

Horticulture as a Therapeutic Tool – HTC2

INSTRUCTOR

Lynn Leach, HTR

EMAIL

landscape@birdsfoot.ca
www.birdsfoot.ca

CLASS LOCATION

Stedman Community
Hospice
445 Grey St.
Brantford, ON

FORMAT

In-person, Virtual
Classroom and
Supported Experiential
Group Study

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is the second of five that comprise the Bird's Foot Horticultural Therapy Education Series and is worth 0.4 points (32 Contact Hours) toward professional registration with the CHTA. A Certificate of Attendance will be provided to students when all course requirements have been met.

*Please visit the CHTA website for current information about voluntary professional registration

COURSE FEES AND MATERIALS

The course fee is \$600 and includes instruction, evidence-based research and reference materials, plant material and supplies required for hands-on activities. Course fees are non-refundable and must be paid in full at the time of registration. Required textbooks are not included in the course fees.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The Profession and Practice of Horticultural Therapy, 1st edition, 2019 CRC Press, ed. Rebecca L. Haller, Karen L. Kennedy, Christine L. Capra. 384 pages.

Designing, Planting and Using a Therapeutic Garden, Sue Jeffries, The Crowood Press, 2023. 224 pages.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with HT/TH specific horticultural skills and knowledge, including how to develop and facilitate safe and effective horticultural programming. Students will explore how to grow and utilise therapeutic plants, necessary attributes of accessible and healing garden spaces and safe/adaptive gardening practices. Discussion will include toxicology of common plant species and common contraindications to avoid when working with varied populations. Students will also learn about therapeutic garden design including specialized therapeutic garden features and the on-going maintenance requirements associated with a therapeutic outdoor space.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATES:	TIMES:	FORMAT	LOCATION
November 7, 2026	8:30-4:30	In-person	Stedman Community Hospice
November 8, 2026	8:30-4:30	In-person	Stone Garden Labyrinth, Brantford
November 9 - 13, 2026	TBD	Scenario-Based Activity*	Virtual Classroom
November 14, 2026	8:30-12:30	Synchronous	Virtual Classroom
November 16 - 20, 2026	TBD	Experiential Activity*	Virtual Classroom
November 21, 2026	8:30-12:30	Synchronous	Virtual Classroom

*Each of the instructor-led course activities will consist of a minimum of 4 contact hours.

EXIT COMPETENCIES – CORE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

At successful completion of this course, students will have an understanding of:

- physical, cognitive, psychological, social, and spiritual effects of plants on people, awareness of life connection to plants
- theories supportive of HT/TH (Biophilic Theory, Attention Restoration Theory, etc.)
- nature-based self care as a tool for professional development
- Indoor and outdoor plant care as it relates to HT/TH and greening of those spaces
- Plant Science and how it relates to HT/TH
- Organic gardening practice and all aspects of growing/harvesting as it pertains to HT/TH
- Tools including adaptation, and safety considerations
- Accessible/therapeutic landscape design, including universal design and basics of designing for varying abilities
- the physical aspects (hardscape) of creating a therapeutic environment considering both large and small spaces
- passive and active therapeutic garden design to maximize the potential for plant-people engagement (signage, invitations to engage, etc.), including sensory plants and how to engage all 5 senses
- the value and practical application of botanical arts and crafts, cooking/nutrition and other related activities
- land stewardship, honourable harvesting practices, and environmental education
- community consultation (ex. awareness of community horticultural network, or therapeutic needs of community)
- cultural history of forest tending and Native plant medicine practices and the medicinal value of local and native plants
- environmental issues and eco anxiety

At successful completion of this course, students will have awareness of:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- understanding individual and group dynamics, using adaptive facilitation styles
- using compassionate, effective, intentional communication (cuing, gendered language, etc.) and cultural awareness
- knowledge of plants and programs for each season
- responsibilities with respect to training, managing, and supporting volunteers financial management of HT/TH budget
- effective communication skills with interdisciplinary team, management, and caregivers
- ability to engage and consult with stakeholders when designing and installing therapeutic gardens

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The Bird's Foot Horticultural Therapy Education Series offers a comprehensive look at the principles and practices for the professional use of horticulture as therapy. This five-module education series includes 160 hours of immersive study along with authentic experiential learning that focuses on the 'Core Skills and Knowledge' recommended for professional registration with the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association (CHTA).

This challenging interdisciplinary program will focus on providing practical knowledge to support those wishing to pursue career opportunities in horticultural therapy (HT) and therapeutic horticulture (TH). Courses will also appeal to professionals currently working in healthcare, recreation, education, landscape design and horticulture who wish to broaden their skills and knowledge pertaining to the many therapeutic benefits of connecting people and plants. Students will have the opportunity to learn and practice HT skills in real-world settings, under the guidance of experienced HT professionals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To provide students with a richer understanding of HT techniques and authentic HT experiences, classes are held in-person and via virtual classroom. Attendance and collaborative engagement are mandatory to earn a Certificate of Attendance. Students can expect additional study and coursework outside of specified contact/class hours. All course work must be completed and submitted within the parameters outlined by the course instructor.