



Sharing the best in Gardening

## RHS Qualifications

### RHS Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture

#### Qualification Specification

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## **1. RHS Qualifications Contact Details**

RHS Qualifications is the Awarding Organisation of the Royal Horticultural Society.

RHS Qualifications  
RHS Garden Wisley  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU23 6QB  
UK

Tel: 01483 226500

Email: [qualifications@rhs.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@rhs.org.uk)

Approved Centre Web Portal: [www.rhsq.org.uk](http://www.rhsq.org.uk)

## **2. Equality and Diversity Policy Statement**

RHS Qualifications is committed to policies that will promote equal opportunities in all its operations, regardless of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor.

RHS Qualifications is committed to ensuring that there is no unfair discrimination in any of its operations and will take into account all current legislation in relation to the equality of opportunity.

RHS Qualifications will constantly monitor and review its policies and practices pertaining to equal opportunities, to ensure that they remain consistent with its equal opportunities objectives and continue to comply with all relevant legislation.

RHS Qualifications will strive to make awareness of and respect for equality and diversity an integral part of the culture of the organisation.

A copy of the RHS Qualifications Equality and Diversity Policy is available on the Approved Centre Web Portal.

### **3. RHS Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture focuses on developing essential horticultural skills. These not only offer opportunities for employment, but provide the foundation for further skills development at level 3. By carefully focusing on key skills, it has been possible to develop a practical qualification that can be studied on a part-time basis, either during the day or in the evening. RHS theoretical and practical qualifications are offered separately in order to provide maximum flexibility to candidates, providers and employers.

There are no pre-requisites for entry to the qualification.

The qualification is accredited within the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Accreditation Number: 501/0207/2

#### **3.2 Credit Value**

The qualification has a credit value of 15.

This equates to 150 learning hours. Learning time is defined as the time taken by learners at the level of the qualification, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the units to the standard determined by the assessment criteria.

#### **3.3 Teaching Pattern**

The qualification is designed to be studied on a part-time basis. No particular teaching pattern is specified, and centres offering courses leading to the qualification are free to define their own teaching structure and teaching hours.

### 3.4 Qualification Structure

The qualification will be awarded to those who gain 15 credits, comprising of the six mandatory units and one from the optional units.

RHS Ref	Unit	Credits	Level
	<b><i>Mandatory Units</i></b>		
R2100	Soil Testing Unit reference number K/601/7503	1	2
R2121	Sowing seeds and vegetative propagation techniques Unit reference number A/601/7666	2	2
R2122	Practical skills in ground preparation for seeding and planting Unit reference number F/601/7667	2	2
R2123	Practical skills in establishing seeds and plants in soil Unit reference number L/601/7669	2	2
R2124	Care and pruning of plants Unit reference number J/601/7671	3	2
R2125	Identification of a range of common garden plants, weeds, pests, diseases, disorders and beneficial organisms Unit reference number K/601/7680	3	2
	<b><i>Optional Units</i></b>		
R2126	Sustainable garden practice Unit reference number M/601/9155	2	2
R2127	Safe operation of powered garden machinery Unit reference number T/601/7682	2	2

### 3.5 Assessment

Assessment will be conducted by the centre using RHS criteria.  
Assessment information and guidance documents can be found in the Guidance for Centres Delivering Practical Assessment.

### 3.6 Language

Assessments will be offered in English.

### 3.7 Award of Credits

Credits for a unit will be awarded to candidates for the successful achievement of the learning outcomes of a unit.

## 4. Approved Centres

Centres wishing to offer examinations leading to RHS qualifications must be approved by RHS Qualifications.

Applications for approval should be sent to the Quality Assurance and Relationships Officer at the contact details in section 1.

## **5. Candidate Registration**

Candidates should be registered for the units of the qualification through the RHS Qualifications Web Portal.

Approved Centres undertake to obtain on behalf of their learners a Unique Learner Number (ULN) and a learner record, unless the learner chooses not to have one.

If centres supply an email address for candidates at the time of registration, candidates will be invited to open an account on the RHS Qualifications Web Portal, and will be able to view their qualification history, their current registrations, and their results when available.

