



## RHS Qualifications

### RHS Level 3 Certificate in Practical Horticulture

Qualification Specification **For Reference Only**

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## 1. RHS Qualifications Contact Details

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

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RHS Website: [rhs.org.uk/qualifications](https://rhs.org.uk/qualifications)

## 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 3 Certificate in Practical Horticulture**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The Level 3 Certificate in Practical Horticulture focuses on developing the essential basic horticultural skills. These not only offer opportunities for employment, but provide the foundation for further skills development at levels. By carefully focusing on key essential 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.

Whilst there are no formal pre-requisites for entry to the qualification, it is strongly recommended that students who undertake this qualification have obtained the RHS Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture or equivalent before they commence on the course.

The qualification is on the Register of Regulated Qualification.

Qualification Number: 500/9782/9

#### **3.2 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and Total Qualification Time (TQT)**

The Guided Learning Hours (GLH) represent the time that the learner spends learning under the immediate guidance and supervision of a tutor and includes assessment by the tutor, as well as invigilated exams. Guided Learning Hours are always less than total qualification time, as learners are expected to complete a certain amount of study in their own time.

The Guided Learning Hours for this qualification are 112.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) includes the Guided Learning Hours and represents the notional time that an average learner could reasonably expect to take to complete the learning outcomes of the units to the standard determined by the assessment criteria, and gain the qualification. It includes all face-to-face contact with tutors as well as assessment time and unsupervised directed study, coursework and practice.

The Total Qualification Time for this qualification is 165.

#### **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 successfully complete the four mandatory units and one of the optional units.

RHS Ref	Unit	Level
	<b><i>Mandatory Units</i></b>	
R3121	Collecting and testing of soil samples and specifying adjustments for horticulture Unit reference number A/601/7683	3
R3122	Collecting, preparing and propagating from seed Unit reference number F/601/7684	3
R3123	Establishing and maintaining a range of plant types and forms Unit reference number Y/601/7688	3
R3124	Identification of a range of common garden plants, weeds, pests, diseases and disorders Unit reference number R/601/7690	3
	<b><i>Optional Units</i></b>	
R3125	Planning, collecting, preparing and establishing propagation material Unit reference number Y/601/7691	3
R3126	Management of green spaces, landscaped areas and ornamental gardens Unit reference number K/601/7694	3

### 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 Learning Resources**

There is a wide range of books and other learning resources published which support the studies of those learning horticulture. RHS Qualifications does not recommend or endorse any specific learning resources as meeting the needs of learners studying for RHS qualifications. Learners are encouraged to seek guidance from their tutors on which resources best support their studies, or to choose the most appropriate resources for their needs from the wealth of material available.

### **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**

RHS Approved centres should register candidates for examinations in 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), 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 ([rhs.org.uk/qualifications](https://rhs.org.uk/qualifications)), 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 RHS Qualifications Fees Notice, this document is available on the Qualifications page on the RHS website and on the RHS web portal.

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 RHS Qualifications 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.

# Collecting and testing of soil samples and specifying adjustments for horticulture

RHS reference number: R3121

Unit reference number: A/601/7683

Unit guided learning hours: 18

Unit level: Level 3

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to collect and test soil samples and to specify adjustments for horticulture

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

- 1 Understand potential hazards and risks
- 2 Be able to select and use appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing
- 3 Understand reasons for soil testing
- 4 Be able to collect and prepare a soil sample for laboratory testing
- 5 Be able to accurately measure by weight the constituent components of different soil samples

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Define the hazards associated with soil to include
  - (a) foreign objects
  - (b) animal waste
  - (c) diseases
- 1.2 Assess the risks of working with soil and the tools used for collecting soil samples
- 2.1 Select and use appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing
- 3.1 Explain why soil texture testing is carried out
- 3.2 Explain why pH testing is carried out
- 4.1 Collect a representative soil sample from a given site using the 'ADAS' method
- 4.2 Prepare a soil sample for testing
- 5.1 Separate particle sizes using appropriate laboratory equipment
- 5.2 Accurately measure by weight the constituent components of two distinctly different soil samples
- 5.3 Interpret the data from 5.2 and use a soil texture chart to classify soil type

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| 6 | Be able to measure the pH of soil                                       | 6.1 | Perform a series of pH tests using an industry standard soil testing kit  |
|   |   | 6.2 | Interpret the results to accurately identify the pH of different soil samples   |
| 7 | Be able to specify suitable materials to amend the PH value of soils    | 7.1 | Specify a suitable material to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) raise the pH of the soil</li> <li>b) lower the pH of the soil</li> </ul> |
| 8 | Be able to measure the area of a given site and make calculations       | 8.1 | Perform calculations to estimate the material requirements to alter the pH of the area  |
|   |   | 8.2 | Perform calculations to estimate the fertiliser requirements of the area  |
| 9 | Be able to diagnose nutrient deficiencies and recommend remedial action | 9.1 | Correctly diagnose nutrient deficiencies from pictures and samples  |
|   |   | 9.2 | Specify materials to correct nutrient deficiencies  |

