



RHS Qualifications

RHS Entry 3 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills

RHS Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills

RHS Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills

Qualification Specification

From September 2026

The RHS Entry 3 and Level 1 Practical Horticulture Skills qualifications are non-Ofqual regulated qualifications designed to support learners to develop practical horticultural knowledge, confidence and skills through structured, assessed activities.

Contents

1.	About these qualifications	3
1.1	Aims and objectives of the qualification	3
1.2	Entry requirements	4
1.3	Guided learning hours (GLH) and Total qualification time (TQT)	4
1.4	Assessment methods	4
1.4.1	Time constraints	4
1.4.2	Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL)	4
1.5	Grading	4
1.6	Learning resources	4
1.7	Approved centres	4
1.8	Guidance on delivery	4
1.9	Learner registration	5
1.10	Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration	5
1.11	Fees	6
1.12	Appeals	6
1.13	Replacement Certificate (if lost, damaged or destroyed)	6
1.14	Malpractice and Maladministration	6
2.	Units	7
2.1	Unit List	7
2.2	Unit Combinations	8
2.3	How to read the unit specification	9
	Unit 1 – Introduction to Growing Plants (L1)	10
	Unit2 - Working Safely in a Food Growing Environment (L1)	13
	Unit 3 - Using Gardening Tools and Equipment Safely (E3)	16
	Unit 4 - Composting and Soil Improvement Techniques (L1)	19
	Unit 5 - Preparing Soil for Planting (E3)	22
	Unit 6 - Planting and Caring for Plants (E3)	25
	Unit 7 - Growing Salad Crops and Herbs (L1)	28
	Unit 8 - Growing Fruit in Containers and Small Spaces (L1)	31
	Unit 9 - Maintaining Raised Beds and Growing Areas (E3)	35
	Unit 10 - Watering, Feeding and Maintaining Crops (L1)	38
	Unit 11 - Managing Pests and Diseases in Food Crops (L1)	41
	Unit 12 - Harvesting Fruit and Vegetables Safely (L1)	45

1. About these Qualifications

1.1 Aims and objectives of the qualifications

This level will suit learners who are just starting out and want a good basic understanding of horticulture practice - enough to get a first job in the sector or move on to further study. It will suit young learners (pre-14, 14-19) or adults or learners with Special Educational Needs.

There are three qualifications to choose from:

- Entry 3 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills
- Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills
- Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills

To achieve the awards, learners must complete 3 units from a wide range of options. To achieve a certificate, learners must complete 8 units, including 3 mandatory units.

The Level 1 Certificate may help to start a career as a:

- Gardener
- Greenkeeper
- Groundsperson
- Garden Centre worker

After completing these qualifications learners can move onto a related Level 2 qualification or start an Apprenticeship.

1.2 Entry requirements

There are no pre-requisites for entry to these qualifications.

1.3 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. 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 each qualification are:

- Entry 3 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills – 45 hours
- Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills – 45 hours
- Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills – 120 hours

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.

- Entry 3 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills – 60 hours
- Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills – 60 hours
- Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills – 145 hours

1.4 Assessment methods

Learners must successfully complete the practical tasks for all units undertaken.

There are two methods of assessment, (i) Observation of Practical skills and (ii) Oral questioning of underpinning knowledge.

RHS Practical Checklists are provided to record the observation of practical skills, and RHS Oral Assessment Sheets provide the questions and recording for the underpinning knowledge assessment. In addition, evidence can be drawn from the Learner Workbooks which act as a portfolio of evidence.

1.4.1 Time constraints

The following must be applied to the assessment of these qualifications:

Registration is valid for 36 months from the registration date or until the last certification, whichever is earlier.

1.4.2 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning means using a learner's previous experience or qualifications which have already been achieved to contribute to a new qualification. RPL is allowed and is also sector specific.

1.5 Grading

All units are pass/fail.

1.6 Learning resources

RHS provides optional teaching resources for each unit, available on the RHS website.

1.7 Approved Centres

RHS Qualifications can only be delivered by approved centres. Further information regarding the approval process can be found at: rhs.org.uk/qualifications.

1.8 Guidance on delivery

Centre Staff delivering these qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they meet the following occupational expertise requirements.

They should:

- be occupationally competent or technically knowledgeable in the area(s) for which they are delivering training and/or have experience of providing training (this knowledge must be to the same level as the training being delivered)
- have recent relevant experience in the specific area they will be assessing
- have credible experience of providing training

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Centres are expected to support their staff in ensuring that their knowledge remains current of the occupational area and of best practice in delivery, mentoring, training, assessment and quality assurance, and that it takes account of any national or legislative developments.

Quality Assurance

Approved centres must have effective quality assurance systems to ensure optimum delivery and assessment of qualifications, including the centre's own internal procedures for monitoring quality.

Centres are responsible for internal quality assurance, and RHS Qualifications is responsible for external quality assurance.

Standards and rigorous quality assurance are maintained by the use of:

- Internal quality assurance
- RHS Qualifications external quality assurance process.

To carry out the quality assurance role, Internal Quality Assurers must

- have appropriate teaching and assessment knowledge and expertise
- have experience in quality management/internal quality assurance
- be familiar with the content covered within the qualification.

External quality assurance for the qualification will be provided by RHS Qualifications EQA process.

External quality assurance is carried out to ensure that assessment is valid and reliable, and that there is good assessment practice in centres.

The role of the EQA is to:

- provide advice and support to centre staff
- ensure the quality and consistency of assessment decisions within and across centres through systematic sampling.
- provide feedback to centres and RHS Qualifications

1.9 Learner registration

All learners must be registered with RHS Qualifications at the commencement of these qualifications through the RHS Qualifications Portal. More information about the registration process is available from RHS Qualifications (qualifications@rhs.org.uk)

1.10 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

RHS Qualifications is committed to ensuring fair assessment for all learners and will facilitate access to its qualifications through reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements for learners with an identified specific need.

Full guidance is provided in the documents 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy for Approved Centres' and 'Special Consideration Policy for Approved Centres'. These documents are available on the RHS website (rhs.org.uk/qualifications), the RHS Qualifications Approved Centre portal, or can be obtained from RHS Qualifications.

Applications for reasonable adjustments or special consideration must be made by the Approved Centre on behalf of the learner. Application must be made within specified timescales.

1.11 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 portal. All fees are payable upon learner registration.

1.12 Appeals

The appeals procedure is available on the RHS Qualifications portal and on the RHS website rhs.org.uk/qualifications

1.13 Replacement Certificate (if lost, damaged or destroyed)

The fee for a replacement certificate can be found on the RHS Qualifications Fees Notice. Requests for a replacement certificate must be sent to the Qualifications Department.

