

What exactly is a Certified Horticulturist?



Both Wes Bray and John Wright have passed the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association's (VNLA) certification program, earning a Certified Horticulturist designation. The designation certifies a thorough knowledge of a wide range of horticultural subjects, an ability to learn technical information and the desire of the recipient to provide home gardeners with accurate and reliable horticultural information.

To receive a Certified Horticulturist designation, candidates must pass a four-hour exam covering: basic botany; soils and fertilization; insects; diseases; pesticides; plant propagation; pruning; indoor foliage; vegetable gardening; fruits; trees and shrubs; perennials and annuals; landscape design and water quality. Approximately only one hundred (100) people receive certifications each year.

“Preparation for the test usually takes up to six months; only about 60 percent of the candidates pass the test for the first time,” according to Jeff Miller, VNLA executive director. The Certified Horticulturists presently working in the commonwealth must renew their certification every three years.

As retail nurseries and landscape maintenance firms are often the sources gardeners turn to for horticultural information the VNLA believes it is important that consumers receive information they can count on. “Consumers can feel confident in the information they receive from a Certified Horticulturist,” according to Miller.

The VNLA is an association of retail nurseries and garden centers, growers, landscape designers and contractors, and horticulturists. The VNLA supports research at Virginia Tech and Hampton Roads Agriculture Research and Extension Center; provides horticultural scholarships to Virginia Tech, sponsors 4-H and FFA projects in Virginia, sets statewide industry standards, and conducts member certification programs. The VNLA is part of the Virginia green industry contributing over \$1.12 billion to the economy of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

