

# CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

## Connecting People and Plants

**Consumer horticulture** touches all our lives, whether in a bustling downtown area, the open countryside or anywhere in between.

**Consumer horticulture** supports human health, community beautification, environmental stewardship, local food and more. **Consumer horticulture** benefits us when we tend a container garden, visit and play in a park or public garden, and grow plants indoors or outdoors<sup>1</sup>. **Consumer horticulture** also provides jobs and revenue in growing, marketing and managing plants<sup>2</sup>.

Quite simply, **Consumer horticulture** is the connection point between people and plants.



# WHO IS CONSUMER HORTICULTURE?

Green thumb or not, we all benefit from Consumer Horticulture.

**Personal Pursuit**—77 percent of U.S. households<sup>3</sup> take part in gardening activities, indoors or outdoors.

**Economic Impact**—Consumers annually spend nearly \$48 billion<sup>3</sup> on DIY garden-related items while also supporting the \$54,700,000 horticulture service industry<sup>2</sup>.

**Community Benefits**—We experience **Consumer horticulture** in a tree-lined street, a public park or garden, a farms market, a nursery or u-pick farm, a teaching garden, a landscaped shopping center, a walking trail, or any space where humans and plants meet.



## Businesses, Jobs and Workplaces

Plants and landscapes can improve rent and occupancy and support customer visitation. For workers, indoor plants reduce stress, mental fatigue and absenteeism while improving concentration. Outdoor green spaces near workplaces can also improve employee health and output<sup>1</sup>.

## Our Environment

Natural ecosystems need plants to hold the soil in place, protect water and air quality, and support pollinators and wildlife. Through growing and interacting with plants in a range of settings, consumers are introduced to soil and water stewardship. These people-plant interactions benefit our environment and our society because residents practice stewardship on private property and learn to value plants and green spaces in public areas.





## Schools and Communities

Plants in or near the classroom increases students' attention, memory and test scores and reduces sick time and behavior issues<sup>1</sup>. Studying plants help students learn life skills and improve self-confidence, while school gardens connect students to food and nature.

**Consumer horticulture** creates a pride-of-place through streetscapes, enhances tourism and bolsters local business<sup>1</sup>. Community gardens increase access to fresh food and support human relationships.

## Housing and Residential Areas

**Consumer horticulture** adds beauty and increases property values. Well-placed plants can save energy and lower utility bills<sup>1</sup>. Plants in and around the places we live produce neighborhood satisfaction and help build healthy social connections<sup>4</sup>.

## Ourselves and Our Families

**Consumer horticulture** improves our personal health and quality of life. Gardening and interacting with plants can reduce stress and tension and lessen chronic health risks through physical activity and nutrition<sup>4,5</sup>. **Consumer horticulture** involving plants, gardens, parks and green spaces provides exercise, fresh food, stress reduction and personal connection.

This publication was written to educate residents about the beneficial roles of Consumer Horticulture. It was collaboratively developed by the Consumer Horticulture Extension, Research, and Education Coordinating Committee (SCC-85) organized through the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors. SCC-85 includes members from Auburn Univ., Clemson Univ., Univ. of Kentucky, Univ. of Georgia, Univ. of Hawaii, Louisiana State Univ., The Ohio State Univ., Univ. of Minnesota, Mississippi State Univ., Univ. of Nebraska, North Carolina State Univ., Univ. of Tennessee, and Virginia Tech. SCC-85 also operates as the NICH Academic/Government Council and serves to connect the academic horticulture community to NICH.

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### References

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**Growing a healthy world through the art, science and business of plants, gardens, and landscapes.**

**[consumerhort.org](http://consumerhort.org)**

The National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture (NICH) is a consortium of industry leaders who are promoting the benefits and value of horticulture. NICH brings together academia, government, industry and nonprofits to cultivate the growth and development of a healthy world through landscapes, gardens and plants – indoors and out.