

Welcome!

Welcome to the Leafy Learning Ltd. RHS Level 2 Certificate, '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 two separate RHS Level 2 qualifications: a theoretical qualification assessed by written examination and a practical qualification.

Leafy Learning Ltd offers ONLY the theory-based course:

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.

Why Choose Leafy Learning Ltd.

Our tutors are currently active in the industry and have been teaching Level 2 RHS qualifications for over 20 years.

We teach exam techniques as well as course content.

We provide weekly support and encouragement to keep you on track and are on hand to answer your queries or fill in any gaps in knowledge.

As we are a small organisation, and this is the only qualification we offer, our prices are very competitive compared to other centres.

Our website has free content so you can see the quality of our content.

(www.leafylearning.co.uk)

We are committed to continuous improvement, and at the end of the course we ask students for feedback on how we can improve. Here is some feedback from students who have successfully earned their qualification:

'Thank you so much! It's been absolutely worth every penny, I felt so prepared for the exams, couldn't have asked for a better teacher :)

I honestly don't think I have any feedback, I felt like I had everything I needed, understood how to aim for high marks in the exams, just brilliant really! I've already been recommending you on Facebook & will continue to do so.'

'I just wanted to personally express my gratitude for all your help and support on the RHS Level 2. Having started my journey with another provider, my experience with Leafy Learning could not have been more different. The course notes, tutor guidance and networking amongst other students has been excellent. It's been challenging but thoroughly enjoyable.'

'The level of support you offered through Leafy Learning was beyond my expectations, and I particularly found the option of the group Zoom meetings to be a huge benefit and the Monday Motivation emails really did provide the motivation needed to continue with the course. I'd highly recommend Leafy Learning to anyone looking to complete their RHS Level 2 qualification.'

'I had to rub my eyes then before accepting that the screen did indeed say 88% for my unit 2 exam... as I breathe a sigh of relief and make a prayer sign with my hands! Thank you so much for such a massively interesting course and such good notes and videos and continued support.'

What will I learn?

See page 3 for overview of course content.

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 EXAMS, Exam 1 and Exam 2.
- Each Exam is made up of 4 units. Exam 1 is units 1-4 and Exam 2 is units 5-8.
- Each Unit contains between 4 and 7 learning outcomes.
- Each learning outcome focuses on a horticultural subject.

The subject matter is studied in the order as it appears below.

EXAM 1

Unit		Learning outcome
1	Plant Science 1: provides underpinning knowledge of the plant, its structure and function.	1. Understand scientific and common plant names 2. Understand life cycle adaptations 3. Understand external parts of the plant 4. Understand internal plant structures 5. Understand pollination and fertilisation 6. Understand photosynthesis and respiration 7. Understand movement of water through the plant
2	Plant Health: provides underpinning knowledge and understanding of the effect of a range of factors on plant health.	1. Understand environmental conditions 2. Understand plant nutrition and plant health 3. Understand the impact of competition on plant health 4. Understand pests and pathogens 5. Understand biosecurity and plant passports 6. Understand how to maintain plant health
3	Plant Nutrition: provides horticultural knowledge of plant nutrition and growing media.	1. Understanding soil types and profiles 2. Understand the role of nutrients 3. Understand soil-based nutrition 4. Understand the principles of pH and nutrient availability 5. Understand bulk constituents for growing media
4	Plant Specification: provides horticultural knowledge to make recommendations for planting based on matching plant need and site requirements.	1. Understand site-based criteria 2. Understand plant-based criteria 3. Understand plant specifications 4. Understand processes for receiving plant material on site 5. Understand planting and post-planting care 6. Understand how to maintain new plantings

EXAM 2

Unit		Learning outcomes
5	Plant Science II: provides an understanding of the range and role of plant adaptations.	1. Understand leaf adaptations 2. Understand stem adaptations 3. Understand root adaptations 4. Understand flower adaptations 5. Understand seed adaptations 6. Understand growth habit adaptations
6	Planting Styles: provides horticultural knowledge of the factors involved in creating a wide range of different horticultural plantings.	1. Understand historical contexts 2. Understand formal planting 3. Understand informal planting 4. Understand plant associations 5. Understand plant uses 6. Understand edible landscapes 7. Understand short-term plantings
7	Horticulture and Society: allows learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of horticulture's contribution to society, including social, environmental and economic.	1. Understanding wellbeing 2. Understanding environment 3. Understand the impact of horticulture on the UK economy 4. Understand community horticulture
8	Biodiversity: provides an applied knowledge of the roles of plants in creating habitats to encourage biodiversity.	1. Understanding plants and biodiversity 2. Understand the impact of climate change 3. Understand habitat creation 4. Understand citizen science and species surveys 5. Understand biodiversity policies and legislation

How will I be supported?

