



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. Any adult over 18 may take classes through the Arboretum's Adult Education Programs. For those interested in developing their skills and knowledge as eco-gardeners, however, we offer a Certificate of Merit requiring core courses such as botany basics and ecology, principles and methods among others as well as elective classes on a range of topics.

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 complete core and elective classes as listed below. These may be a combination of onsite and online courses given the changing nature of program delivery during 2020 and 2021. The curriculum can be completed in a minimum of 24 months, dependent on class schedule and instructor availability, although students may take longer according to their own time commitments and schedule for completion. Students are advised to begin the certificate program with the required class, "Principles of Ecological Gardening." There is no requirement for a final project.

Students should print out and keep track of their course of study for the Eco-Gardener Certificate of Merit. We recommend students record the date and number of hours for all courses taken for credit. Students subscribe to a Code of Honor and Community Values regarding attendance and participation. For both online and onsite/field experiences, students are encouraged to participate in creating a collaborative, interactive and experiential learning environment.

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

Recommended 2021	Foundations of Ecological Gardening (online-based reading discussion group)	
Beginning Spring 2021	BREG Round Table Discussions	
	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	
	Ecology of the Blue Ridge	
	Gardening in a Changing Climate	
	Pollinators (several classes could count for this credit)	
	Wildlife in the Garden	

Elective Studies

Elective studies are selected from the following categories: Pollinators; Wildlife in the Garden; Plant Studies; Design and Botanical Illustration; Climate and Conservation Studies; and Blue Ridge Eco-Gardener Round Table Discussions.

Students should elect to take at least one class from each category above and then may opt to take classes in any combination, with a concentration on the area of eco-gardening students find most interesting, such as 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. Classes that satisfy elective credits are identified by category within 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 Certificate Program Coordinator Rebecca Caldwell email: rcaldwell@ncarboretum.org or call 828-665-2492

