

Blue Ridge Naturalist Certificate of Merit



The North Carolina Arboretum is proud to offer the BLUE RIDGE NATURALIST CERTIFICATE OF MERIT program that presents learning opportunities on a variety of topics in Natural History, Ecology and Culture. These courses provide ways to learn online and in the field more about the uniqueness of the Southern Appalachian ecosystem, one of the most diverse regions in the temperate world.

Any adult over 18 may take classes through the Arboretum's Adult Education Programs. For those interested in developing their skills and knowledge as naturalists, however, we offer a Certificate of Merit requiring over 230 hours in core courses such as botany and regional plant identification, geology, ecology and zoology among others as well as elective classes.

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 within two years, dependent on class schedule and instructor availability. Some students might need a longer time to complete the full 236 hours and final project. Many classes are offered online during this time with some small-group field experiences designed for safely learning onsite at the Arboretum and nearby.	
<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	
Geology of the Blue Ridge	
Meteorology	
Water Systems	
Botany Basics	
Zoology of the Blue Ridge	
Natural History Interpretation	
Core Field Studies	84 hours
Native Tree Identification	
Spring Native Tree ID	
Summer Native Tree ID	
Fall Color and Native Tree ID	
Winter Native Tree ID	
Flora of the Blue Ridge	
Spring Flora	
Summer Flora	
Fall Flora	
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 course description.	
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, ext 212