



Royal  
Botanic Garden  
Edinburgh

# RBGE Certificate in Herbology 2022



## **Introduction**

The RBGE Certificate in Herbology is a great way to learn about medicinal plants – how to find, recognise and use them. The focused content of this ten week programme takes you on a journey through some of the more intriguing moments to be found within the history of western herbal medicine, and these are used as inspiration for further study and research, combined with a complementary physic garden visit, wild herb gathering and the exploration of a myriad of different herbal habitats.

This is the perfect way to begin to develop your materia medica (knowledge of healing botanicals), botanising and green pharmacy (herbal remedy making) skills, and will provide the perfect stepping stone for those wishing to progress on to the RBGE Diploma in Herbology or simply further existing knowledge after completing one or more of our introductory herbal programmes.

As with all the herbology programmes being delivered here at RBGE, the Certificate in Herbology affords a wonderful opportunity to study herbs in one of the most holistic of environments – the Garden itself. The practical content of the course is intended to be uniquely therapeutic, from the mixing and making of herbal remedies, to herb gathering walks, and especially our woodland and sea shore explorations.

## **RBGE Diploma in Herbology**

This course will introduce you to many of the key RBGE Diploma in Herbology subjects of study and will give you the ‘herbal’ confidence required to make the most of your further studies in this field. If you wish to progress onto the diploma, further details may be found by visiting our website: [www.rbge.org.uk/dipherb](http://www.rbge.org.uk/dipherb)

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# **1. Course Structure**

The RBGE Certificate in Herbology runs for 10 full days over 5 designated weekends February - June 2022.

The course presents students with a selection of research-based and practical projects that will take in many of the Garden's 'wild' herb and arboreal collections.

Most mornings will take the form of illustrated talks and or demonstrations while the afternoon sessions will be focused on practical activities, self-directed study, visits or field trips. The history of Western Herbal Medicine will be covered throughout the course with especial reference to the unique contributions of such defining figures as Galen, Culpepper and Dr Edward Bach.

Students will also learn how to approach the design of a theoretical 'Medicine Wheel Garden' based on a bespoke collection of herbs and directly referencing a chosen holistic tradition.

Students who attend all ten classes and complete the work required for their assessment are awarded the RBGE Certificate in Herbology.

## 2. Dates, Times & Location for 2022

The dates and times for the February 2022 course are:

Week	Dates	Time
Weekend 1	Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> & Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	Sat: 10am – 5pm Sun: 10am – 5pm
Weekend 2	Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> & Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	Sat: 10am – 5pm Sun: 10am – 5pm
Weekend 3	Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> & Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2022	Sat: 10am – 5pm Sun: 10am – 5pm
Weekend 4	Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> & Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2022	Sat: 10am – 5pm Sun: 10am – 5pm
Weekend 5	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> & Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Sat: 10am – 5pm Sun: 10am – 5pm

**Important** - On occasions you will need to walk through or beyond the gardens, (e.g. for herb gathering etc.). Please also note that visits where considerable walking may be required will take place outside the Botanics and that these are a key feature of this particular herbology course.

## 3. Study Subject Descriptors

Descriptors for all the subjects are given below – each includes the following:

- The Learning Objectives
- Key knowledge and practical Activities to be covered
- Recommended Completion or Assessment Guidelines

## **Subject: Physic Garden Horticulture**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject students will be able to:

- Collect seed for sowing and or storage
- Mix an organic compost suitable for seed culture
- Practice correct seed sowing techniques for a variety of herbs
- Nurture a selection of medicinal and culinary herbs from seed to seedling
- Understand the basic principles behind good herbal husbandry

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- Explore historical and contemporary concepts of a physic garden - visuals and talk
- Study selected botanical husbandry - practical activities with seeds
- Illustrate quintessential features of early (monastic) physic gardens - slide show
- Herbal categories and definitions notes
- Herbology physic garden herb, seed and or tool handling
- Seed gathering walk with guidance on how to collect, sort and store herbal seeds

**or**

- Seed sowing demonstration and practical
- Handouts detail techniques to be practiced as appropriate
- Complementary visual imagery from a variety of sources e.g. library herbals.

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Begin to compile notes for inclusion in The Herbal Journal
- Sow or collect selected seeds
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

Please note, there may be some necessary seasonal variations to the content of this subject - depending on the time of year you choose to study for your Certificate in Herbology.

