

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 18th 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 100th
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.