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32. WHAT IS "HORTICULTURAL WELLBEING" - IN RELATION TO "HORTICULTURAL THERAPY"?

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ABSTRACT

Horticulture benefits all of us human beings both physically and mentally, including individual aspects and social ones, through its activities and its products. Horticultural therapy is referred to as using the benefits of horticulture for: people with any impairment, disability and/or handicap; who need any medical and/or welfare involvement in order to improve their physical and/or mental conditions, including rehabilitation, promoting physical and/or mental growth, and enhancing quality of life.

However, the benefits of horticulture are used not only for these people but also for the 'normal' people, i.e., all human beings can benefit by participation in horticulture. There has been no term for this field of study and the use of horticultural benefits for all human beings, which has sometimes therefore also been referred to as a part of "Horticultural Therapy". But this usage I consider is not correct, and I propose that for this field the term "Horticultural Wellbeing" be used, which includes "Horticultural Therapy" among other aspects.

Keywords: Horticultural therapy, horticultural wellbeing, rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

Horticultural therapy was introduced into Japan at the beginning of 1990's from the U.S.A. During these several years, Japanese interests in horticultural therapy have heightened, and there has been an explosion of publications in this area. This status of so-called 'horticultural therapy' is now in fashion in Japan (Matsuo, 1998a, b). These publications, however, have created confusion in Japanese as to what is really to be included in the term 'horticultural therapy'. This comes from the differences in understanding of what is to be included as 'horticulture' and 'therapy', because many participants in horticultural therapy understand them from their own individual points of view. Generally speaking in Japan, the concepts of "horticulture" and "therapy" have been broadened. For example, horticulture is sometimes now used to include "plant and plant related activities", while 'therapy' is taken to include "cure", "care", "rehabilitation", "training", "healing", "promotion of health" both mentally and physically and "enhancing quality of life (QOL)" (Matsuo, 1998b). The objectives of horticultural therapy are not discussed definitively, and some publications include benefits to 'normal' people (ie, not only the sick or disabled). Therefore, there have arisen opinions such as that the term includes situations where any person enjoys gardening, growing pot plants on their veranda and/or looking at plants in a park, where they are thus refreshed, healed, and get pleasure; that is they are regarded as participating in horticultural therapy.

Theoretically speaking, these general horticultural activities should not be included in the concept of horticultural therapy, however there is at present no recognized term to express this kind of participation in horticulture. Judging from U.S. horticultural therapists' lectures in Japan, the situation in the U.S.A is not so different from that in Japan. In order to solve these problems and confusions, I propose a new concept, embraced in the term "horticultural wellbeing", and I describe below the relationship and differences between "horticultural therapy" and "horticultural wellbeing".

HORTICULTURE, THERAPY, AND 'HORTICULTURAL THERAPY'

People-plant involvement and horticulture

People involve plants in many ways such as appreciating them with five senses: growing them, using them as foods, drinks, medicines, ornamentals, educational mediation, materials for environmental improvement, etc. Among these forms of involvement, when people-plant involvement is enriched by 'taking care of', this part is referred to as "horticulture" (Fig. 1). In other words, horticulture's primary demand is the "taking care of plants" component among various possible people-plant relationships (Matsuo, 1998a)

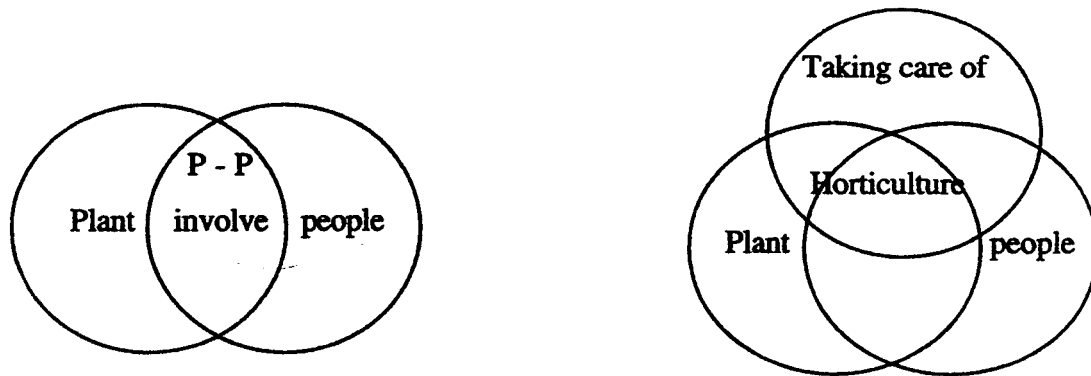


Fig. 1. Schematic presentation of people-plant involvement and horticulture.

In reality, the following activities cannot be called "horticulture": buying and arranging flowers, making pot pourri using herbs bought, touching or looking at flowers in a park, being presented with pot plants, forest bathing, and so on. The most important concept of horticulture is "fostering" or "nurturing" plants, behavior for which must include physically active participation, as well as sensory participation with plants, the two aspects interacting with each other (Matsuo, 1998a, b). Horticulture also provides us with "acquiring" acts, as do sports and other activities. It is a balance of "fostering" and "acquiring" behaviors that enables us to live as human-beings (Matsuo, 1982; 1992; 1995, 1997b, c).

