

Fundamentals of Horticultural Therapy – HTC1

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 first 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 foundational course introduces students to the profession and practice of horticultural therapy and explores the diverse benefits of gardening activities in the realms of health care, education and human services. Students will explore and deepen their understanding of their own personal connection to the natural world, and how to translate that into providing compassionate, respectful, patient-centered care as part of their professional practice. Students will be introduced to existing professional resources and broaden their own networks by meeting and hearing from HT professionals. ***This course is intended to be a prerequisite for the other courses being offered in the series.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATES:	TIMES:	FORMAT	LOCATION
October 17, 2026	8:30-4:30	In-person	Stedman Community Hospice
October 18, 2026	8:30-4:30	In-person	Stedman Community Hospice
October 19 - 23, 2026	TBD	Scenario-Based Activity*	Virtual Classroom
October 24, 2026	8:30-12:30	Synchronous	Virtual Classroom
October 26 - 30, 2026	TBD	Experiential Activity*	Virtual Classroom
October 31, 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:

- the difference between horticultural therapy (HT) and therapeutic horticulture (TH)
- different titles and terms used by HT/TH professionals (Horticultural Therapist, Registered, Horticultural Therapy Technician, Horticultural Therapy Practitioner, Nature Therapist, Ecopsychology, Ecotherapy)
- foundations and diverse evolution of horticultural therapy and the contemporary use of HT/TH internationally
- assessment, treatment, planning, implementation, and evaluation methods pertinent to HT/TH
- research and evidence base that supports the use of HT/TH and therapeutic landscapes
- CHTA Code of Ethics
- CHTA Professional Registration process
- CHTA professional designation and titles
- Updates from the CHTA, including updated core documents
- Current opportunities to contribute to the CHTA

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

- adaptive facilitation styles including cultural awareness
- using compassionate communication
- effective, intentional communication (cuing, gendered language, etc.)
- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- understanding individual and group dynamics
- cultural history and value of plants, including native and non-native plants
- physical, cognitive, psychological, social, and spiritual effects of plants on people
- theories supportive of HT/TH (Biophilic Theory, Attention Restoration Theory, etc.)
- life connection between plants and people
- nature-based self care as a tool for professional development

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 to 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.