

July 2025 Newsletter

What's included in this month's newsletter					
President's Message	News & Events	Horticultural Therapy Certification	HT Activity	Sponsorship	Membership

President's Message

Dear AHTA Members and Supporters,

As we bloom into July, I feel as though summer is moving too fast. I'm so filled with gratitude for our vibrant horticultural therapy community and the work we do together. This summer season is a perfect time to grow our passion for healing through plants and to root ourselves in our shared mission. We're cultivating excitement for our 2025 Virtual Conference, "Nurturing Community: Planting the Seeds of Our Future," scheduled for October. I'm so pleased that author and advocate Richard Louv will deliver our keynote address, offering insights on how nature's power enriches lives and how the AHTA community contributes to that. Keep an eye out for registration details and early bird discounts to join this opportunity to connect and learn.

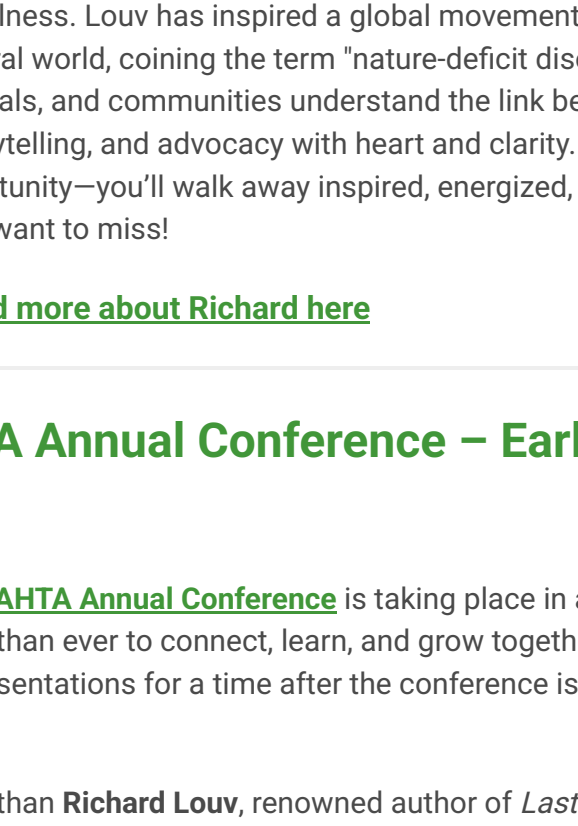
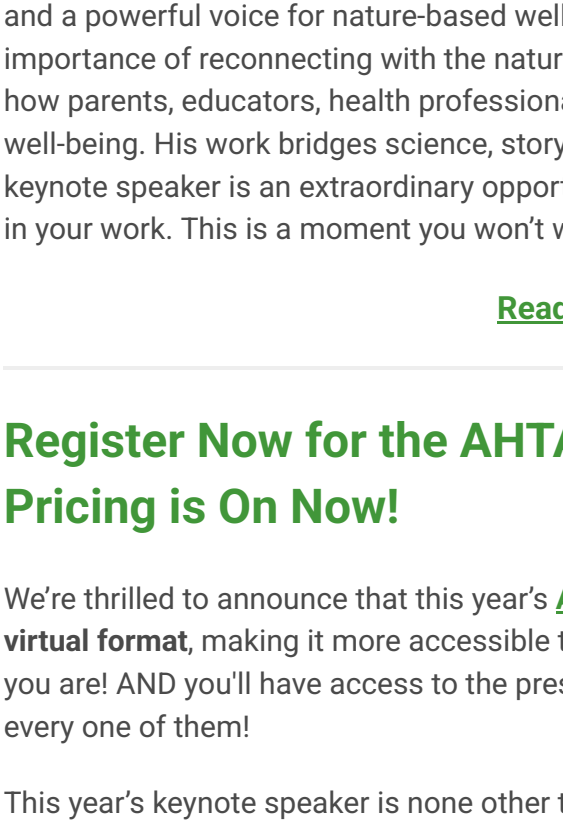
Our Board of Directors and Work Teams are tending to key initiatives, including updates to AHTA's Standards of Practice and professional development resources. We want to dig in? Consider joining a Work Team or nominating yourself or another for our 2026 Board. Your input helps our organization thrive and grow.

Thank you for your commitment to making horticultural therapy a force for healing. Together, we're planting a brighter, greener future.

