



BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** October 12, 2009

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## **Horticultural Therapy Program Wins John Walker Community Service Award**

The Birmingham Botanical Gardens' program earns its first national honor

**BIRMINGHAM, AL** – Birmingham Botanical Gardens' horticultural therapy program has won the 2009 John Walker Community Service Award from the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA). This is the first national honor won by the program, which is managed by Horticultural Therapy Coordinator Susan Grimes with help from a team of dedicated volunteers. The John Walker Community Service Award is given each year to an organization that has made a "significant contribution to horticultural therapy in the area of program services provided for a community."

"This award reinforces The Gardens' outstanding commitment to service in the community," said Ms. Grimes, who traveled to California this past week to accept the honor. "It places Birmingham Botanical Gardens in the same company as other prestigious gardens throughout the United States." The only other public gardens to win the award in the past were Chicago Botanic Garden in 1987 and the Holden Arboretum in 1981.

Horticultural therapy uses gardening as a rehabilitation and life-enrichment tool for a diverse population that includes people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical limitations, mental and emotional impairment or other special needs. Some of The Gardens' clients include United Cerebral Palsy, Children's Hospital, St. Martin's in the Pines and Putnam Middle School. For more information about Birmingham Botanical Gardens' horticultural therapy program, go to [www.bbgardens.org](http://www.bbgardens.org) or call 205.414.3950.

### **About Birmingham Botanical Gardens**

Birmingham Botanical Gardens is Alabama's largest living museum with more than 10,000 different plants in its living collections. The Gardens' 67.5 acres contains 25+ unique gardens, 30+ works of original outdoor sculpture and miles of serene paths. The Gardens features the largest public horticulture library in the U.S., conservatories, a wildflower garden, two rose gardens, the Southern Living garden, and Japanese Gardens with a traditionally crafted tea house. Education programs run year round and over 10,000 school children enjoy free science-curriculum based field trips annually. Birmingham Botanical Gardens is open daily, offering free admission to more than 350,000 yearly visitors.