

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Leafy Learning Ltd. RHS level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth and Development distance learning programme. We are delighted that you are considering Leafy Learning as your course provider. This handbook introduces you to the RHS Level 2 course content and study structure, our policies and procedures, and answers frequently asked questions.

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## **Introduction**

The RHS is an internationally recognised awarding body that offers accredited qualifications that are highly respected within the horticultural industry and the academic world. RHS Level 2 qualifications provide a route to employment in professional horticulture as well as supporting those already working in the profession. They are also excellent for those with a keen interest in gardening who wish to obtain a formally recognised qualification.

There are 2 separate RHS level 2 qualifications; A theoretical course which is assessed by written examination, and a practical course.

Leafy Learning Ltd. only offers the theory based RHS level 2 certificated qualification which is officially called the:

### **RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth and Development.**

If you wish to study the RHS Level 2 practical course you must attend an approved centre in person as this cannot be studied via distance learning. Approved centres which offer the practical courses can be found [HERE](#).

## **Why Choose Leafy Learning Ltd.**

Our course has been specifically developed in line with the RHS syllabus to prepare learners for exams and to provide up-to-date, research-based information which can be applied and used in your garden. We also provide weekly support and encouragement throughout the course to keep you on track and are on hand to answer your queries, feedback on assignments or fill in any gaps in knowledge. Our tutors are currently active in the industry and have at least 5 years' experience. We have delivered this course face to face, which means we have refined the resources after feedback from students.

Leafy Learning began in January 2020 as a free information hub. The blogs, YouTube videos and resources on our website have been viewed thousands of times. We were also asked if we could provide private tutoring, and many emails said that our free provision was better than notes and resources provided by some distance learning providers who charge hundreds of pounds.

So, we decided to strive to be one of the best online distance learning providers for the new RHS Level 2 theory qualification.

We believe we have proved we can teach tricky topics and there is plenty of open access content on the website ([www.leafylearning.co.uk](http://www.leafylearning.co.uk)) if you want to look and judge for yourself.

### **Why choose us over other providers?**

- We are passionate about the environment and all aspects of horticulture. The qualified tutors who will support you have different industry backgrounds which means together we have a vast array of knowledge. We also have teaching qualifications: lots of experts know their subject but it does not mean they can teach it to others!
- RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Plant growth and Development is the **ONLY** course we will offer. Our focus is really focussed!
- Fabulous feedback from subscribers who have accessed free resources on our website:

We have had many positive messages but this message stands out;

*'I hope you're well and enjoying the extended flowering season we're having. I just wanted to get in touch as I've now finished all 3 RHS Level 2 certificates and wanted to express my gratitude again for your amazing Leafy Learning blog. I went back to it again and again and again. It was so amazing to have information presented in a different, concise, expert, easy to understand format by you and I can only imagine how many hours you spent putting the information together. It is a huge skill to be able to convey information in the way you do. Thank you so so much. I got commendations in all the units and now work as a full-time gardener, part time self-employed and part time on a private estate so the best of all worlds in my opinion 🎉. I'm not telling you this because I want congratulations for myself – I'm telling you because for every person that actually gets in touch to say thanks and share what a difference you've made to me as an individual and the RHS L2 community as a whole I guess there are 40 more you'll never hear from. You're the bestest!'*  
Sarah

## What will I learn?

A detailed outline of RHS level 2 qualifications (both the practical level 2 and the theory level 2) is outlined on [THIS PAGE](#)

The course you are studying with Leafy Learning is the Principles of Plant Growth and Development and in short, we call this the ‘**Theory**’ level 2 RHS qualification. If you wish to take the **practical** level 2 qualification you must attend an approved centre such as a college.

The detailed learning outcomes for the **theory** qualification can be found [HERE](#)

## The basic structure of the course content is as follows:

- The qualification is divided into 2 units; Unit 1 and Unit 2.
- Each unit is made up of 4 topics.
- Each topic is made up of between 4 and 7 elements.
- Each element focuses on a horticultural subject and has specific learning outcomes.

The topics/elements are studied in the order they appear below.

Students usually study Unit 1 and then take the exam for Unit 1, and then study Unit 2 and take the exam for Unit 2.

