



Adult & Continuing Education Programs

Learning is a lifelong creative endeavor. Adult Education Programs at The North Carolina Arboretum extends an invitation for you to grow in mind and grow in place. Explore the natural world and grow in your understanding of the uniqueness of this place, one of the most biologically diverse regions of the temperate world. The North Carolina Arboretum's Adult & Continuing Education Programs attract some of the region's leading experts to teach close to 300 classes each year on a range of topics.

North Carolina Arboretum Society members receive a discount on class registration fees.
[Become an Arboretum Member!](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (click on the jump link below to access these categories):

[Registration](#)

[Online Classes](#)

[Online Participation Guidelines](#)

[Onsite & Field-Based Classes](#)

[Current Safety Guidelines](#)

[Certificate Programs - BRN & BREG](#)

[More Information | Contact Adult Ed](#)

Registration:

Q: I'm trying to register for a class after hours or on the weekend. I've called and no one answers. How do I get help?

A: Unfortunately, we are not able to staff a 24-hour helpline for registration questions. We'd love to help you with your registration questions and will get back to you during regular business hours as soon as possible. The easiest and quickest way to get a

response to your class registration question is to email

adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org

Q: *I'm a member but my member discount isn't showing up when I add a class to my cart. How do I get help?*

A: If you have signed into your online account correctly, you proceed with registering for a class. You may not always see your membership discount reflected in the total. If you're worried that a class will sell out or you're signing up at the last minute, please just go ahead and register online. You're an Arboretum member: We always make it right so that you can take advantage of your member benefits! An adjustment will be made and the missed member discount will be refunded to your account within 3 to 5 days for an online sale.

Here's a walkthrough of the sign in process:

[Altru-AE-Membership-Discount-Walk-Through.pdf \(ncarboretum.org\)](#)

Online classes:

Q: *Which online platform are virtual courses hosted on?*

A: Our online classes are held on Zoom. Please download the Zoom application (<https://zoom.us/download>) and make sure it includes the latest Zoom updates prior to the live course. We recommend joining online classes a few minutes early to work out any potential technical issues. If you have trouble signing on to a class, please contact us via email at adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org rather than calling, as we are actively monitoring email as each class begins.

Q: *Will this course be recorded for me to view later? Do I have to attend the live session in order to access the recording?*

A: Check the course description for information about whether a class will be recorded. Most online courses are unless otherwise noted. The entire course will be recorded and available (not downloadable) to all registrants after the live session ends for up to one month. If you are registered, you do not need to attend the live session in order to access the recording.

Q: *I have a scheduling conflict and can't attend the live class. What should I do?*

A: Each of our online classes is recorded, and access to the recording shared with everyone registered within five business days after the live session. If viewing a recorded version of the class will not work for you, we offer a 50% registration fee refund for withdrawals made up to seven business days prior to the live session. Please contact us at adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org to request a class withdrawal and partial refund.

Q: How do I access the recording?

A: Within 1-5 business days after each online class, everyone who registered will receive a follow-up email containing a link to access the recording. If the class is connected with Schoology, the recording will be posted on the Schoology page.

Q: I am interested in an online course that was previously offered. Can I purchase the recording?

A: In general, recordings will not be available for purchase after registration closes. However, some of our live classes are also made available as On-Demand courses afterwards. Current On-Demand offerings can be found by scrolling to the bottom of the [Adult Education Classes webpage](#).

Q: I signed up for a class but I haven't received any information about how to join online. Help!

A: A new useful feature of our new registration program allows you to log in to your account, click on "Upcoming Events" and view upcoming classes for which you are registered! Check there first and do us all a favor by noting class dates and times on whatever digital or analog calendar method you use!

We try to send reminder emails out one to two days in advance of the online classes with the link to join, so please make sure to add adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org to your Contacts so that our emails aren't caught up in your spam folder or denied by your security settings. (It happens all too frequently and then you wonder why we haven't sent you anything.) Both will contain all pertinent class information and the link to join the live session via Zoom.

Be sure to enter your email address correctly when you sign up, and add adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org to your contacts so that our emails don't end up in your spam folder.

Q: Can household members join?

