



Ansford Academy

Practical Horticulture Skills

Curriculum Booklet for 2025 - 2026

Subject Lead: Alyson Evans

Curriculum Intent:

The Key Stage 4 Horticulture curriculum is designed to equip students with the essential knowledge, skills, and practical experience necessary for understanding the science and artistry of plant cultivation. Students will explore horticultural principles, environmental sustainability, plant biology, and landscape design, alongside developing industry-standard practices for growing and maintaining plants. The curriculum aims to foster a deeper connection with nature, promote sustainable practices, and provide students with transferable skills applicable in both academic and real-world contexts.

The Level 1 course is designed to introduce learners to and develop their understanding of:

Practical Horticultural Skills:

- Understanding the Science Behind Horticulture
- Promoting Sustainability and Environmental Awareness
- Encouraging Creativity and Problem-Solving
- Building Industry-Relevant Knowledge and Skills
- Fostering a Sense of Responsibility and Well-Being
- Using a range of tools to construct and maintain outdoor environments.

By the end of Key Stage 4, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a range of practical horticultural skills, from sowing seeds to designing garden spaces.
- Understand the scientific principles of plant growth and the factors affecting plant health.
- Apply sustainable practices to horticulture and evaluate their environmental impact.
- Plan and design effective and aesthetically pleasing plant-based environments.
- Develop problem-solving skills that enable them to respond to horticultural challenges.
- Gain insight into potential career pathways within the horticulture industry.

The curriculum for Key Stage 4 Horticulture ultimately strives to create well-rounded, environmentally conscious individuals with a passion for plants, design, and sustainability. Through engaging and challenging content, we aim to inspire students to pursue further studies or careers in horticulture, environmental science, and related fields.

Practical Horticulture Curriculum Implementation:

As the name suggests, this is a practical, hands-on course. There is no final written exam. Instead, students are assessed regularly on their understanding and ability to complete units as specified by City & Guilds.

Students are taught in mixed gender and mixed ability groups and spend the majority of their time outdoors. At the start of term each student is allocated a plot of land 3m x 5m to prepare, care for, plant up & harvest. Students decide themselves what they want to plant - within the limitations of budget, space and climate. They are supported in looking after their crops before harvesting and taking home their vegetables at the end of the school year, in July.

In Year 11, students learn a variety of different skills they can apply to other areas of Horticulture. For example, how to care for tools correctly, using water based preservatives on outdoor wooden structures, how to aerate soil and why we need to. On occasions we work indoors and cover other aspects of the course like potting up rooted cuttings, how to propagate plants from cuttings, how to test pH values in soil, and plenty more.

At the end of each unit students demonstrate their understanding and ability both practically and verbally. Photographs are taken and these will form part of their portfolio of evidence, which is submitted to City & Guilds at the end of Year 11.

Assessment is on the completion of each unit and is either 'pass' or 'not yet achieved'. There are 3 levels of awards the students can achieve. This is dependent on the number of units they have successfully passed:

Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills
Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills
Level 1 Diploma in Practical Horticulture skills.

The vast majority of students achieve the full diploma by the end of Year 11.

Curriculum Time:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Lessons per fortnight	na	na	na	5	5

Year 10 Horticulture Programme of Study
Exam Board: City & Guilds
Exam Specification: Level 1 (7573-11)

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	Prepare ground for sowing or planting under supervision Assessment Criteria: • State the steps to prepare the ground • Identify that can occur if tilth is too coarse or too fine. • State the reasons for correct consolidation of soil	Unit 101 Time: 6 hours Marks: 3 points
2	Plant Container Grown Subjects Assessment criteria: • State reasons for removing damaged material before planting • State conditions when planting should not take place • State the problems that can occur when plants are planted incorrectly • State the reasons for firming in after planting	Unit 102 Time: 2 hours Marks: 3 points
3	Prepare solid and apply organic mulch Assessment criteria: • State reasons for applying mulch • Understand soil conditions when mulching should not take place • Identify suitable mulch materials • Prepare soil correctly	Unit 103 Time: 4 hours Marks: 3 points
4	Water an area of plants Assessment criteria: • Identify when plants need to be watered • Understand the problems that can occur if over watering	Unit 104 Time: 1 hour Marks: 3 points
5	Determine soil pH using a test kit Assessment criteria: • Identify & record soil pH • Understand how to use this information	Unit 107 Time: 2 hours Marks: 2 points
6	Sow outdoors in drills by hand Assessment criteria: • Prepare tilth and set out taught line • Draw out shallow drill suitable for seed size. • Sow seeds using appropriate spacing • Label the drill correctly • Leave site tidy & store tools	Unit 122 Time: 4 hours Marks: 2 points

Year 11 Practical Horticulture Skills
Exam Board: City & Guilds
Exam Specification: Level 1 (7573-11)

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	Maintain Hand Tools Assessment criteria: • Correct selection of tools & equipment • Understanding the reasons for maintaining hand tools • Identify maintenance requirements • Carry out maintenance work to the required standard	Unit 150 Time: 6 hours + Marks: 2 points
2	Sow indoors in containers Assessment criteria: • Sow seeds in a variety of containers • Understand how to label correctly • Care for seeds until germination.	Unit 123 Time: 2 hours Marks: 2 points
3	Potting up rooted cuttings. Assessment criteria: • Carry out tasks involved carefully • Select correct tools & equipment • Dispose of waste correctly	Unit 126 Time: 4 hours Marks: 2 points
4	Maintain wooden structures with water based preservative Assessment criteria: • Prepare and clean area to be treated • Mark out area with suitable signage • Apply preservative correctly • Clear away and leave site tidy • Clean tools and return to store	Unit 129 Time: 9 hours Marks: 2 points
5	Aerate turf by hand Assessment criteria: • State the task involved • Select appropriate PPe • Carry out activities • Dispose of waste in accordance with H&S guidance • Leave site tidy	Unit 134 Time: 2 hours Marks: 2 points
6	Use a wheeled rotary mower Assessment criteria: • Prepare machine for use • Carry out H&S checks • Set the height of cut • Mow a minimum of 50sq metres • Clean machine using manufacturers recommendations.	Unit 144 Time: 2 hours Marks: 2 points

Additional Practical Horticulture Skills assessments:

Due to the nature of the course, some assessments can be completed in either Year 10 or Year 11. This is generally dependent on weather conditions.

Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
Plant bulbs for naturalisation Assessment criteria: • Identify suitable planting area • Identify suitable bulbs • Plant bulbs carefully at the correct depth & spacing • Clear site and dispose of waste	Unit 108 Time: 6 hours + Marks: 2 points
Propagate by stem cutting Assessment criteria: • Select suitable plant materials • Remove anything dead, diseased or dying • Take cuttings appropriately • Plant cuttings at the correct depth and consolidate soil. • Water cuttings from the base • Label correctly	Unit 125 Time: 2 hours Marks: 2 points
Use a nylon cord strimmer Assessment criteria: • Select appropriate PPE • Select correct tools & equipment • Complete task correctly • Dispose of waste. • Clean tools and return to store	Unit 145 Time: 2 hours Marks: 2 points
Identify trees Assessment criteria: • Identify 15 trees native to the UK	Unit 150 Time: 4 hours Marks: 2 points
Identify weeds Assessment criteria: • Identify a minimum of 15 common UK weeds	Unit 151 Time: 4 hours Marks: 2 points
Identify indoor plants Assessment criteria: • Identify a minimum of 15 indoor/house plants	Unit 152 Time: 4 hours Marks: 2 points

In addition - there is a range of other units that can be chosen from if students are interested.