

Practical gardening

Unit delivery and assessment pack



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Contents

This unit delivery and assessment pack provides teachers with the information they need to deliver this unit.

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The UK Government has announced plans to restrict social media use by children under 16, which may impact some of our qualifications. We will keep our qualifications under review and make any necessary updates as further details become available

Unit overview

Title	Practical gardening
Suite	Skills for Life
Unit Codes	S622E1 S622E2 S622E3 S622L1 S622L2
GLH	20
Unit Aim	To develop learners' knowledge about plants, flowers, vegetables and the practical skills of planting, growing and caring for them, either outdoors or indoors, taking into account issues relating to sustainability.
Unit Summary	This unit introduces learners to practical gardening, helping them develop knowledge of plants, flowers and vegetables and the skills to plant, grow and care for them. Learners also explore safe working practices and sustainable gardening methods, either indoors or outdoors, building confidence and practical competence in a vocational context. At Entry Level, learners develop basic knowledge of different plants, flowers and vegetables, understanding what they need to grow. They carry out simple planting and care tasks, follow instructions and apply basic sustainable practices such as reusing pots or saving water. The focus is on developing practical skills, safe working habits and confidence in small-scale gardening activities. At Level 1 and 2, learners develop a deeper understanding of plant characteristics, growing requirements and environmental factors that affect growth. They plan and carry out gardening activities, maintain plants and apply sustainable practices such as composting and water conservation. The unit prepares learners for vocational horticulture or land-based roles by developing practical competence, environmental awareness and safe working skills.
Curriculum for Wales	Areas of learning and experience: The Practical gardening unit supports the Areas of Learning in Science and technology by helping learners understand plant biology, growth conditions and environmental interactions. Learners will explore the statements of what matters, <i>The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival</i>, as they will learn about what plants need for survival, such as pollination and soil health. It also links to Health and well-being, through promoting safe practical activities, outdoor learning and positive mental health benefits associated with gardening. Additionally, the unit can contribute to Humanities, where learners explore sustainability, local environments and community projects.

Integral and cross-curricular skills: Creativity and innovation and Critical-thinking and problem-solving are embedded in planning planting layouts and adjusting care practices, while Personal effectiveness develops through teamwork, following instructions, and taking responsibility for tasks. Planning and organising skills develop through preparing planting activities and managing ongoing care routines.

Learners develop Literacy skills through recording observations, labelling plants and writing simple care instructions. Numeracy skills are applied when measuring soil, spacing plants or tracking growth over time. The unit promotes Digital competence when learners record observations using photos, logs, or digital growth charts.

Cross-cutting themes: This unit promotes positive Relationships and sexuality by encouraging learners to work cooperatively, communicate respectfully, and share practical tasks. It promotes Human rights and diversity by ensuring fair and inclusive participation, encouraging respect for others, shared spaces, and the environment. It supports Careers and work-related experiences by developing practical skills, teamwork and safe working practices relevant to horticulture and environmental roles. The unit also encourages learners to understand Local, national, and international contexts by exploring seasonal growing, food production and sustainability, helping learners recognise how local gardening actions contribute to wider environmental goals.

Entry Level Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes (the learner will)	Assessment criteria (the learner can)		
	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3
LO1 Know about different types of plants, flowers and vegetables	E1 1.1 Point out one or two common plants, flowers or vegetables. E1 1.2 Show a simple need of a plant.	E2 1.1 Recognise several common plants, flowers or vegetables. E2 1.2 Indicate one difference between types of plants.	E3 1.1 Give a range of plants, flowers and vegetables. E3 1.2 Give a description of basic needs of plants.
LO2 Be able to plant and grow plants, flowers or vegetables	E1 2.1 Take part in preparing soil or containers with support. E1 2.2 Respond to simple instructions to plant a seed or small plants.	E2 2.1 Prepare soil or containers with support. E2 2.2 Plant seeds or a young plant correctly following guidance.	E3 2.1 Prepare soil or containers independently. E3 2.2 Plant seeds or young plants and explain briefly what they need to grow.
LO3 Be able to care for and maintain plants	E1 3.1 Respond to instructions to water or care for plants. E1.3.2 Show one simple care task with support.	E2 3.1 Follow instructions to carry out routine care tasks of plants. E2 3.2 Look at plants to see if they are growing and healthy.	E3 3.1 Carry out routine maintenance of plants independently. E3 3.2 Carry out care tasks such as watering and weeding and show how they help the plant grow.
LO4 Know about sustainable gardening and work safely	E1 4.1 Point out one way to avoid waste. E1 4.2 Point out how to handle a basic gardening tool safely, with support.	E2 4.1 Recognise simple sustainable practices. E2 4.2 Indicate how to use a basic gardening tool safely.	E3 4.1 Give a description of sustainable practices. E3 4.2 Suggest how to use basic gardening tools safely.

