MINNESOTA NURSERY LANDSCAPE PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

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How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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1. What is the best time to prune spring-flowering shrubs in Minnesota?

A. In late winter before buds swell

B. Immediately after flowering

C. In mid-summer

D. In early fall

2. Pruners should be cleaned with a bleach solution between plants to prevent disease transfer.

A. Always

B. Never

C. Sometimes

D. Only after heavy pruning

3. How should pruning cuts be made to promote healing on woody plants?

A. Clean cuts just outside the branch collar; avoid leaving stubs.

B. Leave stubs to promote callus formation.

C. Cut flush with the trunk.

D. Make diagonal cuts inside the branch.

4. Over-fertilizing established trees can cause which issues?

A. Increased drought tolerance

B. Reduced root growth

C. Improved native biodiversity

D. Nutrient burn, salt injury, and environmental runoff

5. Why are buffer zones important when applying pesticides near water bodies?

A. To protect water quality and aquatic life from chemical drift or runoff.

B. To keep pesticides near water.

C. To increase drift.

D. To shorten application time.

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6. What material fills the space between paver blocks to lock them in and keep weeds out?

A. Grout

B. Polymeric sand

C. Clay

D. Compost

7. Which two things are among the most important that humans receive from plants?

A. Shade and food

B. Oxygen and food

C. Aesthetics and food

D. Food and clothing

8. Which soil composition ratio represents a well-balanced soil mixture?

A. 25% air, 25% water, 50% solid matter

B. 50% air, 5% water, 45% solid matter

C. 10% air, 10% water, 80% solid matter

D. 40% air, 25% water, 35% solid matter

9. To saw off a 5 inch limb off a tree, be sure to make a _____ cut first to prevent stripping off the bark on the tree trunk

A. Top

B. Under

C. Flush

D. Over

10. Traditional plant retail nurseries often compete with so-called big box store nursery and garden centers by providing better:

A. Prices

B. Shopping conditions

C. Equipment

D. Service

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Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. A
4. D
5. A
6. B
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. D

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Explanations

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1. What is the best time to prune spring-flowering shrubs in Minnesota?

A. In late winter before buds swell

B. Immediately after flowering

C. In mid-summer

D. In early fall

Spring-flowering shrubs form their next year's flower buds on the previous season's growth. If you prune before those buds have formed, you'll remove potential flowers for next spring. In Minnesota, you want to keep that bud formation in mind and avoid pruning at times that would sacrifice blooms or leave new growth vulnerable to winter damage. The best time to prune is right after they finish flowering, so you can shape the plant, remove spent blooms, and still give the plant time to set new buds for next year's display. Pruning before buds swell in late winter would cut off those future flowers, while pruning in mid-summer or in early fall can disrupt bud formation or harden-off of new growth, reducing next year's bloom.

2. Pruners should be cleaned with a bleach solution between plants to prevent disease transfer.

A. Always

B. Never

C. Sometimes

D. Only after heavy pruning

Disinfecting pruning tools between plants reduces the chance of spreading diseases from one plant to the next. When you prune, the blade picks up sap, plant tissue, and any present pathogens. If you move to another plant without cleaning, those pathogens can be carried along and cause infections, even if the plants look healthy. Bleach is a reliable broad-spectrum disinfectant for pruning equipment, and a 10% solution (household bleach diluted with nine parts water) is a common guideline used to sterilize blades effectively. Sanitizing after each plant ensures you're minimizing cross-contamination, rather than waiting until you've performed heavy pruning or assuming pathogen risk is only present in obviously diseased plants. After sanitizing, rinse and dry the tool to prevent corrosion and keep it ready for the next plant.

3. How should pruning cuts be made to promote healing on woody plants?

A. Clean cuts just outside the branch collar; avoid leaving stubs.

B. Leave stubs to promote callus formation.

C. Cut flush with the trunk.

D. Make diagonal cuts inside the branch.

Focusing on how trees heal, the best pruning cut is clean and placed just outside the branch collar—the protective, raised area where the limb meets the trunk. This preserves the branch collar's tissues so the tree can form wound callus and seal the wound effectively, while also helping compartmentalize any decay. Leaving stubs keeps tissue exposed, slows callus formation, and can become a doorway for pathogens. Cutting flush with the trunk removes the branch collar and damages trunk tissue, which increases the risk of decay and structural problems. Making diagonal cuts inside the branch damages living tissue and doesn't support natural healing. So, the right approach is a clean cut just outside the branch collar, avoiding stubs and not injuring the trunk. This promotes faster, safer healing.

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4. Over-fertilizing established trees can cause which issues?

