



BLUE RIDGE
ECOGARDENER

The North Carolina Arboretum is proud to offer lifelong learning opportunities in horticulture and landscape design.

Blue Ridge Eco-Gardener Certificate of Merit

Ecological gardening is a way of thinking about gardens and landscapes in which gardens are no longer seen as a collection of plants, but a community with complex interdependencies between plants, soils, environment and animals. This certificate program explores ecological principles to help you understand how to design, create and manage a healthy, self-sustaining garden and landscape. Anyone may take classes in the Blue Ridge Eco-Gardener program, but for those interested in developing their skills and knowledge in sustainable gardening, the Certificate of Merit includes a series of core classes as well as elective classes in areas of interest to the candidate.

Overview of BREG Program

Prospective students must complete an application for admission to the program. (See [How to Apply](#) below.)

Students in the **Blue Ridge Eco-Gardener Certificate of Merit** program will participate in 120 contact hours from education classes, including 75 hours of core studies and 45 hours of elective studies. 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 120 hour program of study. Students are advised to begin the certificate program with the required class, "Principles of Ecological Gardening." There is no requirement for a final project. **Please note that there is a 75% minimum attendance requirement to receive credit for classes taken in pursuit of the certificate.**

Program Required Text: "Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes"
Rainer, Thomas and Claudia West (2015, Timber Press).

Core Studies - Required Courses

75 hours

Principles of Ecological Gardening	
Methods of Ecological Gardening (Prerequisite: Principles of Ecological Gardening)	
Introduction to Permaculture (New Core Requirement beginning Fall 2020)	
Fall Seasonal Gardening Projects	
Winter Seasonal Gardening Projects	
Spring Seasonal Gardening Projects	
Summer Seasonal Gardening Projects	
Fall Plants of Interest	
Winter Plants of Interest	
Spring Plants of Interest	
Summer Plants of Interest	
Landscape Design Class	
Botany Basics	
Botanical Latin for Gardeners	
Ecology of the Blue Ridge	
Gardening in a Changing Climate	
Pollinators (several classes could count for this credit)	
Wildlife in the Garden	

Elective Studies

45 hours

Elective studies may be selected from classes on hardscape, edibles, seed saving, grasses, green infrastructure, ergonomics, selected plant groups and more. Electives may be taken in any combination and used to concentrate on the area of interest. Electives are clearly identified in course descriptions and listed in program newsletters.

How to Apply

Complete an application online: <http://www.ncarboretum.org/education-programs/certifications/>
A one-time, non-refundable \$75 application fee is required.

For More Information Adult Education Coordinator Rebecca Caldwell email: rcaldwell@ncarboretum.org or call 828-665-2492