If not specified, then a plural reference within assessment criterion refers to a minimum of two.

Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes (the learner will)	Assessment criteria (the learner can)	
	Level 1	Level 2
LO1 Understand the characteristics and growing requirements of plants, flowers and vegetables	L1 1.1 Describe a range of plants, flowers and vegetables and their growing requirements. L1 1.2 Explain how factors such as soil, water and light affect plant growth.	L2 1.1 Explain the characteristics of a wide range of plants, flowers and vegetables. L2 1.2 Compare growing requirements for different types of plants, flowers and vegetables.
LO2 Be able to plan and carry out planting activities	L1 2.1 Plan and carry out planting activities following guidance. L1 2.2 Demonstrate the use of appropriate soil, containers and seeds for planting.	L2.2.1 Plan and carry out planting activities independently. L2 2.2 Explain the choice of soil, containers, seeds or planting methods.
LO3 Be able to care for and maintain plants to support healthy growth	L1 3.1 Carry out routine maintenance (watering, weeding, feeding) and monitor growth. L1 3.2 Record observations of plant growth or issues.	L2 3.1 Maintain plants independently, adjusting care as needed. L2 3.2 Analyse plant health and take corrective actions to promote growth.
LO4 Understand sustainable gardening practices and work safely	L1 4.1 Describe simple sustainable gardening practices and how to apply them. L1 4.2 Use health and safety guidance correctly when handling gardening tools and materials.	L2 4.1 Apply sustainable gardening practices effectively and evaluate their benefits. L2 4.2 Demonstrate how to use gardening tools safely and appropriately, showing understanding of health and safety.

If not specified, then a plural reference within assessment criterion refers to a minimum of two.

Delivery guidance

Planning courses

Each unit in the Skills for Life and Work suite is awarded individually. When planning courses, teachers should consider the potential qualification outcomes for individual learners.

Closely related units that might be delivered alongside Practical gardening include Community participation, Looking after others, Healthy lifestyle, Home management and maintenance, Mental health and wellbeing, Skills in the natural environment, Sustainability in action and Teamwork. These units complement each other by allowing learners to apply practical skills in a wider vocational and personal context, reinforcing teamwork, responsibility, and awareness of health, wellbeing, and sustainability. Together, they provide a holistic learning experience where learners can connect gardening activities with community involvement, environmental care, and everyday life skills.

There may also be links to other WJEC qualifications including Biology AS/A Level.

For full details of the Skills for Life and Work units and qualifications please refer to the qualification specification.

Amplification of Learning Outcomes

The amplification of the learning outcomes provided below should support teachers in developing content for delivery. Teachers can develop and tailor content as appropriate to their learners, whilst ensuring that the learners are provided with knowledge, understanding and the opportunity to develop and apply the skills needed to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Content should be considered in the context of:

- the level the learner is working at
- providing opportunities for progression
- centre facilities and resources
- local, national and international contexts as appropriate.

Teachers may find it helpful to refer to the level descriptors within the qualification specification.

Learning outcome	Amplification
LO1	• Recognising common plants (e.g. grass, ivy, small bushes, houseplants), flowers (e.g. daisy, dandelion, rose, sunflower) and vegetables (e.g. carrot, potato, lettuce, tomato) found in gardens, classrooms or local areas • Exploring the differences between plants (colour, shape, size, purpose) • Understanding very simple plant categories (e.g. vegetables, flowers) • Becoming familiar with what plants need to grow (water, light, air, soil) • Using pictures, labels or real plant samples to support learning • Observing plants at different stages of growth.

