Introduction to Castlebank Horticultural Centre

“At Castlebank Horticultural Centre, we strive to promote the principles of inclusivity for all, respect for the environment and all living things within it, expanding our knowledge about the natural world, and promoting the physical and mental health benefits of adopting a balanced lifestyle through engagement with the natural world around us.”

Lanark Community Development Trust is a charitable, non-profit body which carries out projects for the common good. It is an independent, volunteer-led organisation which is part of a growing network of Development Trusts which exist across Scotland and the UK. Here in Lanark, we aspire to develop and deliver priority community projects which have a social, environmental and economic impact. One such project is the management of Castlebank Horticultural Centre.

Castlebank Horticultural Centre is a rural hub for education, training, volunteering and learning about the natural world around us. Located in Castlebank Park, the Horticultural Centre is the result of years of dedicated work by the Development Trust and volunteers to transform derelict areas of the park and bring them back into community use. The centre hosts a range of horticultural activities and volunteering opportunities, and is also available for hire by a range of community groups and commercial users.

The recent renovation works were funded by LEADER, the Renewable Energy Fund and the Climate Challenge Fund. Additional funding was awarded by the Levenseat Trust to kit out the interior of the centre with furniture, office supplies and kitchen equipment & utensils. The centre employs a full-time Educational Gardener, a post which is currently funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The focus of the Educational Gardener’s role is to engage with, and educate, a variety of different groups within the community – from nursery children to senior citizens. Facilities include three large polytunnels, multiple raised beds, alpine garden, classroom, meeting space, office and toilet block.

The Horticultural Centre is based within the historic and beautiful area of Castlebank Park in Lanark. Set in the heart of rural Lanarkshire, the park offers visitors a glimpse into the historical but peaceful Clyde Valley. Situated in the west side of the town of Lanark, close to the River Clyde, the park is steeped in history. Activity in the area dates back to the 12th century when the ancient kings of Scotland would hunt in the valley woodlands. William Wallace is reputed to have made his escape through the woodlands leading to the Clyde after slaughtering the English Governor in the nearby castle in May 1297. Castlebank House was originally built in 1760 and developed over the years to its current state. The park is also linked to the UNESCO World Heritage site of New Lanark village by the long distance footpath the Clyde Walkway. The ancient woodlands are a haven for wildlife and there is a good footpath network throughout the park, whether you are looking for wildlife or just a pleasant stroll in the countryside. Visitors can enjoy walking in the park, picnics, the new play area or the recently developed areas such as the Fairy Dell, Bog Garden and Wallace Rose Garden.
1. Introduction to the course ‘RHS Level 2 Principles of Horticulture’

Content
The qualification provides a broad knowledge of the principles which underpin horticultural practices. The qualification combines the units in the RHS Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Plant Growth, Propagation and Development and the RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Establishment and Maintenance. It consists of eight mandatory units which cover the following topics:

- Plant classification, structure and function
- Plant nutrition and the properties and management of soils and growing media
- Maintaining plant health through understanding pest, disease and weed lifecycles
- Principles and practices of plant propagation in horticulture
- Principles of garden planning and garden plant selection
- Establishment and maintenance of garden plants and lawns
- Cultural operations and production methods for outdoor vegetable and fruit crops
- Protected environments (greenhouses, polythene tunnels and cold frames) and their use in plant cultivation

Who is the qualification intended for?
The qualification is intended for those wishing to work in professional horticulture in a variety of roles. It is designed to provide a broad underpinning knowledge of plants and horticultural practices. It is suitable for those wishing to enter horticultural employment for the first time; for those who are already working in horticulture who want to develop their knowledge; and for those who wish to progress to further horticultural study at level 3. The units in the qualification are designed for part-time study so it is particularly suitable for those who are working in the industry and wishing to study part-time in order to progress their careers or prepare for further study at level 3. It is also suitable for those who wish to enter horticulture as a change of career and are seeking the necessary foundation knowledge.

There is no pre-requisite knowledge needed for entry to the qualification.