# Collecting, preparing and propagating from seed

RHS reference number: R3122

Unit reference number: F/601/7684

Unit guided learning hours: 22

Unit level: Level 3

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit will provide learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding required for planning and managing the propagation of plants from seed.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to plan seed propagation
2. Be able to implement seed propagation
3. Be able to monitor germination of seeds

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Prepare a programme of work activities to maximise the success of the operation
- 1.2 Calculate and collect the quantities of seed and growing medium required
- 2.1 Prepare the growing medium in accordance with the requirements of the programme
- 2.2 Check, store and handle seeds in a way that minimises damage and maximises viability
- 2.3 Sow seeds evenly, accurately and at the correct depth and density for the species
- 2.4 Provide immediate aftercare to encourage rapid germination
- 3.1 Identify problems with germination and take the appropriate remedial action
- 3.2 Remove and hygienically dispose of unwanted seedlings
- 3.3 Accurately identify seedlings suitable for the next stage of the production process
- 3.4 Provide suitable post propagation aftercare conditions
- 3.5 Ensure the following records are completed accurately:
  - (i) propagation activities
  - (ii) success rates

- 4. Be able to maintain and use equipment during seed propagation
  - 5. Be able to promote health and safety and environmental good practice
- 4.1 Ensure equipment is prepared, used and maintained in a safe and effective condition
  - 5.1 Work in a way which promotes health and safety, is consistent with relevant legislation, codes of practice and any additional requirements
  - 5.2 Ensure work is carried out in a manner which minimises environmental damage
  - 5.3 Manage and dispose of waste in accordance with legislative requirements and codes of practice
  - 5.4 Maintain effective working relations with all relevant people

# Establishing and maintaining a range of plant types and forms

RHS reference number: R3123

Unit reference number: Y/601/7688

Unit guided learning hours: 28

Unit level: Level 3

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to plant a tree; to carry out maintenance pruning and training on a range of plants; and to provide aftercare to promote growth and fruition.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Understand the potential hazards and risks associated with establishing and maintaining plants

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

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

4. Be able to plant, stake and tie a tree

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

1.1 Define the hazards associated with soil

1.2 Define the hazards associated with the growing medium

1.3 Define the risks of working with tools, equipment and material used for establishing and maintaining plants

1.4 Assess the hazards associated from working with plants

1.5 Assess the hazard from working at height

2.1 Select and use appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing

3.1 Select and use a range of tools and equipment effectively

3.2 Clean and appropriately store tools, equipment and materials after use

4.1 Prepare a planting pit (square or round) with appropriate dimensions

4.2 Evaluate the condition of the tree, prune appropriately, plant, stake and tie one tree

(a) container tree (10 – 15 litre)

(b) bareroot tree (light standard)

4.3 Protect and mulch the planted tree appropriately

- 5. Understand the principles of pruning
  - 5.1 Define the term 3 D's associated operations and the order in which they should be carried out
  - 5.2 Define pruning terminology
  
- 6. Be able to carry out maintenance pruning and training on a range of plants
  - 6.1 Evaluate the maintenance requirements for a range of plants
  - 6.2 Carry out pruning and maintenance in a safe and competent manner
  - 6.3 Dispose of all arisings in an environmentally aware manner leaving the site clean and tidy
  
- 7. Be able to provide aftercare to promote growth and fruition
  - 7.1 Provide appropriate aftercare
  
  - 7.2 Respond to changes in plant health

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

RHS reference number: R3124

Unit reference number: R/601/7690

Unit guided learning hours : 23

Unit level: Level 3

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

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to identify a range of plants and know their characteristics and decorative merits
2. Be able to identify a range of weeds by botanical name and know their characteristics and methods of control
3. Be able to identify a range of seeds
4. Be able to identify a range of pests and diseases and know their characteristics and methods of control
5. Be able to identify disorders and describe appropriate treatment