1.14 Malpractice and Maladministration

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 learners 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 rhs.org.uk/qualifications

2: Units

2.1 Unit List

1.	Introduction to Growing Plants (L1)
2.	Working Safely in a Food Growing Environment (L1)
3	Using Gardening Tools and Equipment Safely (E3)
4.	Composting and Soil Improvement Techniques (L1)
5.	Preparing Soil for Planting (E3)
6.	Planting and Caring for Plants (E3)
7.	Growing Salad Crops and Herbs (L1)
8.	Growing Fruit in Containers and Small Spaces (L1)
9.	Maintaining Raised Beds and Growing Areas (E3)
10	Watering, Feeding and Maintaining Crops (L1)
11	Managing Pests and Diseases in Food Crops (L1)
12	Harvesting Fruit and Vegetables Safely (L1)

2.2 Unit combinations

To achieve the **RHS Entry 3 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills**, learners must achieve 3 units from units 1-12 (a minimum of 2 units from Entry 3 units 3,5,6,9). (Learners can choose either unit 2 or unit 3, but not both)

To achieve the **RHS Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills**, learners must achieve 3 units from units 1-12 (Only one Entry 3 unit can be included, with the exception of Unit 3).

	<u>Entry 3 units</u>	<u>Level 1 units</u>
Unit 1		Introduction to Growing Plants (L1)
Unit 2		Working Safely in a Food Growing Environment (L1)
Unit 3	Using Gardening Tools and Equipment Safely (E3)	
Unit 4		Composting and Soil Improvement Techniques (L1)
Unit 5	Preparing Soil for Planting (E3)	
Unit 6	Planting and Caring for Plants (E3)	
Unit 7		Growing Salad Crops and Herbs (L1)
Unit 8		Growing Fruit in Containers and Small Spaces (L1)
Unit 9	Maintaining Raised Beds and Growing Areas (E3)	
Unit 10		Watering, Feeding and Maintaining Crops (L1)
Unit 11		Managing Pests and Diseases in Food Crops (L1)
Unit 12		Harvesting Fruit and Vegetables Safely (L1)

To achieve the **RHS Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills**, learners must achieve 8 units from units 1-12 as follows: 3 mandatory units 1,2, and 4 and any 5 units from the remaining optional units. (Up to a maximum of two Entry 3 units can be included with the exception of Unit 3).

	<u>Entry 3 units</u>	<u>Level 1 units</u>
Unit 1		Introduction to Growing Plants (L1)
Unit 2		Working Safely in a Food Growing Environment (L1)
Unit 3	Using Gardening Tools and Equipment Safely (E3)	
Unit 4		Composting and Soil Improvement Techniques (L1)
Unit 5	Preparing Soil for Planting (E3)	
Unit 6	Planting and Caring for Plants (E3)	
Unit 7		Growing Salad Crops and Herbs (L1)
Unit 8		Growing Fruit in Containers and Small Spaces (L1)
Unit 9	Maintaining Raised Beds and Growing Areas (E3)	
Unit 10		Watering, Feeding and Maintaining Crops (L1)
Unit 11		Managing Pests and Diseases in Food Crops (L1)
Unit 12		Harvesting Fruit and Vegetables Safely (L1)

2.3 How to read the unit specification

Each unit has the same format. This is as follows:

Unit aim	Sets out the aim of the unit and summarises the learning and assessment within it.
Learning outcome	The learning outcome sets out what a learner must know or be able to do. The learning outcome is a broad statement capturing the overall learning for that outcome.
Assessment criteria	The assessment criteria set out what the learner can demonstrate to show that they have met the requirements for assessment. Each criterion includes a command verb which sets the level of demand and depth of knowledge and understanding required.

Unit 1 – Introduction to Growing Plants (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit aims to introduce learners to the basic principles of growing plants. Learners will develop an awareness of plant needs, identify common plants and growing materials, and participate in practical activities to sow, grow and care for plants safely. The unit provides a foundation for further learning in horticulture and gardening.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (**Remembering**) with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. The emphasis is on learners demonstrating the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow basic instructions. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know the basic requirements for plant growth.

Assessment Criteria

1.1 Identify the basic requirements needed for healthy plant growth.

1.2 State the purpose of water in plant growth.

1.3 State the purpose of light in plant growth.

1.4 State what happens if a plant does not have suitable growing conditions.

Indicative Content

Plant Growth Requirements	Purpose of water in plant growth
• Water • Light • Air • Warmth • Growing media (soil/peat free compost)	• Helps plants grow. • Carries nutrients from the soil to different parts of the plant. • Keeps plants healthy. • Helps prevent plants from drying out. • Supports the development of leaves, stems, flowers and fruits
Purpose of light in plant growth	Not suitable growing conditions
• Light helps plants stay healthy. • Plants need light to live and grow healthily. • Light helps plants make food.	• The plant may become unhealthy. • The plant may wilt. • The plant may stop growing. • The plant may die.

Learning Outcome 2: Identify common plants and growing materials.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 Identify at least three common garden plants.
- 2.2 Identify common growing materials used in plant production.
- 2.3 State the purpose of a plant container or pot.
- 2.4 Identify basic gardening tools used for growing plants.

Indicative Content

Common Plants	Growing materials
For example: • Lettuce • Radish • Tomato • Sunflower • Marigold • Herbs e.g. Basil, Thyme, Mint, Parsley, Chives, Rosemary	• Peat free compost • Soil • Pots and trays • Labels • Seeds • Watering equipment
Purpose of a plant container or pot	Gardening Tools
• Gives the plant somewhere to grow. • Holds the soil or peat free compost and the plant. • Supports the plant while it grows. • Keeps the plant in one place.	• Hand trowel • Hand fork • Watering can • Dibber • Plant labels

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in planting activities.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Follow instructions to prepare a container or growing area.
- 3.2 Sow seeds or plant young plants using appropriate materials.
- 3.3 Use basic gardening tools safely during planting activities.
- 3.4 Complete planting activities with support where required

Learning Outcome 4: Care for growing plants.

Assessment Criteria

4.1 Water plants appropriately following instructions.

4.2 Observe plants for signs of healthy growth.

4.3 Carry out simple plant care tasks.

4.4 Demonstrate safe working practices when caring for plants.

Indicative Content

Plant Care Activities
• Watering • Weeding • Checking plant health • Monitoring growth • Keeping growing areas tidy

Learning Outcome 5: Recognise the benefits of growing plants.

Assessment Criteria

5.1 Identify one benefit of growing plants for people.

5.2 Identify one benefit of plants for the environment.

5.3 State one reason why plants are important in everyday life.

Indicative Content

Benefits of growing plants for people	Benefits of plants for the environment
• Producing food • Improving wellbeing • Supporting wildlife • Enhancing the environment • Developing practical skills	• Plants produce oxygen. • Plants help keep the environment healthy. • Plants provide food for animals. • Plants help improve air quality. • Plants support insects such as bees.
Why plants are important in everyday life	
• Plants help us breathe. • Plants make our surroundings look nice. • Plants provide homes for wildlife. • Plants give us fruit and vegetables. • Plants help keep the environment healthy.	

