

Blue Ridge Naturalist Certificate of Merit



The North Carolina Arboretum is proud to offer the BLUE RIDGE NATURALIST CERTIFICATE OF MERIT program which presents educational offerings on a variety of natural history topics. These courses provide ways to learn about the Southern Appalachian ecosystem and present opportunities to develop environmental awareness and to explore our mountains.

Anyone may take classes in the Blue Ridge Naturalist program, but for those interested in developing their skills and knowledge as a naturalist, the program offers a Certificate of Merit requires a series of core courses on zoology, botany, geology, ecology and plant identification as well as elective classes in butterflies, birds, mushrooms and more.

Overview of BRN Program	
Prospective students must complete an application for admission to the program. (See How to Apply below.)	
Students in the Blue Ridge Naturalist Certificate of Merit program will participate in 236 contact hours from education classes, including 116 hours of core studies, 84 hours of field studies and 36 hours of elective studies. A 30-50 hour final project is required for graduation. The curriculum can be completed in a minimum of 24 months, dependent on class schedule and instructor availability. Some students might need a longer time to complete the full 236 hours and final project.	
<i>Please note that there is a 75% minimum attendance requirement to receive credit for classes taken in pursuit of the Blue Ridge Naturalist Certificate of Merit.</i>	
Core Lecture Studies 116 hours	
Ecology of the Blue Ridge	24
Geology	12
Meteorology	12
Water Systems	12
Botany Basics	20
Zoology of the Blue Ridge	24
Natural History Interpretation	12
Core Field Studies 84 hours	
Native Tree Identification 12 hours	
Spring Native Tree ID	3
Summer Native Tree ID	3
Fall Color and Native Tree ID	3
Winter Native Tree ID	3
Flora of the Blue Ridge 72 hours	
Spring Flora	24
Summer Flora	24
Fall Flora	24
Elective Studies 36 hours	
Elective studies may be selected from classes on insects, birds, reptiles and amphibians, aquatic habitats, mammals, lichens and mosses, mushrooms and more.	
Elective classes may be taken in any combination and can be used to concentrate on the area of natural history students find most interesting. Classes that satisfy the 36 hours of elective credit necessary for the certificate program are identified in each adult education catalog.	
How to Apply	
Complete an application online or download an application form on the Arboretum website: http://www.ncarboretum.org/education-programs/certifications/ Return the completed application form to the Arboretum with a \$55 application fee. Mail: Adult Education Programs, The North Carolina Arboretum 100 Frederick Law Olmsted Way, Asheville, NC 28806	
For More Information	
Adult Education Coordinator Rebecca Caldwell	email: rcaldwell@ncarboretum.org or call 828-665-2492

