

Horticulture

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Horticulture is the branch of agriculture that deals with the art, science, technology, and business of growing plants. It includes the cultivation of medicinal plants, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, herbs, sprouts, mushrooms, algae, flowers, seaweeds and non-food crops such as grass and ornamental trees and plants. It also includes plant conservation, landscape restoration, landscape and garden design, construction, and maintenance, and arboriculture. Inside agriculture, horticulture contrasts with extensive field farming as well as animal husbandry.

Horticulturists apply their knowledge, skills, and technologies used to grow intensively produced plants for human food and non-food uses and for personal or social needs. Their work involves plant propagation and cultivation with the aim of improving plant growth, yields, quality, nutritional value, and resistance to insects, diseases, and environmental stresses. They work as gardeners, growers, therapists, designers, and technical advisors in the food and non-food sectors of horticulture. Horticulture even refers to the growing of plants in a field or garden.

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A fruit and vegetable market in Milan



A vertical garden



Horticultural and health-related produce

Etymology

The word *horticulture* is modeled after *agriculture*, and comes from the Greek *χόρτος*, which in Latin became *hortus* "garden"^[1] and *cultūra* "cultivation", from *cultus*, the perfect passive participle of the verb *colō* "I cultivate".^[2] *Hortus* is cognate with the native English word *yard* (in the meaning of land associated with a building) and also the borrowed word *garden*.^[3]

Scope

Horticulture involves nine areas of study, which can be grouped into two broad sections: ornamentals and edibles:

- Arboriculture is the study of, and the selection, plant, care, and removal of, individual trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants.
- Turf management includes all aspects of the production and maintenance of turf grass for sports, leisure use or amenity use.
- Floriculture includes the production and marketing of floral crops.
- Landscape horticulture includes the production, marketing and maintenance of landscape plants.
- Olericulture includes the production and marketing of vegetables.
- Pomology includes the production and marketing of pome fruits.
- Viticulture includes the production and marketing of grapes.
- Oenology includes all aspects of wine and winemaking.
- Postharvest physiology involves maintaining the quality of and preventing the spoilage of plants and animals.

Anthropology

Horticulture has a very long history.^[4] The study and science of horticulture dates all the way back to the times of Cyrus the Great of ancient Persia, and has been going on ever since, with present-day horticulturists such as Freeman S. Howlett and Luther Burbank. The practice of horticulture can be retraced for many thousands of years. The cultivation of taro and yam in Papua New Guinea dates back to at least 6950–6440 cal BP.^[5] The origins of horticulture lie in the transition of human communities from nomadic hunter-gatherers to sedentary or semi-sedentary horticultural communities, cultivating a variety of crops on a small scale around their dwellings or in specialized plots visited occasionally during migrations from one area to the next (such as the "milpa" or maize field of Mesoamerican cultures).^[6] In the Pre-Columbian Amazon Rainforest, natives are believed to have used biochar to enhance soil productivity by smoldering plant waste.^[7] European settlers called it *Terra Preta de Indio*.^[8] In forest areas such horticulture is often carried out in swiddens ("slash and burn" areas).^[9] A characteristic of horticultural communities is that useful trees are often to be found planted around communities or specially retained from the natural ecosystem.

Horticulture primarily differs from agriculture in two ways. First, it generally encompasses a smaller scale of cultivation, using small plots of mixed crops rather than large fields of single crops. Secondly, horticultural cultivations generally include a wide variety of crops, even including fruit trees with ground crops. Agricultural cultivations however as a rule focus on one primary crop. In pre-contact North America the semi-sedentary horticultural communities of the Eastern Woodlands (growing maize, squash and sunflower) contrasted markedly with the mobile hunter-gatherer communities of the Plains people. In Central America, Maya horticulture involved augmentation of the forest with useful trees such as papaya, avocado, cacao, ceiba and sapodilla. In the cornfields, multiple crops were grown such as beans (using cornstalks as supports), squash, pumpkins and chilli peppers, in some cultures tended mainly or exclusively by women.^[10]

Organizations

The oldest Horticultural society in the world, founded in 1768, is the Ancient Society of York Florists. They still have four shows a year in York, UK.^[11] They have a large archive of records, including the original members book dating back to 1768.

Desh Bhagat School of Horticulture Sciences at Desh Bhagat University, Punjab is a prestigious institution in India to encourage the research and promote horticulture techniques throughout the country. The Royal Horticultural Society is a UK charity which oversees several major shows and gardens.^[12]

The professional body representing horticulturists in Great Britain and Ireland is the Institute of Horticulture (IOH).^[13] Also, the IOH has an international branch for members outside of these islands.

The International Society for Horticultural Science^[14] promotes and encourages research and education in all branches of horticultural science.

The American Society of Horticultural Science^[15] promotes and encourages research and education in all branches of horticultural science in the Americas.