Matthew Janson CTRS, HTR,
AHTA President

News and Events

Keynote Speaker - Richard Louv



Richard Louv
Keynote Speaker at AHTA Conference in October!

His groundbreaking work has profoundly shaped the field of horticultural therapy, igniting a global movement that validates the healing power of nature and deepens the purpose of our work.

Don't miss the chance to hear Richard Louv live at the AHTA Conference!

This year's keynote speaker is none other than **Richard Louv**, renowned author of *Last Child in the Woods* and a powerful voice for nature-based wellness. Louv has inspired a global movement around the importance of reconnecting with the natural world, coining the term "nature-deficit disorder" and changing how parents, educators, health professionals, and communities understand the link between nature and well-being. His work bridges science, storytelling, and advocacy with heart and clarity. Having him as our keynote speaker is an extraordinary opportunity—you'll walk away inspired, energized, and deeply affirmed in your work. This is a moment you won't want to miss!

[Read more about Richard here](#)

Register Now for the AHTA Annual Conference – Early Bird Pricing is On Now!

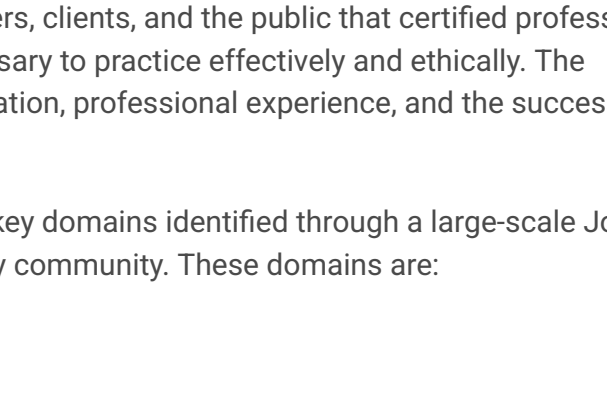
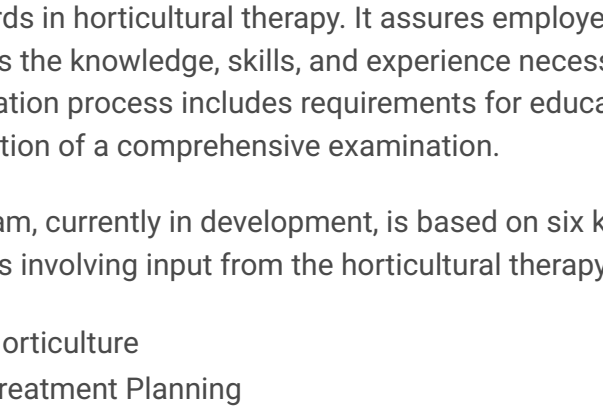
We're thrilled to announce that this year's **AHTA Annual Conference** is taking place in an **exciting new virtual format**, making it more accessible than ever to connect, learn, and grow together—no matter where you are! AND you'll have access to the presentations for a time after the conference is over so you can see every one of them!

This year's keynote speaker is none other than **Richard Louv**, renowned author of *Last Child in the Woods* and a powerful voice for nature-based wellness. You'll also hear from **international presenters**, experience **new types of presentations and workshops**, and connect with professionals and plant people from all over the world.

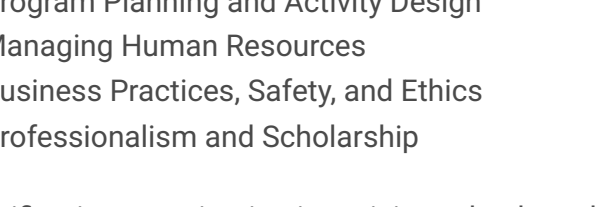
AHTA 2025 Annual Conference
"NURTURING COMMUNITY: Planting Seeds of Our Future"
October 9-11, 2025

Early bird registration ends August 5th—don't miss your chance to save and secure your spot!

Come grow with us! REGISTER TODAY!



AHTA Conference
Early Bird Registration
Prices End August 5th
REGISTER TODAY!



Special Rate for Students!
Special Rate for Members!
AHTA.ORG



Horticultural Therapy Certification

After many years of thoughtful consideration, AHTA is actively developing a certification for Horticultural Therapists. While some details are still being finalized, we want to keep our members informed and share what you can expect as this important credentialing process moves forward.

What is the AHTA Certification?

The AHTA Certification 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 examination.

