

FREE
CPD

INTRO TO HORTICULTURE

DATES 18 MARCH 2024 10AM-3PM & 23 MARCH 2024 10AM-3PM

Soil is essential for life on earth. It is often taken for granted. Soil is the source of all minerals and metals, it acts as support for our physical life.

It forms part of many natural cycles, hydrological being the most important. Until recently soil was considered a growing medium which, as any growing medium, is inert and can be manipulated by the addition of the correct fertilizers and other chemicals.

In recent decades the importance of living soil has been increasingly widely recognised. Many growers, horticulturists and groundsmen are beginning to see the benefits of increasing soil organic matter and improving soil life.

Benefits include: improved fertility, plant health and resilience, drainage and moisture retention. Lower input costs and labour requirements. In addition, soil is a key carbon sink.

This short course will provide participants with an understanding of the importance of living soil to their organisation and business. It will give an overview on the benefits of soil organic matter and its contribution to soil health. During the course we will sample soil and learn of tools which can be used onsite and using basic lab equipment to monitor soil health. Participants will leave with a toolbox of strategies to improve soil organic matter and soil life.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

You will learn:

- The importance of soil organic matter and soil life to the health of plants, enterprise and planet
- How to sample and assess soil organic matter and soil life
- Strategies to improve soil organic matter and soil life

COURSE CONTENT

Morning interactive presentation with case studies:

- Importance of soil organic matter and soil life
- Soil microbial life- recognising the main players
- Sampling and assessing soil health using a variety of tools

Afternoon

- Lab work observing soil life under microscope
- Discussion: strategies to improve soil organic matter and soil life: compost, compost teas, mulch, green manures, chop and drop, ramial woodchip, biochar

TEACHING METHODS

- Face to face
- Demonstration in field/garden
- Lab work

RESOURCES

- Soil samples (prepared)
- Microscopes
- Soil sampling workbooks