UNIT 1	
Topic	Elements
1 <b>Plant Science 1:</b> provides underpinning knowledge of the plant, its structure and function.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scientific and common plant names</li> <li>2. Lifecycle adaptations</li> <li>3. External parts of the plant</li> <li>4. Internal plant structures</li> <li>5. Pollination and fertilisation</li> <li>6. Photosynthesis and respiration</li> <li>7. Movement of water through the plant</li> </ol>
2 <b>Plant Health:</b> provides underpinning knowledge and understanding of the effect of a range of factors on plant health.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environmental conditions</li> <li>2. Plant nutrition and plant health</li> <li>3. Impact of competition on plant health</li> <li>4. Pests and pathogens</li> <li>5. Biosecurity and plant passports</li> <li>6. Maintaining plant health</li> </ol>
3 <b>Plant Nutrition:</b> provides horticultural knowledge of plant nutrition and growing media.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Soil types and profiles</li> <li>2. Role of nutrients</li> <li>3. Soil-based nutrition</li> <li>4. pH and nutrient availability</li> <li>5. Bulk constituents for growing media</li> </ol>
4 <b>Plant Specification:</b> provides horticultural knowledge to make recommendations for planting based on matching plant need and site requirements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Site-based criteria</li> <li>2. Plant-based criteria</li> <li>3. Plant specifications</li> <li>4. Receiving plant material on site</li> <li>5. Planting and post-planting care</li> <li>6. Maintaining new plantings</li> </ol>

  

UNIT 2	
Topic	Elements
1 <b>Plant Science II:</b> provides an understanding of the range and role of plant adaptations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leaf adaptations</li> <li>2. Stem adaptations</li> <li>3. Root adaptations</li> <li>4. Flower adaptations</li> <li>5. Seed adaptations</li> <li>6. Growth habit adaptations</li> </ol>
2 <b>Planting Styles:</b> provides horticultural knowledge of the factors involved in creating a wide range of different horticultural plantings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Historical contexts</li> <li>2. Formal planting</li> <li>3. Informal planting</li> <li>4. Plant associations</li> <li>5. Plant uses</li> <li>6. Edible landscapes</li> <li>7. Short-term plantings</li> </ol>
3 <b>Horticulture and Society:</b> allows learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of horticulture’s contribution to society, including social, environmental and economic.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wellbeing</li> <li>2. Environment</li> <li>3. Economy</li> <li>4. Community</li> </ol>
4 <b>Biodiversity:</b> provides an applied knowledge of the roles of plants in creating habitats to encourage biodiversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plants and biodiversity</li> <li>2. Impact of climate change</li> <li>3. Creating habitats</li> <li>4. Citizen science and species surveys</li> <li>5. Biodiversity Action Plans</li> </ol>

## **How will I be supported?**

Once you have purchased the course:

- We will ask you to complete an enrolment form and arrange an initial one to one zoom call to explain the overall format of the course such as what does AO1 and AO2 mean? and how do qualification-wide subjects such as biodiversity and health and safety fit within each topic area? We will explain in detail how we support you each week, how to contact your tutor and how the online exam system works. This is an opportunity to ask any questions, discuss any learning needs and meet your tutor. Together we will also decide when you are planning to take your exams.
- You can download the full set of resources for the course immediately. We will send you a link and instructions on how you do this. These resources can be saved to your PC or laptop. You can also print them out if you wish. We do not provide paper copies but there is nothing to stop you finding an online printer or a local printer and organising this yourself.
- The course is structured to run over a 1 year-18 month period and the pace of learning depends on when you start and when the next scheduled exams are (with enough time for you to study and prepare for them). We will send you a structured learning plan which we discuss together, detailing which elements you will study each week to ensure that all study content is covered before the exam. Every Monday your tutor will send you some questions linked to the element you have studied the previous week (as shown in your schedule). You are encouraged to send completed essay questions to your tutor for marking and feedback. This is a good way to interact with the learning material and helps you to retain information for the exam.
- Once a month we have a network meeting where we discuss a topic and you have a chance to meet your fellow students. This forum is an opportunity to network with others and share information. We also have a WhatsApp group.
- Your tutor is available to answer questions and mark assignments Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) 50 weeks of the year (we are off Easter week and Christmas week) and will reply to emails within 48 hours. This unlimited support is available from your enrolment date for one year OR until the date of your Unit 2 exam.
- We will complete all the administration required by RHS qualifications such as registering you as a candidate, entering you for examinations and posting your certificate when you successfully pass both exams. Exam administration will last for 2 years from the initial one to one zoom meeting just in case you do not achieve a pass first time round.

