



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Unit code: F2B6 35

Unit purpose: This Unit enables candidates to develop a range of skills associated with the identification, cultivation and use of a range of plants requiring specific growing conditions which may belong to the following groups- woodland garden plants, bog garden plants, alpine garden plants, native plants, grasses and bamboos, drought-resistant plants, sub-tropical plants.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Identify and name plants from relevant plant groups.
- 2 Explain optimum growing conditions preferred by each plant group.
- 3 Evaluate the design uses of each plant group.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is recommended that candidates have relevant experience in plant identification and plant use, and in the basic principles of garden design. Higher National units such as *Plant Recognition*, *Planting Design*, and *Plants for Gardens: Trees, Shrubs and Herbaceous* would be beneficial in this respect.

Core Skills: There may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery: This Unit may be delivered as part of a Group Award, or free standing for continued professional or personal development. If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: The assessment methods adopted should reflect the teaching/learning approaches of individual centres. Outcome 1 could be assessed by a series of identification tests. Outcomes 2 and 3 could be assessed by written or recorded oral assignments and may be assessed separately, however they would also lend themselves to integration onto a single instrument of assessment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Unit code: F2B6 35

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Identify and name plants from relevant plant groups

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Plant recognition
- ◆ Bi-nomial nomenclature
- ◆ Plant groups

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ identify a minimum of 45 plants correctly using binomial botanical nomenclature
- ◆ name the relevant group to which each plant belongs

Throughout this Unit 'Plant Groups' refers to the following Specialist Plant Groups: Woodland Garden Plants; Bog Garden Plants; Alpine Garden Plants; Native Plants, Grasses and Bamboos; Drought resistant Plants and Sub-tropical Plants.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed as a series of supervised closed-book identification tests. Each assessment should consist of a minimum of ten plants.

The 45 plants should be made up of five plants from each of the seven groups, and in addition any other 10 plants from the groups.

The pass mark for this assessment is 80% of the total marks available for correctly identifying the plants, and the plant groups to which they belong. Suitable marking schemes covering these criteria may be devised on a local basis.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Outcome 2

Explain optimum growing conditions preferred by each plant group

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Natural habitats and origins of groups
- ◆ Environmental conditions
- ◆ Physiological adaptations
- ◆ Creation of appropriate growing conditions

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the natural habitats from which the plant groups originate
- ◆ explain the environmental conditions within the natural habitats
- ◆ explain any physiological adaptations resulting from their natural habitat
- ◆ explain the growing conditions required by each group in a cultivated setting
- ◆ explain how appropriate growing conditions may be created

for a minimum of three of the Plant Groups listed.

Throughout this Unit 'Plant Groups' refers to the following Specialist Plant Groups: Woodland Garden Plants; Bog Garden Plants; Alpine Garden Plants; Native Plants, Grasses and Bamboos; Drought resistant Plants and Sub-tropical Plants.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome may be assessed by a written or recorded oral assignment, supported by graphical materials where relevant, which covers the Knowledge and Skills points listed above and meets the Evidence Requirements. The assignment should cover a minimum of three of the listed Plant Groups.

The assessment for this Outcome may stand alone, or be combined with Outcome 3 in a single instrument of assessment

Outcome 3

Evaluate the design uses of each plant group

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Historical background to garden use
- ◆ Design uses/functions
- ◆ Climate change

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ evaluate the historical reasons for the change in popularity of these plants groups
- ◆ evaluate traditional and contemporary garden design uses for the plant groups
- ◆ evaluate the potential for use of each group in relation to climate change issues

for a minimum of three of the Plant Groups listed.

Throughout this Unit 'Plant Groups' refers to the following Specialist Plant Groups: Woodland Garden Plants; Bog Garden Plants; Alpine Garden Plants; Native Plants, Grasses and Bamboos; Drought resistant Plants and Sub-tropical Plants.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome may be assessed by a written or recorded oral assignment, supported by graphical materials where relevant, which covers the Knowledge and Skills points listed above and meets the Evidence Requirements. The assignment should cover a minimum of three of the listed Plant Groups.

The assessment for this Outcome may stand alone, or be combined with Outcome 2 in a single instrument of assessment.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F2B6 35

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Superclass category: SA

Original date of publication: August 2007

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2007

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit aims to develop within the candidates a range of skills associated with the identification, cultivation and garden use of a range of plants for specialised garden features.

For horticulture, garden design and landscape professionals it is important to possess knowledge of as wide a range of plants as possible. This Unit aims to extend this knowledge into other more specialised areas, and could be used in a Group Award to complement and extend any other plant identification content; for example Units such as Plant Recognition and Planting Design.