The Australian Society of Horticultural Science was established in 1990 as a professional society for the promotion and enhancement of Australian horticultural science and industry.^[16]

The National Junior Horticultural Association (NJHA) was established in 1934 and was the first organization in the world dedicated solely to youth and horticulture. NJHA programs are designed to help young people obtain a basic understanding of, and develop skills in, the ever expanding art and science of horticulture.^[17]

The New Zealand Horticulture Institute.^[18]

The Global Horticulture Initiative (GlobalHort) fosters more efficient and effective partnerships and collective action among different stakeholders in horticulture. The organization has a special focus on horticulture for development (H4D), i.e. using horticulture to reduce poverty and improve nutrition worldwide. To be efficient, GlobalHort is organized in a consortium of national and international organizations to collaborate in research, training, and technology-generating activities designed to meet mutually-agreed-upon objectives. GlobalHort is a not-for-profit organization registered in Belgium.^[19]

See also

- Floriculture
- Forest gardening
- Gardening
- Genetically modified trees
- Genomics of domestication
- Hoe-farming
- Horticultural botany
- Horticultural flora
- Horticultural oil
- Horticultural therapy
- Indigenous horticulture
- Landscaping
- Permaculture
- Plant nutrition
- Plug (horticulture)
- Tropical horticulture
- Turf management
- Vertical farming

References

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2. Harper, Douglas. "horticulture". *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

3. Entry for *yard* (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/yard>) Dictionary.com (presenting information supposedly from Random House Dictionary)
4. "Archived copy". Archived from the original on September 10, 2012. Retrieved September 21, 2012.
5. Fullagar, Richard, Judith Field, Tim Denham, and Carol Lentfer (2006) *Early and mid Holocene tool-use and processing of taro (Colocasia esculenta), yam (Dioscorea sp.) and other plants at Kuk Swamp in the highlands of Papua New Guinea* Journal of Archaeological Science 33: 595–614
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7. Solomon, Dawit, Johannes Lehmann, Janice Thies, Thorsten Schafer, Biqing Liang, James Kinyangi, Eduardo Neves, James Petersen, Flavio Luizao, and Jan Skjemstad, *Molecular signature and sources of biochemical recalcitrance of organic carbone in Amazonian Dark Earths*, *Geochimica et cosmochemica ACTA* 71.9 2285-2286 (2007) ("Amazonian Dark Earths (ADE) are a unique type of soils apparently developed between 500 and 9000 years B.P. through intense anthropogenic activities such as biomass-burning and high-intensity nutrient depositions on pre-Columbian Amerindian settlements that transformed the original soils into Fimic Anthrosols throughout the Brazilian Amazon Basin.") (internal citations omitted)
8. Glaser, Bruno, Johannes Lehmann, and Wolfgang Zech, *Ameliorating physical and chemical properties of highly weathered soils in the tropics with charcoal – a review*, *Biology and Fertility of Soils* 35.4 219-220 (2002) ("These so called Terra Preta do Indio (Terra Preta) characterize the settlements of pre-Columbian Indios. In Terra Preta soils large amounts of black C indicate a high and prolonged input of carbonized organic matter probably due to the production of charcoal in hearths, whereas only low amounts of charcoal are added to soils as a result of forest fires and slash-and-burn techniques.") (internal citations omitted)
9. McGee, J.R. and Kruse, M. (1986) *Swidden horticulture among the Lacandon Maya* [videorecording (29 mins.)]. University of California, Berkeley: Extension Media Center
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11. <http://www.ancientsocietyofyorkflorists.co.uk/>
12. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/>
13. IOH (<http://www.horticulture.org.uk/>)
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15. ASHS (<http://www.ashs.org/>)
16. AuSHS (<http://aushs.org.au/>)
17. NJHA (<http://www.njha.org/>)
18. [1] (<http://www.rnzih.org.nz/>)
19. [2] (<http://www.globalhort.org/>)

Further reading

- C.R. Adams, *Principles of Horticulture* Butterworth-Heinemann; 5th edition (11 Aug 2008), ISBN 0-7506-8694-4.
- David Oluwatosin Samuel. I actually don't know I can make a contribution on here. This is great. :)

External links

- The Institute of Horticulture (<http://www.horticulture.org.uk/>)
- ISHS – International Society for Horticultural Science (<http://www.ishs.org/>)
- The Royal Horticultural Society (<http://www.rhs.org.uk/>)
- British Library – finding information on the horticulture industry (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060626042637/ht>)
- History of Horticulture (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120910033023/ht>)
- HORTIVAR – The FAO Horticulture Cultivars Performance Database (<http://www.fao.org/hortivar>)
- Global Horticulture Initiative – GlobalHort (<http://www.globalhort.org/>)
- Horticulture Information & Resource Library (<http://hin.com.au/>)
- Plant and Soil Sciences eLibrary (<http://passel.unl.edu/>)

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