HORTICULTURE'S BENEFITS

Horticulture benefits us in many ways (Matsuo, 1997b). Thinking of our home garden, we can mention the following:

- *Providing foods, medicines, drinks, and herbs.* Our horticultural products may be used in many ways, as described above. Vegetables and fruits may be fresh and rich in nourishment and not polluted with chemicals. We enjoy these products, and are pleased to use them. They are useful for us to keep and promote a healthy body and mind
- *Producing economic profits.* Professional farmers earn money by selling their products. Amateur gardeners may save some money by not having to buy some of their vegetables and/or flowers.

- Dutch local government also can save the cost of park maintenance by lending citizens a part of the public park, for example at Volkstuin, which is maintained by citizens but not by local government. The well-maintained gardens raise the values of real estate in the area. (Weyerhaeuser, 1986).

Environmental benefits Plants produced as the result of our nurturing care, plants give us favorable surroundings in which to live, both physically and mentally; for example a comfortable atmosphere, greenery, ornamental flowers, etc. They also provide high real estate evaluations.

Physical (bodily) benefits Working with plants, such as digging holes to transplant trees, carrying pots, weeding, etc. is good physical exercise. Such exercise may be good rehabilitation, or for training muscles. Although most horticultural activity is not as hard physical activity as most sports, it may be effective in protecting the body from atrophy caused by disuse, and help get the body back into the good physiological condition.

Psychological and physiological benefits Plants and flowers give us tranquility, healing, encouragement, refreshment, and other psychological effects, resulting in such benefits as early recovery from surgery (Ulrich, 1984), decrease in number of sick persons (Moore, 1982), etc. Recently, these psychological phenomena have been monitored with our physiological indicators such as brain waves, heart rate, blood pressure, skin conductance and

so on.

Promoting mental growth This aspect concerns how we live as human beings, including emotional aspects. For example, through taking care of plants we are pleased to know that they grow well, flower and set fruit, and that can solve problems such as drought damage, weed, disease, etc., which occur during taking care of plants. These activities, involving thinking, trial and error, and appreciating the process and the results, will heighten self-esteem and self confidence, improve motivation and make life worth living, etc. The accumulation of this type of experience nourishes us, to grow ourselves, as creative human beings (Matsuo, 1998b).

Social benefits Mental disease or a lack in development can lead to an inability to lead a normal life as a member of society. Horticultural activity and its resultant plants, greenery and flowers can help improve and develop such an individual's interests and social relationships. For example, flowers or vegetables in the garden mediate communication and exchange between the family members, neighbors or even with strangers. Cooperative gardening in a park or taking care of roadside flower gardens could produce a sense of solidarity and/or shared sense of values. Thus, horticulture results in good human relationships and good community development.

Educational benefits Horticultural activity and its products have been traditionally used as a medium of education in such diverse areas as science, aesthetic sensitivity, mathematics, agriculture, and even music and languages. It has also mediated the transmission of culture, including way of life, morality, philosophy, etc.

Among educational benefits, it should be emphasized that horticulture can provide us with the opportunity to study behavior and thought of both "fostering" (nurturing) and "acquiring" modes, which together enable us to live as human beings (Matsuo, 1992; 1995).

WHAT IS 'THERAPY'?

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The basic goal of horticultural therapy is to utilize these benefits of horticulture for restoring and/or promoting human health and enhancing quality of life, involving growing to live. as a human being both mentally and physically. However, the word "therapy" indicates what are to be the specific objectives of this procedure. Let us consider these objectives. Therapy generally starts with treatment towards a medical cure, which is applied to patients with physical and/or mental injuries or disease. In general, the patients need medical treatment first,

followed by aftercare such as rehabilitation, training, help, etc. which allow the clients to enhance their quality of life. Some measures are included in medical care and the others in aftercare, the latter being thought very important nowadays, because they need much more time and money than medical treatment in the clients' lives. These aftercare measures could be referred to as welfare involvement.

Thus, just as the medical cure and care have evolved to include therapy, the objectives of therapy have been expanded from the patients to people with any impairment, disability and/or handicap (including the elderly, who need any welfare input. When we ponder on the necessary procedure of therapy as adopted by the Delta Society (Shadan-hojin Dobutsu Byoin Fukushi Kyokai, 1996), we are led to a definition of therapy, as follows: -

Therapy is a procedure where:

- *a trained therapist with professional skills*
- *understands the nature and*
- *conditions and/or symptoms*
- *of the clients who need any medical and/or welfare involvement. and*
- *uses any mediation. e.g., materials and/or activities*
- *in order to improve their mental and/or physical conditions and/or symptoms,*
- *recording the procedure and evaluating the results.*
- *choosing the next procedures.*

(Matsuo, 1997a; 1998a, b).

