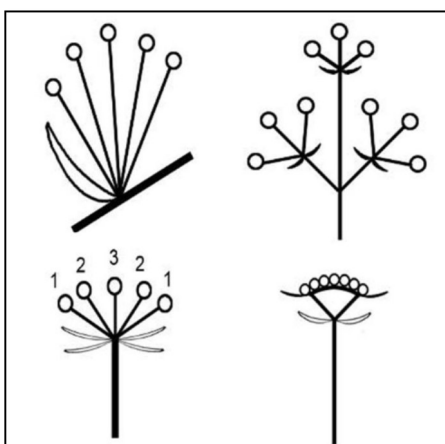




Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

RHS Level 3 Certificates in the Principles Horticulture 2018-19



PropaGate
Learning

Explore the world of plants online with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh



Welcome...

...to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), and thank you for requesting further information on the RHS level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture.

The *RHS Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture* comprises of two parts: the *Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth, Health and Applied Propagation* (Part 1) and the *Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Construction and Planting* (Part 2). Both certificates together can be combined with a practical certificate to make the RHS Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practices of Horticulture. We currently do not offer the practical certificate, which is required to be awarded the diploma.

The RHS Level 3 Part 1 and Part 2 certificates are stand-alone qualifications and can be applied for separately. Many people choose which part to take according to their interests or depending on what they intend to do after gaining the certificate. These certificates are ideal if you have a real passion for plants and gardens. We would generally recommend studying the RHS Level 2 Certificate in Horticulture before undertaking this course, but it is not always necessary.

RBGE is a fantastic place to be a student – a world renowned centre for horticultural and botanical training and research. We have superb resources, the jewel in the crown being our living collections – over 15,000 species of plants growing across our four Gardens; Edinburgh, Benmore, Dawyck and Logan. Perhaps even more important for our students though, is the expertise of our horticultural and botanical staff. The RHS Level 3 course offers students expert input and tuition from specialists in every branch of horticulture and botany. The opportunity to study with RBGE is an enjoyable and rewarding one for all of our students.

This handbook introduces you to the RHS Level 3 course. We hope it answers all your questions, but please don't hesitate to contact us via the details below if you have any further queries.



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

RBGE Education Department
rhslevel3@rbge.org.uk
0131 248 2937

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1. Part 1

1.1 Introduction to the course

The RHS Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth, Health and Applied Propagation builds on the current RHS Level 2 certificate and delivers a broad-based understanding of horticultural techniques and plant biology. If you are based in Scotland, it is equivalent to something between a higher and an advanced higher or to an English A-Level.

It provides students with a qualification that is recognised internationally by the horticulture industry. This broad base makes it ideal for those wishing to pursue a career in any branch of horticulture. It is also perfect for leisure gardeners who would like to expand their horticultural knowledge, and to have it formally assessed. It is an ideal precursor to relevant diploma and degree programmes here at RBGE.

The award of the Certificate is based on written examinations that are externally set and marked by the RHS. The certificate is accredited by OFQUAL (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) in England and Wales.

1.2. Course Structure and Content

The RHS Level 3 Part 2 course is structured around the examinations set by the RHS, so the content is predominantly theory. It is a part of the wider Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), a system that is designed to allow you to study a huge range of subjects to tailor your learning.

The course is organised into four units and the learning hours recommended by the RHS and the QCF credits for each unit are as shown below.

Principles of Plant Growth, Health and Applied Propagation		Guided learning hours	Additional Self-directed studies in hours	Total Qualification Time*	QCF Credits^
Unit 1	Plant taxonomy, structure and function	32	23	55	5
Unit 2	The root environment, plant nutrition and growing systems	28	22	50	5
Unit 3	The management of plant health.	24	16	40	3
Unit 4	Understanding applied plant propagation	21	14	35	2

***The RHS have estimated that the Total Qualification Time** required for students to study this certificate is 180 hours. We have apportioned the number of hours required for each unit based on the guided learning hours.

^The total number of QCF credits for this Certificate is 15 Credits.

