

Course: Professional Landscaping: Design and Operations (Level 1)

Guided Learning Hours: 24 Contact Hours

Pre-requisite: None

Abstract:

This short course provides participants with the knowledge and practical experience needed to understand the fundamentals of landscaping, establish and manage different plant types, and develop practical skills for operating a landscaping business. The course emphasises practical landscape management, plant health, equipment use, site development, and entrepreneurial opportunities within the landscaping industry.

Target Audience:

- Homeowners
- Gardening enthusiasts
- Aspiring landscapers
- Property maintenance personnel
- Groundskeepers
- Entrepreneurs seeking to start a landscaping business
- Facilities and estate management personnel

Learning Outcomes

On the completion of this programme, participants should:-

- Identify common ornamental, landscape, and ground-cover plants.
- Conduct basic site surveys, measurements, and landscape assessments.
- Prepare sites for planting and establish plants correctly.
- Apply basic propagation techniques.
- Develop appropriate fertilisation and plant nutrition programmes.
- Identify common pest and disease problems and recommend appropriate controls.

- Select, operate, clean, and maintain basic landscaping equipment.
- Plan and install basic landscape lighting and special features.
- Apply landscape management principles to real-world projects.
- Identify opportunities for starting and growing a landscaping enterprise.

Course Content

Session 1 – Introduction to Landscape Management & Plant Identification

Topics:

- Introduction to the landscaping industry
- Principles and elements of landscape design
- Types of landscapes: residential, commercial and institutional
- Plant classification and identification
- Ornamental trees, shrubs, palms, ground covers and turf
- Plant selection based on site conditions
- Basic plant identification techniques

Practical: Plant identification exercise using a live specimen

Session 2 – Site Surveying, Measurement & Landscape Assessment

Topics:

- Understanding a landscape site
- Basic site surveying principles
- Measuring distances, areas and levels
- Site assessment and recording existing features
- Soil, drainage, sunlight and wind considerations
- Identifying site limitations and opportunities
- Introduction to basic landscape plans and sketches

Practical: Participants conduct a basic site survey and prepare a simple site plan.

Session 3 – Site Preparation, Planting & Establishment

Topics:

- Site clearing and preparation
- Soil preparation and improvement
- Drainage considerations
- Selection and preparation of planting areas

- Correct planting techniques
- Spacing and plant arrangement
- Staking and supporting plants
- Watering and establishment after planting
- Mulching

Practical: Site preparation and planting of selected ornamental plants.

Session 4 – Plant Propagation & Nursery Management

Topics:

- Principles of plant propagation
- Sexual and asexual propagation
- Seed propagation
- Stem, leaf and root cuttings
- Division and layering
- Propagation media
- Propagation containers and tools
- Nursery management and plant hardening
- Propagation as an entrepreneurial opportunity

Practical: Participants prepare propagation material and establish plants using selected propagation techniques.

Session 5 – Fertilisation, Plant Nutrition & Pest/Disease Management

Topics:

- Essential plant nutrients
- Understanding fertilisers and fertilizer labels
- Organic and inorganic fertilisers
- Fertiliser application methods
- Recognising nutrient deficiencies
- Common landscape pests and diseases
- Pest and disease identification
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Safe handling and application of plant protection products

Practical: Plant health assessment and development of a basic fertilisation and pest-management programme.

Session 6 – Landscaping Equipment Selection, Operation & Maintenance

Topics:

- Hand tools and power equipment
- Equipment selection for different landscaping activities
- Lawn mowers, trimmers, blowers and other equipment
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Safe equipment operation
- Cleaning and routine maintenance
- Equipment storage
- Developing an equipment maintenance schedule
- Equipment costing and investment for entrepreneurs

Practical: Equipment identification, safe operation, cleaning and basic maintenance.

Session 7 – Landscape Lighting, Water Features & Special Features**Topics:**

- Principles of landscape lighting
- Types of outdoor lighting
- Functional, safety and decorative lighting
- Lighting placement and basic planning
- Water features
- Decorative structures and garden features
- Paving, edging, trellises and garden structures
- Creating focal points
- Sustainable and low-maintenance landscape features

Practical: Participants develop a basic concept for a landscaped area incorporating lighting and at least one special feature.

Session 8 – Field Trip, Landscape Assessment & Entrepreneurship

Field Trip: Visit to an established landscape, garden, nursery, commercial property or landscape project.

Activities:

- Observe professional landscape management practices
- Identify plants and landscape features
- Assess site preparation and maintenance practices
- Examine irrigation, drainage and lighting
- Evaluate pest and disease management

- Identify equipment and maintenance practices
- Discuss operational challenges with industry professionals

Entrepreneurship Component:

- Starting a landscaping business
- Identifying target markets
- Estimating landscaping jobs
- Labour and material costing
- Pricing landscaping services
- Customer service and professional presentation
- Basic record-keeping
- Building a landscaping portfolio
- Marketing and social media for landscaping businesses

Final Practical Activity: Participants complete a basic landscape assessment and present recommendations for improving the site.