A: As our wonderful program instructors receive a teaching stipend from class registration fees, and as each class we offer, whether onsite or online, involves a myriad of associated staffing, planning, set-up, and administrative costs, we so appreciate the willingness of our online students to pay separate registration fees for classes enjoyed together at home. If more than one member of your household is involved in the Blue Ridge Naturalist (BRN) or Blue Ridge Eco-Gardener Certificate of Merit (BREG) program, each person must make sure to register and pay separately for online classes, since we use both the registration and Zoom rosters to assign appropriate class credit to certificate students.

Online participation guidelines:

Hosting an engaged community of learners is a priority for us, and we are striving toward best practices of retaining that community classroom feel within this new-to-us virtual format.

1. We find that when students keep their cameras on, it goes a long way to enlivening the online classroom with extra spark and personality-- it's nice for participants to see each other's shining faces, and reassuring for instructors to be reminded that they're not just teaching into a virtual void!
2. When an instructor or another student is speaking, we recommend that participants keep their microphones muted to help eliminate potential disruptions such as background noise.
3. Our instructors welcome questions, comments, discussion, and participation! This can be achieved through using the Zoom chatbox feature at any time during a class. We also love it when students write a little about themselves (where you're joining from, why you're interested in the class, etc.) in the Chat by way of introduction. If time allows, most instructors encourage students to unmute their microphones periodically, and/or during the last few minutes of class, for live questions and discussion.

Onsite & Field-Based Classes:

Q: Can I bring someone with me?

A: Only participants ages 18 and older who have registered and paid for classes are permitted to attend. Rosters are generated for each class and no one whose name does not appear on the roster will be permitted to participate.

Q: Something came up and I can't make it to class. Can I get a refund?

A: We are able to offer a 50% registration fee refund for withdrawals made up to seven business days prior to a scheduled class. Please contact us at adulteducation@ncarboretum.org to request a class withdrawal and partial refund.

Q: I signed up for an onsite or field-based class, but I haven't received any information about where to meet. Help!

A: One to two days before each onsite or field-based class, we send a reminder email containing all pertinent class information and the meeting location to connect with your instructors, our program's environmental educators and other members of these small-group experiences.

Be sure to enter your email address correctly when you sign up, and add adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org to your contacts so that our emails don't end up in your spam folder.

Q: What should I bring to an onsite or field-based class?

A: All reminder emails contact current Safety Guidelines, meeting instructions, and recommendations on how to dress and what to bring for you to be properly prepared.

Q: If I am not an Arboretum member, do I need to pay for parking for on-site classes?

A: The class registration fee includes entry the day of a class. If you are not a member, just stop by the gatehouse and identify yourself to the Attendant to be allowed into the Arboretum. Members receive the 10% discount for class registration, and can enter the day of the class through the member gate.

Current Safety Guidelines:

Please review our recently updated Safety Guidelines for Adult Education Programs. We encourage all participants to make conscious, courteous decisions based on your own and others' wishes and needs for safety. Participants should consider in advance their level of comfort engaging in outdoor group activities.

Certificate Programs:

Q: Is there a certain date each year for new students to begin the program?

A: Our certificate programs are self-directed, and core and elective courses offered year round. Core courses are offered on a set schedule throughout the calendar year. (See the Curriculum Overview for each Certificate of Merit program.) Students are welcome to enroll during open enrollment periods, which are announced on the website.

Q: What are the required courses?

A: Some of your questions can be answered by looking at the materials linked off of our [Certificate Programs](#) page. You'll find an active link for the core and elective courses listed on a Curriculum Overview for each Certificate of Merit Program. You can certainly choose your elective courses. Certain courses are required to give a good grounding in the general subject area and the specifics to where we are "placed" in the Southern Appalachians.

Many core courses are only offered once a year. For example Geology of the Blue Ridge and Ecology of the Blue Ridge are offered in the fall. Botany Basics, Zoology and Fluvial Systems are offered in the spring. Other core courses are offered in the appropriate season, such as Flora Identification is offered in Spring, Summer and Fall. All three seasons are core courses and are offered in online and field-based versions. Seasonal Gardening Projects and Plants of Interest are offered in season as is Native Tree Identification: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.