What can the qualification lead to?
The qualification can lead to employment in the following roles:

- Gardener in private, public, or botanic gardens, or parks and urban green spaces
- Plant propagator in commercial plant production
- Production assistant in fruit or vegetable growing
- Garden Centre assistant

The qualification supports progression to further learning on level 3 courses in horticulture.

Who supports the qualification?
The qualification is supported by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the Environmental and Land-based Sector, as meeting an entry requirement to the industry and as being suitable to those working in the industry and wishing to upgrade their knowledge.

The qualification is recognised by the Chartered Institute of Horticulture as contributing towards the academic component of their entry criteria – see the following link:
http://www.horticulture.org.uk/page.php?pageid=557

The qualification provides a suitable foundation for further study on the RHS Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth, Health and Applied Propagation, the RHS Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Construction and Planting, or on equivalent level 3 horticulture courses. It also contributes to meeting the entry requirements of specialist horticultural training programmes such as the RHS Level 3 Diploma in Horticultural Practice.
Further Information


2. Course Structure and Breakdown

The RHS Level 2 course is aimed towards the examinations set by the RHS, so the content is predominately theory. Students will have the chance to enhance their theoretical learning by viewing practical demonstrations or undertaking practical activities within the Horticultural Centre or wider area of Castlebank Park.

The course is broken down into two separate certificates that are designed to stand alone. When combined, they make up the RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture.

Certificate 1: Principles of Plant Growth, Propagation and Development

- Unit 1: Plant classification, structure and function
- Unit 2: Plant nutrition and the root environment
- Unit 3: Maintaining plant health
- Unit 4: Understanding plant propagation

Certificate 2: Principles of Garden Planning, Establishment and Maintenance

- Unit 5: Understanding garden features, plant selection and maintenance
- Unit 6: Understanding choice, establishment and maintenance of garden plants and lawns
- Unit 7: Understanding the production of outdoor vegetables and fruit
- Unit 8: Understanding protected environments and their use in plant cultivation

The Guided Learning Hours (GLH) represent the time that the learner spends learning under the immediate guidance and supervision of a tutor and includes assessment by the tutor, as well as invigilated exams. Guided Learning Hours are always less than total qualification time, as learners are expected to complete a certain amount of study in their own time. The Guided Learning Hours for this qualification are 196.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) includes the Guided Learning Hours and represents the notional time that an average learner could reasonably expect to take to complete the learning outcomes of the units to the standard determined by the assessment criteria, and gain the qualification. It includes all face-to-face contact with tutors as well as assessment time and unsupervised directed study, coursework and practice. The Total Qualification Time for this qualification is 315.

3. Course duration and course dates

The RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture is a 10-month part-time course. The class will run on a weekday from 9.30am until 4.30pm with an hour lunch break between 12.30pm and 1.30pm.

Term 1: September to January 2020 (start date 21st September 2020) – 15 weeks

Term 2: February to June 2021 (start date 11th January 2021) – 15 weeks

This is a guide; a full timetable including holidays will be given at the beginning of the course.
4. Examination Dates
Examinations will take place at Castlebank Horticultural Centre. The exam dates set by the RHS are as follows:

- February 2021: Level 2 Certificate in Plant Growth, Propagation and Development
- February 2021: Level 2 Certificate in Garden Planning, Establishment and Maintenance
- June 2021: Level 2 Certificate in Plant Growth, Propagation and Development
- June 2021: Level 2 Certificate in Garden Planning, Establishment and Maintenance

5. Course Costs
The fee for the attended course is £600 (inc VAT), which is payable on acceptance of a place and includes the following:

- Full series of classes over 10-month period
- Exam registration fees for one sitting of each paper (£136)

Fees are payable on acceptance of your place and must be paid prior to the commencement of the course. A part-refund of examination fees (£136) will only be paid if a student leaves a course before the exam registration has taken place. There will be no refunds available for any other fees paid.

6. Application Process
Candidates wishing to apply for this course should request an application form by email info@lanarktrust.co.uk or call 01555 728 329.

If you have any enquiries, please email info@lanarktrust.co.uk or call 01555 728 329.

Applications will close on 31.08.2020. If there is insufficient interest before this date, the course will not commence and candidates will be reimbursed.