



RHS LEVEL 3 ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN HORTICULTURE

2010

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.

Please turn over/.....

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** seed tray of **EACH** of the seeds labelled **B** and **C**, using the full-size seed trays and seed compost provided.
 - b) Cover half of **EACH** container if appropriate.
 - c) Label **EACH** container as appropriate, using the labels provided. **30**
- Q3** Select, prepare and insert cuttings for **EACH** of the specimens labelled:
- D** - 10 softwood stem cuttings;
 - E** - 2 whole leaf cuttings.
- Use the pots, half-size seed trays and cutting compost provided. **30**
- (Leave any unused material on the work bench.)**
- Q4** Prune **EACH** of the plant specimens labelled **F** and **G** in order to maintain their effectiveness as ornamental plants. Assume the time of year for pruning both specimens, **F** and **G**, to be early spring. **20**
- (Leave all prunings on the work bench.)**

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

Please see over/.....

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section B – Plots

MARKS

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|-----------|
| Q5 | a) | Carry out the necessary cultivations for an area measuring approximately 2m x 2m square, in preparation for the sowing of grass seed. On the site you have prepared, set out a circle with a 1m diameter, using the equipment provided. | 25 |
| | b) | Sow the grass seed labelled H at a rate of 35g/m ² on to the prepared circle. The approximate area of the circle is 0.8m ² . | 10 |
| | | | |
| Q6 | a) | Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare a 1m strip of soil in readiness for planting the transplants labelled I . | 10 |
| | b) | Select, and plant out in a staggered formation, SIX transplants in EACH of TWO rows 20cm apart 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 a 1m strip of soil in readiness for sowing the seed labelled J . | 10 |
| | b) | Select and sow the seed labelled J across the width of the plot, TWO rows 30cm apart at correct spacing. | 15 |
| | c) | Leave half of EACH row uncovered. | 5 |
| | | | |
| Q8 | | Plant the container grown woody plant labelled K . | 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 Using a simple texture test, identify the texture of soil samples labelled L and M .	5
Q10 Determine the pH of the soil sample N , using the kit provided. At the conclusion of your test, label the test tube with your candidate number and leave where advised to settle out.	5
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

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The Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6QB.

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RHS LEVEL 3 ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN HORTICULTURE 2010

MODULE C PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

Examiners Report

Candidates Registered	409		Total Candidates Passed	245	76.09%
Candidates Entered	322	78.73%	Passed with Commendation	89	27.64%
Candidates Absent	70	17.11%	Passed	156	48.45%
Candidates Deferred	15	3.67%	Failed	77	23.91%
Candidates Withdrawn	2	0.49%			

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

There were a few weak points in candidates' performance on this question. Examiners often thought that the workbench was not organised optimally in order to carry out this task, sometimes trays were not filled correctly and often spacing of seedlings and neatness of the completed tray were not given sufficient attention. The remaining seedlings were often left in a disturbed and poor state. Candidates should not search through the entire pot for seedlings to be pricked out.

- Q2**
- a) Sow **ONE** seed tray of **EACH** of the seeds labelled **B** and **C**, using the full-size seed trays and seed compost provided.
 - b) Cover half of **EACH** container if appropriate.
 - c) Label **EACH** container as appropriate, using the labels provided.

30

Candidates did not always give enough attention to filling the seed tray, consolidation and arriving at a correct final level of compost. There is no need to sieve the compost provided for this practical. Medium seed was sometimes sown at too low a density while some candidates sowed the fine seed in lines instead of broadcasting which produces a better distribution. Covering the seed was usually performed well although it is advantageous to protect half the seed tray with a presser board in order to achieve a neat finish.

- Q3** Select, prepare and insert cuttings for **EACH** of the specimens labelled:

D - 10 softwood stem cuttings;

E - 2 whole leaf cuttings.

Use the pots, half-size seed trays and cutting compost provided.

30

(Leave any unused material on the work bench.)

The taking of Pelargonium cuttings was sometimes poorly done with either too many leaves left on the cutting or trimming not being carried out carefully enough or the mother plant being left in a poor condition. The Begonia leaf cuttings were usually done better although the quality of vein cutting left a bit to be desired.

- Q4** Prune **EACH** of the plant specimens labelled **F** and **G** in order to maintain their effectiveness as ornamental plants. Assume the time of year for pruning both specimens, **F** and **G**, to be early spring.

20

(Leave all prunings on the work bench.)

In general, weak shoots and dead and diseased material is not being removed as part of the pruning process. Secateurs are not always sharp enough for the task. The appropriate pruning for the named time of year was not always carried out, candidates finding it difficult to ignore leaves and flowers and hard prune as required.

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

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section B – Plots

MARKS

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|----|
| Q5 | a) | Carry out the necessary cultivations for an area measuring approximately 2m x 2m square, in preparation for the sowing of grass seed. On the site you have prepared, set out a circle with a 1m diameter, using the equipment provided. | 25 |
| | b) | Sow the grass seed labelled H at a rate of 35g/m ² on to the prepared circle. The approximate area of the circle is 0.8m ² . | 10 |

The main problem experienced with this question was time management. It should only take 20-25 minutes but many candidates take much longer in trying to produce a perfect tilth and therefore run out of time for later questions. Some examinees confused radius with diameter and some found calculation of the amount of grass seed needed difficult.

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|-----------|----|---|----|
| Q6 | a) | Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare a 1m strip of soil in readiness for planting the transplants labelled I . | 10 |
| | b) | Select, and plant out in a staggered formation, SIX transplants in EACH of TWO rows 20cm apart at the correct spacing, leaving the rest of each row marked out but NOT planted. | 10 |

See Question 7.

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|--|----|
| Q7 | a) | Across the 3m width of the plot, prepare a 1m strip of soil in readiness for sowing the seed labelled J . | 10 |
| | b) | Select and sow the seed labelled J across the width of the plot, TWO rows 30cm apart at correct spacing. | 15 |
| | c) | Leave half of EACH row uncovered. | 5 |

Questions 6 & 7

In general these questions were not well done. Ground preparation was not always carried out well and many found difficulty in producing taut lines. Grading of the wallflowers was not always carried out, spacing was variable and finishing not always of a high standard. Spacing and depth of sowing of the parsnip seeds was often not correct.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Q8 | Plant the container grown woody plant labelled K . | 15 |
|-----------|---|----|

The planting of the shrubs was usually done competently but hurriedly due to lack of time. Mulching was sometimes done incorrectly.

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

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Section C – Plant, Pest, Disease & Disorder Identification

	MARKS
Q9 Using a simple texture test, identify the texture of soil samples labelled L and M .	5
Q10 Determine the pH of the soil sample N , using the kit provided. At the conclusion of your test, label the test tube with your candidate number and leave where advised to settle out.	5
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
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Questions 9 – 13

Many candidates were not confident with the assessment of soil texture but otherwise performed well on this section of the paper. It should again be stressed that the syllabus only requires a student to state whether a particular soil is a sandy loam, a silt loam or a clay loam. No other textural classes need be known.

General Comments

Overall a major concern is examinees' time management. Candidates must ensure they match time spent on a question with the proportion of marks allocated to it. Too many candidates are failing the examination due to failure to even start one or more questions. Attention should also be given to general tidiness of both the work station and completed task in both the potting shed and the plots. Proficiency marks are awarded for both Sections A, Potting Shed, and B, Plots. Examiners will award proficiency marks at their discretion to a maximum of 15 marks when observing candidates' ability to accurately follow a correct procedure, demonstrate good technical skills, perform tasks whilst maintaining a tidy work area, or to perform tasks in a logical manner emphasising thought has been given to the question.

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