A. Increased drought tolerance

B. Reduced root growth

C. Improved native biodiversity

D. Nutrient burn, salt injury, and environmental runoff

Over-fertilizing established trees introduces more nutrients and salts than the tree can use, leading to nutrient burn, salt injury, and environmental runoff. When soil accumulates excess salts, the soil solution's osmotic potential rises, making it harder for roots to take up water. Even if the soil feels moist, the tree can seem water-stressed, showing leaf scorch, tip and margin browning, and weakened growth. Excess nitrogen can push rapid, soft shoot growth that's more vulnerable to pests and diseases and places additional strain on the tree's root system, further reducing vigor. At the same time, the salts and nutrients can wash away with rain or irrigation, entering storm drains and waterways, where they contribute to nutrient pollution, algal blooms, and harm to aquatic life. The other options don't fit because over-fertilization does not reliably increase drought tolerance or improve biodiversity; in fact, it can hinder drought tolerance by stressing roots and tissues. Reduced root growth can occur under salt stress, but the broad and environmentally problematic issues described in the correct choice capture the main problems caused by excess fertilizer.

5. Why are buffer zones important when applying pesticides near water bodies?

A. To protect water quality and aquatic life from chemical drift or runoff.

B. To keep pesticides near water.

C. To increase drift.

D. To shorten application time.

Buffer zones are used to keep pesticides away from water bodies to protect water quality and aquatic life by reducing entry of chemicals through drift and runoff. Spraying near water can send fine droplets or wind-blown spray into streams, ponds, or wetlands, and rainfall or irrigation can wash pesticides off soil into the same water bodies. By maintaining a treated-off area around the water, these zones give the landscape a chance to act as a filter—vegetation and soil can intercept, absorb, and partially break down some of the chemical before it reaches the water. This helps protect sensitive aquatic organisms and downstream water quality. The width and design of the zone depend on the pesticide's properties and local regulations, but the core idea is to minimize the chance that pesticides reach water. The other options miss the purpose: keeping pesticides near water increases risk, increasing drift defeats the goal of protection, and shortening application time is not the objective of buffer zones.

6. What material fills the space between paver blocks to lock them in and keep weeds out?

A. Grout

B. Polymeric sand

C. Clay

D. Compost

Polymeric sand fills the joints between paver blocks. It's coated with polymers that bond the sand grains together when you wet it, creating a semi-rigid, weed-resistant joint. This binding action helps lock the pavers in place and reduces movement from traffic and frost, while the dense joint prevents weed growth and minimizes washout. Grout is too rigid and cement-based for typical paver applications; clay and compost don't form a stable, weed-suppressing joint and would cause other problems like staining, decomposition, or attraction of pests.

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7. Which two things are among the most important that humans receive from plants?

A. Shade and food

B. Oxygen and food

C. Aesthetics and food

D. Food and clothing

Plants convert sunlight into chemical energy and, in the process, release oxygen while producing glucose as food. For humans, oxygen is essential for cellular respiration to generate the energy our cells need, and food provides the necessary energy and nutrients to keep us alive. Together, oxygen and food are the most fundamental contributions plants make to human survival. Shade or aesthetics, while pleasant, aren't required for staying alive, and clothing, though often plant-based, isn't as universally essential as air and energy.

8. Which soil composition ratio represents a well-balanced soil mixture?

A. 25% air, 25% water, 50% solid matter

B. 50% air, 5% water, 45% solid matter

C. 10% air, 10% water, 80% solid matter

D. 40% air, 25% water, 35% solid matter

A well-balanced soil mixture has about half of its volume as solid material (mineral plus organic matter) and the other half as pore space that can hold air and water. Within that pore space, air and water should be in roughly equal amounts to support both root respiration and moisture availability. The 50% solids with 25% air and 25% water fits this pattern: solids provide the structural framework and nutrient-holding capacity, while the equal 25% each for air and water in the pore space ensure good drainage, aeration, and moisture availability for roots. The other options disrupt this balance. Too little water (with excessive air) means plants can't access enough moisture. Too little pore space (high solids and low air and water) leads to poor drainage and root suffocation. Too much air relative to solids can leave the soil lacking in structure and nutrient-holding capacity, reducing stability and fertility.

9. To saw off a 5 inch limb off a tree, be sure to make a _____ cut first to prevent stripping off the bark on the tree trunk

A. Top

B. Under

C. Flush

D. Over

Start with an undercut relief cut on the underside of the limb. This notch relieves tension and gives a controlled break point so the limb can be removed without the bark peeling away from the trunk. After making the undercut, complete the cut from the top, outside the notch, so the limb separates cleanly. If you cut from the top first, the limb can tear the bark as it fails, especially with a limb about this size. The undercut helps prevent that damage and keeps the trunk intact.

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10. Traditional plant retail nurseries often compete with so-called big box store nursery and garden centers by providing better:

A. Prices

B. Shopping conditions

C. Equipment

D. Service

Providing high-quality service means offering knowledgeable staff who can diagnose plant problems, tailor recommendations to a specific site, and guide customers through every step of planting and care. Traditional nurseries win by delivering personalized assistance, expert plant knowledge, and ongoing support—things that help customers choose the right plants for Minnesota soils and climate, plan a cohesive design, and troubleshoot issues after purchase. This hands-on help, along with options like installation guidance, plant care tips, and warranties or guarantees, creates value that goes beyond what price or store layout alone can promise. While big-box retailers might compete on price or visibility, the unique advantage of traditional nurseries is the dependable, personalized service that leads to healthier plants and more successful landscapes.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://mnnurserylandscape.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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