

Characteristics of horticulture

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The following are the basic characteristics of horticulture:

Horticulture is the science and art of growing fruits, vegetables, flowers, or ornamental plants. Horticulture is commonly associated with the more professional and technical aspects of plant cultivation on a smaller and more controlled scale than agronomy. There are various divisions of horticulture because plants are grown for a variety of purposes. These divisions include, but are not limited to: propagation, arboriculture, landscaping, floriculture and turf maintenance. For each of these, there are various professions, aspects, tools used and associated challenges; Each requiring highly specialized skills and knowledge of the horticulturist.

Typically, horticulture is characterized as the ornamental, small-scale/non-industrial cultivation of plants; horticulture is distinct from gardening by its emphasis on scientific methods, plant breeding, and technical cultivation practices, while gardening, even at a professional level, tends to focus more on the aesthetic care and maintenance of plants in gardens or landscapes. However, there are aspects of horticulture that are industrialized/commercial such as greenhouse production or CEA.

Horticulture began with the domestication of plants around 10,000-20,000 years ago. At first, only plants for sustenance were grown and maintained, but eventually as humanity became increasingly sedentary, plants were grown for their ornamental value. Horticulture emerged as a distinct field from agriculture when humans sought to cultivate plants for pleasure on a smaller scale rather than for mere sustenance.

Emerging technologies are moving the industry forward, especially in the way of altering plants to be more adverse to parasites, disease and drought. Modifying technologies such as Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR/Cas9), are also improving the nutrition, taste and yield of crops.

There are many horticultural organizations and societies found around the world, that are formed by horticulturists and those within the industry. These include the Royal Horticultural Society, the International Society for Horticultural Science, and the American Society of Horticultural Science;

There are divisions and sub-divisions within horticulture, this is because plants are grown for many different reasons. Some of the divisions in horticulture include:

It includes the cultivation of all plants including, but not limited to: ornamental trees/shrubs/plants, fruits, vegetables, flowers, turf, nuts, seeds, herbs and other medicinal/edible plants. This cultivation may occur in garden spaces, nurseries, greenhouses, vineyards, orchards, parks, recreation areas, etc.

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Horticulturists, are those who study and practice the cultivation of plant material professionally. There are many different types of horticulturists with different job-titles, including: gardener, grower, farmer, arborist, floriculturist, landscaper, agronomist, designer, landscape architect, lawn-care specialist, nursery manager, botanical garden curator, horticulture therapist, and much more. They may be hired by a variety of companies/institutions including, but not limited to: botanical gardens, private/public gardens, parks, cemeteries, greenhouses, golf courses, vineyards, estates, landscaping companies, nurseries, educational institutions, etc. They may also be self-employed.

Horticulture began with the domestication of plants 10,000-20,000 years ago, and has since, been deeply integrated into humanity's history. The domestication of plants occurred independently within various civilizations across the globe. The history of horticulture overlaps with the history of agriculture and history of botany, as all three originated with the domestication of various plants for food. In Europe, agriculture and horticulture diverged at some point during the Middle Ages.

Early practices in horticulture include a number of various ways that people managed the land (using an assortment of tools), with a variety of methods and types of plants cultivated for a number of uses. Methods, tools and plants grown, have always depended on the culture and climate.

In addition to the medicinal and nutritional values that plants hold, plants have also been grown for their beauty, and to impress and demonstrate power, knowledge, status and even wealth of those in-control of the cultivated plant material. This symbolic power that plants hold has existed even before the beginnings of their cultivation.

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