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY AND HORTICULTURAL WELLBEING

Horticultural therapy

Horticultural therapy is a therapy mediated through horticulture, i.e., taking care of plants and/or using the products by users (Matsuo, 1998a, b). The subjects of this therapy are people with any impairment, disability and/or handicap who need medical and/or welfare involvement.

Therefore, horticultural therapy CAN BE defined as follows:-

Horticultural therapy is a procedure where a trained horticultural therapist with professional skills understands the nature and conditions and/or symptoms of the clients who need any medical and/or welfare involvement, and uses horticulture in order to improve their mental and/or physical conditions and/or symptoms, recording the procedure and evaluating the results, followed by choosing the next procedures (Matsuo, 1998a, b). From this point of view, if plants themselves, including greenery, are used as mediation of therapy, it should be referred to as "plant therapy". In the same sense, when living things such as plants and/or animals are used, this therapy should be called "biotherapy" (Matsuo, 1998a, b).

As mentioned above, horticultural therapy deals with the people with any impairment, disability and/or handicap who need medical and/or welfare involvement. Horticulture, however, benefits not only these people but also the other people without any impairment, disability and/or handicap. In reality, horticulture is used as one of the ways to keep healthy, as a recreational activity, leisure activity, etc., through which we become healthy and grow up

into human beings, our life quality being enhanced. Therefore, sometimes in Japanese documents, the objectives of horticultural therapy have been broadened to include the needs of ordinary people without any impairment, disability and handicap. Thus, the community development, education mediated with horticulture, healing, healthcare, refreshment via horticulture, etc. have sometimes been mentioned as horticultural therapy. Even in the U.S.A., whether or not they should be included in horticultural therapy has sometimes been discussed.

Horticultural wellbeing

Thinking of the definition and the evolution of concepts of horticulture and therapy, the objectives of horticultural therapy should be limited in application to people with an impairment, disability and/or handicap who need any medical and/or welfare involvement. How then, should we refer to the field which deals with the use of horticultural benefits for all people? As horticultural benefits enable us to be healthy mentally and physically, to grow up human beings, to enhance quality of life, etc. in other words, since horticulture can play a great role in our wellbeing - we could refer to this field as 'Horticultural Wellbeing'. Horticultural wellbeing concerns health, growth of humanity, and quality of life, both mentally and physically through horticulture, including horticultural therapy, horticultural activity as recreation and leisure activity, exchange between family members or community members, community development (Table 1).

Table 1. Horticultural wellbeing concerns all of us through horticulture, as follows.

Personal aspect	Mental and physical health including cure, care, rehabilitation, training, help, healing
Personal and Growing up	as a human being (mental growth), enhancing QOL social aspect
Social aspect	Promoting communication, and exchange, improving human relationship, producing sense of unity and common feelings of value, and resulting in _community development

N.B. The lack of normal social life is dependent on the mental injury and/or under development as a human being. The aims of horticultural wellbeing and that of horticultural therapy are broadly speaking identical, i.e., utilizing horticultural benefits for human wellbeing in order to improve or develop the mental and physical status both individually and socially, but the subjects are everyone, in the case of horticultural wellbeing, but are limited to people with an impairment, disability and handicap in horticultural therapy (Fig. 2 and Table 2): this is because the latter category of people need supporters with special knowledge and techniques, the horticultural therapists. For these subjects of horticultural therapy in general cannot participate in horticulture as they might like by themselves without any support of professionals because of their impairment.



Fig. 2. Subjects of horticultural wellbeing and horticultural therapy

Subjects of horticultural wellbeing are all citizens, while those of horticultural therapy are people with any impairment, disability and/or handicap. It can be seen that horticultural therapy needs special skills in order to work in this area. These specialists are the horticultural therapists, who are also able help advance horticultural wellbeing, but people who have learned horticultural wellbeing may have no ability to be involved horticultural therapy. This looks like an example of a Japanese proverb, that: "Ship carpenters can build a house, but house carpenters cannot build a ship because special skills are needed to make a ship". In summary:

Aims of both horticultural therapy and horticultural wellbeing are to improve the mental and physical status of the person, resulting in their growth as a human being and enhancement of QOL.

Subjects of horticultural wellbeing are all people, whereas those of horticultural therapy are people with an impairment, disability or handicap.

Participation is autonomous for horticultural wellbeing, but for horticultural therapy. the person needs the support of professionals (the horticultural therapists).

CONCLUSIONS

Horticultural wellbeing can be distinguished as the field concerning the promotion of human welfare through horticulture for all people. This field primarily deals with improving mental and physical health (including cure, care, rehabilitation, training, help. etc.), healing, growing us as human beings, vocational training and enhancing quality of life, improving human relationships which includes community development, family relationships, etc. Within this area of horticultural wellbeing, when the objective is limited to the people who need medical and/or welfare involvement because of their impairment, disability or handicap (including the elderly). it should be referred to as *horticultural therapy*. Horticultural therapy is conducted under the support of professionals (horticultural therapists) with special skills, for these people cannot usually participate in horticulture as they would like by themselves.

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