## **Subject: Humours, Herbaria & Theories on Theriaca**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject students will be able to:

- Reference the basic concepts behind humoral herbal healing and the plant 'energetics' of western herbal medicine.
- Prepare a small collection of herbarium specimens (dried pressed plants)
- Evaluate the healing properties of selected herbs within a designated herbal formula
- Recognise the botanical and defining characteristics of a significant herbal family and be able to describe the therapeutic categories to which it belongs.

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- Slide show with notes - a journey through the humours and the legacy of Galencial remedies
- Herbal categories explored within the humoral context
- Discussion on how this knowledge could be applied to our everyday use of culinary and medicinal plants - notes for the formula of Theriaca
- Herb handling and sampling
- Herbarium visit to see the Herbs of Theriaca and other herbaria housed within the RBGE collection
- Demonstration of how to prepare botanicals for inclusion in a Herbarium, all relevant equipment being handled and discussed (including: Copenhagen solution, carpological boxes, presses, absorbent papers, card, archival glue, adhesive tape and thread, the use of capsules/labels etc.).
- Herb gathering walks to collect potential herbaria for inclusion in a Herbal Journal.

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Throughout the programme gather and press botanicals for your Herbal Journal
- Write up herbarium visit notes into Herbal Journal
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

## **Subject: Medicine Wheel Garden Design**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject, students will be able to:

- Define the significance, themes and symbolism that lie behind the creation of Native American Medicine Wheels
- Recognise selected sacred herbs, colours and creatures associated with this healing tradition
- Draw up a working proposal with appropriate herbal plantings for a therapeutic environ
- Create a template design for a 'Medicine Wheel Garden'.

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- Basic Medicine Wheel structures, with explanatory discourse on directional and celestial alignments of radiating spokes and cairns.
- Simple physic garden design principles and how to apply them
- Choice of herbs
- Sacred herb handling and discussion
- Visit to The Secret Garden
- Talk and guided tour around the herb beds, concepts of design discussed.
- Collating herbal sources of inspiration
- Drawing up a Medicine Wheel Garden design

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Add design ideas, images, notes to Herbal Journal
- Complete Medicine Wheel Garden Design Assignment
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

## **Subject: The Apothecary's Art**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject students will be able to:

- Evaluate Culpeper's unique herbal legacy
- Recognise the principle herbal formularies of the C17th apothecary
- Make a contemporary herbal remedy inspired by Culpeper's "A Catalogue of Simples".

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- How to interpret the old herbals
- Exploration of the potential and appropriate application of 'antiquated' herbal knowledge
- To extend herbal repertoires and vocabulary
- The preparation of a traditional herbal remedy
- Library research from original archival herbals
- Compilation of notes (herbologists work in pairs to source material for later use in class)
- Group feedback and discussion of discovered herbal formularies and ingredients used
- Dried powdered herb handling and tasting with commentaries
- Herbal Remedy Making

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Add own notes to the Herbal Journal
- Begin recipe notes for 'Green Pharmacy Preparations' in Herbal Journal
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

## **Subject: Bach Flower Remedies**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the healing theories behind the Bach Flower Remedies
- Recognise and name many of the botanicals used to prepare the remedies
- Make Bach Flower remedies using The Sun Method of preparation

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- Plant Spirit Medicines and the philosophy of healing behind the Bach Flower Remedies
- Exploration and identification of the 38 Bach Flower Remedies
- How to choose a remedy
- The technique of preparing a 'simple' and a composite blend
- Slide show and demonstration - with appropriate equipment and ingredients for handling and sampling.
- Bach flower gathering walk
- The preparation of several Bach Flower Remedies (Stock Bottles)
- Floral infusion tasting
- Herbarium specimen pressings

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Recipe notes for 'Green Pharmacy Preparations' in Herbal Journal
- Add pressed and dried plants to Herbal Journal
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

## **Subject: Herbology Field Work**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject, students will be able to:

- Recognise (by name and family) a variety of medicinal plants
- Use a botanical crib, wildflower key, and hand lens
- Describe a range of herbal habitats and the various plants found there
- Understand and implement a code of good conduct for wild harvesting
- Gather herbs sustainably