	For Level 1 and 2 learners: • Understanding different plant types (annuals, perennials, vegetables, herbs) • Exploring plant structures (roots, stems, leaves, flowers) and functions • Understanding environmental needs: soil type, light levels, temperature, water • Comparing different types of plants and their preferred conditions • Identifying how poor conditions affect plant health • Interpreting basic growing guides, plant labels or resources.
LO2	• Following simple step-by-step instructions to plant seeds or young plants • Handling soil, compost, pots and basic tools safely • Learning where to place seeds or plants (depth, spacing) • Understanding that plants need regular care after planting • Using simple equipment (e.g. small watering cans, trowels) • Recognising changes as seeds sprout and grow. For Level 1 and 2 learners: • Planning planting tasks (what to plant, where and when) • Selecting appropriate tools, seeds, compost, pots or beds • Preparing soil or containers properly (e.g. removing stones, adding compost) • Understanding spacing, depth and planting positions • Following correct planting methods for seeds and young plants • Recording planting activities (e.g. seed logs or schedules).
LO3	• Watering plants correctly (how much, how often) • Keeping plants tidy by removing dead leaves or debris • Observing changes in plants and noticing early growth • Understanding why care tasks are needed (plants dry out, weeds compete) • Learning simple routines like checking soil moisture • Working safely during maintenance tasks. For Level 1 and 2 learners: • Carrying out regular tasks: watering, weeding, feeding, pruning • Monitoring plant health and identifying signs of problems • Understanding common plant issues: over-watering, under-watering, pests, disease • Applying suitable measures to support plant health (e.g. adjusting water or light) • Maintaining tools and equipment during care routines • Keeping simple growth records, observations or maintenance.

LO4

- Understanding simple ways to avoid waste (reuse pots, save water)
- Recognising how composting works at a basic level
- Understanding that gardening can help the environment
- Using basic gardening tools safely with support (holding, passing, storing – hand trowel, small spade, hand fork, garden gloves)
- Learning why safety matters (protecting self and others)
- Being encouraged to think about looking after nature and wildlife.

For Level 1 and 2 learners:

- Understanding the principles of sustainable gardening (recycling, reusing, low waste)
- Using composting, organic methods and natural fertilisers
- Reducing water waste (mulching, rainwater collection, appropriate watering)
- Considering wildlife when gardening (habitats, pollinators)
- Understanding risks associated with tools and equipment
- Following safe working procedures (PPE, tool use, manual handling).

Suggested activities

This section gives some suggested activities to support teaching and learning in a vocational context consistent with the philosophy and intent of the unit and associated qualifications. Useful resources and possible contacts that could be made in the delivery of the learning are also signposted.

The following activities would be suitable for use with Entry Level learners:

- Explore different plants, flowers and vegetables using real examples, pictures or sensory materials.
- Demonstrate and practise simple planting tasks such as sowing seeds in pots or trays.
- Carry out basic plant-care routines (watering, checking soil moisture, removing dead leaves).
- Observe plant growth over time and record changes using photos, drawings or simple labels.
- Take part in simple sustainability tasks, such as reusing pots or collecting rainwater for watering.
- Participate in group discussions about what plants need to grow, using visual prompts.
- Sort and identify basic gardening tools and learn how to use them safely with supervision.
- Work together on a small, shared gardening project, such as creating a classroom planter or windowsill garden.

The following activities would be suitable for use with Level 1 and 2 learners:

- Plan and complete a small-scale growing project, selecting appropriate seeds, containers and soil, or plan/design a small garden area explaining what would be planted where and why, as well as rotation.
- Carry out soil preparation, planting and transplanting tasks using suitable tools and methods.

- Monitor plant development through simple logs or digital records, identifying issues such as pests or poor growth.
- Practise sustainable gardening methods, such as composting, mulching or water-efficient irrigation.
- Compare the growing requirements of different plants and adjust care routines accordingly.
- Undertake maintenance tasks such as weeding, pruning, feeding and pest control, applying safe working practices.
- Evaluate the success of planting activities and suggest improvements for future growing cycles.
- Work as part of a team to maintain a garden area or planting bed, applying organisational and problem-solving skills relevant to vocational practice.

Sources of evidence

This unit is centre assessed and externally quality assured by WJEC. Assessment must be accessible, using clear language and reflecting the learner's level. Learners should demonstrate knowledge and skills through realistic activities such as role-play, case studies, or projects. While evidence may be verbal, written, practical, or visual, extended written work is not required unless appropriate. Each unit must be assessed independently, even if tasks cover multiple criteria. Assessor judgements should focus on meeting the standard, not spelling or presentation unless specifically assessed. Full assessment guidance is available in the qualification specification.