## **6 Reasonable Adjustments**

RHS Qualifications is committed to ensuring fair assessment for all candidates, and will facilitate access to its qualifications through reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements for candidates with an identified specific need. An example of a reasonable adjustment which could be made is the production of a modified assessment paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

Full guidance is provided in the document 'Guidance to Centres for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration'. The document is available on the RHS website ([www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)), the RHS Qualifications Approved Centre Web Portal, or can be obtained from RHS Qualifications.

Applications for reasonable adjustment must be made by the Approved Centre on behalf of the candidate. Application must be made within specified timescales.

## **7. Fees**

For a full list of fees please see the Qualifications and Credit Framework Fees Notice, this document is available on the Qualifications page on the RHS website and on the RHS Webportal.

All fees are payable prior to confirmation of service or entry for assessment.

### **Replacement Certificate (if lost, damaged or destroyed)**

The fee for a replacement certificate can be found on the Qualifications and Credit Framework Fees Notice. Please send your request to the Qualifications Department.

## **8. Appeals Procedure**

An Appeals procedure exists to conduct appeals lodged by candidates against decisions made by RHS Qualifications, concerning their performance, the granting of an award and/or the closure of their entry to an award on academic grounds.

The procedure is also followed in cases where there is irregularity or malpractice in the conduct of assessment and where RHS Qualifications has imposed a penalty on a candidate or assessor, and the Centre wishes to appeal against this decision after results are published.

A copy of the procedure is available on the RHS Qualifications Web Portal and on the RHS website.

## **9. Policy on Malpractice and Maladministration**

Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment or examination, the certification of qualifications and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment, examination and certification.

RHS Qualifications does not tolerate actions or attempted actions of malpractice by learners or centres in connection with RHS qualifications. RHS Qualifications may impose penalties and/or sanctions on candidates or centres where incidents, or attempted incidents, of malpractice have been proven.

A copy of the full policy is available on the RHS Qualifications Web Portal and on the RHS website.

## Soil Testing

**RHS reference number: R2100**

**Unit reference number:- K/601/7503**

**Unit guided learning hours: 8**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 1**

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the skills and knowledge to accurately test a range of soils

### **Learning Outcomes**

The learner will:

1. Understand the reasons for soil testing
2. Be able to collect and prepare soil samples for testing
3. Be able to identify the textural class of soils
4. Be able to determine the pH of soils

### **Assessment Criteria**

The learner can:

- 1.1 State the reasons for soil testing
- 2.1 Collect a soil sample from the topsoil of a given site (without using the ADAS method)
- 2.2 Demonstrate how to prepare a soil sample for testing
- 3.1 Perform soil texture tests by feel using the ADAS 1985 soil texture key
- 3.2 Distinguish between distinctly different textural classes
- 4.1 Perform a pH test using an industry standard soil testing kit
- 4.2 Differentiate between prepared soil samples



# Sowing seeds and vegetative propagation techniques

**Unit reference number: R2121**

**Unit reference number: A/601/7666**

**Unit guided learning hours: 15**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 2**

Unit purpose and aim(s) This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to propagate a diverse range of plants and to provide appropriate aftercare.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to fill containers appropriately to a consistent standard in readiness to accept seed or propagules
2. Be able to sow seed to a consistent and uniform standard in containers and carry out appropriate aftercare to ensure successful germination
3. Be able to prick out seedlings into containers

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Demonstrate how to fill a range of containers
- 1.2 Demonstrate how to 'strike off' (level) a range of containers
- 1.3 Consolidate growing media in a range of containers appropriately
- 2.1 Sow seed and label appropriately
- 2.2 Cover seeds appropriately
- 2.3 Perform the task of watering selecting an appropriate method
- 2.4 Select the appropriate environmental conditions for sown seed
- 2.5 Specify the appropriate temperature range required for successful germination of different types of seeds sown
- 2.6 Describe how to ensure successful germination of seed
- 3.1 Prick out seedlings singly into pots
- 3.2 Prick out seedlings into seed trays at stated densities
- 3.3 Prick out seedlings into modular trays at stated densities