Unit 2 - Working Safely in a Food Growing Environment (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the basic health, safety and environmental practices required when working in a food growing environment. Learners will develop an awareness of hazards associated with growing fruit, vegetables and herbs and learn how to work safely with tools, equipment, materials and growing areas. The unit provides a foundation for safe participation in practical horticultural activities.

This unit is designed primarily at **Level 1 (Remembering)** with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. Learners should demonstrate the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow basic health and safety requirements within a food growing environment. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records

Learning Outcome 1: Know the importance of health and safety in a food growing environment.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Identify common hazards found in a food growing environment.
- 1.2 State why health and safety is important when growing food crops.
- 1.3 Identify appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) used in food growing activities.
- 1.4 State the importance of following instructions and safety signs.

Indicative Content

Hazards	Importance of health and safety
• Slips, trips and falls • Sharp tools • Manual handling • Weather conditions • Uneven ground • Water hazards	• Prevents accidents. • Stops people from getting hurt. • Keeps workers safe. • Creates a safe place to work. • Protects people and crops.
PPE	Importance of safety instructions
• Gloves • Safety footwear • Waterproof clothing • Sun protection • High-visibility clothing (where appropriate)	• Prevent accidents. • Stop people getting hurt. • Tell people how to work safely. • Keep the work area safe. • Show people what to do and what dangers to avoid.

Learning Outcome 2: Identify safe working practices in a food growing environment.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 State how tools should be carried safely.
- 2.2 Identify safe methods for lifting and carrying materials.
- 2.3 State the importance of keeping work areas clean and tidy.

Indicative Content

Safe carrying of tools	Safe lifting and carrying
• Tools should be carried with the sharp end pointing down. • Carry tools carefully. • Keep tools close to your body when carrying them. • Carry tools so they do not hurt anyone.	• Lift using leg power and keep your back straight. • Ask for help if the load is too heavy, do not try to lift things that are too heavy • Carry loads carefully.
Keeping work areas clean and tidy	
• Keeping work areas clean and tidy helps prevent accidents. • Keeps people safe. • Reduces the risk of trips and falls. • Makes the work area safer.	

Learning Outcome 3: Use tools and equipment safely.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Select appropriate tools for a given task.
- 3.2 Demonstrate safe handling of horticultural tools.
- 3.3 Store tools safely after use.
- 3.4 Follow instructions when using equipment.

Learning Outcome 4: Work safely during food growing activities.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Prepare a work area safely before starting a task.
- 4.2 Carry out a food growing activity following instructions.
- 4.3 Maintain personal safety during practical activities.
- 4.4 Leave the work area in a safe and tidy condition.

Learning Outcome 5: Understand personal hygiene and food safety requirements.

Assessment Criteria

5.1 State why personal hygiene is important when growing food.

5.2 Identify appropriate handwashing practices.

5.3 Recognise ways of reducing contamination of food crops.

5.4 State the importance of reporting injuries or accidents.

Indicative Content

Importance of personal hygiene	Handwashing practices
• Personal hygiene helps keep food clean and safe. • It helps stop germs spreading. • It helps prevent contamination. • It helps keep people healthy.	• Wash hands with soap and water before handling food crops. • Wash hands after using the toilet. • Dry hands with a clean towel. • Wash hands when they are dirty.
Reducing contamination of food crops	Reporting injuries or accidents
• Use clean hands and clean tools when working with food crops. • Keep crops clean. • Wash hands before handling crops. • Use clean equipment. • Keep animals away from food crops where appropriate.	• Reporting injuries or accidents helps people get help and stay safe. • It helps prevent further accidents. • It allows hazards to be dealt with. • It helps keep everyone safe. • It makes sure injuries are treated. • Report: ○ Cuts and scratches ○ Slips, trips and falls ○ Tool-related injuries ○ Near misses ○ Unsafe conditions

Unit 3 - Using Gardening Tools and Equipment Safely (E3)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the safe use of basic gardening tools and equipment. Learners will develop an awareness of common gardening tools, their purpose, and the importance of working safely when carrying, using, cleaning and storing equipment. The unit provides a foundation for participating safely in practical horticultural activities.

This unit is designed at Entry 3 (Remembering). Learners should demonstrate simple recall and recognition of safe gardening practices, tools, equipment and hazards. The emphasis is on identifying, stating, naming and following simple instructions rather than detailed explanation. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know the purpose of common gardening tools and equipment.

Assessment Criteria

1.1 Identify common gardening tools used in horticulture.

1.2 State the purpose of a gardening tool.

1.3 Identify common gardening equipment used during gardening activities.

1.4 State why different tools are used for different tasks.

Indicative Content

Common gardening tools	Purpose of a gardening tool
• Hand trowel • Hand fork • Rake • Hoe • Secateurs • Watering can • Dibber • Spade	• A gardening tool helps me do gardening jobs. • It helps me work in the garden. • It helps me plant and grow plants. • It helps me do a gardening task.
Common gardening equipment	Why different tools are used
• Wheelbarrow • Water butt • Plant trays • Pots • Buckets	• Different tools do different jobs. • Each tool has its own job. • Some tools are for digging, some for watering and some for pruning. • Different jobs need different tools.

Learning Outcome 2: Know basic safety requirements when using gardening tools and equipment.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 Identify hazards associated with gardening tools and equipment.
- 2.2 State why tools and equipment should be used safely.
- 2.3 Identify appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) used during gardening activities.
- 2.4 State the importance of following instructions when using tools and equipment.

Indicative Content

Hazards	Why tools should be used safely
- Sharp edges - Trips and falls - Damaged tools - Wet surfaces - Improper tool storage	- To keep people safe. - To stop accidents. - To stop people from getting hurt. - To work safely.
PPE	Importance of following instructions
- Gloves - Safety footwear - Waterproof clothing - Sun protection	- Following instructions helps keep people safe. - It helps prevent accidents. - It helps me use tools correctly. - It helps stop people from getting hurt. - It helps me work safely.

Learning Outcome 3: Use gardening tools safely.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Select an appropriate gardening tool for a task.
- 3.2 Carry gardening tools safely.
- 3.3 Use gardening tools safely following instructions.
- 3.4 Return tools safely after use.

Learning Outcome 4: Care for gardening tools and equipment.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Clean tools after use.
- 4.2 Check tools for obvious damage.
- 4.3 Store tools in an appropriate location.
- 4.4 Help keep tool storage areas tidy.

Learning Outcome 5

Understand safe working practices when using gardening tools and equipment.