Possible sources of evidence may include:

- Assessor observation records or witness testimonies of practical gardening tasks.
- Photographs of learners carrying out planting, maintenance or sustainability activities.
- Learner workbooks or reflective journals documenting steps taken or observations made.
- Completed planting plans, sketches or simple layout designs created by learners.
- Labels, logs or growth charts showing plant development over time.
- Worksheets or short written descriptions identifying plants or explaining care routines.
- Video clips of learners performing tasks or explaining what they have done.
- Checklists confirming safe use of tools and equipment.
- Samples of recycled or reused materials used in sustainable gardening activities.
- Evidence of participation in group or individual gardening projects (e.g. project summaries).
- Feedback forms from workplace supervisors, instructors or peers.
- Digital portfolios or slideshows compiling images, notes and reflections from the gardening tasks.

Experiences

To provide a real-world context you could do the following:

- Learners can visit a local community garden or allotment to observe a wide variety of plants, flowers and vegetables growing in real conditions, helping them understand how different environments affect growth. They can speak with gardeners or volunteers who explain daily maintenance routines and sustainable practices such as composting or rainwater harvesting. Learners can participate in simple hands-on tasks such as watering, weeding or planting, building confidence and practical skills.

- Learners can have a volunteering session with a horticultural or environmental organisation to experience the expectations and teamwork involved in real horticultural work, such as preparing beds, planting seasonal crops or maintaining green spaces. They gain insight into how sustainability is embedded in professional practice, including waste reduction, habitat protection and safe working methods. This experience helps learners connect classroom skills with vocational pathways, increasing motivation and awareness of potential career options.
- Learners can have a guided visit to a garden centre or nursery. Learners can explore a wide range of plants and materials, comparing their characteristics, growing requirements and uses. Staff can explain how plants are selected, cared for and displayed, as well as how sustainable approaches (e.g. peat-free composts) are applied in the industry.
- Learners can complete a practical task such as choosing suitable plants for a small gardening project, encouraging decision-making and application of knowledge.

Resources and organisations

Resources required for delivery

Centres may need access to small outdoor/indoor planting areas, basic tools (trowels, gloves, watering cans), and consumables (seeds, soil, compost). These resources support safe, hands-on planting and maintenance, enabling valid evidence of sustainable gardening practice.

Resources available to support delivery

National Botanic Garden of Wales	Website: https://botanicgarden.wales The National Botanic Garden of Wales offers a wide range of education programmes, workshops and resources focused on plant science, biodiversity, sustainability and horticulture. • Hosts school visits with tailored activities based on age and ability • Offers access to expert staff, including horticulturists and environmental educators • Provides resources on Welsh plants, conservation and sustainable gardening • Promotes learning through its Apothecary Garden, Butterfly House and Science Centre.
Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) – Campaign for School Gardening	Website: https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk The RHS Campaign for School Gardening provides free resources, lesson plans and training to help educators deliver effective gardening sessions. • Downloadable lesson packs linked to curriculum outcomes • Guidance on planning a school garden, growing calendars and seasonal activities • CPD training opportunities for staff. Offers the Five Level Award scheme to recognise pupil progress and school commitment.

Keep Wales Tidy – Eco-Schools Wales	Website: https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru Keep Wales Tidy supports schools through its Eco-Schools programme, helping learners engage with sustainability and environmental action. • Activities on composting, recycling, water conservation and biodiversity • Resources to develop eco-gardens, wildflower areas and pollinator zones • Links to the Curriculum for Wales and supports cross-curricular learning • Offers funding opportunities through their Local Places for Nature scheme.
The Wildlife Trusts – Wales and UK	Website: https://www.wildlifetrusts.org The Wildlife Trusts support schools with education programmes about nature, biodiversity and gardening for wildlife. • Run outdoor learning sessions and workshops in many areas across Wales • Promote pollinator-friendly gardening and habitat creation • Downloadable activity packs on sustainable gardening, composting and seasonal planting. Local Wildlife Trusts (e.g. South and West Wales) offer tailored school engagement projects.

Resources required for assessment

Assessment of this unit should not require any additional resources to those required for delivery.

References to third-party materials and links to external websites in this document are provided for convenience and informational purposes only.

We select and review these resources at the time of publication to support teaching and learning; however, their inclusion does not imply endorsement or guarantee of the organisations, content or opinions expressed.

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