

American Society for Horticultural Science

Specifications for ASHS Mechanization, Robotics, and Smart Technology Publication Award

Objective

To recognize and honor the author(s) of the outstanding mechanization, robotics, and smart technology paper published in the previous year's issues of *HortScience*, the *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*, or *HortTechnology*.

Subject Area

Papers shall report results of original and substantial research relating to mechanization, robotics, and/or smart technology used in breeding, growing, harvesting, or postharvest handling of specialty crops. See Categories below.

Eligibility Requirements

The author or one of the co-authors of the paper selected for the award must be a Member of ASHS at the time of publication.

Basis for Judging Papers

- 1) Originality, accuracy, clarity, and conciseness of the presentation.
- 2) Contribution to the advancement of knowledge of the subject. See Criteria below.

Screening Committee

The Screening Committee to select the awardee shall consist of five members, plus at least two alternates, all of whom shall be appointed each year by the ASHS President-elect. The committee will meet at least once per year prior to the Annual Conference and will select a chair from among the current committee members to take the position at the conclusion of the Annual Conference. All appointees to the committee must be Members of ASHS.

Screening Procedures

As soon as possible after publication of the final issues of ASHS Serial Publications for the year, ASHS Headquarters staff will share a list of eligible papers. Each member of the screening committee, upon contact from the chair, will submit to the chair a list of what he/she considers to be the three most worthy papers for the award.

The chair will prepare a list of all the papers recommended and forward a copy to each member of the screening committee, together with a blank ballot, for final vote. Each Committee member will complete the ballot, listing the four most worthy papers, in order. Each committee member also will submit substantiating statements for his/her choices. The following weights will be assigned to the papers: 1st choice (5 points), 2nd choice (3 points), 3rd choice (2 points), and 4th choice (one point). The chair shall report to the Awards Committee chair, the executive director, and other members of the screening committee the two papers receiving the most points, together with the "score" and substantiating statements for each paper (the top two papers must not have a "tie" score). The Awards Committee is responsible for final selection/ approval of the winning paper.

Omission of the Award

If, in any year, no paper is considered by the Screening Committee to meet the criteria and standards for the award, the Screening Committee may recommend to the Awards Committee that no award be given that year.

Award/Reception

The award consists of a plaque-mounted certificate of the research paper selected for the award for the primary author, and a certificate for the coauthor(s) if applicable. There is no monetary stipend.

The award presentation normally will be made during the Society's Annual Conference, at a function or event at which the awardee's(s') peers are present. Information about the award will be disseminated in press releases and will be included in appropriate publications of the Society (such as *HortScience*).

Approved by the Board of Directors, 10/6/25.

Categories of articles eligible for award consideration. (One award will be given per year)

- Automation in Horticultural Production
- Smart Irrigation and Fertigation Systems
- Data-Driven Decision Tools
- Technology Adoption and Impact

Criteria

Purpose and Objective

- Clearly stated research or outreach goals.
- Includes a well-defined problem statement and/or target audience.
- Relevance to the award category.

Technical Quality

- Accuracy and reliability of data and methodology.
- Logical organization and clarity of presentation.
- Sufficient detail to support replication or application.
- Appropriate use of statistical or analytical tools.

Usefulness and Relevance

- Direct connection between the research/methodology and the stated problem.
- Practical applicability to horticultural science, industry, or education.
- Value to stakeholders (e.g., growers, educators, students, consumers).

Originality and Innovation

- Novelty of the research question, approach, or technology.
- Creativity in adaptive research, teaching methods, or extension strategies.
- Unique contributions to the field or cross-disciplinary integration.

Potential Impact

- Likely influence on future research, industry practices, or educational methods.
- Evidence of adoption, scalability, or broader relevance.
- Contribution to advancing horticultural science or solving real-world problems.