



Royal  
Botanic Garden  
Edinburgh

# RBGE Certificate in Botanical Illustration 2018-19 Distance (online) Course



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## 1. Course Overview

The RBGE Certificate in Botanical Illustration (CBI) is a great way to learn the fundamental techniques of paint and pencil. Using plants as our core subject this course is an ideal starting certificate if you want to become a botanical illustrator. The techniques you learn are valuable across all areas of illustration and seldom taught in art colleges or university art departments, so it is well suited to any developing artist.

This course consists of ten units with ongoing assessment built into the programme. The focus is on the fundamental skills, and is taught by experienced and enthusiastic tutors.

There is some theory provided to aid your understanding, but the course is designed to be delivered and assessed using videos, galleries, and text which is focused on predominantly practical skills.

The RBGE Certificate in Botanical Illustration is a formally assessed course and therefore requires students to successfully pass all units and assignments in order to achieve the award. Students are required to build up a course portfolio containing notes, visuals and exercises and to upload this to PropaGate Learning (RBGE's online learning environment) throughout. This body of work will show progression and help develop skills leading to a final painted composition. Both the portfolio and the final piece will be assessed and the marks combined to provide the final grade. There is also an element of continuing self-assessment and evaluation within the programme.

### RBGE Diploma in Botanical Illustration



This course gives you all the skills required to join the RBGE Diploma in Botanical Illustration if you wish to take your studies to a professional level. Further details on the diploma can be found by visiting our website:

[www.rbge.org.uk/dipbi](http://www.rbge.org.uk/dipbi)

## 2. Course Structure and Start Dates for 2018/2019

The online CBI programme will be delivered through PropaGate Learning as a ten unit course. Students who complete all ten units and the assessments are awarded the RBGE Certificate in Botanical Illustration.

### Option 1: Starting October 2018

### Option 2: Starting March 2019

Unit Number	Title
CBI-01	Context of Botanical Illustration and Drawing Exploration
CBI-02	Drawing - Texture & Tone
CBI-03	Modelling in 3D with paint
CBI-04	Colour and Mixing Paint
CBI-05	Introduction to Storyboard for Composition - Flowers & Buds
CBI-06	Exploring Composition - Leaves
CBI-07	Working on final Composition
CBI-08	Working on final Composition
CBI-09	Working on final Composition and Review
CBI-10	Final hand in of all course work

### **3. Online Learning**

Your online learning environment is PropaGate Learning which uses the Moodle learning platform.

PropaGate Learning is website that you log into in order to access your course. It's a place for learning and for discussing topics and progress with your tutors and other students. PropaGate Learning allows you to study from home, whilst becoming part of a thriving and enthusiastic learning community.

Your course consists of a number of elements including: slideshows / presentations, notes, videos, quizzes, galleries, discussion forums, and an upload area for your drawings and paintings. The resources and activities are designed to help you learn online and to help you to share and learn from each other.

#### **How can I prepare for studying online?**

You should be competent computer user with a basic understanding of standard computer applications such as using an internet browser, email and word processing. Your course involves uploading your drawings and paintings, so experience of scanning images using a scanner, taking photographs with a digital camera and of editing/re-sizing images would be useful. Our 'Digital Skills Check' at the following link will help you to identify any areas of IT you may need to brush up on:

<https://tinyurl.com/y8nspgr4>

You will be given access to PropaGate Learning prior to the course starting to help you familiarise yourself with the online environment. Please make use of this time as it will enable you to fully engage with the course itself once it starts, rather than spending your time finding your way around. It is also a chance to meet other learners and the tutors,

Online courses require a much more self-motivated learning style than traditional attended classes. You should plan to set aside a certain amount of time to log into the course classes and carry out tasks. You will need to be proactive about understanding the timetable and submitting your work.

Participation in online discussions and the sharing of work is also part of the course – online learning is much more sociable than you might think!

## **What hardware or software will I need?**

You will need access to a desktop or laptop computer with an up to date operating system. You will also need a reliable internet connection capable of viewing videos online. Most of the course will be accessible via a tablet, but we recommend using a laptop or desktop computer. You may find some aspects of the course will be easier to use on a computer. You will also need access to a scanner (we recommend an A3 flatbed scanner) and/or a digital camera.

Regarding software, you will need an up-to-date browser (e.g. Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer). You will also need software that will open PDFs (e.g. Adobe Reader), as well as an image-editing programme.

PropaGate Learning is available 24/7 with the exception of any maintenance work, which we will inform you about in plenty of time.

## **What support is available?**

We encourage everyone to make the most of the forums on the course. These provide a way for students to talk to one another and to tutors and ask each other questions. Tutors usually check the forums at regular intervals (e.g. once or twice a week). There is also a private messaging activity within PropaGate Learning where you can contact your tutor directly.