Assessment Criteria

5.1 State the importance of keeping work areas tidy.

5.2 Identify safe methods of moving around a gardening area.

5.3 State why accidents or damaged tools should be reported.

5.4 State one way to help keep people safe during gardening activities.

Indicative Content

Importance of tidy work areas	Safe methods of moving around
• To help keep people safe. • To stop accidents. • To stop trips and falls. • To make the area safe.	• Walk carefully and watch where you are going. • Use pathways. • Do not run. • Carrying tools correctly • Be aware of tools and other people.
Why report accidents or damaged tools	Keep people safe
• To help keep people safe. • To stop someone getting hurt. • So the tool can be fixed. • So help can be given if needed.	• Use tools safely. • Follow instructions. • Wear gloves. • Keep the area tidy. • Keep pathways clear • Report hazards • Put tools away after use.

Unit 4 – Composting and Soil Improvement Techniques (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the principles of composting and soil improvement in horticulture. Learners will develop an understanding of the purpose and benefits of composting, identify materials suitable for compost production, and participate in practical activities to create and maintain compost. The unit also develops awareness of simple soil improvement techniques that support healthy plant growth and sustainable gardening practices.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (Remembering) with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. The emphasis is on learners demonstrating the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow basic instructions. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know the purpose and benefits of composting.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 State the purpose of composting.
- 1.2 Identify benefits of composting for gardeners.
- 1.3 Identify benefits of composting for the environment.
- 1.4 State how compost can help plant growth.

Indicative Content

Purpose of composting	Benefits of composting for gardeners
- Recycling garden waste - Producing compost - Reducing waste - Supporting plant growth	- Improves soil quality - Reduces waste sent to landfill - Produces a useful soil conditioner - Helps retain moisture - Encourages healthy plant growth
Benefits of composting for the environment	How compost helps plant growth
- Composting reduces waste. - Composting recycles garden and food waste. - Composting reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill. - Composting helps reduce rubbish.	- Compost helps plants grow by adding nutrients to the soil. - Compost improves the soil. - Compost helps plants grow better. - Compost helps the soil hold water. - Compost makes the soil healthier.

Learning Outcome 2: Know materials used in composting.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 Identify materials suitable for composting.
- 2.2 Identify materials that should not be added to a compost heap.
- 2.3 State why a mixture of materials is used when composting.
- 2.4 Identify common sources of compostable materials.

Indicative Content

Suitable materials for composting	Materials that should not be added to compost
• Grass cuttings • Leaves • Vegetable peelings • Fruit waste • Plant trimmings • Cardboard • Paper	• Meat • Fish • Dairy products • Diseased plants • Plastics • Glass • Roots or seeds of some garden weeds
Why a mixture of materials is used in composting	Common sources of compostable materials
• A mixture of materials helps make good compost. • Different materials help compost break down. • A mixture helps compost form properly. • It helps make healthy compost. • Different materials work together to make compost.	• Compostable materials come from the garden and kitchen. • Leaves from the garden. • Grass cuttings. • Fruit and vegetable peelings. • Plant trimmings. • Kitchen waste.

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in composting activities.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Select suitable materials for composting.
- 3.2 Add materials to a composting system following instructions.
- 3.3 Use tools and equipment safely during composting activities.
- 3.4 Follow safe working practices when handling compost materials.

Learning Outcome 4: Participate in soil improvement activities.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Identify areas where soil will be improved by mulching.
- 4.2 Add compost or organic matter to soil following instructions.
- 4.3 Use tools safely during soil improvement activities.
- 4.4 Leave the work area clean and tidy after completing activities.

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the importance of healthy soil.

Assessment Criteria

- 5.1 State why healthy soil is important for plant growth.
- 5.2 Identify characteristics of healthy soil.
- 5.3 State one way compost improves soil.
- 5.4 Identify one sustainable benefit of composting.

Indicative Content

Why healthy soil is important	Healthy Soil Characteristics
• Healthy soil helps plants grow. • Healthy soil supports plant roots. • Healthy soil helps plants stay healthy. • Healthy soil provides nutrients for plants. • Healthy soil helps plants grow well.	• Dark colour • Crumbly texture • Contains organic matter • Holds moisture • Supports plant roots
One way compost improves soil	Sustainable benefits of composting
• Adding organic matter • Adding nutrients to the soil • Improving water holding capacity • Mulching the soil surface • Helping reduce weed growth • Improving soil structure	• Composting reduces waste. • Composting recycles materials. • Composting helps the environment. • Composting reduces rubbish sent to landfill. • Composting reuses garden and food waste.

Unit 5 – Preparing Soil for Planting (E3)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the basic knowledge and practical skills needed to prepare soil for planting. Learners will learn why soil is important for plant growth, identify simple soil preparation tools, and carry out basic soil preparation activities following instructions. The unit promotes safe working practices and an understanding of how good soil preparation helps plants grow successfully.

At Entry 3, learners should be encouraged to demonstrate understanding through verbal responses, practical activities, photographs, matching exercises, pointing to objects, symbols and observation by the assessor. The focus is on basic recognition and participation rather than detailed explanation.

Learning Outcome 1: Know why soil is important for plants

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Identify soil as a growing medium for plants.
- 1.2 State one reason why plants grow in soil.
- 1.3 Identify one thing that healthy soil provides for plants.
- 1.4 State one benefit of healthy soil.

Indicative Content

Soil as a Growing Medium	Healthy Soil Provides
- Plants grow in soil. - Soil supports roots. - Soil helps plants stay upright.	- Water. - Nutrients. - Air - Anchorage for roots
Why Plants Grow in Soil	Benefits of Healthy Soil
- Holds water. - Holds nutrients. - Supports plant roots.	- Better plant growth. - Healthier plants. - Strong roots.

Learning Outcome 2: Know tools used for soil preparation

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1** Identify common tools used to prepare soil.
- 2.2** State the purpose of a garden fork.
- 2.3** State the purpose of a rake.
- 2.4** Identify one safety rule when using gardening tools.

Indicative Content

Soil Preparation Tools	Rake
• Garden fork • Spade • Rake • Hand trowel	• Levels soil. • Removes stones and debris
Garden Fork	Safety Rules
• Loosens soil. • Breaks up compacted ground	• Carry tools safely. • Follow instructions. • Keep tools on the ground when not in use

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in preparing soil for planting

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1** Select suitable tools for soil preparation.
- 3.2** Remove weeds, stones or debris following instructions.
- 3.3** Loosen soil following instructions.
- 3.4** Follow safe working practices during soil preparation activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Know the importance of keeping the planting area suitable for planting

Assessment Criteria

4.1 Identify common materials that should be removed from planting areas.

4.2 State one reason for removing weeds.

4.3 State one reason for removing stones or rubbish.

4.4 Identify a tidy planting area.

Indicative Content

Materials to Remove	Why Remove Stones and Rubbish
- Weeds - Stones - Litter - Dead plant material	- Helps planting. - Makes soil easier to work. - Helps plants grow.
Why Remove Weeds	Tidy Planting Area
- Weeds compete with plants. - Weeds take water and nutrients.	- Free from weeds. - Free from rubbish. - Ready for planting.