Once you have purchased the course online:

- We will ask you to complete an enrolment form and arrange an **initial one-to-one Zoom call**. We will explain in detail how we support you each week, options for exam dates 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 decide when you are planning to take your exams.
- You can download the full set of resources for the course immediately after purchase. We will send you a link to Dropbox. These resources can be saved to your PC or laptop. You can also print them out if you wish. But please be aware that resources are continually updated to maintain quality, so it is better to download resources one by one. We don't provide paper copies, but you're welcome to arrange printing yourself through an online or local service.
- The course is structured to run for up to two years and the pace of learning depends on when you start and when the next scheduled exams are. After we have discussed and agreed exam dates, we will send you a structured learning plan to ensure that all study content is covered before each exam. **On Mondays** your tutor will send you some questions linked to the element you have studied the previous week (as shown in your schedule).
- Once a month, and sometimes more often, we have a live group Zoom meeting. A specific subject area is presented by the tutor and students can get involved by asking and answering questions. We also have a Student WhatsApp group.
- Your tutor is available for support 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.
- We will complete all the administration required by RHS qualifications.

Cost and Payment Options

Leafy Learning charges a total of £780 for the course. £540 for the course, plus £240 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 pass an exam, you must pay an additional £110 to resit each exam. 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?

- **Registration as an RHS Candidate (£20) and payment of online exam fees for Unit 1 and Unit 2. (£220).**
- **Initial one-to-one Zoom meeting and regular weekly support sent to your inbox which follows a bespoke learning plan.**
- **High-quality detailed notes and resources provided in digital format.**
- **Live online group meetings each month. These are also recorded so those who are unable to join, can watch the video later.**
- **Unlimited access to tutor support is available from your enrolment date for two years.**

Payment Options

- Payment can be via a bank transfer (full amount). Instant access to all resources. Total cost £780
- PayPal payment (full amount). Instant access to all resources. Total cost £780.
- Payment by cheque (Full amount). Full access to all resources once processed. Total cost £780. (Please email us to let us know you have posted a cheque.)
- PayPal payment 'Pay in 3' (3 payments over 3 months). Total cost £780. Instant access to all resources.

Technology Requirements

Our main method of communication is by email. Notes are downloaded from an online platform called Dropbox and can be 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 into files/folders.
- 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, Firefox, Microsoft Edge or Safari.
- You can access the internet to join a Zoom meeting.
- A camera, microphone and speakers are essential 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 with a strong, reliable internet connection. Although most course materials can be viewed on a tablet, the exams must be taken on a PC or laptop (NOT a tablet). Your computer will also need a working webcam, microphone and speakers for the examinations and online Zoom sessions.
- You will need an up-to-date web browser, such as Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari or Firefox. Your internet connection should be reliable enough to stream videos, join Zoom meetings, download course documents and complete the online examinations without interruption.
- The course resources are supplied as PDF documents. Most modern web browsers can open PDFs, or you can download a free PDF reader such as Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- You will also need word-processing software to open Word documents and type your answers to tutor questions. Microsoft Word or Microsoft 365 may be used, but you do not have to purchase them specifically for the course. Free alternatives include:

Microsoft Word for the web, which can be used through a web browser with a free Microsoft account, Google Docs, which is free with a Google account and can open and save Microsoft Word files, and LibreOffice Writer, a free program available for Windows and Mac computers. Apple Pages, which is available free of charge on most Apple devices, can open and export Word documents.

- Whichever program you use, please make sure you can save your work in Microsoft Word format (.docx) or PDF format when required. You will also need an email account and access to Zoom. A printer may be useful if you prefer to work from printed course notes, but it is not essential.

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 course prepares students for the examinations set by the RHS. As the course content and examinations are predominantly theoretical, a good understanding of written English is required.

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

Assignments, Tutorials and Exams

- **Assignments.** On Mondays we send you an email containing questions relating to the learning outcome you have studied the previous week(s). We encourage you to complete these questions. 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.
- **Exams**
Online examinations are held in two sessions each year, taking place in February and June, strictly in accordance with the schedule set by the RHS. Each Exam (Exam 1 and Exam 2) will be assessed by an online written examination. You will need to pass both exams to gain your certificate. **There will be no October exam in 2026. We are waiting for official confirmation from the RHS regarding future October exams.**

Distance learning students must take their exams online, unless they have been approved for special access arrangements. The 2026/2027 dates for exams can be found [HERE](#)

Registration fees (£20) and exam fees (£220) are included in the cost of the course. These are administered by Leafy Learning Ltd. on your behalf and paid to the RHS at the start of the course. Where required, resit fees are charged at an additional cost of £110 per exam.

How many hours of study are 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 many additional hours.

Past students who completed this course at college in one academic year, said that they spent an 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 **TWO** years to study and pass both exams to gain the qualification. We will carry out any administration in relation to exams during this time.

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 two-week periods such as holidays, as this is too difficult to manage.

Course Policies

Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

Leafy Learning values diversity and is committed to providing an inclusive environment where all students feel welcome and supported.

We encourage students from all backgrounds and abilities to apply. If you need reasonable adjustments to help with your learning or exams, please inform your tutor as early as possible.

Customer Service and Complaints

We want to ensure your experience with us is positive. If you have any feedback, suggestions, or concerns:

- Contact us via email: anne@leafylearning.co.uk
- We aim to acknowledge your message within 3 working days and resolve issues within 10 working days.
- Formal complaints are handled confidentially and fairly, according to our Complaints Policy.

Terms and Conditions

Time frame for completing your course

This course is timetabled with the aim of you completing your studies within two years from enrolment. We understand that sometimes it's easy to fall behind due to other commitments and that is why you have the option to pause for up to 3 months (once only). This means you have a maximum of two years and three months to complete and pass both exams.

Extended study time

In exceptional circumstances you may need tutor support for more than two years to complete your studies. This can be discussed with your tutor and further support can be arranged for an additional fee.

Refunds

Upon payment for the distance learning course, students gain immediate access to all course materials. Under UK law, there is generally no right to a refund if you change your mind after accessing digital content. We will refund the £240 RHS registration and

examination fees if you change your mind before we have registered you with the RHS. We register you with the RHS and pay the exam fees after the one-to-one Zoom meeting. Fees will not be refundable should you not complete or pass the course.

Code of Conduct and Student Responsibilities

We are committed to creating a respectful and supportive learning environment for everyone. We expect all students to:

- Treat fellow students and staff with respect and kindness.
- Focus on course-related topics during group discussions and meetings.
- Uphold academic integrity by not sharing course materials outside of the enrolled group.

Failure to adhere to these standards may result in suspension or removal from the course without refund.

Updates to Learning Materials

The Provider reserves the right to update, modify, or replace course notes and related resources at any time to maintain accuracy, relevance, and quality. Such updates may include the addition of new material based on recent examination content, syllabus revisions, or user feedback. Users acknowledge and agree that it is their responsibility to access and use the most current versions of the materials, and they are advised to download materials in stages to ensure they have the current version.

Intellectual Property

All course material you download is owned by Leafy Learning Ltd. unless otherwise stated and is 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 or by any other means.

Data Protection and Privacy

Your personal information is handled with the utmost care and stored securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

We will use your data only for course administration, communication, and exam registration. We do not share your information without consent.

Our learning support guarantee

Leafy Learning Ltd will provide you with a bespoke learning plan and send regular assignments on Mondays as outlined in the plan. We aim to respond to all emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends, bank holidays, and our Christmas and Easter closures of one week each).

We will host a live Zoom teaching session at least every 4 weeks (6pm UK time) which is also recorded and can be viewed at any time.

Before each exam session, Leafy Learning will contact you to confirm your readiness and will register you for the exam or discuss deferral options if you need more time. There is a deadline for registration for each exam and we will inform you of this deadline date. If you change your mind and decide not to take the exam after the deadline date, you will lose your exam fee.

We always have a live Zoom meeting two weeks before every exam to review exam techniques and answer questions about the online exam.

Frequently Asked Questions

What qualification will I get?

When you have passed Exam 1 and Exam 2, 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. You can change exam dates to suit you, as described previously, which makes this a very flexible course. 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. You can start the course at any time throughout the year. We have 10 places for new students each month.

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. Questions focus on UK horticulture so exam answers should be relevant to UK horticulture.

Do the assignments have to be completed every week?

Ideally you complete the assignments sent on a Monday before the next set of questions are sent. 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 Exam 1 and Exam 2?

At your initial one-to-one Zoom meeting, we will discuss exam date options and create a timetable that allows time for sufficient preparation for each exam. For example, if you enrol in November, you would typically sit Unit 1 in June of the following year. An earlier February exam date can also be arranged if you prefer to study at a faster pace.

You may defer your planned exam if you feel unprepared, provided you notify us promptly when we check in before each exam date. Deferred exams can be taken at the next sitting without losing your exam fee.

When scheduling your exams, plan carefully to ensure you have enough time, especially in case you need to retake an exam.

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?

You can defer an exam if you feel unprepared, but you must request the deferral before the exam registration deadline. If you miss this deadline, you will forfeit your exam fee. You can defer exams as many times as you wish within the two-year study period.

In addition to the two-year study period, you can pause your learning plan once for up to three 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.

Refunds

Once purchased, students receive full access to all learning resources, so refunds for the full course fee cannot be issued. However, if a student requests a refund before their one-to-one Zoom meeting, exam fees and registration fees (£240) can be refunded.

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 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 of the year and exams will be scheduled to allow you enough time to study for each exam.

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

Phone: A telephone callback can be arranged if requested by email.