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- Basic herb botany
- Simple principles of plant classification and botanical nomenclature
- Techniques of recording information out in the field
- Care of wildlife and nature havens
- Exploratory microscopy of given botanical structures
- The exploration of diverse wild and local habitats
- Wild herb gathering (for remedy making)
- Collecting and pressing plants for later use

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Add notes, images, observations and discoveries to the Herbal Journal.
- Include collected pressed plants in the Herbal Journal
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

## **Subject: Glass House Botanicals Materia Medica**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject students will be able to:

- Identify a range of medicinal botanicals located within the glasshouses
- Evaluate the ethno-medicinal value of several non-native herbs.
- Utilise knowledge of one or more of these plants to create a herbal remedy

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- An introduction to the healing plants of the RBGE glasshouse collections
- Becoming familiar with at least one of these botanicals
- How to care for more 'exotic' herbs through our seasonal time frames
- Referenced medicinal plant uses in indigenous herbal/folk traditions
- A guided/curator's walk through one of the Garden's research glasshouses
- General observational notes and image taking
- Compilation of a single plant profile - detailing botanical features, uses and culture etc.
- Complementary (home/local) library-based research
- Recipe writing for theoretical remedy formulation with compatible ingredients
- Group feedback and discussion

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Add glasshouse botanical profile to Herbal Journal
- Include recipes for 'Green Pharmacy Preparations' in Herbal Journal
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment

## **Subject: Green Pharmacy Preparations**

### **The Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this study subject students will be able to:

- Practice some highly original herbal remedy making techniques
- Confidently experiment with recipes
- Safely incorporate a variety of familiar, and unfamiliar, ingredients into effective home pharmacy preparations

### **Key Knowledge, Resources & Practical Activities:**

- A refined understanding of herbal remedy making techniques
- Extending materia medica to include more unusual herbs as ingredients in home herbal remedies
- Adapting traditional herbal recipes for home use
- An eclectic mix of Green Pharmacy principles
- Herbal and base ingredient handling and mixing
- Creative recipe adaptation and formulation
- Group experimental approaches compounding mixtures of herbs
- Herbal remedy preparations

### **Recommended Assessment Guidelines:**

- Note recipes in your Herbal Journal
- Complete the related Complementary Study Assignment
- Complete the Green Pharmacy Assessment (Remedy Making)

## **4. Methods of Assessment & Submission of Work**

The RBGE Certificate in Herbology is a formally assessed course and therefore requires students to successfully pass assignments in order to achieve the award.

The 4 pieces of work that need to be completed in order to achieve your certificate are:

1. A Herbal Journal
2. Four Complementary Study Assignments
3. A Medicine Wheel Garden Design
4. A Green Pharmacy Preparation

### **4.1 Submission of Work**

All work, (with the exception of a selected Green Pharmacy Preparation, which is to be prepared in class on the final morning), must be completed and submitted for assessment during the final weekend of the course.

The course concludes with an informal and collective presentation of all student work completed throughout the preceding 5 months.

### **4.2 The Herbal Journal (Not Assessed)**

As part of your non-assessed work for the Certificate in Herbology you are asked to compile a Herbal Journal, a hand written compilation of your own herbology experiences.

Ideally, this is something that should be completed regularly to form a compendium of all your notes, complementary research, herbaria, green pharmacy recipes, physic garden horticulture and herbology observations, together with any complementary articles, cuttings, visual images etc.

Most importantly, it should be a book of reflections on your learning.

Herbal Journals afford a creative medium of expression for your own herbal experiences throughout the course.

### **4.3 Complementary Study Assignments**

(70% of the assessment grade)

You will be asked to complete four Complementary Study Assignments to augment your learning in key subjects of study, these will include:

- Entheogenic & Sacred Herbs or Galencial (Humoral) Medicines
- Traditional Herbal Formularies
- Flower Essence Remedies
- Native Materia Medica

### **4.4 Medicine Wheel Garden Design**

(20% of assessment grade)

To complement your studies, you are asked to design a theoretical 'Medicine Wheel' Garden.

This should be accompanied by a detailed Plant List of all the herbs that are included in your design and the reasons for their selection.