Our PropaGate Learning team are always available so if you ever feel you are stuck with a course-related technical problem, they can be contacted via the forums or by emailing: [propagatelearning@rbge.ac.uk](mailto:propagatelearning@rbge.ac.uk)

## **4. Assessment Methods**

This is a predominantly practical course, designed to teach a foundation level of skills, understanding and competence. This will be delivered through a series of videos, written tasks and galleries for reference.

Candidates will be assessed in three ways:

### **4.1 Course Portfolio for Units 1-4 (40% of assessment marks)**

You will be asked to upload work regularly for feedback and/or assessment.

You are encouraged to include notes, self-analysis, diagrams, and photographs. These will need to be uploaded along with your work. However, this is a 'practical' course and therefore you will be engaged for the most part in 'hands on' drawing and painting.

As you progress through the course you will create a collection of work that will be a valuable resource to refer back to in the future.

You will be given tutor feedback at key points during the course, and your work and finished composition will be assessed at the end.

### **4.2 Self-Assessment throughout the course (10% of assessment marks)**

Each student is required to fill in a self-evaluation record at the end of each unit. This is to enable the tutors to gauge your understanding of your progression through the course.

### **4.3 Final Composition Project: Units 5-10 (50% of assessment marks)**

Working from fresh plant material, students experiment with compositional approaches and, with tutor approval, select the final composition to be used.

Beginning with pencil studies, the proposed image composition is agreed and transferred onto the final watercolour paper and the process of painting from base washes to fully rendered state follows.

Students are required to present their work, demonstrating that they have been able to meet the set criteria, given at the start of the course.

A level of skill, in association with the assessment criteria, is required to pass this course.

Grading will consist of:

- An assessment of the course units through your portfolio of work
- An assessment of your final composition
- Analysis of your Student Assessment
- Written tutor feedback to students.

### **4.4 Certification & Grading**

Successful candidates will be awarded the '*RBGE Certificate in Botanical Illustration*', which will be graded as follows:

- Referral: 49%
- Pass: 50%-59%
- Merit: 60%-69%
- Distinction: 70% and above

NB: Referred candidates may retake the Final Composition Assessment but will still be able to gain a Pass.

Your Portfolio of work will count for 40% of the final course mark, the Student Self-Assessment throughout the course 10%, and the Final Composition 50%.

### **4.5. Common Themes**

The following themes will be considered throughout all the modules.

- Observation
- Drawing with precision
- Materials and equipment
- Painting techniques
- Composition
- Sourcing information
- Understanding plants
- Keeping a portfolio of work



## **5. Timetable**

It is important that you keep to the study timetable to get the most out of this course. It means you will receive feedback at the appropriate times to enable you to continue smoothly with the course and complete it successfully.

In the event you do find you are falling behind you must contact your tutor to discuss the options.

Please note: If you are unable to complete a module in the specified timeframe there will be an additional charge for marking and feedback, this fee will vary depending on the module and the level of marking and feedback. In the event of extenuating circumstances these fees may be waived.

## **6. Course Fees**

The cost for the course is £600. Full payment for the course is required on acceptance of a place.

## 7. Application Procedure

Spaces on this course are limited. Candidates will be selected on the basis of the answers given to the questions on the application form at the back of the handbook. If all applications are of a high standard, applications may be allocated based on the date they were received.

**Application Deadline:** Please complete and return the form to us by:

- Friday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018 for the October 2018 Course
- Friday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019 for March 2019 Course

Completed forms should be posted to us:

Education Department (CertBI-D)  
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh  
20a Inverleith Row  
Edinburgh  
EH3 5LR

Alternatively you can scan your completed form and send it to us by email:  
[education@rbge.org.uk](mailto:education@rbge.org.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE:** you must apply using the application form at the back of this handbook. Applications using the short course booking form at the back of the RBGE course prospectus will not be considered.

Applicants will be notified if their application has been successful or not within 2 weeks of the application deadline date.

## 8. Equipment Required

This is a practical course so you must have basic drawing and painting materials: This includes:

- A4 cartridge pad
- Saunders Waterford Hot Press (HP) watercolour paper, or other Hot Press Watercolour paper: 2 sheets of A2 size
- Tracing paper: 1 sheet
- Windsor & Newton Professional Quality Watercolour paints, or other Artists Quality Paints:
  - Permanent Rose
  - Perylene Maroon
  - New Gamboge
  - Windsor Lemon
  - Indanthrene Blue
  - Cobalt Blue
- 2B, HB, 2H pencils
- Ceramic palette or white plate for mixing paint
- High quality pointed watercolour brushes size 0, 2 and 4 (these are not required until Unit 03)
- Eraser – Plastic and Putty
- Sharpener / knife
- 30cm clear Ruler and / or dividers
- Magnifying glass (if you have one)
- A “Pocket” microscope is also recommended.