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| <b>4.</b> Be able to propagate plants from stem cuttings                         | 4.1 Collect suitable material from the mother plant                                      |
|  | 4.2 Demonstrate how to protect collected material appropriately to prevent desiccation   |
|  | 4.3 Prepare uniform stem cuttings for insertion  |
|  | 4.4 Propagate plants from stem cuttings  |
|  | 4.5 Apply appropriate root promotion material to the base of the propagule (if required) |
|  | 4.6 Demonstrate how to insert propagules into growing media                              |
| <b>5.</b> Be able to propagate plants from leaf petiole and leaf lamina cuttings | 5.1 Collect material from the mother plant   |
|  | 5.2 Demonstrate how to protect collected material appropriately to prevent desiccation   |
|  | 5.3 Propagate by leaf petiole cuttings   |
|  | 5.4 Perform leaf lamina propagation techniques   |
|  | 5.5 Prepare and insert propagules into growing media appropriately                       |
| <b>6.</b> Be able to propagate plants from root cuttings during dormant season   | 6.1 Collect material from the mother plant   |
|  | 6.2 Demonstrate how to protect collected material appropriately to prevent desiccation   |
|  | 6.3 Propagate by root cuttings   |
|  | 6.4 Prepare and insert propagules into growing media                                     |
| <b>7.</b> Be able to propagate plants by division during the appropriate season  | 7.1 Lift the mother plant (if necessary)   |
|  | 7.2 Demonstrate how to carry out the process of division using a suitable method         |
|  | 7.3 Perform the technique of division on a range of plants                               |
|  | 7.4 Prepare the propagules for replanting / potting                                      |

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|    | 7.5  | Demonstrate how to protect newly prepared material from desiccation   |
|    | 7.6  | Replant or pot propagules in prepared soil or appropriate media in containers   |
| 8. | Be able to provide aftercare to propagules | 8.1 Select a suitable environment for newly propagated material and carry out appropriate aftercare to ensure success |

# Practical skills in ground preparation for seeding and planting

RHS reference number: R2122

Unit reference number: F/601/7667

Unit guided learning hours: 15

Unit level: Level 2

Credit Value: 2

Unit purpose and aim(s): The aim of this unit is to provide the learner with the knowledge and skills required in preparing the ground for planting plants and seeds. The preparation of the ground may cover the use of both hand tools and powered machinery such as tractor mounted equipment.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to select, use and maintain equipment
2. Be able to prepare ground for seeding and planting
3. Be able to work safely and minimise environmental damage

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Select appropriate equipment for this area of work
- 1.2 Use equipment according to instructions
- 1.3 Prepare, maintain and store equipment in a safe and effective working condition throughout
- 2.1 Prepare the ground in a way that is appropriate to the plants/seeds being established, the soil type and ground conditions
- 2.2 Add the materials specified for the operation. (it may be compost, fertiliser or sand)
- 2.3 Produce the required tilth for the specified finish.
- 2.4 Clear debris from the site effectively, safely, tidily and legally
- 2.5 Complete work to the agreed schedule
- 3.1 Work in a way which maintains health and safety and is consistent with current legislation, codes of practice and any additional requirements
- 3.2 Carry out work in a manner which minimises environmental damage
- 3.3 Dispose of waste safely and correctly

## Practical Skills in Establishing Seeds and Plants in Soil

**RHS reference number: R2123**

**Unit reference number: L/601/7669**

**Unit guided learning hours: 15**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 2**

Unit purpose and aim(s): The aim of this unit is to provide the learner with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to plant and establish plants and or seeds in soil. The learner will also provide aftercare to meet specifications for newly established plants or seeds.

### Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to select, use and maintain equipment
2. Be able to select and transport plants and or seeds
3. Be able to establish plants and or seeds in soil
4. Be able to work safely and minimise environmental damage

### Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Select appropriate equipment for this area of work
- 1.2 Use equipment according to instructions
- 1.3 Prepare, maintain and store equipment in a safe and effective working condition throughout
- 2.1 Select plants and or seeds as requested
- 2.2 Identify a representative sample of plants
- 2.3 Handle, prepare and transport plants and seeds in a way that maintains their health and condition
- 3.1 Position and plant the plants and or seeds according to instructions / drawings
- 3.2 Provide aftercare to meet the planting specifications
- 4.1 Work in a way which maintains health and safety and is consistent with current legislation, codes of practice and any additional requirements
- 4.2 Dispose of waste safely and correctly

