



N.J. horticultural therapist receives service award



Laura DePrado (center), owner of Final Touch Plantscaping, LLC, Branchburg, receives the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association 'Distinguished Service Award of the Year' from association Executive Director Dominick Mondì (left) and Vice President Jack Otterbein (right) at the Annual Awards held at Laurita Winery, New Egypt. (Courtesy of New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association)

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Laura DePrado, horticultural therapist and owner of Final Touch Plantscaping, LLC in Branchburg, is the recipient of the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association 2015 Distinguished Service Award.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes the contributions of an individual or organization that has given generously of their time and resources to support and grow the horticulture industry in New Jersey.

"I am honored and grateful to the NJNLA for this award," DePrado said. "The support of the NJNLA in raising awareness about Horticultural Therapy cannot be measured."

The New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association's mission is to be passionate advocates for professional nursery and landscape businesses in New Jersey. Members include nursery growers, landscape professionals, retail garden centers, and greenhouse producers. The association was organized in 1915 and is currently celebrating its 100th year.

"Laura embodies the best traits we look for in a service award candidate. Generosity, passion, and dedication come naturally to her," said Dominick Mondì, executive director of the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association.

DePrado has underwritten Horticultural Therapy Resolutions at the New Jersey Agriculture Conventions in 2013-15.

She is a registered horticultural therapist with the American Horticultural Therapy Association, has a bachelor's of science degree and HT Certificate from Rutgers University, is a journalist and co author Rutgers Fact Sheet, "Enabling Gardens: The Practical Side of Horticultural Therapy."

Final Touch Plantscaping connects people and plants through customized activities and programs for children, young adults through seniors using plants year round in adult day, sub acute, long term, rehabilitative and in-home care for groups and individuals.

At a special ceremony in August at Melick's Town Farm in Oldwick in Hunterdon County, Congressman Leonard Lance presented her with a U.S. flag flown over the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. in honor of one of DePrado's senior clients. The U.S. Senate and U.S. Assembly issued a citation and the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders issued a proclamation in celebration of the impact of horticultural therapy has had on this senior's life.

On May 11, Gov. Chris Christie signed a bill into law designating the third week of March as Horticultural Therapy Week, beginning in 2016.