Unit 1: Plant taxonomy, structure and function

This is the botany section and really helps you to get to grips with plants, their diversity and how they work. There are 7 major learning areas in this part of the course, including plant taxonomy, tissues, reproduction, photosynthesis and respiration, transport, and regulation of growth. Understanding this helps you make sense of many of the processes later in the course.

Unit 2: The root environment, plant nutrition and growing systems

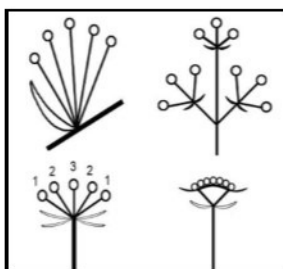
This unit begins with a look at soil classification and formation and the underlying rocks and their properties. The focus shifts to a detailed look at the properties of the mineral and biological components of soils and growing media. We also look at nutrient cycles in soil and plants as well as causes and symptoms of deficiencies. Finally this unit introduces the principles of organic growing and the ways in which soils and plant health can be managed in organic systems.

Unit 3: The management of plant health

This unit covers three major learning areas –Firstly you will be expected to identify a wide range of pests, diseases and weeds and know how to manage and control them by different methods, including integrated pest management. Secondly, to understand how and when chemical controls can be used and stored to minimise damage to non-target organisms. Thirdly there is a focus on biosecurity and reducing the spread of pests and diseases.

Unit 4: Understanding applied plant propagation

This unit looks at how the germinating seed works, the requirements for seed storage and conservation, breaking dormancy and ensuring successful germination. Vegetative propagation will cover different methods of propagation, including grafting, bulb propagation and micro-propagation and a look at a range of facilities used for vegetative propagation.



2. Part 2

2.1 Introduction to the Course

The RHS Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Construction and Planting builds on the current RHS Level 2 certificate and delivers a broad-based understanding of garden design, construction and planting. If you are based in Scotland, it is equivalent to something between a higher and an advanced higher, or to an English A-Level.

It provides students with a qualification that is recognised internationally by the horticulture industry. This broad base makes it ideal for those wishing to pursue a career in any branch of horticulture or garden design. It is also perfect for leisure gardeners who would like to expand their horticultural knowledge, and to have it formally assessed. It is an ideal precursor to relevant diploma and degree programmes here at RBGE.

The award of the Certificate is based on written examinations that are externally set and marked by the RHS. The certificate is accredited by OFQUAL (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) in England and Wales.

2.2. Course Structure and Content

The RHS Level 3 Part 2 course is structured around the examinations set by the RHS, so the content is predominantly theory. It is a part of the wider Qualifications, Credit Framework (QCF), a system that is designed to allow you to study a huge range of subjects to tailor your learning.

The course is organised into four units and the learning hours recommended by the RHS and the QCF credits for each unit are as shown below.

Principles of Garden Planning, Construction and Planting		Guided learning hours	Additional Self-directed studies in hours	Total Qualification Time*	QCF Credits^
Unit 1	Understanding garden survey techniques and design principles	28	27	55	4
Unit 2	Understanding the selection and use of landscaping elements in the garden	28	27	55	4
Unit 3	Understanding the setting out and construction of landscaping elements in the garden	27	25	52	4
Unit 4	Understanding a range of specialist elements in the establishment of garden and urban plantings	24	16	40	3

***The RHS have estimated that the Total Qualification Time** required for students to study this certificate is 202 hours. We have apportioned the number of hours required for each unit based the guided learning hours.

^The total number of QCF credits for this Certificate is 15 Credits.

Unit 1: Understanding garden survey techniques and design principles

This unit is concerned with garden survey techniques and design principles. It explains the historical development of garden design styles which still have an influence on the gardens of today. Any good garden design needs to reflect the needs of the garden users and the capabilities of the site so the crucial information gathering and recording stages of the process are discussed before dealing with the application of design principles.