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the benefits of preparing soil before planting

Assessment Criteria

5.1 State one benefit of preparing soil before planting.

5.2 Identify one-way prepared soil helps plants grow.

5.3 State one benefit of removing weeds before planting.

5.4 Identify one sign of a well-prepared planting area.

Indicative Content

Benefits of Soil Preparation	Benefits of Removing Weeds
- Easier planting. - Better growth. - Healthier plants.	- Less competition. - Better plant growth.
How Prepared Soil Helps Plants	Signs of Well-Prepared Soil
- Roots can grow. - Water can reach roots. - Air can reach roots.	- Level surface. - Few weeds. - Loose soil.

Unit 6 – Planting and Caring for Plants

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the basic skills needed to plant and care for plants. Learners will identify common plants, understand what plants need to grow, take part in simple planting activities and provide basic care to help plants remain healthy. The unit promotes safe working practices and encourages learners to develop confidence when working with plants in a horticultural environment.

At Entry 3, learners should be encouraged to demonstrate understanding through verbal responses, practical activities, matching exercises, photographs, symbols, pointing to objects and assessor observation. The emphasis should be on basic recognition and participation rather than detailed explanation

Learning Outcome 1: Know what plants need to grow

Assessment Criteria

1.1 Identify water as something plants need to grow.

1.2 Identify light as something plants need to grow.

1.3 State one reason plants need water.

1.4 State one reason plants need light.

Indicative Content

What plants need to grow	Why Plants Need Light
• Water • Light • Air • Soil	• Helps plants grow • Helps plants make food • Keeps plants healthy
• Helps plants grow • Keeps plants healthy • Stops plants drying out	

Learning Outcome 2: Know the basic equipment used for planting

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1** Identify common planting equipment.
- 2.2** State the purpose of a plant pot or container.
- 2.3** Identify planting compost or soil.
- 2.4** Identify one safety rule when planting.

Indicative Content

Planting Equipment	Planting compost or soil
• Plant pot • Hand trowel • Watering can • Compost • Plant label	• Compost or soil is what plants grow in. • Plants are planted in compost or soil. • Compost or soil helps plants grow. • Compost or soil holds the plant roots.
Purpose of a plant pot or container	Safety Rules when planting
• Holds the plant • Holds soil • Supports roots	• Follow instructions • Carry tools safely • Keep work area tidy

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in planting activities

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1** Select suitable equipment for planting.
- 3.2** Fill a container or planting area with compost or soil following instructions.
- 3.3** Plant a seed, seedling or young plant following instructions.
- 3.4** Follow safe working practices during planting activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Know how to care for plants

Assessment Criteria

4.1 Identify one way to care for a plant.

4.2 State why plants should be watered.

4.3 Identify signs of a healthy plant.

4.4 Identify signs that a plant may need care.

Indicative Content

How to care for plants	Signs of a healthy plant
• Watering • Checking plants regularly • Removing dead leaves • Providing light	• Green leaves • Upright stems • New growth • Healthy appearance
Why plants should be watered	Signs that a plant may need care
• Plants need water to grow. • Water helps plants stay healthy. • Water stops plants wilting and drying out. • Plants need water to live.	• Wilting leaves • Dry soil • Yellow leaves • Drooping stems

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the benefits of caring for plants

Assessment Criteria

5.1 State one benefit of caring for plants.

5.2 Identify one-way plants benefit people.

5.3 Identify one-way plants benefit the environment.

5.4 State one thing you enjoyed about planting or caring for plants.

Indicative Content

Benefits of Caring for Plants	Benefits to the Environment
• Healthy growth • More flowers • More fruit or vegetables • Attractive plants	• Supports wildlife • Produces oxygen • Improves outdoor spaces
Benefits to People	Things you enjoyed about planting or caring for plants
• Food • Enjoyment • Attractive surroundings	• Planting the seeds. • Watering the plants. • Watching the plants grow. • Working in the garden. • Planting flowers.

Unit 7 – Growing Salad Crops and Herbs (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the principles and practical skills involved in growing salad crops and herbs. Learners will develop an understanding of common salad crops and herbs, identify the basic requirements for healthy growth, and participate in practical activities such as sowing, watering, maintaining and harvesting crops. The unit also develops awareness of safe working practices and the benefits of growing fresh produce.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (Remembering) with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. The emphasis is on learners demonstrating the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow basic instructions. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know common salad crops and herbs.

Assessment Criteria

1.1 Identify common salad crops.

1.2 Identify common herbs.

1.3 State one use of a salad crop.

1.4 State one use of a herb.

Indicative Content

Common Salad crops	Uses for salad crops
• Lettuce • Spinach • Spring onions • Radish • Tomatoes • Cucumber	• Salad crops can be eaten in salads. • They are used for food. • They can be eaten. • They can be used in sandwiches. • They can be used in meals.
Common Herbs	Uses for herbs
• Basil • Parsley • Chives • Mint • Coriander • Thyme • Rosemary	• Herbs are used to add flavour to food. • They are used in cooking. • They make food taste better. • They can be added to meals. • They can be used as a garnish.

Learning Outcome 2: Know the basic requirements for growing salad crops and herbs.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 Identify the basic requirements for plant growth.
- 2.2 State the purpose of water in plant growth.
- 2.3 State the purpose of light in plant growth.
- 2.4 State what happens if plants do not have suitable growing conditions.

Indicative Content

Requirements for plant growth	Purpose of light in plant growth
• Water • Light • Air • Suitable growing medium • Space • Warmth	• Light helps plants grow. • Plants need light to live. • Light helps plants stay healthy. • Light helps plants make food. • Plants need light to grow properly.
Purpose of water in plant growth	If growing conditions are not suitable
• Water helps plants grow. • Plants need water to stay healthy. • Water helps plants live. • Water helps plants take up nutrients. • Water helps keep plants healthy.	• The plant may not grow properly. • The plant may become unhealthy. • The plant may wilt. • The plant may stop growing. • The plant may die.

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in sowing and planting activities.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Select suitable seeds or young plants.
- 3.2 Prepare a container or growing area following instructions.
- 3.3 Sow seeds or plant young plants following instructions.
- 3.4 Use gardening tools safely during planting activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Participate in the care of salad crops and herbs.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Water plants following instructions.
- 4.2 Identify signs that plants require care.
- 4.3 Carry out simple maintenance activities.
- 4.4 Follow safe working practices during plant care activities.

Indicative Content

Signs Plants Require Care
• Dry soil • Wilting leaves • Weeds • Damaged leaves

Learning Outcome 5: Understand harvesting and the benefits of growing salad crops and herbs.

