

Different branches of horticulture

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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.²; 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,⁴; and the American Society of Horticultural Science.⁵;

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.

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.¹⁵;

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There is evidence that various gardens maintained by the Aztecs were sacred, as they grew plants that held religious value. Plants were grown for their metaphorical relation to Gods and Goddesses. Flowers held symbolic power in religious rites, as they were offered to the Gods, as well as were given in ceremonies to leaders to demonstrate their connection to the Gods.

Plant propagation in horticulture is the process in which the multiplication of a species is performed, increasing the number of individual plants. Propagation involves both sexual and asexual methods. In sexual propagation seeds are used, while asexual propagation involves the division of plants, separation of tubers, corms, and bulbs - by use of techniques such as cutting, layering, grafting.

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