

**RESOLUTION # 30**  
**HORTICULTURAL THERAPY**

1           **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) serves the entire  
2           agricultural and horticultural industry throughout the state by promoting the growing,  
3           selling, purchase, and consumption of locally grown food, fiber, and plant material;  
4           advocating for healthy consumption of locally grown food, fiber, and plant material;  
5           advocating for healthy and nutritional meals; and promoting outdoor recreational  
6           activities for all residents of New Jersey; and

7           **WHEREAS**, the NJDA recognizes that people benefit from plants, passively and  
8           actively, and that no one should be denied the benefits of working with, growing and  
9           harvesting plants; and

10           **WHEREAS**, the benefits of people-plant connections and interactions can be  
11           realized and achieved through active participation in the garden or through passive  
12           participation in, or visiting garden spaces; and

13           **WHEREAS**, Horticultural Therapy (HT) is recognized as a practical and viable  
14           treatment which uses plants and customized gardening activities to provide wide-ranging  
15           benefits for people in therapeutic, vocational and wellness programs; and

16           **WHEREAS**, HT and the therapeutic benefits of garden environments have been  
17           long established, as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, when Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the  
18           Declaration of Independence and the man recognized as the “Father of Modern  
19           Psychiatry,” was first to document the positive effect working in the garden had on  
20           individuals with mental illness; and

21           **WHEREAS**, HT garden techniques include, but are not limited to, sensory-  
22           stimulating environments with plants (vegetables, flowers, herbs) selected for fragrance,

23 texture, and color; utilizing accessible greenhouses that bring the garden indoors for  
24 year-round enjoyment; constructing accessible entrances and paths in compliance with  
25 ADA regulations; utilizing raised beds, table trays, and adjustable adaptable work  
26 spaces; and adapting tools that are lightweight, brightly colored and interchangeable;  
27 and

28 **WHEREAS**, HT designs and programs can offer cognitive, social and physical  
29 benefits with year-round application indoors and outdoors, in schools, senior and  
30 community centers, adult day care, assisted living, nursing homes, rehabilitation  
31 facilities, hospitals, vocational schools, substance-abuse rehabilitation, family shelters  
32 and resource centers, developmentally disabled day programs and group homes, day  
33 and residential housing for autistic adults, community and county gardens and arboreta;  
34 and

35 **WHEREAS**, certified HTR professionals or interns can deliver effective HT  
36 programs, and these programs are customized for individuals and/or groups, providing  
37 meaningful activities to help in the healing and rehabilitation processes while celebrating  
38 the people-plant connection; and

39 **WHEREAS**, HT training and internships are linked with Rutgers, the State  
40 University, and local community colleges, and lead to gratifying jobs and career  
41 opportunities; and

42 **WHEREAS**, HT programs provide new growth opportunities for the agricultural  
43 and horticultural producers in New Jersey to bring their goods to market while exposing  
44 the benefits of agriculture and gardening to a community that is currently disconnected  
45 from the farm and nursery industries.

46 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 100<sup>th</sup>  
47 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 4-5,  
48 2015, do hereby direct the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, through its various

49 entities, to be responsive to our state's growing and changing needs and promote HT to  
50 connect individuals with disabilities to plants, and build stronger community and  
51 purposeful inclusion for all residents of the Garden State, from children to adults.

52 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support the passage of a pending Senate  
53 Joint Resolution and Assembly Joint Resolution establishing the third full week of March  
54 each year as "Horticultural Therapy Week" in New Jersey, bringing further awareness to  
55 the value and importance of Horticultural Therapy.