Unit 2: Understanding the selection and use of landscaping elements in the garden

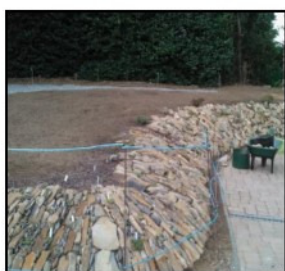
This unit puts physical form to the design by exploring how soft and hard landscaping features and materials are selected and used in the garden. Important safety issues are dealt with and we look at the topical subject of using sustainable materials.

Unit 3: Understanding the setting out and construction of landscaping elements in the garden

This unit moves on to the construction phase. The plans discussed in unit 1 are translated into physical features and the methods used to construct those features are explained.

Unit 4: Understanding a range of specialist elements in the establishment of garden and urban plantings

This unit covers aspects of planting and maintenance which are specific to amenity, woodland, wildlife, sensory, prairie, potager and urban gardens. We also look at how water sustainability can be incorporated into garden design and explain a number of specialist pruning techniques.



3. Entry Requirements

Although the RHS Level 3 Certificates do not require any prior qualifications the RHS Level 2 certificate is a valuable starting point. Fundamentally, however, all you need is an interest in the subject and a willingness to set aside time for home study. We are looking for keen, enthusiastic 'plants people' of all ages, who would value the opportunity to develop their knowledge in a structured and supported learning environment and will contribute to the programme.

Where there is competition for places we will accept those we feel would most benefit from attending the course.

4. Course Delivery: How does it work?

Learning Online

As a student on the RHS Level 3 certificate courses you will have access to PropaGate, RBGE's virtual learning environment which uses the Moodle learning platform.

PropaGate Learning is a 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.

PropaGate Learning contains a wide range of learning materials to support your study including comprehensive resources, activities, revision aids and guidance on recommended reading.

You will be provided to the e-book that supports this course.

How can I prepare for studying online?

You should be a competent computer user with a basic understanding of standard computer applications such as using an internet browser, email and word processing. Experience of participating in online forums would also be a benefit, but not essential.

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>

When you are first given access to PropaGate Learning, please take time to complete the Welcome Activity. This will give you an essential introduction to the tutors on your course, finding your way around, advice on learning independently and the best ways to communicate with tutors and other students.

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 lessons and carry out tasks. The amount of time required depends on the number of units you are studying at a time, however we suggest 2-3 hours per week for 6 months if you want to take 2 exams at the end of that 6 months. Participation in online discussions is also a key 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. 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.

Regarding software, you will need an up-to-date browser (e.g. Firefox, Chrome, Safari). You will also need software that will open PDFs (e.g. Adobe Reader).

Most importantly you will need a reliable internet connection.

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 check the forums at regular intervals and will reply to forum queries within one week. There is also a private messaging activity within PropaGate Learning where you can contact tutors 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

5. Examinations

Each unit will be assessed by a separate written examination covering all learning outcomes specified in that unit. The examinations will be offered twice a year, in February and June.

The RHS charge a £25 registration fee per exam. We strongly advise student's to register to take the exams at your nearest examination centre (a full list of approved centres can be found on the RHS website: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/qualifications-and-training/rhs-qualifications/find-a-centre>)

Exam registration forms for sitting the exams at RBGE will be sent out to students in good time before registration deadlines.

If you have any physical or written access requirements (for example, if you have dyslexia or English is not your first language) please contact RBGE when you register for your exam. In addition, you must include a doctor's note or similar information with your exam registration form.

Further details about the exams is available on the RHS website: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/qualifications-and-training>

The table below shows when the exams are in relation to the month you apply. Note, your access to PropaGate will be for 18 months from the date your account is activated by RBGE. Note we do not accept applications in June, July or August.