Assessment Criteria

- 5.1 Identify when a salad crop or herb is ready to harvest.
- 5.2 State how to harvest salad crops or herbs following instructions.
- 5.3 State one benefit of growing salad crops and herbs.
- 5.4 State one-way home-grown produce can be used.

Indicative Content

Ready to harvest	Benefits of Growing Salad Crops and Herbs
• It is ready when it is big enough to pick. • The leaves are large enough to harvest. • The crop looks ready. • It has grown to the right size. • Often stated on seed packet eg Radishes 5 weeks after sowing. • It is ready when instructed by the tutor.	• Fresh produce • Healthy eating • Saves money • Enjoyment of gardening • Supports wildlife • Reduces food miles
Harvest salad crops or herbs	Ways home-grown produce can be used
• Pick the leaves or herbs carefully following instructions. • Harvest the crop when told to. • Use the correct method shown by the tutor. • Pick only the parts you are told to harvest.	• Home-grown produce can be eaten. • It can be used in salads. • It can be used in cooking. • It can be added to meals. • It can be shared with family and friends.

Unit 8 – Growing Fruit in Containers and Small Spaces (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the principles and practical skills involved in growing fruit in containers and small spaces. Learners will develop an understanding of common fruit crops suitable for containers, identify the basic requirements for healthy growth, and participate in practical activities such as planting, watering, maintaining and harvesting fruit crops. The unit also develops awareness of safe working practices and the benefits of growing fruit at home or in limited growing spaces.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (Remembering) with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. The emphasis is on learners demonstrating the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow basic instructions. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know common fruit crops suitable for containers and small spaces.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Identify common fruit crops suitable for containers.
- 1.2 Identify common fruit crops suitable for small growing spaces.
- 1.3 State one use of home-grown fruit.
- 1.4 State one benefit of growing fruit at home.

Indicative Content

Fruit crops suitable for containers	Uses of home-grown fruit
• Strawberries • Blueberries • Raspberries • Dwarf apple trees • Dwarf pear trees • Patio cherries • Gooseberries • Currants	• Home-grown fruit can be eaten. • It can be eaten fresh. • It can be used in desserts. • It can be used in cooking. • It can be made into jam. • It can be added to meals.
Fruit crops suitable for small spaces	The benefits of growing fruit at home
• Strawberries in hanging baskets • Vertical strawberry planters • Espalier apples • Columnar fruit trees • Blueberries in pots • Patio fruit trees	• Growing fruit at home provides fresh fruit. • It helps people eat fresh unprocessed food. • It can save money. • It is enjoyable. • You can grow fruit in a small space. • It reduces food miles.

Learning Outcome 2: Know the basic requirements for growing fruit successfully.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 Identify the basic requirements for fruit plant growth.
- 2.2 State the purpose of water in fruit production.
- 2.3 State the purpose of sunlight in fruit production.
- 2.4 State what may happen if fruit plants do not have suitable growing conditions.

Indicative Content

The requirements for fruit plant growth	The purpose of sunlight in fruit production
• Water • Sunlight • Air • Suitable compost or growing medium • Nutrients • Space • Warmth	• Sunlight helps fruit plants grow. • Fruit plants need sunlight to live. • Sunlight helps plants stay healthy. • Sunlight helps plants produce fruit. • Sunlight helps plants make food.
The purpose of water in fruit production	If growing conditions are not suitable
• Water helps fruit plants grow. • Water helps fruit plants stay healthy. • Fruit plants need water to live. • Water helps plants produce fruit. • Water helps plants take up nutrients.	• The plant may not grow properly. • The plant may become unhealthy. • The plant may wilt. • The plant may produce less fruit. • The plant may die.

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in planting fruit crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Select suitable fruit plants for containers or small spaces.
- 3.2 Prepare a container or growing area following instructions.
- 3.3 Plant fruit crops following instructions.
- 3.4 Use gardening tools safely during planting activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Participate in the care of fruit crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Water fruit plants following instructions.
- 4.2 Identify signs that fruit plants require care.
- 4.3 Carry out simple maintenance activities.
- 4.4 Follow safe working practices during fruit plant care activities.

Indicative Content

Signs Plants Require Care
• Dry compost • Wilting leaves • Yellow leaves • Weeds • Damaged fruit • Pest damage

Learning Outcome 5: Understand harvesting and the benefits of growing fruit in containers and small spaces.

Assessment Criteria

5.1 Identify when fruit is ready to harvest.

5.2 State how fruit should be harvested following instructions and risk assessment.

5.3 State one benefit of growing fruit in containers and small spaces.

5.4 State one way home-grown fruit can be used.

Indicative Content

Ready to harvest	The benefits of growing fruit in containers
• Fruit is ready to harvest when it is ripe. • The fruit is the right colour. • The fruit is full size. • The fruit looks ready to pick. • The fruit is ready when the tutor says it is ready. • The fruit is ready when it can be picked easily.	• Fresh fruit • Healthy eating • Saves money • Enjoyment of gardening • Attractive displays • Supports pollinators • Reduces food miles
How fruit should be harvested	The ways home-grown fruit can be used
• Fruit should be picked carefully. • Fruit should be harvested following instructions. • Follow risk assessment in case of possible thorns, prickles, etc. • Fruit should be picked without damaging the plant. • Use the correct method shown by the tutor. • Harvest fruit when it is ready.	• Home-grown fruit can be eaten fresh. • It can be used in desserts. • It can be used in cooking. • It can be made into jam. • It can be added to meals. • It can be used in fruit salads.

Unit 9 – Maintaining Raised Beds and Growing Areas (E1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the basic knowledge and practical skills needed to maintain raised beds and growing areas. Learners will identify common maintenance tasks, recognise the importance of keeping growing areas clean and tidy, and participate in simple maintenance activities following instructions. The unit promotes safe working practices and helps learners understand how regular maintenance supports healthy plant growth.

At Entry 3, learners should be encouraged to demonstrate understanding through verbal responses, practical activities, photographs, matching exercises, pointing to objects, symbols and observation by the assessor. The focus should be on basic recognition, participation and following instructions rather than detailed explanation.

Learning Outcome 1: Know the purpose of raised beds and growing areas

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Identify a raised bed or growing area.
- 1.2 State one thing that can be grown in a raised bed.
- 1.3 State one reason raised beds are used.
- 1.4 Identify a well-maintained raised bed.

Indicative Content

Raised beds and growing areas	Reasons Raised Beds Are Used
• Areas used to grow plants. • Areas used to grow vegetables. • Areas used to grow flowers.	• Easier to manage. • Easier to plant. • More accessible for disabled or elderly users • Helps plants grow.
Things that can be grown	Well-Maintained Raised Beds
• Lettuce • Herbs • Flowers • Vegetables	• Free from weeds. • Tidy appearance. • Healthy plants. • Free from litter.

