

# COURSE EVALUATION / CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

## Growing Organic Food - Spring 2007

### 1. ORGANIC HORTICULTURE

How has the course improved your understanding of the subject?

With information on planting / sowing, fertilisers and general other organic techniques.

I am a new allotment holder and as a complete amateur with little understanding of organic cultivation, I found this information very useful.

The fundamental need to improve the soil with compost, manure, minerals etc. – that you can't expect great results by doing nothing. Importance of raised beds especially when garden on a bank). How growing your own veg fits in with a holistic earth-view – reclaiming power + ownership of food, responsibility etc.

Greatly, I feel like from a complete beginner, I now have a basic framework to work from in getting started.

In many ways – I knew bits before, and rather uncertainly, but now I have a bit more joined-up approach to the fundamentals.

Has taught me a lot about all sorts of different aspects – but also made me feel a lot more confident about trying to grow stuff.

I know lots more about lots more and feel I can access further reading with some understanding.

It gave me a broader understanding of gardening from a completely different aspect.

Well, I didn't know most of it when I started, so I've improved my understanding a great deal.

I now have a far greater understanding of the subject.

I now have a greater understanding about the needs of different plants.

By making the practice seem straightforward, showing it's possible to aim higher and get improved standards of produce.

I feel I have only scratched the surface of a huge subject.

### 2. THE COURSE

Did the course meet your expectations?

Yes The course more than met my expectations.

Yes and no – different from what I expected. I learned a lot that I didn't expect to learn, but not as much as on other things.

Yes, greater than my expectations.

Yes, I wanted to become confident enough and inspired to sort out a vegetable patch at home – on a patch I have looked at longingly for the past four years.

Yes, it's been excellent. Yes and exceeded them. Yes, it did.

Yes. It far exceeded anything I was expecting.

It exceeded my expectations!!

Yes, it was more specialised than I expected, but all of us students seemed intent on "getting the knowledge" to make a real effort in future. Each of us grasped the information which would be useful to us individually.

### 3. CONTENT

Did the course content meet your needs?

Were there any subjects you thought were missing or not covered enough?

Yes, my only comment really is the sessions were sometimes a bit rushed – due to time constraints. Yes.

Generally yes - +was frequently inspirational and fascinating. Sometimes I felt bombarded with too many things to think about + not enough time to take on board the information I needed to glean from the session.

Yes. I don't have enough gardening knowledge to know if any vital bits were missed out. I think the tutor seems to have distilled a very large amount of experience and knowledge into very well thought out handouts and presentation. Thought the 8 stages of plant development were just great.

Yes, though I would have liked more time + maybe work in pairs to discuss one another's personal projects.

I could have done with a guide to what plants should look like at different stages of growth.

Yes, handouts good, very useful for further reading.

There was a good taster of each subject.

Can't think of any.

The course was very extensive and touched on aspects I'd never considered.

### 4. TUTOR

Was the tutor capable & competent? Did he provide support and feedback?

Do you think the tutor gave everyone a chance to participate?

Yes, yes, yes and very knowledgeable about his subject.

Yes, capable and competent, providing support + feedback. Remembered members' contributions + encouraged them in their participation.

Yes to all of the above – encouraged and welcomed feedback, always happy to talk about any queries I brought to him.

Yes, yes, yes, yes! Amazingly capable and competent – gave lots of support / feedback and everyone participated.

Yes, excellent. Yes, yes, yes.

Fantastic, very informed / Helped in lots of ways / The core group worked extremely well.

Tutor very competent with vast array of knowledge which he readily shares. Friendly and approachable.

Richard is a great support. Answering any questions fired at him with a confidence gave me confidence to attempt to grow.

Yes, tutor excellent, not too dogmatic, but understanding the many practical problems of us students. Handouts very useful for us to study later to reinforce the subjects discussed.

## 5. SESSIONS

What do you think of how the class sessions were delivered?

Varied and interesting. Talking then slides is a good combination.

Richard Clare is an excellent tutor. He has the gift of teaching.

I admired the altruism, optimism + examples of grass-roots democracy + action e.g. protest at burning leaves in the Sheffield incinerator, planting fruit trees on "waste land". Good examples + use of slide shows to bring home the points + community involvement. Occasionally I felt the slides took up too much time in the session, but generally they were used to reinforce the teaching.

Generally very good – great mix of interactive elements, like trying greens out, smelling herbs and demo of potting. However photos did go on a bit. Fine

Good to be quite informal and have participation from the class. Really enjoyed the slide illustrations.

Interesting, varied, thought-provoking, knowledgeable, practical feel – resources brought in.

Good mix of delivery.

Fine although the slideshows last thing on a Monday night makes you a bit sleepy!

Varied and well-organised.

Would have liked more time for discussion.

Morning session was intimate which suited me.

12 weeks was an appropriate length and paying in two instalments was useful.

## 6. LEARNING RESOURCES

What did you think about the support materials used?

Very good. Very good.

I enjoyed being able to browse through and borrow books and samples ( very generous). Slides generally excellent, high quality. Handouts mostly useful but an awful lot of information to absorb.

All very good – handouts seem to give a great amount of well thought-out knowledge.

All good.

Very good – as a beginner, I have to narrow down my options and concentrate on a few things at a time.

Excellent Excellent.

Fine. I thought bringing samples and other real objects to the session was a great idea.

Variety of books is fantastic and relevant to topic covered. Very generous selection of samples – ORGANICALLY-GROWN!

Slides and displays etc were a great resource as I'm a practical thinker.

Good weekly libraries. Good handouts. Good freebie samples! Good tea and biscuits!

## 7. LEARNER SUPPORT

Did you receive enough help and encouragement from the tutor?

What more can be done to support learners?

Yes – a follow on course in the summer! Very good.

Having dropped science subjects at an early age, I could have done with a bit more basic soil / plant chemistry.

Yes. A glossary of terms for beginners.

Yes. Mutual support.

Practical sessions alongside the theory.

I don't think you could do very much more for learners. Learners really need the confidence and motivation to get on with it and take a chance. Very helpful.

Maybe formal hands-on sessions at weekends? It's difficult to relate theory to practice in a classroom.

Certainly very helpful – a bit more hands-on in class may be a good idea.

Good to give people the opportunity to attend the other class if they miss a week.

## 8. IMPROVEMENTS

How can the course be changed to make it (even) better?

Needs more weeks! Or longer sessions. Or BOTH! Yes

Visit to an allotment / garden that is well maintained – practical inspiration. I also enjoyed hearing the experience of fellow students – some more time for discussion / reflection / debate could be built into each class?

I think the tutor used a few too many gardening terms that as a beginner I hadn't heard of before and he needs to explain these better – e.g. “bolting”, had no idea what this meant and felt a little shy to ask. But do know now.

Very difficult to imagine. I did feel that a Q & A session would be good. For me, Two hours was not nearly long enough.

## 9. LEARNER PROGRESSION

Do you think you now know enough to begin to achieve your organic growing aims and ambitions?

Yes – to an extent – the only real way to learn is to do it – each year something new occurs – but this course has certainly cleared up a few of the mysteries of “organic”.

It should be more than the ten weeks allocated. A full year seems more appropriate for such an extensive subject.

Certainly it has helped me get started and I have been pointed out useful contacts, reading material etc. so that I can continue learning.

Yes, very much – it's given me lots of ideas which I have begun to put into practice and I'm sure the handouts will be vital as I progress.

Yes have started. Raised beds prepared and a number of seeds to go in this weekend.

Yes, and also more prepared to experiment and take a risk.

I think so, given that I'm happy to make mistakes.

The first steps are always more difficult, but it has given me the confidence to carry on.

No, that will only come with time and practice! But it was a good initial “map”.

Without a doubt, but would still like to go further – another course maybe? Would not hesitate in recommending this course to colleagues and students.

I have a lot of useful information now + some cuttings / seedlings to help start things off.