Application Month	18 Months			
	Exam sittings during your enrolment			Enrolment Ends
September 2018	February 2019	June 2019	February 2020	March 2020
October 2018	February 2019	June 2019	February 2020	April 2020
November 2018	February 2019	June 2019	February 2020	May 2020
December 2018	June 2019	February 2020	June 2020	June 2020
January 2019	June 2019	February 2020	June 2020	July 2020
February 2019	June 2019	February 2020	June 2020	August 2020
March 2019	June 2019	February 2020	June 2020	September 2020
April 2019		February 2020	June 2020	October 2020
May 2019		February 2020	June 2020	November 2020

It is possible to sit exams outside of your enrolment period, it just means you will no longer have access to the course materials on PropaGate.

6. Education at RBGE

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has always been an institution devoted to learning in all its forms. It began life as a physic garden, in which Edinburgh's aspiring doctors could learn about the cures they would encounter during their work. Needless to say, a lot has changed since, but the mission of RBGE remains much the same – 'To explore, conserve and explain the world of plants for a better future'. The education department helps explain the world of plants to everybody from nursery school children through to adult learners of all ages.

We offer diverse and varied schools programmes, and a huge range of further and short and professional courses including RBGE Certificates and Diplomas, HND/BSc and MSc.

Our focus on horticulture and botanical education allows us to devote the expertise of our staff to supporting students through their studies. No matter what they are coming here to learn, students always find RBGE a friendly and welcoming place. We also have the benefit of excellent living collections and a newly developed teaching nursery.

RBGE has three Regional Gardens in addition to the Garden at Edinburgh. All of them are equally committed to public outreach and education: Benmore Botanic Garden in Scotland's temperate west coast rainforest; exotic Logan Botanic Garden, basking in the Gulf Stream and Dawyck Botanic Garden, nestled in the cool dry climate of the Border hills.

7. Practical Horticulture Courses and Workshops

RBGE offers a series of practical courses and workshops which offer a useful complement to this course. The RBGE Certificate in Practical Horticulture may be of particular interest to you. Please see the RBGE Professional Courses webpage or the Short Course programme for details of these. Both can be found here:

www.rbge.org.uk/education

8. Course Costs

The fee for a single certificate is £400, the fee for both is £700. This is payable on application and includes:

- 18 months Access to course materials on PropaGate Learning for a single certificate, 24 months for both certificates
- Tutor support for any horticultural study questions

It is possible to extend your online access for an additional 6 months for a fee of £50 should you need a little bit longer to complete the course.

9. Application Procedure

Please complete and return the application form to us by Friday 24th August for a 4th September start.

Applications for the distance learning course are up to 31st May 2019. Applications received after 24th August 2018 will be processed within 5 working days of receipt.

Your PropaGate Learning account will be activated and course joining instructions will be sent once your payment has cleared.

Please send your completed form to:

Education Administrator (RHS)
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
20a Inverleith Row
Edinburgh
EH3 5LR

You can also scan and email your application to rhslevel3@rbge.org.uk

Online Application:
<https://onlinecourses.rbge.ac.uk/index.php/apply-online>

*online applications for immediate start will be available until 31st May 2018. Applications will then close until Monday 20th August 2018 for starting in September onward.

[APPLICATION FORM ON NEXT PAGE]



Distance Learning Application Form RHS Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture

Please send your completed to: Education Department (RHS3)
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
20a Inverleith Row
Edinburgh
EH3 5LR

1. Personal Details

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

Name: _____

Contact Numbers:

Address: _____

Daytime: _____

Evening: _____

Mobile: _____

Sex: M / F (delete as appropriate)

Date of Birth: _____
(dd/mm/yy)

Email Address: _____

Nationality: _____

2. Application Option

Certificate 1 ☐

Certificate 2 ☐

Both Certificates ☐

3. Payment Details

Course Fee:

Single Certificate £400 ☐ Both Certificates £700 ☐

Name as it appears on the Card _____

Card Number

Start Date

Expiry Date

Security Number

Signed: _____ Date: _____

4. Application Form

Existing Qualifications & Experience (in brief)

Professional Background

Reasons for applying for this course?

What do you hope to gain from this course?

Where did you hear about this course?

For office use only:

Date received	application		Reference Number	
Offered place	Yes / No	Date:	Place accepted	Yes / No Date: