

Certified Professional Horticulturist (CPH) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

- 1. What is the most important maintenance step for avoiding disease and pest infestations?**
 - A. Sanitation**
 - B. Identification**
 - C. Application of pesticides**
 - D. Aeration of soil**
- 2. What are the planting methods used to establish a new lawn?**
 - A. Cuttings, separation, division, and grafting**
 - B. Seeding, sodding, separation, and sprigging**
 - C. Plugging, cuttings, division, and grafting**
 - D. Layering, seeding, and transplanting**
- 3. Which plant material is best for creating a microclimate?**
 - A. Groundcovers**
 - B. Bedding annuals**
 - C. Herbaceous perennials**
 - D. Trees**
- 4. Which of the following is the most overlooked asset of any company?**
 - A. Public relations**
 - B. Capital investments**
 - C. Rental equipment**
 - D. Staff**
- 5. During active growth, how much water do most trees, gardens, and lawns need per week?**
 - A. 1 inch**
 - B. 10 inches**
 - C. 3 inches**
 - D. 1 foot**

- 6. Which of these soil types has the smallest particle size?**
- A. Silt**
 - B. Sand**
 - C. Loam**
 - D. Clay**
- 7. Based on the optimum growth needs of vegetable plants, which soil pH range is recommended?**
- A. 7.0-7.3**
 - B. 6.3-6.5**
 - C. 5.7-6.0**
 - D. 5.0-5.5**
- 8. By law, nursery tags must have this information on them:**
- A. Scientific name, plant care, spacing**
 - B. Scientific name, common name, price**
 - C. Common name, spacing, price**
 - D. Scientific name, height/caliper, price**
- 9. Organic matter comes from decaying plants and animals as well as animal excretions, but also includes:**
- A. Living organisms**
 - B. Essential nutrients**
 - C. Some carbon-based materials**
 - D. Soluble salts**
- 10. Do landowners benefit from conservation landscaping only because it looks good?**
- A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Depends on the region**
 - D. Only if done professionally**

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. D
4. D
5. A
6. D
7. B
8. D
9. A
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What is the most important maintenance step for avoiding disease and pest infestations?

A. Sanitation

B. Identification

C. Application of pesticides

D. Aeration of soil

Sanitation plays a crucial role in preventing disease and pest infestations in both gardens and landscapes. This process involves removing debris, dead plant material, and any infected or infested plants, which are often breeding grounds for pests and pathogens. By regularly cleaning up garden areas and removing potential sources of disease, growers can significantly reduce the chances of issues arising in the future. Additionally, proper sanitation includes practices such as sterilizing tools, maintaining clean pots and containers, and avoiding the introduction of infested materials. This proactive approach is generally more effective and sustainable compared to reactive measures like pesticide application, as it tackles the problem at its source. Maintaining a clean environment creates a less hospitable habitat for pests and diseases, thereby supporting healthier plant growth. While the identification of pests and diseases is essential for managing plant health, it does not prevent them from occurring in the first place. Similarly, although aeration of soil is important for root health and overall plant vigor, it doesn't directly address the risk factors associated with diseases and pests. Therefore, sanitation stands out as the most critical maintenance step for avoiding infestations and ensuring a thriving, healthy plant ecosystem.

2. What are the planting methods used to establish a new lawn?

A. Cuttings, separation, division, and grafting

B. Seeding, sodding, separation, and sprigging

C. Plugging, cuttings, division, and grafting

D. Layering, seeding, and transplanting

The methods used to establish a new lawn primarily include seeding, sodding, separation, and sprigging, which effectively support the creation of a robust and healthy grass cover. Seeding is one of the most common methods, involving the dispersal of grass seeds over a prepared soil surface. This method allows for a wide variety of grass species to be used, accommodating different climates and soil types. Sodding involves laying down pre-grown grass rolls or squares, providing an instant lush lawn. This technique helps to reduce erosion and weed competition while establishing a lawn quickly, making it a preferred choice for those looking for immediate results. Sprigging is another valuable method, especially for warm-season grasses. It entails planting small shoot sections or stolons that develop roots and grow into a full lawn over time. This method can be both cost-effective and environmentally friendly, as it can utilize existing grass in the area or from specific cultivars. While other options mention methods like cuttings and layering, which are not typically used for lawn establishment, the techniques listed in the correct answer specifically focus on methods suitable for growing grass lawns efficiently.

