



RHS LEVEL 3 ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN HORTICULTURE

2011

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION – MODULE C

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully before commencing.

- i) Duration of this paper is **3 hours**.
- ii) There are **THREE** sections **A**, **B** and **C** to complete.
- iii) **ALL** questions are to be attempted.
- iv) **ALL** work to be labelled with the candidate's number.

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section A – Potting Shed

MARKS

Q1 Prick off **ONE** tray of **40** seedlings labelled **A**, using the full-size tray and potting compost provided.

20

Q2 a) Sow **ONE** full sized seed tray for **EACH** of the seeds labelled **B** and **C**, using the appropriate compost.

b) Cover **HALF** of **EACH** seed tray if appropriate.

c) Label **EACH** seed tray as appropriate.

30

Q3 Pot up **FIVE** of the rooted cuttings labelled **D**, using the containers and compost provided.

Carry out any appropriate maintenance tasks.

20

Q4 Select, prepare and insert **TEN** cuttings for **EACH** of the specimens labelled **E** and **F** into the containers and cutting compost provided.

30

Leave any unused material together with the mother plants at your workstation.

NOTE – 15 Proficiency marks are available for this section of the paper.

Please see over/.....

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section B – Plots

		MARKS
Q5	a) Accurately mark out a rectangle 1m x 2m, using the equipment provided.	10
	b) Carry out the necessary cultivations in preparation for the sowing of grass seed, commencing with forking.	17
	c) Sow the grass seed labelled G at a rate of 35g/m ² on to the prepared rectangle.	8
Q6	a) Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare the soil in readiness for planting the transplants labelled H .	10
	b) Select and plant out SIX transplants in EACH of TWO staggered nursery rows at the correct spacing, leaving the rest of each row marked out but NOT planted.	10
Q7	a) Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare the soil in readiness for sowing TWO rows of the seed labelled I .	12
	b) Sow TWO rows of the seed labelled I across the width of the plot at appropriate spacing, with rows 20cm apart.	
	Leave half of EACH row uncovered.	18
Q8	Plant the container grown woody shrub labelled J .	15

NOTE – 15 Proficiency marks are available for this section of the paper.

Please turn over/.....

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section C – Plant, Pest, Disease & Disorder Identification

	MARKS
Q9 Determine the pH of the soil sample K , using the kit provided. At the conclusion of your test, label the test tube with your candidate number and leave where advised.	6
Q10 A pH test has been carried out on a soil and the result is shown by the tube labelled L . On the pro-forma provided, name ONE plant that would grow well in soil of this pH and ONE plant that would grow poorly. Give the genus and specific epithet in EACH case.	4
Q11 On the pro-forma provided, identify the plant specimens labelled 1 – 40 , giving the genus and specific epithet in EACH case.	40
Q12 On the pro-forma provided, identify the pest, disease or disorder affecting EACH of the specimens labelled 41 – 50 , giving the common name in EACH case.	10
Q13 On the pro-forma provided, identify the weeds and seeds labelled 51 – 60 , giving the genus and specific epithet for EACH weed and genus only for EACH seed.	10
	300

©These questions are the property of the Royal Horticultural Society.
They must not be reproduced or sold.

The Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6QB.
RHS Registered Charity No: 222879/SC038262



RHS LEVEL 3 ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN HORTICULTURE 2011

MODULE C PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

Examiners Report

Candidates Registered	179		Total Candidates Passed	113	82.48%
Candidates Entered	137	76.54%	Passed with Commendation	66	48.17%
Candidates Absent	31	17.32%	Passed	47	34.31%
Candidates Deferred	8	4.47%	Failed	24	17.52%
Candidates Withdrawn	3	1.67%			

Guidance notes for candidates and tutors

This examination report has been designed to support candidates and tutors preparing for the RHS Advanced Certificate - Module C practical examination. The report concentrates on areas which candidates found challenging or appeared not to be fully prepared. The RHS hope that prospective candidates and tutors will find the report constructive in the preparation for module C practical examination.

The report has three components:

- 1) The examination question is recorded with marks allocated.
- 2) Specific comments for each question. These comments relate to:
 - a) Was the task completed safely?
 - b) Did the candidate use the appropriate resources efficiently?
 - c) Was the method used correct and appropriate to the task?
 - d) Did the method used relate to modern* horticultural practices?
(* within the last ten years)
- 3) General comments

Important note

A common misconception by candidates is “we must do this the RHS way”. There is no RHS way. Examiners mark candidates work with reference to the criteria as recorded under the specific comments in this report.

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section A – Potting Shed

MARKS

- Q1** Prick off **ONE** tray of **40** seedlings labelled **A**, using the full-size tray and potting compost provided.

20

Seedlings should be handled by the cotyledons and inserted to the correct depth (to the cotyledons). Seedlings should be selected to a uniform size and the five rows should be even and straight. Care should be taken that the correct number are used and that the rest of the seedlings in the pot are left in a usable condition.

- Q2**
- a) Sow **ONE** full sized seed tray for **EACH** of the seeds labelled **B** and **C**, using the appropriate compost.
 - b) Cover **HALF** of **EACH** seed tray if appropriate.
 - c) Label **EACH** seed tray as appropriate.