The exam, currently in development, is based on six key domains identified through a large-scale Job Task Analysis involving input from the horticultural therapy community. These domains are:

1. Horticulture
2. Treatment Planning
3. Program Planning and Activity Design
4. Managing Human Resources
5. Business Practices, Safety, and Ethics
6. Professionalism and Scholarship

The certification examination is anticipated to launch in **October 2026**.

Who is the Certification for?

The certification—tentatively titled Horticultural Therapist—Board Certified (HT-BC)—is designed for individuals seeking to be recognized as credentialed horticultural therapists. It is expected that HT-BC will eventually replace the current HTR designation as the primary credential in the field.

Frequently Asked Questions

What will happen to the HTR designation? AHTA will stop accepting new HTR applications approximately three months before the launch of the certification exam. After that, all new applicants will apply for the HT-BC certification. Current HTRs may continue to use their designation. Those who wish to obtain the HT-BC credential may take the certification exam, but it is not mandatory.

Will this affect the THP designation? No. The certification exam is not expected to be required for Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner (THP) applications. The THP designation will remain unchanged.

How do I know if I'm eligible to sit for the certification exam? Eligibility requirements will include specific education and experience criteria, which will be published well in advance of the exam launch. These will align with national standards for professional certification.

Will there be study materials or prep courses for the exam? AHTA plans to provide recommended resources, sample examination questions and some guidance on the examination. The exam will be based on what practitioners are expected to know so applicants education and training should be the best preparation.

How long is the certification valid, and what is required for renewal? The certification is expected to be valid for five years. To maintain certification, individuals will be required to complete continuing education and/or demonstrate ongoing professional activity, as defined in the recertification guidelines.

Membership Discussion on the new AHTA Certification (HT-BC)

Member Discussion

We are excited to announce the upcoming launch of the Horticultural Therapist – Board Certified (HT-BC) credential, developed by the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) and set to be available in October 2026. This new certification represents a significant step forward in establishing professional standards, enhancing credibility, and advancing the field of horticultural therapy. Please visit the [website](#) for more information on the certification.

To ensure that the HT-BC credential meets the needs of practitioners, employers, educators, and other key stakeholders, we invite you to participate in an upcoming focus group discussion. These discussions will provide an opportunity for you to share your insights and help shape the direction of the certification.

WHY AHTA SUPPORTS CERTIFICATION FOR HORTICULTURAL THERAPISTS

Horticultural therapy is a growing field that bridges healthcare, social services, and horticulture to improve physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As the profession gains recognition, certification provides several key benefits:

1. Professional Credibility
2. Standardization of Practice
3. Demonstrating Expertise and Skill Development
4. Increased Public and Industry Recognition
5. Continuing Education and Growth

Discussion Topics

We are seeking input on three key areas:

1. **Eligibility Criteria and Pathways** – What qualifications and experience should be required to obtain certification, and what alternative pathways should be considered? Please note the preliminary pathways for exam eligibility below.
2. **Challenges and Impact** – What obstacles might professionals face in pursuing certification, and how can we address them? How do you think credentialing might impact employment, funding and advancement in the field?

Focus Group Meeting Details:

July 28th, 2025 | 12 PM EST, 9AM PST

OR

July 30th, 2025| 7PM EST, 4PM PST

Your feedback is invaluable in ensuring that the HT-BC certification is relevant, accessible, and impactful. Whether you are a practitioner, employer, educator, or advocate in the field, your perspective will help shape the future of horticultural therapy certification. If you are unable to attend but would like to provide input, we welcome your thoughts via email or scheduled one-on-one discussions.

Thank you for your time and commitment to advancing the field of horticultural therapy. We look forward to your participation and valuable insights.

To inform our discussion, please see:

Eligibility Pathways

Certification for Horticultural Therapists

Phase 2 of the AHTA 'Growing Impact' Youth Wellness Campaign Is Here!

This Independence Month is more than honoring history – it's an important reminder to embrace authenticity, lean into collective purpose, and recognize the strength within. Particularly for youth, it can be a reminder to keep growing boldly into their unique identity – supported by connection, community, and care.

The 'Growing Impact' Youth Campaign helps nurture this journey – spotlighting the power of the people-plant connection, the skilled and compassionate work of AHTA professionals, and the transformative potential of therapeutic green spaces to support youth well-being and advancement.