3. Which plant material is best for creating a microclimate?

- A. Groundcovers**
- B. Bedding annuals**
- C. Herbaceous perennials**
- D. Trees**

Trees are highly effective for creating microclimates due to their ability to provide shade, reduce wind speed, and moderate temperature fluctuations within their vicinity. By creating a canopy, trees can shield the ground below from harsh sunlight, thereby lowering the temperature and conserving moisture in the soil. This can create a more hospitable environment for understory plants and other organisms, promoting biodiversity. Furthermore, trees can act as natural windbreaks, reducing the impact of strong winds on plants and structures nearby, which is crucial in maintaining a stable microclimate. Their root systems also contribute to soil stability and can improve water retention, adding another layer of ecosystem service in microclimate formation. In contrast, groundcovers, bedding annuals, and herbaceous perennials, while they offer some benefits, do not possess the same capacity for modifying the surrounding environment on a larger scale. Groundcovers may help with soil erosion and moisture retention but lack the height and density of trees to provide significant shade or wind protection. Bedding annuals typically have a short life cycle and are often not as effective at modifying microclimate conditions over time. Herbaceous perennials can provide seasonal benefits but usually do not offer the robust environmental control that trees do. Thus, trees are indeed

4. Which of the following is the most overlooked asset of any company?

- A. Public relations**
- B. Capital investments**
- C. Rental equipment**
- D. Staff**

The most overlooked asset of any company is often its staff. While companies frequently recognize the importance of capital investments, public relations, and equipment, they may not always fully appreciate or invest in their workforce. Employees are the backbone of any organization; their skills, creativity, and engagement directly impact productivity and customer satisfaction. When staff members are valued and supported through proper training, development opportunities, and a positive work culture, their performance improves, leading to better overall results for the company. Companies that overlook the potential of their workforce risk lower morale, reduced service quality, and higher employee turnover, all of which can have significant negative effects on the bottom line. This perspective emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive and empowering environment for employees, recognizing that they are not just a resource but a vital part of the company's success. When staff are prioritized as a crucial asset, it can lead to innovation, loyalty, and a strong competitive edge in the market.

5. During active growth, how much water do most trees, gardens, and lawns need per week?

- A. 1 inch**
- B. 10 inches**
- C. 3 inches**
- D. 1 foot**

The amount of water that most trees, gardens, and lawns need during active growth is typically around 1 inch per week. This figure is well-researched and is generally recommended as a guideline for adequate irrigation under normal weather conditions. An inch of water applied to the soil penetrates to a sufficient depth to reach the root zones of most plants, ensuring they can absorb what they need for growth, without the risk of over-saturation or wastage. Other choices such as 10 inches, 3 inches, or 1 foot greatly exceed the typical requirements for watering and may lead to issues such as waterlogging, nutrient leaching, and root rot. These excessive amounts can cause more harm than good, leading to decreased plant health and sustainability in landscaping practices. Using 1 inch as a standard helps create a balance where plants receive the correct amount of moisture, promoting healthy growth and efficient water use. This guideline can vary based on specific plant types, soil conditions, climate, and other factors, but it remains a foundational principle for effective horticultural practices.

6. Which of these soil types has the smallest particle size?

- A. Silt**
- B. Sand**
- C. Loam**
- D. Clay**

The soil type that has the smallest particle size is clay. Clay particles are less than 0.002 millimeters in diameter, making them significantly finer than other soil types like sand and silt. This small particle size provides clay with unique properties, such as a high surface area to volume ratio, which allows it to hold water and nutrients effectively. Clay's fine texture also results in a high cohesion between particles, leading to compacted soils that can inhibit drainage and root penetration. Understanding clay's characteristics is essential for plant growth and soil management since these properties influence water retention, nutrient availability, and soil structure. In contrast, sand consists of larger particles, followed by silt, which has an intermediate size, and loam, which is a mixture of sand, silt, and clay, without being defined by the smallest particle size.

