

# GROWERTALKS

## Web Exclusive

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## Six Associations Join to Promote Horticulture

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Mary Meyer, professor and extension horticulturist at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and president of ASHS (American Society of Horticultural Science), recently sent an email asking people to read an attached white paper that outlined a proposal to research, develop and promote an advocacy and marketing campaign to increase the awareness of horticulture among the general public and students (as a career opportunity).

The white paper outlines all the positives of horticulture, along with the increasing global demand for all that we offer, from food to biofuels. But it goes on to describe the lack of awareness of the importance and value of horticulture among the general public, especially young people.

What's the solution? "Increase public awareness of the positive attributes of horticulture, especially in regards to educators, public service workers, students with an aptitude for plant science or for artistic expression through plant materials, and the general public," says the white paper.

Joining ASHS in this proposed plan is Longwood Gardens, the American Public Garden Association, the American Horticulture Society, the National Junior Horticulture Association Foundation (who?) and AmericanHort (the merged ANLA/OFA).

They propose a large national study to determine the scope of the issue and then the development of marketing plans to reach the various groups above. The desired outcome: improve public perception of horticulture; ensure that horticulture is part of the national education curriculum; increase youth participation in NJHA, 4-H, FFA, etc.; increase the number of high school and college students in horticulture programs; and ultimately increase the number of well-trained horticulture employees.

They're working now on funding; by next summer they hope to embark on phase 1 of the research, with other phases taking place in 2015 and 2016 and a marketing and education plan being launched by winter/spring 2017.

To read the white paper, [CLICK HERE](#). For more information, email Mary at [meyer023@umn.edu](mailto:meyer023@umn.edu). **GT**