Where 'Seed to STEM' Meets 'Growing Impact'



This June, Seed Your Future's 'Seed to STEM' program was introduced to the AHTA 'Growing Impact' Youth Campaign!

STEM educators from across the country gathered in Chicago for a week-long immersive experience – exploring many aspects of horticulture including the dynamic field of horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture. They discovered how the health-boosting power of plants supports multiple dimensions of youth wellness, while also serving as a science-rich, evidence-based tool that elevates STEM learning.

Educators were equipped with evidence-based research demonstrating the significant impact of horticultural therapy on human health and development. They also took part in a hands-on miniature Zen garden activity, which fostered self-expression, encouraged mindfulness, and harnessed how plants, soil, and stones – combined with intention – can nurture inner calm, personal growth, and connection.

This is just the beginning... Follow the 'Growing Impact' Youth Campaign as AHTA spotlights impactful initiatives, nurturing green spaces, and lived experiences, inspiring the next generation to grow with resilience and purpose.

More partners and sponsors to follow! Please direct any questions to sponsorship@ahta.org.

Dried Botanical Mini-Wreaths

By Kasia Bilhartz, HTR – Northwest Therapeutic Horticulture Networking Group

These dainty mini-wreaths are a joy to create and can easily fit into a 60-minute group session. They are appropriate for almost any season since they use dried materials, but I like to create them in summer when my garden is bountiful with florals and botanicals that I dry by hanging upside down for 2 weeks.

Materials:

- Mini wreath forms
- A goodly amount of dried flowers, botanicals, lichens, mosses
- Ribbon or twine
- Hot-glue gun (dual temp, set on low)
- Glue gun sticks
- Paper plates (to keep dried materials organized)

I start the session by sharing 3 fun facts, or lore, about some of the plant materials I brought. I share the lore as we pass the plant material from person to person. If time allows, we go around the circle and share a summer flower we love.

Examples flower lore:

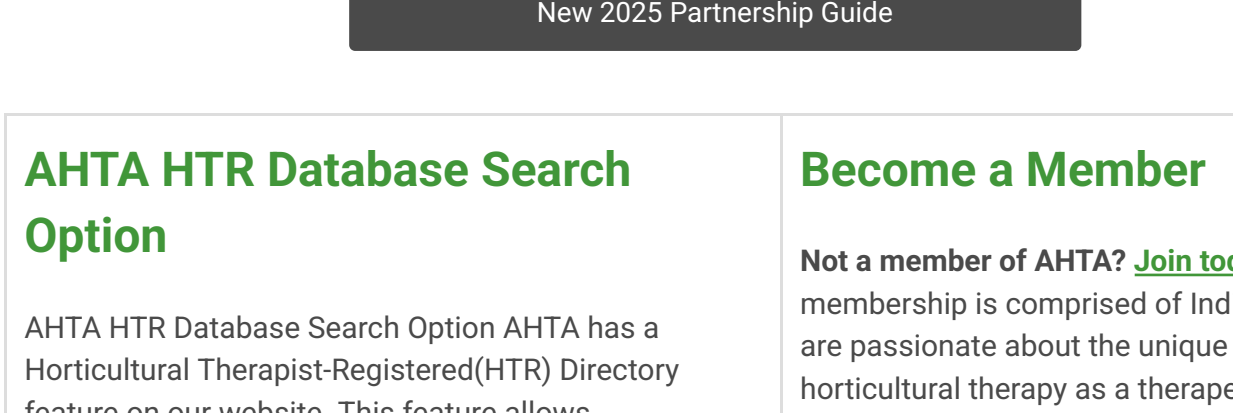
Lavender: The word lavender comes from Latin "lavare", which means "to wash", as it has long been used as an ingredient in toiletry products, going as far back as the ancient Egyptian era.
Rose: One of the world's oldest cultivated flowers. The oldest living rose is a vine growing on a cathedral in Germany, and is about 1000 years old!

Rosemary: Research suggests that rosemary can benefit memory, focus, and cognition.

Once done with the lore, I spread out materials along the table on paper plates and distribute the mini-wreath forms (They are widely available at craft stores, or easily pre-made from grape vines or other soft, pliable branch/vine).

I encourage participants to experiment with design layouts before they affix the florals to the wreath. I also give a brief safety reminder to not touch the tip of the hot glue gun to avoid burns. I have several hot glue guns, so participants glue them on as they are able. Of course I assist (or do all the gluing) as appropriate for each person's abilities.