Learning Outcome 2: Know common maintenance tasks

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1** Identify common maintenance activities.
- 2.2** State one reason weeds should be removed.
- 2.3** Identify materials that should be removed from growing areas.
- 2.4** State one reason growing areas should be kept tidy.

Indicative Content

Maintenance activities	Materials to remove from growing areas
• Weeding • Watering • Removing litter • Removing dead leaves • Tidying pathways	• Weeds • Stones • Litter • Dead plant material
Why remove weeds?	Why keep growing areas tidy?
• Helps plants grow. • Weeds take water and nutrients.	• Safer working area. • Better appearance. • Healthier plants.

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in maintaining raised beds and growing areas

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1** Select suitable tools or equipment for maintenance activities.
- 3.2** Remove weeds, litter or debris following instructions.
- 3.3** Carry out a simple maintenance activity following instructions.
- 3.4** Follow safe working practices during maintenance activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Know how to work safely when maintaining growing areas

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1** Identify one item of PPE used during maintenance activities.
- 4.2** State why tools should be used safely.
- 4.3** Identify safe methods of moving around growing areas.
- 4.4** State the importance of reporting accidents or damaged equipment.

Indicative Content

PPE used during maintenance activities	Safe movement around growing areas
- Gloves - Sturdy footwear - Overalls	- Walk carefully. - Use pathways. - Look where you are going.
Why tools should be used safely?	Reporting accidents or damaged equipment
- Prevent accidents. - Keep people safe.	- Helps keep people safe. - Allows repairs to be made.

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the benefits of maintaining growing areas

Assessment Criteria

- 5.1** State one benefit of removing weeds.
- 5.2** State one benefit of keeping growing areas tidy.
- 5.3** Identify one way maintenance helps plants grow.
- 5.4** State one thing they enjoyed about maintaining a growing area.

Indicative Content

Benefits of removing weeds	Maintenance helps plants grow
- More water for plants. - More nutrients for plants. - Better plant growth.	- Reduces competition. - Improves growing conditions. - Supports healthy plants.
Benefits of tidiness	Things you enjoyed about maintaining a growing area
- Safer environment. - Better appearance. - Easier to work.	- Watering the plants. - Pulling out weeds. - Making the area tidy. - Working in the garden. - Helping the plants grow. - Using the watering can.

Unit 10 – Watering, Feeding and Maintaining Crops (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the basic principles and practical skills involved in watering, feeding and maintaining horticultural crops. Learners will develop an understanding of why crops need water and nutrients, identify signs that plants require attention, and participate in practical crop maintenance activities. The unit also develops awareness of safe working practices and the importance of regular crop care in supporting healthy plant growth and food production.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (Remembering) with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. The emphasis is on learners demonstrating the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow basic instructions. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets, or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know the importance of watering crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 State why crops need water.
- 1.2 Identify signs that a crop requires watering.
- 1.3 State one effect of insufficient water on crops.
- 1.4 Identify suitable equipment used for watering crops.

Indicative Content

Why crops need water	Effects of insufficient water on crops
- Water helps plants grow. - Water helps plants stay healthy. - Water helps plants take up nutrients. - Water helps plants produce leaves, flowers and fruit.	- Poor growth. - Wilting. - Yellowing leaves. - Plant death.
Signs that a crop requires watering	Effects of too much water on crops
- Dry soil or compost. - Wilting leaves. - Drooping stems. - Dry surface of growing medium.	- Plant roots rot, causing crops to grow poorly or die. - Stops air reaching the roots. - Makes crops unhealthy. - Washes nutrients out of the soil. - Encourages plant diseases. - Water is valuable; only give when required.
Equipment used for watering crops	
- Watering can. - Hose. - Spray bottle. - Irrigation system.	

Learning Outcome 2: Know the importance of improving soil nutrition for crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1** State why crops need nutrients to grow.
- 2.2** Identify common materials that can improve soil nutrition.
- 2.3** State one benefit of improving soil nutrition for crops.
- 2.4** Identify when soil may need nutrients to be added.

Indicative Content

Why crops need nutrients	Benefits of improving soil nutrition for crops
• Support healthy growth. • Help plants develop roots. • Support flowering and fruiting. • Maintain plant health.	• Helps crops grow well. • Produces healthier plants. • Helps crops grow stronger. • Helps plants make more leaves, flowers or fruit. • Improves root growth. • Helps crops produce a better harvest.
Materials that can improve soil nutrition	When soil needs nutrients to be added
• Peat-free compost. • Well-rotted manure. • Leaf mould. • Garden compost. • Homemade compost	• Before planting crops. • When plants are growing poorly. • After harvesting crops. • When the soil has been used for growing crops for a long time. • When adding compost to prepare a growing area

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in watering and feeding crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1** Select suitable equipment for watering crops.
- 3.2** Water crops following instructions.
- 3.3** Apply plant feed following instructions.
- 3.4** Use tools and equipment safely during watering and feeding activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Participate in maintaining crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Identify signs that crops require maintenance.
- 4.2 Carry out simple crop maintenance activities.
- 4.3 Remove weeds or damaged plant material following instructions.
- 4.4 Follow safe working practices during crop maintenance activities.

Indicative Content

Signs maintenance is required	Maintenance activities
• Weeds present. • Dead leaves. • Damaged leaves. • Pest damage.	• Weeding. • Removing dead leaves. • Removing damaged fruit. • Tidying growing areas. • Supporting plants.

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the benefits of regular crop care.

Assessment Criteria

- 5.1 State one benefit of regular watering.
- 5.2 State one benefit of regular improvement of soil nutrition for crops.
- 5.3 State one benefit of maintaining crops.
- 5.4 Identify one way crop care supports healthy plant growth.

Indicative Content

Benefits of regular watering	Benefits of maintenance
• Helps plants grow. • Keeps plants healthy. • Prevents wilting.	• Reduces weeds. • Improves appearance. • Helps plants grow better.
Benefits of regular soil nutrition improvement	Crop care supports healthy growth
• Improves growth. • Supports flowering and fruiting. • Improves plant health.	• Plants stay healthy. • Better crop production. • Improved plant development.

Unit 11 – Managing Pests and Diseases in Food Crops (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the basic principles of identifying and managing common pests and diseases affecting food crops. Learners will develop an understanding of common signs of pest and disease problems, identify simple non-chemical methods of control, and participate in practical crop monitoring and maintenance activities. The emphasis is on safe, environmentally responsible approaches that support healthy crop production and sustainable gardening practices.

This unit focuses on integrated, non-chemical pest and disease management, promoting environmentally responsible horticultural practices suitable for Level 1 learners and food-growing environments.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (Remembering) with some simple practical application activities to support engagement and skill development. Learners should demonstrate the ability to identify, recognise, state and follow simple instructions. Responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know common pests found on food crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Identify common pests that affect food crops.
- 1.2 Identify signs of pest damage.
- 1.3 State one effect pests can have on crops.
- 1.4 Identify one method of checking crops for pests.

