



Horticultural therapist honored with Chairman's Award

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TRENTON, NJ — Laura DePrado of Branchburg in Somerset County, NJ, and president of Final Touch Plantscaping LLC received the Chairman's Award from the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee of the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly at the State Capitol, here, during celebration of Horticultural Therapy Week New Jersey. The award was presented by Assemblyman Robert Andrzejczak (D-1), chairman of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, at the display showcasing horticultural therapy in Goldfinch Square.



MaryAnne McMillan (left), immediate past president of the American Horticultural Therapy Association, looked on as Assemblyman Robert Andrzejczak (right), chairman of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, presented Laura DePrado with the Chairman's Award. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Atwood, legislative director.

"The Chairman's Award is new and meant to honor someone who is doing innovative work in the field of agriculture — work that is benefiting the residents of New Jersey," Andrzejczak said in a March 27 press release. "As a veteran, and chairman of the assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, I felt that the work Laura DePrado and her colleagues are doing in the field of horticultural therapy was uniquely suited for this award."

DePrado commented in the release, "Being recognized by the state Legislature is a great honor. But the greatest reward is that awareness about the evidenced-based benefits is growing in many fields across the Garden State. As a result, my colleagues and I are able to help more people every day from ages 6 to 106 across the spectrum of abilities and circumstances in many facility types."

Horticultural therapy is the time-proven practice of utilizing the therapeutic benefits of working in a peaceful garden environment and using horticulture as modality to improve quality of life, the release said. It is practiced through social, vocational and therapeutic programs and successfully empowers individual to achieve their maximum independence providing a wide range of benefits to people of all ages in rehabilitative, health care and residential settings, in addition to its valuable, indirect benefit of encouraging the designation and creation of public and community gardens.