appropriate by AHTA.
7. I understand that AHTA may use my demographic information and examination data in aggregate form for examination development, psychometric analysis, research, quality assurance, accreditation, and reporting purposes. Information that personally identifies me will not be disclosed except as required by law or as necessary for examination administration and certification operations.

By proceeding with the examination, I acknowledge my understanding of, and agreement to comply with these requirements.



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

A Note of Appreciation the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA)

Thank you for your participation in moving the profession of horticultural therapy forward.

The AHTA expresses gratitude for your interest, and participation in the Horticultural Therapist-Board Certified (HT-BC). The mission of the AHTA is to promote and advance the profession of horticultural therapy as a therapeutic and rehabilitative modality. The HT-BC will set the gold standard for excellence in horticultural therapy. Developed in partnership with psychometric experts and grounded in comprehensive Job Task Analysis, this certification validates real-world competence and elevates professional credibility across the field.

The HT-BC is a formal recognition that an individual has met established professional standards in horticultural therapy. It assures employers, clients, and the public that certified professionals possess the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to practice effectively and ethically.