## 9. Unit Descriptors

Descriptors for all units are on the following pages. Each descriptor states the:

- Learning Objectives
- Key Knowledge and Practical Activities to be covered during the unit
- Assessment Guidelines

**Unit Number: CBI-01**

**Unit Title: Context for Botanical Illustration & Drawing – Line and Measuring**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand what defines Botanical Illustration
- Understand the context of Botanical Art
- Introduce the materials of the Botanical Illustrator
- Understand the basic principles for accurate measured drawing
- Learn to measure the correct size of plant parts with correct scale and proportions

**Key Knowledge:**

- To outline the key features that define a Botanical Illustration
- An Introduction to the discipline of Botanical Illustration.
- Exploring the materials essential to the illustrator
- Understanding of the key structures of the subject through investigation, and simple line drawings

**Key Practical Activities:**

- To watch a video of past and present artists' work with discussion. A chance for personal analysis throughout the session. Online material for further reference and follow up information
- Exploration of pencil line techniques
- Practicing key measuring skills
- To undertake an accurate measured observational drawing of a fruit and a leaf

**Assessment:**

- Begin a student self-assessment
- Begin course uploading coursework

**Unit Number: CBI-02**

**Unit Title: Drawing – Texture & Tone**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Carry out a range of different techniques in pencil
- Understand the use of tone for 3D rendering
- Understand the techniques for rendering appropriate texture

**Key Knowledge:**

- Getting to know different pencil strengths appropriate for task
- How to create three dimensional illustrations
- Learn exactly what type of drawing is appropriate for the purpose (sketching, accurate line or tone)
- Reinforcement of measuring skills

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Exercises to explore the pencil, line, tone, gradation and the effect of light source, etc.
- Carry out a 3D pencil drawing of a fruit
- Explore various aspects of one a leaf, both front and back

**Assessment:**

- Continue with self-assessment
- Annotations of materials and methods used
- Self-critical analysis
- Tutor Feedback on pencil work at the end of the unit
- Upload coursework

**Unit Number: CBI-03**

**Unit Title: 3D Modelling with Paint**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand the principles of preparation for painting
- Control the application of paint from light to dark
- Create a recognisable subject in 3D

**Key Knowledge:**

- Advantages and disadvantages of various materials
- How to generate good tertiary colours
- Building up depth of tone in a controlled way
- Different methods to create detail

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Experiment with colour mixes, to achieve tertiary colours
- Carry out exercises with a variety of shapes creating volume
- Prepare a light detailed drawing on relevant paper using transfer methods
- Application of paint

**Assessment:**

- Self-assessment
- Annotations of methods
- Upload coursework
- Tutor Feedback on painting methods at the end of the unit

**Unit Number: CBI-04**

**Unit Title: Colour and Mixing Paint**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand the principles and methods of colour mixing starting with primary colours
- Carry out at least two distinct methods of paint application
- Understand how to bring one subject to a conclusion

**Key Knowledge:**

- Advantages and disadvantages of proportions of paint /water
- To learn control of paint by building up washes
- To demonstrate dryer brush work in conjunction with washes
- To create 3D form by modelling and to strengthen tone

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Carry out a gradated range using only greens
- Using a fruit to work with, explore how to match test colours to subject, using layers
- Introduce dry brush technique for detail and textures on subject
- Colour matching and rendering of the front and back of leaf subject matter
- Create a colour wheel from primary colours, with annotations

**Assessment:**

- Variation of colour strength for subject matter
- Self-assessment
- Upload course work
- Tutor Feedback on colour application at the end of the unit

**Unit Number: CBI-05**

**Unit Title: Introduction to Storyboard for Composition -  
Flowers and Buds**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Identify basic floral parts and their functions, in order to record correctly
- Understand the principles and methods of colour matching to plant material
- Understand the level of fine dry detail appropriate to subject
- Understand the elements required to complete a storyboard for the selected plant
- Understand use of Storyboard for composition development
- Utilise a camera for recording accurately all the plant details

**Key Knowledge:**

- Correct drawing transfer and methods, care of work
- Reasons for pigment section and quantity of paint to water
- Terminology: depth of field, foreshortening
- Techniques: washes, gradation, blending, dry brush, etc.
- Types and properties of different wet and dry methods of paint application
- Considerations when controlling edges of subject
- Appreciation of structure of flower head and its function

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Carry out drawings for developing your knowledge of perspective, subject matter etc., of the flower head
- Transfer to watercolour paper
- Prepare colour tests for flower head and bud
- Follow through a painted study of at least the flower petals

\*\* Introduction to Final Composition Brief will be given \*\*

**Assessment:**

- Self-assessment
- Carry out completed petal task
- Upload course work with annotations and self-criticism
- Draw and label the basic parts of the flower