## **Cost and Payment Options**

### **Cost**

**Leafy learning will charge a total of £760 for the course.** £540 for the course, plus £220 which is paid directly to the RHS which includes registration and taking 2 online exams, marking of exams and issuing a certificate if successful. **If you do not achieve Unit 1 or Unit 2, you must pay an additional £100 to re-sit each unit. If you are registered to take an exam and you back out at the last minute you also forfeit your exam fee and must pay again to take it.**

### What is included in the cost?

- **Mandatory registration as an RHS Candidate (£20) and payment of online exam fees for Unit 1 and Unit 2. (£200).**
- **Initial one-to-one zoom meeting and regular weekly support sent to your email box.**
- **High Quality Detailed Notes and Resources**  
Our notes and resources have been developed by tutors who have taught RHS level 2 and 3 qualifications for over 20 years. These notes have been trialled in face-to-face lessons and have been reviewed and adjusted so that information is clear, and learning outcomes listed in the syllabus are covered. There are many colour photographs and diagrams for those who are visual learners.  
The notes are provided in digital format and can be downloaded and saved to your own device such as a laptop or PC. You can print them out if you wish.  
The notes will be accessible for one year from your enrolment date until your final exam for unit 2. You can download ALL the notes for Unit 1 and Unit 2 at the start of the course and save them to your PC for the year ahead.  
We have decided not to supply printed copies as the cost is over £100 for a full set of notes as there are 1,121 pages. You can source your own online printing company to print and send you hard copies of notes.
- **Live online group meetings each month.**
- **Unlimited access to tutor support is available from your enrolment date for one year OR until the date of your Unit 2 exam.**

### Payment Options

- Payment can be via a bank transfer (full amount). Instant access to all resources. Total cost £760
- PayPal payment (full amount). Instant access to all resources. Total cost £760.
- Payment by cheque (Full amount). Full access to all resources once processed. Total cost £760. (Please email us to let us know you have posted a cheque.)
- PayPal payment 'Pay in 3' (3 payments over 3 months). Total cost £760

### Technology Requirements

This is an online distance learning course, and our main method of communication is by email. Notes are downloaded from an online platform called Dropbox and can be downloaded and saved to your personal computer or laptop.

Examinations will be taken online from your own home (unless you have specific access requirements)

We are sorry but we do not communicate on a regular basis by phone call or letter. It is therefore very important that you have the following skills to enjoy all the benefits of the course:

### **Required Digital Skills**

- You can download documents from an internet site and organise this information, using files and folders, to store this information on your personal computer or laptop.
- You can use word processing applications to create documents.
- You can share documents with others by attaching them to an email.
- You can connect to the internet and use website browsers such as Chrome, Internet Explorer or Safari.

- You can access the internet in order to be part of a zoom meeting (Instructions will be provided).
- A camera and microphone is essential in order to participate in group zoom meetings and take your exam online.
- You must be able to log on to the RHS portal in order to find out your results. (Instructions on how to do this will be provided)
- You can use a mouse and keyboard.

### **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 such as Google Chrome, Safari, Microsoft Edge, or Firefox. You will also need software that will open PDFs (e.g. Adobe Acrobat Reader which is free to download). The resources for this course are in PDF format.
- You will need word processing software such as Microsoft office 365 which contains Microsoft word which enables you to open and view word documents and create new word documents from scratch. This is useful when answering questions set by your tutor. Weekly questions will be in Microsoft word format so that you can download the word document and then answer questions by editing the original word document.
- Most importantly you will need a strong, reliable internet connection capable of streaming videos, downloading large documents and taking the online examinations.

### **Entry Requirements**

The RHS Level 2 Certificate does not require any existing qualifications or experience. All you need is an interest in the subject and a willingness to set aside several hours a week for study.

We do advise that you should have some very basic confidence with computers, in order to access the online learning resources, communicate with your tutor and take the exam online.

The RHS Level 2 Certificate is aimed towards the examinations set by the RHS, so the content is predominantly theoretical. Although there are no entry requirements, the exam does involve writing answers to short form questions and long form essay-type questions, as well as a selection of multiple-choice questions, so a good understanding of the English language is required to pass the exams and understand study materials.

