

# Horticultural therapist earns professional registration credential

Final Touch Landscaping LLC 12:04 a.m. EST February 14, 2015

*DePrado work is featured in the 2015 NJ Agricultural Magazine, and she has Under written Horticultural Therapy Resolutions at The NJ Agriculture Convention of 2013, 2014 and 2015, and legislation designating the third week of March as Horticultural Therapy in NJ. Horticultural Therapy Week was established by Congress in Spring 2006. DePrado's efforts have resulted in the NJ Senate becoming the first legislative body to pass a bill.*



(Photo: PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA DEPRADO)

Laura DePrado, Branchburg-based owner of Final Touch Landscaping LLC has achieved the professional credential of "HTR," horticultural therapist registered by the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA). The AHTA is the only national organization that recognizes and registers horticultural therapists through a professional registration program. The designation Horticultural Therapist-Registered (HTR) ensures that professional competencies have been achieved based on standardized academic requirements and professional training. In New Jersey there are less than 25 HTRs. DePrado, who holds a bachelor's degree in journalism, University of Northern Texas, also has a certificate in horticultural therapy from Rutgers University. She specializes in connecting people and plants through customized activities and programs for varied-age populations throughout New Jersey.

Horticultural therapy techniques are employed by HTR's to assist participants to learn new skills or regain those that are lost. HT helps improve memory, cognitive abilities, task initiation, language skills, and socialization. In physical rehabilitation, HT can help strengthen muscles and improve coordination, balance, and endurance. In vocational HT settings, people learn to work independently, problem solve, and follow directions.

DePrado is the 2013 recipient of the AHTA's Alice Burlingame Humanitarian Award, and national presenter. She has also earned numerous local, state and national awards. She is a columnist, co-author of the published Rutgers Fact Sheet, "Enabling Gardens: The Practical Side of Horticultural Therapy", and freelance writer for the AHTA News Magazine. Her work is featured in the 2015 NJ Agricultural Magazine, and she has Under written Horticultural Therapy Resolutions at The NJ Agriculture Convention of 2013, 2014 and 2015, and legislation designating the third week of March as Horticultural Therapy in NJ. Horticultural Therapy Week was established by Congress in Spring 2006. DePrado's efforts have resulted in the NJ Senate becoming the first legislative body to pass a bill.

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