All of the Outcomes in the Unit relate specifically to the following plant uses or types:

- ◆ Woodland garden plants
- ◆ Bog garden plants
- ◆ Alpine garden plants
- ◆ Native Plants
- ◆ Grasses and Bamboos
- ◆ Drought-resistant plants
- ◆ Sub-tropical plants

Plant groups such as Woodland garden plants, Bog garden plants, Native plants and Alpine garden plants will be familiar both in terms of content and garden uses. It has however been necessary to include some less well defined groups such as Grasses and Bamboos, Drought-resistant plants and Sub-tropical plants as vehicles to introduce a range of plant that are at present topical, popular, fashionable and reflect the changing trends and opportunities for gardens design driven by climate change.

‘Grasses and Bamboos’ are included as a group due to their continuing popularity. Both are featured regularly in the gardening media and are versatile and easy to cultivate. With regard to grasses, trends such as Prairie planting, Minimalist gardens and the work of Piet Oudolf could be mentioned. It should also be mentioned that the use of bamboos continues to be explored in garden design for anything from visual barriers and structural planting to groundcover.

‘Drought resistant plants’ as a group provide the opportunity to introduce the diverse range of plants tolerant of sunny and dry growing positions, including appropriate herbaceous perennials, grey leaved Mediterranean plants, shrubs, sub-shrubs, and herbs. Again a group growing in importance due to climate change.

‘Sub-tropical plants’ is perhaps the loosest knit of all the groups, but allows us to introduce the range of plants regarded as ‘exotic’ and which are now ‘almost’ hardy out of doors, again due to our changing climate. These may include species ranging from structural plants such as Palms, Citrus, Musa, and Tree ferns, to flowering plants such as Canna, Salvia and Brugmansia.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Outcome 1 provides the opportunity for the candidate to learn 45 plants from the seven target plant groups. An understanding of binomial-nomenclature and well established identification skills would be an advantage.

Outcome 2 examines the natural habitats of these plants. It looks at the environmental conditions in which they grow, the physiological adaptations developed for survival in these conditions, and the gardening techniques used to recreate these growing conditions in a cultivated setting. The creation of appropriate growing conditions should include aspects such as light and shade, water requirements, shelter and soil related factors such as nutrients, drainage, organic content, organics supplementation, mulching.

Outcome 3 provides an opportunity to explore the history and background of these plants as popular garden subjects and to investigate when, why and how these plants were introduced into cultivation. In addition it looks at traditional and contemporary uses of these plant groups in garden design, and finally considers the usefulness (or not) of these plant groups in the light of current climate change. In this context we should consider trends such as lower rainfall/drought in certain areas, higher temperatures, less severe winters, lower incidence of frost, increased wind speeds, higher rainfall and unpredictability of seasonal weather patterns.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form part of a Group Award at HN level, designed to provide the candidates with technical or professional knowledge and skills for a specified occupational area. The Unit may also stand alone for candidates who wish to pursue professional or personal development.

The method of delivery, and the assessment procedures adopted should reflect the teaching/learning approaches of the individual centres presenting this Unit.

Seasonality of presentation should be carefully considered if live plant material is to be observed and used in the plant identification tests for Outcome 1.

Aspects of Outcome 1 may lend themselves to integration with Outcome 2 of the HN Unit *Plant Recognition*.

This Unit could be delivered by means of the following teaching /learning techniques- field observation of plant material, use of photographs, garden visits, formal lectures, candidate centred research using the internet and other suitable sources, class discussion.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

Open learning

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of this Unit lend themselves to distance learning. Careful attention should be paid by centres to ensuring the validity of assessment.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Plants for Gardens: Specialised Plantings

This Unit will introduce a range of skills associated with the identification, cultivation and use of a range of specialised plant type. The Unit throughout deals with plants in the following groups:

- ◆ Woodland garden plants
- ◆ Bog garden plants
- ◆ Alpine garden plants
- ◆ Native Plants
- ◆ Grasses and Bamboos
- ◆ Drought-resistant plants
- ◆ Sub-tropical plants

It will look at:

- ◆ how to identify a range of species from each group
- ◆ the natural habitats of these plants and how they have adapted to them
- ◆ how to cultivate these plants in a garden setting
- ◆ the reasons for their popularity
- ◆ uses and functions in a garden

On completion of this Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Identify and name plants from relevant plant groups.
- 2 Explain optimum growing conditions preferred by each plant group.
- 3 Evaluate the design uses of each plant group.

Outcome 1 deals with plant identification. You will be asked to identify 45 plants by botanical names, along with the group to which they belong.

Outcome 2 will explore the natural habitats to which these plants belong, the range of adaptations found in these groups to enable survival, and the environmental conditions which must be recreated in order to cultivate these plants.

Outcome 3 looks at the reasons for the popularity of these plants as garden subjects; their decorative features and uses in the garden and in garden design, and their future potential as garden plants in the light of climate change.