

## ***Another Landmark Achievement for Horticultural Therapy's Canadian Pioneer***

**Cross-Cultural Therapy**  
**July 20, 2009**

It's Blooming in Taiwan and it all began in Guelph!

Canada's first book on Horticultural Therapy has been translated into its third language and is now available in a Traditional Chinese edition for distribution in Taiwan. Published in Guelph, *Horticulture as Therapy: A Practical Guide to Using Horticulture as a Therapeutic Tool* was written by Guelph author and therapist Mitchell L. Hewson, HTM LT RAHP.



The Japanese and Chinese editions of Mitchell's book



Mitchell presented the book to Dr. Edgardo Perez MD, MPH, FRCPC, CHE, CHPQ, Chief Executive Officer and President of Homewood Corporation and Homewood Health Centre, for the Homewood Library and Archives during the official press release.

“It is the first text book on Horticultural Therapy in Canada, Japan and Taiwan,” says Hewson, Canada's first registered horticultural therapist and manager of the Horticultural Therapy department at Homewood Health Centre in Guelph. “The new Chinese edition is available in Taiwan through the PsyGarden Publishing Company, and will be used by mental health agencies there to improve their health care system. Taiwan now recognizes the importance of horticulture as a therapeutic tool,” says Hewson, and, as with Canada, the country is integrating horticulture into the health care system as a form of therapy. The book describes how to develop a Horticultural Therapy program, which is used as a treatment for addiction, mental illnesses, eating disorders, depression, dementia, stress and anxiety.”

“Horticultural Therapy is an experiential therapy that promotes a natural sense of wellness,” Hewson explains. “The use of living material with its intrinsic complement of textures, smell, and colour stimulates memory and thought processes and encourages an awareness of the external environment. Meaningful activity builds self-esteem and exercises the body. Positive socialization skills are developed and new, creative leisure skills are learned.”

During his 35 years as a therapist in this field, Hewson has seen first hand how horticulture as a therapeutic medium has reawakened a sense of hope, quality of life and dignity in clients who had all but given up on ever feeling happy and fulfilled again.

“Horticultural Therapy is increasingly recognized as a leading-edge complementary therapy. Its positive effects on specialized populations, including those who suffer from mental illness, have been firmly established through both anecdotal and empirical evidence. In creating this manual, I have tried to include all the information that a novice horticultural therapist would need to move forward with confidence as well as the detail required to make it a valuable aid for the seasoned professional.”

Originally published in 1994, the English edition of *Horticulture as Therapy: A Practical Guide to Using Horticulture as a Therapeutic Tool* is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> printing. “I am honored that my book and the therapeutic benefits it espouses is now available to another world community and its health care professionals.” In addition to his duties at Homewood Health Centre, Mitchell is also consultant to the Hong Kong Association of Therapeutic Horticulture. He will be offering copies of his book at a World Conference of Mental Health Care in the spring of 2010.

