



Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist (PCH) Fact Sheet



The following are some commonly asked questions concerning the
Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist (PCH) program:

What is a Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist (PCH)?

A Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist (PCH) is a horticultural expert who has successfully completed a comprehensive study program and examination which tests his/her knowledge of plant biology and maintenance, landscape design and garden center management. A PCH must maintain certification through a program of continuing education credits to ensure his/her ongoing knowledge and expertise as a professional in the horticultural industry.

Why should I become a Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist (PCH)?

Managing or working with a nursery, landscape or garden center business requires in-depth knowledge of plant growth and maintenance, landscape design and installation and retail operations. The Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist designation is a formal way for the landscape or nursery professional to gain professional credibility. Having PCH certified individuals on staff also enhances the firm's professional image, aids the growth of your business and increases the customer's respect for you and the profession.

Who is eligible for testing?

It is strongly recommended that individuals meet one of the following criteria:

- Two years of employment in the landscape or nursery industry during the previous four year period; or
- Two years (60 credits) of classroom study in a recognized horticulture curriculum completed within the past four years; or
- A combination of one year (30 credits) or horticulture education and one year of employment in the landscape or nursery industry, for a total of two years, within the last four years.

What do my registration fees cover?

The application fee covers the first exam, one retest, two full years on the mailing list, and recognition when certification is achieved.

PLNA Member (owner/employee of PLNA member firm)	\$ 75.00
Non-member	\$125.00

Additional retests within the two-year application period are subject to a retest fee.

PLNA Member (owner/employee of PLNA member firm)	\$ 25.00
Non-member	\$ 35.00

What is the test procedure?

The exam consists of four sections of equal weight. The format of the exam consists of a combination of multiple choice, true or false, and matching questions. The sections consist of:

Plants and Their Growth (Section I) - This section requires a thorough understanding of plant parts, how a plant grows and functions, soils, plant nutrition, insects and diseases and how they affect plant behavior. It also tests your ability to identify plants by characteristics, growth requirements and habits, pictures, and both Latin and common names.

Plant Maintenance (Section II) - You will need to show thorough understanding of pruning, fertilizing, turf maintenance, watering, pest control, mulching and handling nursery stock.

Landscape Design and Installation (Section III) - This section tests plant usage and relies upon familiarity with plant materials. You will also need to be familiar with the principles of design and the design process. Specific construction ("how to build") questions are not asked. You must, however, be acquainted with installation materials and procedures.

Garden Center Basic (Section IV) - This section requires an understanding of retail operations within the nursery & landscape industry. You will need to be familiar with basic sales, customer service, employee fundamentals, maintenance, safety, marketing and merchandising.

How do I schedule an exam?

PCH exams can be scheduled at Penn State Cooperative Extension offices throughout Pennsylvania. A schedule of upcoming Exams can be found on www.PLNA.com. Call PLNA at 717-238-1673 to schedule an exam date. For large groups, arrangements may sometimes be made for on-site testing at your company.

What does it take to pass the exam?

To pass the examination, candidates must attain a score of at least 80% in each of the four sections. If a passing score is attained in all sections, the candidate will be considered a Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist. Scores will be received within four (4) weeks after taking the exam. Scores will NOT be given over the phone.

If the candidate does not attain the minimum passing score in any of the four sections, the candidate must retake those area(s) of the exam not passed. The first time a candidate retests there is no charge. Beyond that a candidate may retake any section(s) of the exam for a charge of \$25 for PLNA members or \$35 for non-members within the remainder of their two-year application period.

What's the best way to prepare for the Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist Exam?

The PCH Study Manual, published by PLNA, is designed to serve as a comprehensive study guide for those preparing for the certification exam, as well as a reference source for the industry. Each area of the exam is covered by the guide with additional works referenced for voluntary review. The guide may currently be purchased at the price of \$50.00 for members and \$75 for non-members plus shipping & handling.

What are the requirements to maintain the PCH designation?

Individuals holding PCH certification must recertify every two years AND report 24 CEUs within the recertification period AND pay the required renewal fee. CEUs may be earned and reported in both Educational and Service Categories. Reminders for CEU reporting will be sent via email and regular mail. Approved Educational and Service credit categories can be found on the PLNA website, www.PLNA.com.

For more information:

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