# Care and pruning of plants

**RHS reference number: R2124**

**Unit reference number: J/601/7671**

**Unit guided learning hours: 23**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 3**

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to successfully plant, prune and care for a wide range of hardy plants.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to re-pot and pot on
2. Be able to provide aftercare to aid the establishment of plants that have been re-potted and those growing in the open ground
3. Know how to apply the principles of pruning
4. Be able to prune a range of plants to achieve specified outcomes

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Assess the condition of the plant and report
- 1.2 'Knock out' an established container grown plant
- 1.3 Remove dead, diseased or damaged parts of plants
- 1.4 Remove old media from surface and ease compaction of the root ball
- 1.5 Trim the roots and aerial growth (if appropriate)
- 1.6 Select an appropriate container
- 1.7 Select an appropriate growing media for the subject
- 1.8 Perform the task of potting on
- 2.1 Demonstrate how to provide appropriate aftercare
- 2.2 Demonstrate how to apply fertilisers
- 2.3 Report changes in the conditions of plants indicating possible causes
- 3.1 Define the term '3 Ds' and state the order in which the 3 D's are carried out
- 3.2 Define pruning terminology
- 4.1 Perform formative and maintenance pruning operations on a range of plants

# Identification of a range of common garden plants, weeds, pests, diseases, disorders and beneficial organisms

**RHS reference number: R R2125**

**Unit reference number: K/601/7680**

**Unit guided learning hours: 23**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 3**

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge required to identify a range of common garden plants, weeds, seeds, pests, diseases, disorders and beneficial organisms.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Understand how plants are botanically named
2. Be able to identify a range of plants
3. Be able to identify a range of seeds
4. Be able to identify a range of pests, diseases and disorders
5. Know a range of beneficial birds, animals and insects

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Name plants correctly using the accepted botanical nomenclature
- 2.1 Identify a range of plants by botanical name from each of the following categories:
  - (a) deciduous or evergreen trees
  - (b) conifers
  - (c) deciduous shrubs
  - (d) evergreen shrubs
  - (e) non-woody herbaceous plants
  - (f) rock garden and alpine plants
  - (g) aquatic plants
  - (h) weeds
- 3.1 Identify a range seeds by generic name.
- 4.1 Identify a range of pests, diseases and disorders by common name.
- 5.1 Identify a range of beneficial birds, animals, or insects by common name.
- 5.2 State why the animals, birds and insects identified in 5.1 are beneficial to horticulture

## Sustainable garden practice

**RHS reference number: R2126**

**Unit reference number: M/601/9155**

**Unit guided learning hours: 23**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 2**

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit enables the learner to understand and apply a range of sustainable gardening practices.

### Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to identify potential hazards and risks associated with sustainable garden practice

2. Be able to select and use appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing

3. Be able to select and use a range of tools, equipment and materials

4. Be able to make and use garden compost

### Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Define the hazards associated with handling plant waste and composting
- 1.2 Define the hazards associated with preparing and applying compost teas and other organic materials
- 1.3 Define the hazards associated with water storage and use
- 1.4 Assess the hazards associated with handling potentially injurious plants
- 2.1 Identify and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing required
- 3.1 Perform sustainable garden operations using a range of equipment and tools
- 3.2 Select and use sustainable materials in a range of garden operations
- 4.1 Collect garden waste and separate for processing
- 4.2 Select and process suitable material for composting (shredding if required) and add to compost heap
- 4.3 Dispose of unsuitable material in an environmentally acceptable manner
- 4.4 Monitor compost and assess the need for aeration and turning