Indicative Content

Common Pests	Effects of Pests
• Aphids (greenfly/blackfly) • Slugs • Snails • Caterpillars • Vine weevil	• Poor plant growth • Damaged crops • Reduced harvest • Unhealthy plants
Signs of Pest Damage	Checking for Pests
• Holes in leaves • Chewed leaves • Damaged fruit • Sticky deposits • Visible insects	• Looking at leaves • Looking under leaves • Checking stems • Inspecting fruit

Learning Outcome 2: Know common diseases affecting food crops.

Assessment Criteria

2.1 Identify common diseases affecting food crops.

2.2 Identify signs of disease.

2.3 State one effect disease can have on crops.

2.4 Identify one way to help prevent disease.

Indicative Content

Common Diseases	Effects of Disease
• Powdery mildew • Tomato blight • Rust • Botrytis	• Poor growth • Crop loss • Plant death • Reduced harvest
Signs of Disease	Disease Prevention
• Yellow leaves • Brown spots • White powder on leaves • Rotting fruit • Wilting plants	• Good hygiene • Removing infected material • Adequate spacing • Watering correctly • Cleaning tools

Learning Outcome 3: Know non-chemical methods of pest and disease control.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 Identify non-chemical methods of pest control.
- 3.2 Identify non-chemical methods of disease prevention.
- 3.3 State one benefit of non-chemical control methods.
- 3.4 Identify safe working practices when managing pests and diseases.

Indicative Content

Non-chemical methods of pest control	Benefits of non-chemical control
• Hand removal of pests • Removing damaged leaves • Using netting • Using barriers • Encouraging beneficial insects • Regular crop inspection	• Environmentally friendly • Safe for wildlife • Safe for food crops • Reduces chemical use
Non-chemical disease prevention	Safe working practices
• Removing infected material • Cleaning tools • Good spacing between plants • Crop hygiene • Watering at soil level	• Wearing gloves • Following instructions • Washing hands • Using tools safely

Learning Outcome 4: Participate in pest and disease monitoring activities.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 Inspect crops for signs of pests.
- 4.2 Inspect crops for signs of disease.
- 4.3 Report findings following instructions.
- 4.4 Follow safe working practices during monitoring activities.

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the importance of maintaining healthy crops.

Assessment Criteria

5.1 State one benefit of regular crop inspection.

5.2 State one benefit of removing damaged plant material.

5.3 State one benefit of good crop hygiene.

5.4 Identify one way healthy crops can be supported.

Indicative Content

Benefits of Crop Inspection	Benefits of Good Hygiene
• Finds problems early • Helps protect crops • Supports healthy growth	• Reduces disease (Do not compost diseased plant material) • Keeps crops healthy • Improves growing conditions
Benefits of Removing Damaged Material	Supporting Healthy Crops
• Reduces spread of pests • Reduces spread of disease (Do not compost diseased plant material) • Improves plant health	• Watering when necessary • Improving soil nutrition when necessary • Monitoring regularly • Keeping growing areas tidy

Unit 12 – Harvesting Fruit and Vegetables Safely (L1)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - 15 hours

Unit aim

This unit introduces learners to the knowledge and practical skills required to harvest fruit and vegetables safely. Learners will develop an understanding of when crops are ready to harvest, how to use harvesting tools safely, and how to handle produce correctly after harvesting. The unit promotes safe working practices, good personal hygiene and the importance of protecting crops and produce during harvesting activities.

This unit is designed primarily at Level 1 (Remembering) with practical application activities. Learners should demonstrate the ability to identify, state, recognise and follow simple instructions. Evidence may be gathered through observation, oral questioning, worksheets, photographs and practical activities. Oral questioning responses may be provided verbally, through practical demonstration, photographs, worksheets or assessor observation records.

Learning Outcome 1: Know when fruit and vegetables are ready to harvest.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Identify signs that fruit is ready to harvest.
- 1.2 Identify signs that vegetables are ready to harvest.
- 1.3 State one reason for harvesting crops at the correct time.
- 1.4 Identify one crop that is ready to harvest.

Indicative Content

Signs fruit is ready to harvest	Reasons for harvesting at the correct time
• Correct colour • Correct size • Ripe appearance • Ready to pick	• Better quality produce • Better taste • Too soon: crop is too small or too hard • Avoid spoilage (from being overripe) • Prevent waste
Signs vegetables are ready to harvest	Crops ready to harvest
• Correct size • Firm texture • Mature appearance • Ready to pick	• Strawberries • Raspberries • Lettuce • Radish • Tomatoes • Spring onions

Learning Outcome 2: Know safe harvesting practices.

Assessment Criteria

2.1 Identify tools used for harvesting.

2.2 State why tools should be used safely.

2.3 State the importance of following instructions during harvesting.

2.4 Identify appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) used during harvesting activities.

Indicative Content

Harvesting Tools	Following Instructions
• Secateurs • Scissors • Harvesting knife • Collection basket • Trug	• Work safely • Avoid damage • Use correct methods
Safe Tool Use	PPE
• Prevent accidents • Protect people • Protect crops	• Gloves • Sturdy footwear • Protective clothing where appropriate

Learning Outcome 3: Participate in harvesting fruit and vegetables.

Assessment Criteria

3.1 Select suitable harvesting equipment.

3.2 Harvest crops following instructions.

3.3 Handle harvested produce carefully.

3.4 Follow safe working practices during harvesting activities.

Learning Outcome 4: Know the importance of hygiene when harvesting food crops.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.1 State why personal hygiene is important during harvesting.
- 4.2 Identify appropriate handwashing practices.
- 4.3 State one way to help prevent contamination of harvested produce.
- 4.4 State the importance of reporting injuries or accidents.

Indicative Content

Personal Hygiene	Preventing Contamination
• Clean hands • Clean clothing • Protect food safety	• Clean hands • Clean equipment • Avoid damaged produce
Handwashing	Reporting Accidents
• Use soap and water • Wash before harvesting • Wash after handling soil	• Helps keep people safe • Allows appropriate action to be taken

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the benefits of harvesting crops correctly.

Assessment Criteria

- 5.1 State one benefit of harvesting fruit correctly.
- 5.2 State one benefit of harvesting vegetables correctly.
- 5.3 State one benefit of careful handling of produce.
- 5.4 Identify one way harvested produce can be used.

Indicative Content

Benefits of Correct Harvesting	Benefits of Careful Handling
• Better quality produce • Reduced waste • Less crop damage • Longer storage life	• Prevents bruising • Maintains quality • Reduces waste
Benefits of Correct Harvesting	Uses of Harvested Produce
• Better quality produce • Reduced waste • Less crop damage • Longer storage life	• Eating fresh • Cooking • Salads • Sharing • Selling • Preserving