The RHS outlines the exam structure in detail [HERE](#)

The course notes present the facts and give examples of how to apply this knowledge to garden situations. It is useful if you have a garden space where you can put into practice all you are learning, as this will help you remember and understand the theoretical content.

### **Assignments, Tutorials and Exams**

- **Assignments.** We follow the structured plan which we have agreed at our initial zoom meeting. Every Monday we send you an email which sets assignments relating to the element you have studied the previous week. We encourage you to complete these assignments and seek feedback from your tutor. Of course, these assignments

are not mandatory but interacting with the learning materials will help with understanding and prepare you for exam day.

- **Tutorials.** Each month all learners are invited to join a zoom tutorial session where we will focus on one topic of study. The topic of the tutorials will be decided in response to feedback from learners. This will also be an opportunity to ask any questions about the course and meet fellow learners.
- **Exams**  
Online examinations (for both unit 1 and unit 2) are held in three sessions each year, taking place in February, June and October, strictly in accordance with the schedule set by the RHS. Each unit will be assessed by a separate written examination (2 hours long) covering the learning outcomes specified in that unit. You will need to pass both units to qualify for the Certificate.  
Distance learning students must take their exams online, unless they have special permission to take them at an approved centre. The 2024 and 2025 dates for exams can be found [HERE](#)  
Registration fees (£20) and exam fees (£200) are included in the cost of the course. These are administered by Leafy Learning Ltd. on your behalf and paid to the RHS. Where required, re-sit fees are charged at an additional cost of £100 per unit.

### **How many hours of study is required per week?**

The official total qualification time required for this course is a minimum of 180 hours. This includes the number of hours a learner spends reading resources, interacting with their tutor, revising for exams and taking the exams.

In reality, the number of study hours required per week varies depending upon your starting point. Experienced gardeners could complete the course in 180 hours while a beginner gardener may require additional hours.

Past students who completed this course at college in one academic year, said that they spent on average 7 hours per week studying, which amounts to 245 hours over 1 academic year (35 weeks). They said they found their year of study very intense but enjoyable.

### **Study Length**

Once registered as a candidate with the RHS, you have **2** years to study and pass exams to gain the qualification. We will carry out any administration in relation to exams during this time.

Leafy Learning will guide and support you over the 1 year-18 month study period. The additional 6 months allows time for exam re-takes or if you need to take a break.

We understand that life gets in the way sometimes, so you can pause your study programme for up to 3 months and then let us know when you want to continue. Please note we cannot pause study for numerous 2 week periods such as holidays, as this is too difficult to organise.

### **Course Policies**

All course materials you download are owned by Leafy Learning Ltd. unless otherwise stated and are subject to copyright. Any downloading or copying of course material must be for the sole use of the learner who is studying with Leafy learning Ltd. Course materials and any documents owned by us must not be shared with others on any social media platform

(including the Facebook Exams study group), by email or photocopying or by any other means of communication.

### **Data Protection and Security of Data**

Leafy Learning Ltd. is serious about protecting and safely storing personal data we collect from learners / candidates / centre staff and any other persons associated with the business. Collection, processing and storage of personal data will comply with the regulations as outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018. See our privacy policy [HERE](#)

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Leafy Learning Ltd. is committed to promoting Diversity and Inclusion across all our work. Students who require a reasonable adjustment to enable them to study and take exams, should inform their tutor at the one to one zoom meeting so that any reasonable action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which places the Learner at a substantial disadvantage in the learning and assessment situation, can be put in place.

### **Customer Service and Complaints Procedure**

#### **Customer Service Statement**

Leafy Learning Ltd. is committed to providing excellent standards of customer service and makes all reasonable efforts to ensure that the standards of service set out in this document are consistently achieved.

Leafy Learning seeks to continually improve customer experience and welcomes all feedback and comments. Comments can be made by letter or email. Contact details are included at the end of this document.

Leafy Learning aims to acknowledge all enquiries or complaints within 3 working days of receipt. Where further investigation is required, we aim to provide a full response within 10 working days.

### **Code of Conduct**

We empower learners to take responsibility for their own learning by providing learning resources and regular scheduled tutor support.

We aim to ensure that all students have an enjoyable and successful time with us. For this to happen we need an agreed Code of Conduct.