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Identify a range of plants by botanical name from each of the following categories and describe their characteristics and decorative merits.
  - a) deciduous and evergreen trees
  - b) conifers
  - c) deciduous shrubs
  - d) evergreen shrubs
  - e) non-woody herbaceous plants
  - f) climbing plants/wall shrubs
  - g) rock garden and alpine plants
  - h) aquatic plants
- 2.1 Identify a range of weeds by botanical name and describe their characteristics and cultural and chemical methods of control
- 3.1 Identify a range of seeds by botanical name
- 4.1 Identify a range of pests and diseases by common name and describe their characteristics and methods of prevention and cultural, biological and chemical control
- 5.1 Identify a range of disorders and describe appropriate methods of treatment

# Planning, collecting, preparing and establishing propagation material

**RHS reference number: R3125**

**Unit reference number: Y/601/7691**

**Unit guided learning hours: 21**

**Unit level: Level 3**

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to collect, prepare and establish propagation material in a growing environment.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to plan the collection of propagation material

2. Be able to collect propagation material

3. Be able to prepare propagation material

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

1.1 Plan the timing of the collection of propagation material to maximise the success of the operation and to fit in with the production programme

1.2 Determine the source of the propagation material and the method of collection in accordance with the needs of the plant species and the propagation method

2.1 Correctly identify plants from which material is to be collected

2.2 Handle plant material in a manner which minimises damage and wastage

2.3 Select and use suitable facilities for the storage of collected material

2.4 Provide clear and accurate information for recording purposes

3.1 Handle plant material in a manner which minimises damage and wastage, and optimises growth

3.2 Select and use a suitable propagation method

3.3 Prepare and treat propagation materials appropriately

3.4 Provide clear and accurate information for recording purposes

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| 4. | Establish propagation material in a growing environment              | 4.1 | Identify and source the materials for preparing a suitable rooting medium  |
|    |  | 4.2 | Prepare a suitable environment to establish the propagation material   |
|    |  | 4.3 | Position propagation material correctly in the growing medium and place in a suitable environment  |
|    |  | 4.4 | Promote and sustain plant development after propagation  |
| 5. | Be able to maintain and use relevant equipment                       | 5.1 | Ensure equipment is prepared, used and maintained in a safe and effective condition  |
| 6. | Be able to promote health and safety and environmental good practice | 6.1 | Work in a way which promotes health and safety, is consistent with relevant legislation, codes of practice and any additional requirements |
|    |  | 6.2 | Ensure work is carried out in a manner which minimises environmental damage  |
|    |  | 6.3 | Manage and dispose of waste in accordance with legislative requirements and codes of practice  |

# Management of green spaces, landscaped areas, and ornamental gardens

RHS reference number: R3126

Unit reference number: K/601/7694

Unit guided learning hours: 22

Unit level: Level 3

Unit purpose and aim(s): This unit provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to assess the management requirements of horticultural areas; to produce management and maintenance plans for specified periods of time; and to monitor and maintain the health, safety and security of the work area.

## Learning Outcomes

The learner will:

1. Be able to carry out site surveys
2. Be able to assess the management requirements of horticultural areas
3. Be able to produce management and maintenance plans for specified periods of time

## Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Carry out a site survey to assess the condition of a the following
  - (a) hard landscape features (vertical and horizontal elements)
  - (b) accessories
  - (c) soft landscape features (plants)
- 2.1 Evaluate the management requirements of
  - (a) hard landscape features (vertical and horizontal elements)
  - (b) accessories
  - (c) soft landscape features (plants)
- 3.1 Describe the factors to consider in developing a 5 year management plan for a specified area.
- 3.2 Produce an annual maintenance programme for a specified area to include
  - (a) preparation and cleaning of hard landscape features (vertical and horizontal elements)
  - (b) preparation and cleaning of accessories
  - (c) pruning, feeding, weeding and watering of soft landscape features (plants)
- 3.3 Provide verbal advice to clients in respect of managing and maintaining the area specified in 3.2

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| 4. | Understand the importance of biosecurity in protecting horticultural areas              | 4.1 | Explain the meaning of biosecurity and its importance in preventing the spread of diseases or invasive plants to established horticultural areas.  |
| 5. | Understand how to monitor and maintain the health, safety and security of the work area | 5.1 | Explain the legal and organisational responsibilities in relation to health, safety and security covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) people</li> <li>(ii) equipment and materials</li> <li>(iii) the work area</li> </ul> |
|    |   | 5.2 | Explain the importance of carrying out risk assessments for all work activities including assessing risks from new and non-routine activities  |
|    |   | 5.3 | Describe how to carry out and evaluate a risk assessment   |
|    |   | 5.4 | Explain the hierarchy of measures to control risks   |
| 6. | Be able to monitor and maintain the health, safety and security of the work area        | 6.1 | Carry out risk assessments in accordance with relevant legal and organisational requirements   |
|    |   | 6.2 | Evaluate the risks which have been identified and implement appropriate control measures   |