



BLUE RIDGE ECOGARDENER

CERTIFICATE of MERIT

The North Carolina Arboretum | a UNC System Affiliate

As a proud University of North Carolina System Affiliate, The North Carolina Arboretum is pleased to offer lifelong learning opportunities in horticulture and landscape design leading to a certificate of merit.

Blue Ridge EcoGardening Certificate of Merit

Ecological gardening is a way of thinking about gardens and landscapes in which they are no longer seen as just a collection of plants, but as a thriving ecosystem — nurturing harmony and interdependence between plants, soils, structures, wildlife and humans! We encourage an understanding of ecological principles together with the fundamentals of design and site assessment to aid in the creation and management of healthy, self-sustaining gardens and landscapes. **Grow in place with us!**

Overview of Program

Students in the **Blue Ridge EcoGardener Certificate of Merit (BREG)** program, will complete core and elective requirements as listed below to earn the certificate. The core curriculum is designed to be completed within one to two years. Students may elect to take additional courses in their areas of interest through Adult & Continuing Education Programs at The North Carolina Arboretum, which might add to their own time commitments and schedule for completion

Any adult over 18 may take classes through Adult & Continuing Education Programs at the Arboretum and need not be enrolled in the certificate program. A student who elects to join the program may petition to count courses identified as BREG core or elective credit taken within one year prior to enrolling.

Recommended Foundational Texts:

Norris, Kelly D. *New Naturalism: Designing and Planting a Resilient, Ecologically Vibrant Home Garden.* (2021, Cool Springs Press).

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

Tallamy, Douglas W. *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard.* (2020, Timber Press).

Core Studies - Required Courses

Term	Course Title
Winter Spring	Botany Basics
Spring	Landscape Design Fundamentals
Summer	Botanical Latin for Gardeners
Summer	Living Soil
Summer Fall	Ecological Gardening: Principles in Practice
Fall	Ecology of the Blue Ridge
Fall	Gardening in a Changing Climate
Fall	Introduction to Permaculture Plants of Interest
Winter	Creating a Multi-Use Native Plant Garden
In Season	Pollinators (several classes could count for this credit)
In Season	Wildlife in the Garden (several classes could count for this credit)
In Season	Seasonal Gardening Projects
In Season	Seasonal Plants of Interest

Elective Studies – 15 Hours, minimum

Elective studies are selected from the following categories:

- Pollinators
- Wildlife in the Garden
- Plant Studies
- Design and Botanical Illustration
- Climate and Conservation Studies
- Service and Volunteerism

Students should elect to take **at least one class from each category** above and then may opt to take classes in any combination with elective studies selected from Adult & Continuing Education classes. Classes that satisfy elective credits are identified by category within each course description.

How to Apply

Complete an application online: <https://www.ncarboretum.org/education-programs/certifications/>

A one-time, non-refundable application fee is required at time of enrollment. Applicants are admitted during open enrollment periods in December – January and August – September.

For More Information Contact: Certificate Program Coordinator Rebecca Caldwell email: adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org