The finishing touch is adding a ribbon, or twine to hang the wreath from. Everyone enjoys sharing their finished wreath with the group, and the feedback is always kind and supportive. Lots of lovely oohhs and aahhhs and encouragement. If time allows, I ask everyone to share where they will put their wreath. Often folks respond that it will be a gift for a special person on an upcoming birthday. It is wonderful when a participant creates something they are proud to give as a gift.



Updates from AHTA

- The **AHTA Code of Ethics** was updated to align with professional standards effective March 1, 2025! For more information [Here](#)
- The **THP Verification of Work Experience** form has been updated expanding the direct client services to include direct client hours, documentation, program planning/preparation, client meetings, supervision meetings and non-supervision meetings!
- The **HTR Verification of Work Experience** has been updated to requiring the equivalent of 1,500 hours work experience as an employee or independent contractor, supervised by either a HTR or general supervisor who can validate the horticultural therapy services provided.

HTR Internship Sites and Intern Supervisors Information Updates

AHTA receives numerous requests for information from students in Horticultural Therapy educational programs and applicants for the Horticultural Therapist – Registered regarding the internship requirements for registration. A list of internship sites that meet the requirements for HTR internships, as well as the list of approved Intern Supervisors, are available on the AHTA website. We ask for your help to update those lists.

If you are part of a program that is currently on the list of Intern Sites, AHTA members please check your program and contact information on the AHTA website [Internship Sites](#). If you need to make updates, contact the AHTA office at info@ahta.org.

If you know of a program that is already hosting HTR interns and is not listed, or you are a part of a program that would like to be listed as an internship site, please go to the Internship Site Questionnaire on the Horticultural Therapy Internship webpage, under the Professional Registration tab.

If you have been a HTR for at least 1 year and would like to be listed on the website as an Intern Supervisor, please complete the application at [Intern Supervisor Application](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the [AHTA Office](#).

AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture

The AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture had been approved for the OpenAccess Model and is now available on Google Scholar. Did you know that you can access the copies of the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture by going to Google Scholar, putting in the "AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture" in the search window and to narrow down your search add the volume number from the AHTA list of Journal. Click [HERE](#) to learn more. While considering publishing in the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture consider that as members of AHTA there is no charge for the Article Processing Charge (APC) while nonmembers pay \$300. Another great way to become a member! Hoping to see more submissions that will go out to all!

Supporting AHTA

Your generous support makes it possible for our organization to grow and thrive. Your contributions help keep us going, including helping with the expenses of our annual conference, increasing our ability to work toward credentialing, offsetting the cost of our journal and other outreach publications, and connecting to colleges and universities, facilities, prisons, hospitals, and agencies that [support the profession of horticultural therapy](#). Our [2025 Partnership Guide](#) is now available!

In keeping with the forward growth of AHTA, we have redesigned our [2025 Partnership Guide](#) to include new "à la carte" sponsorship opportunities! These options can be selected independently of AHTA sponsorship packages or added to enhance them. The goal is to offer sponsors greater flexibility in shaping their partnership opportunities to better align with their specific needs and objectives, resulting in a more tailored and impactful collaboration. [Sign up to become a sponsor](#) today! Your support fuels our mission to continue advancing the development of horticultural therapy and making an impact nationally and worldwide.

AHTA HTR Database Search Option

AHTA HTR Database Search Option AHTA has a Horticultural Therapist-Registered(HTR) Directory feature on our website. This feature allows companies or the general public to search for HTRs near them. The benefits for HTRs may include employment, consultation work, presentation /information sharing opportunities, advocacy for the profession of horticultural therapy and more! Any HTR member has the opportunity to opt-in or opt-out of the database. We request that HTR members update their profile with this indication.

To update:

1. Log into the Member Center
2. Select "My Profile"
3. Select "EditProfile"
4. Check "Opt-in" or "Opt-out"

We would like to use this as a reminder for all members to refresh their profiles with any other updates as well.

Become a Member

Not a member of AHTA? Join today! AHTA's membership is comprised of individuals who are passionate about the unique benefits of horticultural therapy as a therapeutic modality. Members are committed to the growth of the profession. Membership in the AHTA will keep you up to date on the latest in horticultural therapy news, as well as give you access to outstanding educational and networking opportunities.

Did you know? AHTA members benefits include free webinars and free article processing fees for the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture! Another two new reasons to join!