7. Based on the optimum growth needs of vegetable plants, which soil pH range is recommended?

- A. 7.0-7.3**
- B. 6.3-6.5**
- C. 5.7-6.0**
- D. 5.0-5.5**

The recommended soil pH range for optimum growth of vegetable plants is typically between 6.3 and 6.5. This pH range is slightly acidic, which is ideal because it allows for the best availability of nutrients essential for plant growth. Most vegetable crops thrive in this pH level, as it optimally balances nutrient solubility and microbial activity in the soil. At this pH range, nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium—as well as micronutrients like iron and manganese—are readily available to plants. When the pH is within this range, it also encourages beneficial soil organisms that help with nutrient cycling and organic matter decomposition, further supporting plant health. Soils that are too alkaline (above 7.3) can lead to nutrient deficiencies, particularly with micronutrients that become less available. Acidic soils (below 6.3) can also lead to problems, including potential toxicity of certain elements and decreased nutrient absorption. Therefore, maintaining a soil pH between 6.3 and 6.5 creates a favorable environment for vegetable growth.

8. By law, nursery tags must have this information on them:

- A. Scientific name, plant care, spacing**
- B. Scientific name, common name, price**
- C. Common name, spacing, price**
- D. Scientific name, height/caliper, price**

The requirement for nursery tags is primarily to provide essential information that helps consumers make informed decisions about the plants they purchase. The correct choice includes the scientific name, which is crucial for identifying the plant accurately. This is important because many plants can have common names that vary by region, leading to confusion in plant identification. Additionally, including height or caliper gives potential buyers an understanding of the plant's size, which is crucial for planning in landscaping and ensuring that the plant fits the available space and meets aesthetic expectations. Pricing, while not always legally required on tags, is generally included to inform customers about the cost of the plant. The other options fail to include the comprehensive combination of scientific identification and size specifications that would provide the most relevant information for consumers and allow them to gauge the plant's requirements and suitability for their environment. Therefore, the option that incorporates the scientific name, height or caliper, and price gives a complete picture of what the consumer needs to know when considering a plant purchase.

9. Organic matter comes from decaying plants and animals as well as animal excretions, but also includes:

- A. Living organisms**
- B. Essential nutrients**
- C. Some carbon-based materials**
- D. Soluble salts**

Organic matter is composed primarily of decomposed materials from plants and animals, including their excretions. Additionally, it encompasses living organisms such as microbes, fungi, and other small creatures that are a part of the ecosystem. These living organisms contribute to the dynamic nature of organic matter through processes like decomposition and nutrient cycling. They play a vital role in breaking down complex organic materials into simpler forms that can be utilized by plants and other organisms. While essential nutrients are necessary for plant growth, they don't constitute organic matter itself; instead, they are often found within it. Similarly, carbon-based materials may include various substances, but not all carbon-based materials are classified as organic matter, especially synthetic or non-decomposable materials. Soluble salts are inorganic compounds and do not contribute to the definition of organic matter. Therefore, the inclusion of living organisms as a component of organic matter emphasizes the ecosystem's interconnectedness and the importance of biological activity in maintaining soil health and fertility.

10. Do landowners benefit from conservation landscaping only because it looks good?

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Depends on the region**
- D. Only if done professionally**

The correct answer highlights that the benefits of conservation landscaping extend far beyond aesthetic appeal. While a well-designed landscape can indeed enhance visual enjoyment, the primary advantages of conservation landscaping include environmental improvements, wildlife habitat creation, water conservation, and promoting biodiversity. Conservation landscaping often involves the use of native plants that are better adapted to the local climate and soil, which can reduce maintenance needs and the use of harmful chemicals. This approach can lead to decreased water usage due to the plants' natural resilience, enhancing the sustainability of the land. Additionally, these landscapes can provide essential habitats for local wildlife, supporting ecosystems and contributing to the health of the environment. The perception that aesthetic value is the sole benefit of conservation landscaping overlooks these significant ecological and practical advantages that landowners can experience. More than just visual appeal, conservation landscaping serves a critical role in supporting local ecosystems while providing functional benefits that can enhance property value and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://certifiedprofessionalhorticulturist.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!