Whilst it's not possible to lay down an exhaustive list of standards, detailed below are general examples which demonstrate the levels of conduct Leafy Learning Ltd. expects from all staff and students:

Treat all staff and fellow students with respect.

Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

Stay on topic – keep personal or non-study related conversations for your personal time.

Practice and promote equality, respecting other cultures and opinions.

Leafy Learning Ltd resources must not be shared with others unless permission has been given by Leafy Learning Ltd.

Leafy Learning Ltd. reserves the right to suspend access to, or require a student to leave, a course (without refund) at any stage if that student is guilty of inappropriate conduct or behaviour or of acting, in our view, in any way which detrimentally affects the learning experience of others or other circumstances apply which we deem unacceptable.

If you feel that a member of staff has acted inappropriately or has not upheld the standards of service which you expect, you can make a formal complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with our Complaints Policy.



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What qualification will I get?**

When you have passed exams in both units, the Royal Horticultural Society will award you the RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth and Development - at either Pass, Merit or Distinction grade.

### **Is it possible to study this qualification alongside a full time job?**

Yes, it is possible. The benefits of distance learning study mean you can study at your own pace. If you want to complete the qualification in one year, it will be an intense year of study as there is a large amount of content. Committing to regular study sessions and keeping on track with the study programme will help you achieve your goals.

### **I live outside the UK. Is the RHS level 2 certificate, Principles of plant growth and development a suitable course for my area?**

Yes this online course is suitable for anyone around the world. But you will need to think about how hardiness ratings and zones relate to plants in your area.

### **Do the assignments have to be completed every week?**

Ideally you complete the assignments sent on a Monday before the following Monday. This enables you to stay on track with the study programme. You can also choose to do assignments at any time during the tutor support period. You can also choose not to complete any assignments and study independently. You can also pause your study programme for up to 3 months.

### **Can I choose when to take Unit 1 and Unit 2 exams?**

The RHS no longer allows students to take exams as external candidates; you must be registered with an approved centre. RHS qualification policy states that candidates MUST be registered within 4 weeks of enrolment. Leafy Learning Ltd will administer this process. You will automatically be registered for exams, and timings will depend on when you enrol and your learning schedule. Examination dates will be timed so that you have enough time to study for each unit. For example, if you enrol in November, you would take Unit 1 in June the following year, as taking it in February the following year would probably be too soon. However, we discuss this with you at our initial meeting and if you wish to take the exam sooner, you can.

If you have not passed both examinations within 2 years you will need to re-register with the RHS in order to take the exams and this will incur an additional charge.

### **Do I have to take my RHS exams online?**

Leafy Learning Ltd. students will take their RHS Level 2 exam online from their own home. We will guide you and support you with this process.

### **What happens if I can't take the exams or need to delay my learning?**

Special consideration and reasonable adjustment can be implemented at the time of an exam to ensure fair assessment and support a candidate who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances which arose at, or near, the time of exam/assessment.

You can pause your learning plan for up to 3 months.

**Can you support students with special or additional learning requirements?**

Yes, often the flexibility of an online course can help with learning difficulties as you can learn at your own pace at times and places which suit you. Please get in touch to discuss your individual requirements. Your individual requirements will also be discussed at your initial meeting with your tutor.

**How to enrol**

Please proceed to the payment page and after your payment has been processed, we will send you an enrolment form and arrange your initial one to one meeting. We will also send the link to the learning resources. If you have any further questions before paying for the course, please contact [Anne@leafylearning.co.uk](mailto:Anne@leafylearning.co.uk) . We can only accept 10 new students each month and the number of places remaining for each month is shown next to the 'proceed to payment' link.

On the first day of each month the basket on our website is updated and there will be 10 places available. Places are taken on a first come first served basis and once the 10 places have been purchased, there are no more places available until the following month. You can start the course at any time / any month and exams will be scheduled to allow you enough time to study each unit.

**Get in touch**

We hope we have answered most of your questions but if you need to know more, please get in touch.

All enquiries should be addressed to the following:

Email: [anne@leafylearning.co.uk](mailto:anne@leafylearning.co.uk)

Post: A. Gunning, Leafy Learning Ltd., Riverside Mill, Mountbatten Way, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1DY

Phone: A telephone call back can be arranged if requested by email or post.