

0174-502 – Level 3 Horticulture - Theory exam (1)

Spring 2026

Examiner Report

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Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Principal Examiner, it is designed to be used as a feedback tool for centres to use in order to enhance teaching and preparation for assessment. It is advised that this document be referred to when preparing to teach and then again when candidates are preparing to sit examinations for City & Guilds Technical qualifications.

This report provides general commentary on candidate performance and highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strengths and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat the **Spring 2026** examination series. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose, whether it was caused by a lack of knowledge, incorrect examination technique or responses that failed to demonstrate the required depth of understanding.

The document provides commentary on the following assessment;

0174-502 – Level 3 Horticulture - Theory exam (1)

Theory Exam – Spring 2026

Grade Boundaries and distribution

Assessment: **0174-502**

Series: **Spring 2026**

Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	27
Merit mark	36
Distinction mark	45

The approximate distribution of grades and pass rates for this assessment is now available as a single easy-to-view resource on the Technicals Resources pages of our website Resource Hub - [Technical Qualifications | City & Guilds](#) under the 'Post-results services' drop down tab.

Principal Examiner Commentary

General Comments on Candidate Performance

Assessment component: 0174-502

Series 1 (Spring 2026)

The question paper was well balanced and covered an appropriate range of knowledge and understanding across the qualification. Candidates answered questions with varying degrees of accuracy and depth. Overall performance was comparable to that of the previous year. Some questions were misinterpreted, as some candidates did not recognise specific technical terminology, which affected the content of their responses. In addition, a number of candidates did not attempt certain questions.

Candidates demonstrated good recall of knowledge and gained marks in areas such as machinery checks, leaf adaptations, and pesticide disposal. Higher-scoring candidates were able to justify their answers effectively and therefore achieved higher marks. Overall, candidates showed particular strengths in the following areas:

- Machinery operations
- Plant protection

Many candidates demonstrated weaknesses in both recall and understanding in questions relating to types of pests and diseases. Some candidates were unfamiliar with the terminology used, while others misunderstood its meaning. As a result, opportunities to gain marks were missed, particularly where candidates were unable to demonstrate knowledge of the reasons for pest control.

The extended response question provided candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate their overall understanding of the qualification and their knowledge of environmental protection within a named context. There were some well-developed responses, showing excellent use of examples. Higher-achieving candidates were able to discuss a range of measures to limit environmental impact, including detailed examples and consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of different methods. Responses demonstrated an adequate understanding of impacts on soil and biodiversity. However, most candidates did not address key areas such as legislation and health and safety. Few responses demonstrated awareness of the full range of available measures or made effective use of technical terminology. Some candidates also did not structure their responses effectively, which limited their ability to explore issues and solutions in sufficient depth. Instead, they focused on only one or two aspects or discussed issues not directly relevant to the question.

Candidates are strongly advised to spend sufficient time reading each question thoroughly in order to provide a relevant and complete response. Answers should be well structured and show appropriate depth in relation to the command verb. Increased revision of viral diseases and the feeding habits of pests is recommended.

Centres are reminded of the City & Guilds Technicals 'Exam Guides' available here:

[Horticulture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds](#)