30

Some candidates still cover fine seed. However it is more common for candidates, after half covering medium seed, to leave insufficient space for subsequent watering. The surface of the medium on which seed is sown should be nearer the top of the tray for fine seed.

- Q3** Pot up **FIVE** of the rooted cuttings labelled **D**, using the containers and compost provided.

Carry out any appropriate maintenance tasks.

20

Ten plants are provided for candidates to choose to pot up the five best. Fuchsias should be stopped without leaving excess stem and the flowers removed. The surface of the compost of the young plants should be cleaned of weeds etc., and damaged or dead leaves removed and then they should be placed centrally in the pot.

- Q4** Select, prepare and insert **TEN** cuttings for **EACH** of the specimens labelled **E** and **F** into the containers and cutting compost provided.

30

Leave any unused material together with the mother plants at your workstation.

It was expected that leaf petiole cuttings would be taken from the Peperomia and leaf-bud cuttings from the Hedera. In the latter, leaves should be lying on the surface but slightly clear so as to allow air movement and minimise leaf rot. The length of the petiole in the Peperomias and of the stem below the bud in Hedera should not be excessive.

NOTE – 15 Proficiency marks are available for this section of the paper.

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section B – Plots

		MARKS
Q5	a) Accurately mark out a rectangle 1m x 2m, using the equipment provided.	10
	b) Carry out the necessary cultivations in preparation for the sowing of grass seed, commencing with forking.	17
	c) Sow the grass seed labelled G at a rate of 35g/m ² on to the prepared rectangle.	8

It is important to site the area for grass sowing within the plot in such a way that it does not impinge on later activities. Students should practise the use of a 3,4,5 triangle so that excessive time is not spent on this activity. The diagonals should be measured as a check on accuracy. The use of a landscape rake and a garden rake to achieve a final finish should also be practised. Consolidation should be even. The grass seed should be divided into two lots and broadcast in two directions at right angles to each other.

Q6	a) Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare the soil in readiness for planting the transplants labelled H .	10
	b) Select and plant out SIX transplants in EACH of TWO staggered nursery rows at the correct spacing, leaving the rest of each row marked out but NOT planted.	10

The bare root plants provided should be graded and protected from drying out during the time spent on this activity. The rows should be measured from the edge of the plot and lines should be taut. Transplants should be planted up against the line and firmed in. Spacing and depth of planting was variable in the recent examination, some candidates only guessing the distance they should be apart.

Q7	a) Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare the soil in readiness for sowing TWO rows of the seed labelled I .	12
	b) Sow TWO rows of the seed labelled I across the width of the plot at appropriate spacing, with rows 20cm apart.	
	Leave half of EACH row uncovered.	18

Drills should be taken out against a taut line and should be straight. In the recent examination, sowing depth and distance was usually well known. In addition to the skill of soil preparation and sowing of the seeds, the measuring distance between the rows (20cm) is important as is the fact that seeds should be planted as close to the edge as appropriate. It is important to remember that in commercial horticulture, profits could be lost if the space is not utilised appropriately.

Q8 Plant the container grown woody shrub labelled **J**. **15**

The surface of the compost should be cleaned prior to planting the shrub. The sides and bottom of the planting hole should be forked. About one square metre of mulch should be applied reducing in thickness towards the stem of the shrub.

NOTE – 15 Proficiency marks are available for this section of the paper.

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section C – Plant, Pest, Disease & Disorder Identification

	MARKS
Q9 Determine the pH of the soil sample K , using the kit provided. At the conclusion of your test, label the test tube with your candidate number and leave where advised.	6
Q10 A pH test has been carried out on a soil and the result is shown by the tube labelled L . On the pro-forma provided, name ONE plant that would grow well in soil of this pH and ONE plant that would grow poorly. Give the genus and specific epithet in EACH case.	4
Questions 9 and 10 In the recent examination the pH test was usually well done although calcicoles and calcifuges were sometimes confused.	
Q11 On the pro-forma provided, identify the plant specimens labelled 1 – 40 , giving the genus and specific epithet in EACH case.	40
Q12 On the pro-forma provided, identify the pest, disease or disorder affecting EACH of the specimens labelled 41 – 50 , giving the common name in EACH case.	10
Q13 On the pro-forma provided, identify the weeds and seeds labelled 51 – 60 , giving the genus and specific epithet for EACH weed and genus only for EACH seed.	10

Questions 11 – 13

The identification of plants is still a problem for some students.

General Comments

It should always be borne in mind that both for the potting shed and the plot work, there are an extra fifteen marks not allocated to specific tasks that assess overall three areas of competence: layout of working area, method and effectiveness of working and task completion and tidiness. For the plot work section in particular,

successful candidates tend to review the questions prior to commencing in order to evaluate where each question shall be placed within the plot. This is an extremely time constrained discipline and candidates should be conscious of this. Good preparations can save time, such as collecting all materials and equipment in one journey as opposed to several.

In addition, since each of the three sections must be passed in order to achieve an overall pass, the complete omission of a question will lead to an almost certain fail.

**©These questions are the property of the Royal Horticultural Society.
They must not be reproduced or sold.**

The Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6QB.
RHS Registered Charity No: 222879/SC038262