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|    | 4.5 | Select and apply composted material for a range of uses to include   |
|    |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) conservation / protection of un-cropped areas</li> <li>b) mulching around established plants</li> <li>c) soil improvement prior to sowing or planting</li> </ul>                               |
| 5. |     | Be able to harvest rainwater, conserve grey water, store appropriately and use to irrigate plants  |
|    | 5.1 | Harvest/recycle water and store appropriately  |
|    | 5.2 | Assess the quality of harvested/ recycled water for horticultural use  |
|    | 5.3 | Apply adequate amounts of water to plants outdoors to maintain growth  |
| 6. |     | Be able to use green manure, compost and natural materials to enhance soil fertility and feed plants   |
|    | 6.1 | Name suitable plant species for use as green manure  |
|    | 6.2 | Sow green manure between crops   |
|    | 6.3 | Incorporate green manure by digging in prior to re-sowing or planting  |
| 7. |     | Be able to prepare liquid organic materials and apply to plants  |
|    | 7.1 | Prepare liquid organic materials   |
|    | 7.2 | Apply liquid organic materials to plants   |
| 8. |     | Be able to select plant species adapted for specific environmental conditions  |
|    | 8.1 | Select plant species adapted for specific environmental conditions to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) dry soils</li> <li>(b) waterlogged soils</li> <li>(c) reduced light</li> </ul>                                  |
|    | 8.2 | Report changes in the condition of plants, indicating possible causes to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) water deficiency/excess</li> <li>(b) disease</li> <li>(c) pests</li> <li>(d) environmental damage</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>9.</b> Be able to select and make provision for beneficial birds, animals and insects</p>        | <p>9.1 Perform activities in a garden setting which encourage beneficial organisms</p> <p>9.2 State the ecological advantages of a range of beneficial birds, animals and insects in a garden setting</p>  |
| <p><b>10.</b> Be able to prevent and control pests, weeds and diseases using sustainable practices</p> | <p>10.1 Demonstrate suitable cultural methods to prevent / reduce the occurrence of pests, weeds and diseases</p> <p>10.2 Demonstrate suitable cultural methods of control on a range of established pests, weeds and diseases</p> <p>10.3 Apply biological controls to a range of pests</p> |

## Safe operation of powered garden machinery

**RHS reference number R2127**

**Unit reference number: T/601/7682**

**Unit guided learning hours: 15**

**Unit level: Level 2**

**Credit Value: 2**

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to safely operate a range of powered garden machinery, and includes pre-start checks, adjustment, effective operation and basic maintenance.

### Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to identify potential hazards and risks associated with powered garden machinery
2. Be able to select and wear appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing
3. Be able to carry out pre-start checks on powered garden machinery
4. Be able to check that all safety signage, guards and devices are in position and operating correctly
5. Be able to identify the controls and define their function
6. Be able to adjust a limited range of garden machinery for specified tasks
7. Be able to use garden machinery safely and effectively

### Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Identify the risks associated with powered garden machinery
- 1.2 Assess the hazards associated with powered garden machinery
- 2.1 Select and correctly wear the appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing/equipment required
- 3.1 Assess the condition and serviceability of powered garden machines
- 4.1 Define the meaning of the different safety decals (signage)
- 4.2 Identify the position of guards and confirm that they are in place correctly fitted and secure
- 4.3 Demonstrate that all safety devices are operational (as applicable to machine)
- 5.1 Identify the controls of a range of powered garden machinery, and demonstrate their correct use
- 6.1 Perform pre-operation adjustments to powered garden machines prior to 'work' to accommodate the operator
- 6.2 Carry out simple adjustments to different types of powered garden machine prior to 'work' to suit task
- 7.1 Demonstrate safe use of different powered garden machinery

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|    | 7.2  | Demonstrate efficient working practice and correct technique using different powered garden machinery |
| 8. | Be able to clean and check garden machinery after use                                      | 8.1 Wear correct personal protective equipment for cleaning garden machinery                          |
|    | 8.2  | Perform post operative cleaning operations and checks on powered garden machinery                     |
| 9. | Know how to correctly dispose of waste associated with the use of powered garden machinery | 9.1 Specify how to dispose of waste correctly   |

Additional information about the unit	
Unit purpose and aim(s)	This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to safely operate a range of powered garden machinery, and includes pre-start checks, adjustment, effective operation and basic maintenance.
Unit expiry date	31 December 2014
Details of the relationship between the unit and relevant national occupational standards or other professional standards or curricula (if appropriate)	
Assessment requirements or guidance specified by a sector or regulatory body (if appropriate)	
Support for the unit from a SSC or other appropriate body (if required)	
Location of the unit within the subject/sector classification system	Horticulture
Name of the organisation submitting the unit	Royal Horticultural Society
Availability for use	Shared
Unit available from	1 September 2010
Unit guided learning hours	15