

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 core courses such as botany and regional plant identification, geology, ecology and zoology among others as well as elective classes on a range of topics.

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 complete core lecture and field studies as well as elective studies in designated subject areas. 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 course of study and the 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.

Students should print out and keep track of their course of study for the Naturalist 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.

Core Lecture Studies with Optional Field Experiences

Spring 2021	Botany Basics	
Spring 2021	Water Systems	
Spring 2021, I & II	Zoology of the Blue Ridge	
Fall 2021, Spring 2022	Ecology of the Blue Ridge	
Fall 2021	Geology of the Blue Ridge	
Fall 2021	Climate Change Science	
Fall 2021	Natural History Interpretation	

Core Field Studies

Native Tree Identification

April 2021	Spring Native Tree ID	
July 2021	Summer Native Tree ID	
October 2021	Fall Color and Native Tree ID	
February 2022	Winter Native Tree ID	

Flora of the Blue Ridge

April 2021	Spring Flora	
July 2021	Summer Flora	
September 2021	Fall Flora	

Elective Studies

Elective studies are selected from the following categories: Astronomy & Meteorology; Wildlife; Plant Studies; Appalachian Arts & Culture; and Blue Ridge Naturalist 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 natural history students find most interesting. 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

Program Coordinator Rebecca Caldwell email: rcaldwell@ncarboretum.org
or call 828-665-2492, ext 212

