



# FLORIDA 4-H EXPLORATION

## Careers in Horticulture

Horticulture is the science and art of growing and caring for plants. Plants make a significant contribution to our health and wellness as ingredients in food and medicinal products, as well as in our recreational spaces: landscapes, parks, botanical gardens, natural areas, and hiking trails. Additionally, plants provide ecosystem benefits such as pollination services, healthy forests, support of wildlife habitat, and ecological diversity. The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) O\*NET Database\* has listed “Foresters” and “Soil and Plant Scientists” among its “Bright Outlook” career pathways. The USDOL defines bright outlook occupations as those expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, to have large numbers of job openings, and/or to be new and emerging occupations.

This publication highlights some of the many career pathways in horticulture. 4-H youth and 4-H club leaders can use the document to explore potential career interests. A career pathway is a workforce development strategy that assists young people and 4-H youth in their transition from education to the actual workforce. 4-H members can use some of the career pathways outlined below to explore different careers and determine their interest level before they graduate from high school. These career pathways can lead to knowledge and experience gained, as well as opportunities for individual or club service learning projects.



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An Equal Opportunity Institution. 4-H is the nation’s largest youth development organization. Over 230,000 members in the State of Florida help to make up the community of more than 6.5 million young people across America. 4-H is a non-formal, practical educational program for youth. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida/IFAS.

Youth can learn more about pursuing a career in horticulture by getting hands-on experience and working on 4-H horticulture projects. Examples include participating in the [Florida 4-H Horticulture Identification and Judging competition](#), or setting up a [4-H Gardening Project](#).

## Horticulture Career Pathways

Career Pathway	4-H Project Activity	4-H Project Activity Resources
Landscape Architecture and Design: Design and create beautiful greenspaces and Florida-Friendly landscapes.	Paint a picture, draw a map, or construct a 3-D model with plants and flowers.	<a href="#">Plants and Youth Terrarium Project</a>
Horticulture Production: Start your own horticulture business by growing edible (fruit and vegetables) and ornamental plants (palms and shrubs).	Share what you learn and grow with others.	<a href="#">Let's Get Growing</a>
Landscape Management—Sports Fields/ Golf Courses/Botanical Gardens/Residential/ Commercial Landscapes: Grow and care for plants in landscapes, public gardens, parks, golf courses, and sports fields.	Lead a community service project to clean up a local park or cemetery.	<a href="#">4-H Florida Friendly Landscaping Workbook</a>
Floriculture: Grow cut-flowers and design floral arrangements.	Share your floral arrangements at nursing homes, schools, or hospitals.	<a href="#">4-H Horticulture ID: Flowers and Foliage</a>
Forestry and Arboriculture: Promote tree and forest health using appropriate pruning, tree maintenance, and fire-science principles.	Invite a forester to speak at your next 4-H club meeting.	<a href="#">Give Forests a Hand</a>
Education/Consulting: Teach courses and provide training on how to grow and care for plants. Team with a local Extension specialist.	Volunteering to teach is a great way to learn more about plants and sharpen skills.	<a href="#">Plant Connections</a>
Ecosystem Restoration: Remove and control invasive plants growing in parks and natural habitats to protect our environment and natural resources.	Work with a local environmental group to educate the public about how to remove invasive plants or organize/collaborate on an invasive species removal workday.	<a href="#">Soil, Water and Land Use</a>
Science: Protect plant health with pest- and disease- management planning.	Invite a professional from a landscape pest management company or a horticulture Extension agent to a 4-H club meeting for a demonstration on pest and disease identification techniques.	<a href="#">4-H Horticulture ID</a>

Research other careers in horticulture, including tissue culture technology, marketing, etc., to explore more possibilities. Check out additional 4-H resources to develop career readiness. Contact your local Extension office to learn more about horticulture, or to get involved in a 4-H youth horticulture project.

## References

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O\*NET OnLine. (2023). Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources. <https://www.onetonline.org/find/career?c=1>

Florida 4-H Curriculum Clearinghouse. (2019). Florida 4-H Curriculum Clearinghouse. [https://florida4h.ifas.ufl.edu/media/florida4hifasufledu/docs/Florida\\_4-H\\_Curriculum-Clearing-House-2019-20.pdf](https://florida4h.ifas.ufl.edu/media/florida4hifasufledu/docs/Florida_4-H_Curriculum-Clearing-House-2019-20.pdf)

\*O\*NET Online Career Pathway Database is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, and developed by the National Center for O\*NET Development.