**Unit Number: CBI-06**  
**Unit Title: Exploring Composition - Leaves**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand the basic principles and guidelines of composition
- Understand different types of composition, highlighting styles (old /contemporary) and reasons for use
- Ascertain when there is balance and harmony within the piece
- Identify basic structure and parts of leaves
- Draw and paint subject to a life like standard

**Key Knowledge:**

- Appreciation of images and discuss what elements are prioritised and how, for example, Botanists use scientific plates
- Becoming familiar with methods to design and compose a piece of work from sketch to layout
- Organising one's time with reference to the life of the plant

**Key Practical Activities:**

- To watch a presentation of portfolio examples of Distinction, Merit and Pass from previous CBI students
- Have an awareness of weight and balance within a composition
- To carry out exercises using prepared reproductions of plant parts to generate compositions
- To colour test and mix relevant colours to render a section of the front and back of a leaf

**Assessment:**

- Self-assessment
- Carry out completed leaf task
- Referring to brief, explore the positioning of the 3 key elements within the composition i.e., flower, front and back of leaf
- Upload course work
- Tutor Feedback on composition and work so far at the end of the unit

**Unit Number: CBI-07**  
**Unit Title: Working on Final Composition**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Develop the required elements of the composition in a balanced way
- Understand the principles of usage of cross sections elements in Botanical Illustration
- Draw and paint the subject to a life-like standard

**Key Knowledge:**

- Explore sizes, proportions and scale of elements within a botanical Illustration.
- Balance within composition
- Use of photography as a supporting and recording device
- Accurate drawing and colour matching of subject matter

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Use of tracing paper or light box to transfer final drawn composition to watercolour paper
- Continue with accurate colour matching and convincing 3D rendering of plant subject matter

**Assessment:**

- Begin painting the flowers and buds on the final piece
- Self-assessment
- Upload course work with notes, annotations, and self criticism

**Unit Number: CBI-08**  
**Unit Title: Working on the Final Composition**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand colour weight and balance throughout a piece and the relationships between the elements
- Gain an understanding of when the piece of work needs adjustment and understand how the work should be 'refined' in terms of tone, texture, etc.
- To become more familiar with the qualities of depth of field

**Key Knowledge:**

- Importance of refining the composition
- Gain confidence with colour mixing and matching
- Continue exploration of paint application
- Control and use of materials

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Identifying correct colour palettes for specific parts
- Confirming composition
- Continue to work on the painting of the three elements
- Exploring details and challenging areas such as stems, junctions and textures

**Assessment:**

- Begin painting the leaves on the final piece
- Self-assessment
- Upload course work

**Unit Number: CBI-09**

**Unit Title: Work on Final Composition**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Develop a critical awareness of your own work and of the subject in general
- Consider the presentation of the final composition and supporting work in general
- Show an ability to appreciate gaps in your research in order to prepare for the final submission
- To assess areas requiring more tonal contrast, colour, or detail

**Key Knowledge:**

- Employing finishing and sharpening techniques
- Review of work to date
- Decide if additional elements are needed to balance the composition

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Identifying correct colour palettes for specific parts
- Continue to work on the painting of the three elements
- Exploring details and challenging areas such as stems, junctions, and textures
- Personal course work review

**Assessment:**

- Ongoing development of composition
- Self-assessment
- Upload course work

**Unit Number: CBI-10**

**Unit Title: Finalising and hand in of all course work**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Upload completed final composition and submit all work for assessment
- Have the ability to transfer knowledge to other pieces of work

**Key Knowledge:**

- To look at course work and final composition to recognise whether the work is successfully concluded
- To investigate areas for future work and development

**Key Practical Activities:**

- Complete final composition and course work
- Upload work to the Certificate gallery

**Assessment:**

- Ongoing development
- Self-assessment
- Completed course work
- Completed final composition

[APPLICATION FORM ON NEXT PAGE]



Application Form
RBGE Certificate in Botanical Illustration (CERT BI)

Please post your completed form to:

Education Administrator (CertBI-D)
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
20a Inverleith Row
Edinburgh
EH3 5LR
education@rbge.org.uk

Or email a scanned copy to:

Please see section 7 (page 10) for application procedure and deadline dates.

1. Personal Details

Title Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Dr / Other

Name:

Contact Numbers:

Address:

Daytime:

Evening:

Mobile:

Nationality:

Email Address:

Reasons for applying for this course?

Multiple horizontal lines for writing reasons for applying.

Existing Qualifications & Experience (in brief)

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Where did you hear about this course?

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Do you have any additional support needs? Please give details.

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## 2. Course Options

Please select the course you wish to apply for.

October 2018 Course

March 2019 Course

## 3. Payment Details

	Total Amount
Course Fees	£600

### Payment Method:

Please do not send any money with this form, you will be asked for payment when you are offered a place on the course.

For office use only:					
Date application received			Reference Number		
Offered place	Yes / No	Date:	Place accepted	Yes / No	Date: