

Report for the course *Safe Use in Pesticides – Knapsack Sprayer PA1&PA6*

I, Mireille Godert, made a career change from waitressing into horticulture 10 months ago. I started working as a Gardener Assistant in May 2016 at an Eco-Garden in Cornwall where vegetables and other useful plants are grown from seed. Since then I have learned how to make compost blocks, how to measure the soil pH and how to adjust it, which insects are beneficial or harmful to the plant, when to sow, plant and harvest, how crop rotation is most effective, etc. We grow food ecologically and no harsh chemicals are being applied to the plant. Nevertheless it is necessary to have the Knapsack-Sprayer Certificate in the Safe Use of Pesticides for example for the use of organic Pyrethrum.

In September 2016 I started the RHS Level 3 course in Practical Horticulture at Duchy College. It helped me with better understanding of the course for the Safe Use of Pesticide as I knew already about the different ways of using Herbicides and Insecticides.

The course *Safe Use in Pesticides – Knapsack Sprayer PA1&PA6* took place on Friday 24th of February and 3rd of March with a final assessment on Tuesday 7th of March 2017 at Kernow Training Ltd in Summercourt, Cornwall.

Including assessment and learning material the total cost was £390 and the amount of £300 was kindly funded by the Professional Gardener's Trust from a donation from the Ernest Cook Foundation used to support gardeners under 30. Thank you very much again for your support! It means a lot to me.

About the course: First I had to gain the PA1 certificate so during the first day of the course I had the chance to learn about the regulations in the Pesticide Code of Practice such as the COSHH risk assessment, how to store chemicals, what to be aware of regarding my environment, how to read a product label, etc. On the second day I successfully passed a computer test with multiple choice questions to prove my knowledge and to achieve the PA1 certificate.

The PA6 course was more practical and I got to use a Knapsack Sprayer (filled with water) for the first time and I learned how to use it safely, how to do accurate calculations for the product I want to spray, which PPE I have to wear, etc. At any time the instructor was very helpful and making sure that every participant understood both the theory and the practical side of the course. The following week I had a 1.5 hour one-to-one assessment, where I had to prove that I am capable of using a Knapsack Sprayer and the product in a safe manner and in a least harmful way possible.

Especially, this course made me realize again how important it is to observe my environment, from streams and neighbour gardens to the most little creatures that live in the soil. Spraying Pesticides seems so easy... But we have to be aware of the influence and consequences it has on nature. Therefore I am very happy to have gained this certificate and to be able to use Pesticides safely.

I wanted to qualify for this certificate in order to be capable of controlling pests and diseases on food I grow. My wish is to work in balance with nature and therefore I have to know about it as much as possible: In what ways I can cause harm and how I can avoid it.

Also I hope that with this certificate it will make it easier for me to find an employment if I have to look for an additional job once the summer season is over.