You will be asked to consider the following points while creating this design:

- Choice of Herbs
- Colours & Structures
- Sensory perception/stimulation (e.g. fragrance from aromatic herbs)
- Focal features
- Ecology (e.g. are you creating a wildlife sanctuary for honeybees or other creatures?)
- References to one or more of the healing traditions or themes covered during the course (e.g. Humoral, The C17th Apothecary, Bach Flower Remedies, Sacred Healing Herbs)
- The therapeutic nature of your garden as a whole

## **4.5 Green Pharmacy Preparation**

(10% of assessment grade)

On the penultimate morning of the course, you will be asked to make a herbal remedy - adapting a simple recipe already explored in class. This forms part of your assessed work and takes the form of a self-directed practical.

Preparatory research will need to be undertaken at home during the previous weeks, when your recipe, and choice of ingredients to be used, will be agreed with your tutor.

All equipment and most ingredients required for you to complete this part of the course are provided by RBGE. (Please note that you may need to source some of your herbs independently if these are not already to hand in the Herbology Room store).

## **4.6 Final Assessment Weekend**

On the final weekend of the course, all students are required to give a simple table-top presentation of their own course work to their fellow herbologists and tutor/s. This is an essential element of the programme and enables students to receive valuable feedback and guidance for their future development and herbal endeavours.

### **Mornings:**

- Green Pharmacy (Remedy Making)) Self-Directed Practical
- Green Pharmacy Assessment

### **Afternoons:**

- Table Top Presentations
- Group & Tutor Feedback
- Submission of Completed Work

## **4.7 Certificate Award & Grades**

Successful candidates will be awarded the “RBGE Certificate in Herbology”, which will be graded as follows:

- Referral: <50%
- Pass: 50%
- Merit: 60-70%
- Distinction: 70% and above

NB. Deferred candidates may retake assessment the following year - subject to the running of the programme.

## **5. Attendance & Missed Class Procedure**

All students who wish to pass this Certificate must attend all of the classes. If you miss a class or are unable to attend, you need to tell us as soon as you possible.

It may possible to arrange for a catch up day, there would be a fee of £150\* for this, except under exceptional circumstances and by prior arrangement with RBGE. Please note it will not be possible to arrange catch up days for off site visits.

If you are unable to attend a class or miss a class, please contact the Education Office in the first instance by emailing: [education@rbge.org.uk](mailto:education@rbge.org.uk)

\*If more than one student is attending the catch-up day this fee will be reduced accordingly.

## **6. Equipment & Ingredients Required**

All equipment and materials needed to complete this programme of study are provided by RBGE, with the exception of a small bottle of brandy (required for making the Flower Essence Remedies).

## **7. Course Fees**

The cost for the course is £720. Full payment for the course is required on acceptance of a place.

## **8. 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. If all applications are of a high standard, applications may be allocated based in the order they were received.

To apply for the course, you must complete our [online application form](#).

Applications will open at 10.00am on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 close at 5.00pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 the last day. These times are UK times, please take this into account if applying from outside the UK.

Applicants will be notified if their application has been successful or not within 1 week of the application deadline date.

## 9. Terms and Conditions

### **RHS Courses and Online Short Courses**

*(where all resources are accessible immediately with no time constraint)*

You will not be eligible to a refund if any of the learning materials have been accessed within the 14 days of payment (this does not include introductory resources but does include any e-books). If you have registered for two certificates, however you have only accessed one, a 50% refund will be given.

### **RBGE Diplomas and Certificates**

**Online Courses:** You are eligible for a full refund within 14 days of payment, minus the value of the course available and accessed (e.g. if the course has 10 units and you have accessed one, you will receive 90% of the course fee as a refund).

**Attended Courses:** We will be unable to offer a refund after the start of the course.

### **Exercising your right to cancel**

If you wish to exercise your right to cancel within the 14 days, you must inform us of your decision within the cooling off period. Cancellation by email or by post is effective from the date on which you send us your message.

Fees will not be refundable should you not complete or pass the course.

### **Privacy Notice**

RBGE will process your personal data for the administration of your course, to create your account on PropaGate Learning and to take payment (where relevant). RBGE will also process your personal data to inform you of any updates to the course, the admissions procedure, course dates, as well as any special offers. For more information see our [privacy notice](#).