Beginning in 2020, we adapted all core courses to be offered in the required version online. We blended online courses with small-group field experiences and walks to provide students opportunities to apply learning in the field and onsite at the Arboretum. At present, four field experiences are recommended and are indicated in the course description and in communications to program participants. Any additional field experiences or walks taken by a participant are counted as elective credit.

Q: Where do I find the courses described and how do I register for them?

A: New courses are listed every month and are announced in our Learn & Grow e-newsletter that is sent to Arboretum members. Keep track on our main Adult Education Classes page [here](#). You will need to click “Learn More” to see the full course description and the credit offered and to register.

When possible, program staff (one at the present time) update a separate listing of all current classes on the [Certificate Programs](#) page.

Q. What are the dates, times and the base location of classes?

A: All dates, times and base locations of all classes are listed in the course descriptions. (See above.) Classes are indicated by ONLINE, ONSITE or FIELD just before the date.

For example: **ONLINE | Thursday, October 21; 10 to 11:30 a.m.**

A new useful feature of our new registration program allows you to log in to your account, click on “Upcoming Events” and view upcoming classes for which you are registered! Check there first and do us all a favor by noting class dates and times on whatever digital or analog calendar method you use!

We try to send reminder emails out one to two days in advance of the online classes with the link to join, so please make sure to add adulteducation@ncarboretum.org to your Contacts so that our emails aren't caught up in your spam folder or denied by your security settings. (It happens all too frequently and then you wonder why we haven't sent you anything.)

When the instructor provides us with meeting information and itinerary for an onsite and/or field experience, we try to send it to registered participants as soon as we receive it. Often we don't receive until just before the trip, so please be patient. We hope soon to start including that information on the "Supplemental Content" available to you as a registered participant when logged into your online account.

We will be transitioning to a new registration system early in 2022, which should help us ensure that emails are being sent through the system with all the meeting information and not by the all-too-human staff having to see to every detail in class-specific, individually-written emails.

Q. Are there required/recommended texts?

A: We regularly recommend texts that are foundational for both certificate programs. Currently, the foundational text for the Blue Ridge Eco Gardener (BREG) certificate program is *Planting in a Post Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes*. Rainer, Thomas and Claudia West (2015, Timber Press). Additional recommended texts are listed on the Curriculum Overview.

Two additional recommended texts:

Recommended for the BRN program: *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees*. Tallamy, Douglas W. (2021, Timber Press)

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

The author of the recommended texts – Douglas Tallamy – will be a featured speaker in the fall of 2022.

Q: What is the total cost of the program?

A: There is no set total cost of either the Blue Ridge Naturalist (BRN) or Blue Ridge Eco Gardener (BREG) Certificate of Merit Program. An initial application fee is required, which covers student support, access to online learning management systems, and graduation costs. The one-time application fee is not discounted for members.

The certificate programs are self-supporting and are not subsidized by state, private or foundation funding at this time. Most states' Master Naturalist and Master Gardener programs are run through a university system or a state's extension services. While the Arboretum is an affiliate of the University of North Carolina System, our educational programs are sustained by revenue generated by class registration fees and member support through the non-profit Arboretum Society. Unlike a university, our

classes are not offered on a semester system or rolled by credit hour into a term's tuition.

Once enrolled, students pay *per class* as they go, via the registration fees associated with each. Registration fees range generally from \$35 for a one-session online course to \$265 for a multi-session field course. Every class is different, so fees vary depending on many factors, such as whether the class is an individual session or series, where/how the class is held (online, on-site, or in the field), cost of course materials, staffing/administration requirements, etc. Registration fees go toward paying our instructors honoraria to teach that is appropriate to their level of expertise and years of experience; remaining funds go to staff the program and maintain record keeping.

Q: Why don't online courses cost less?

A: Our newer online classes carry costs similar to our traditional onsite courses because we pay our instructors the same as if they were teaching in person. The Arboretum still incurs a number of costs associated with hosting online classes. More staff time is in fact required to schedule classes, respond to email inquiries, handle registration issues, open and moderate classes, make available course materials and assist instructors. We keep the numbers in our core classes low to make for an interactive seminar-like meeting in live time as much as possible. (We also make the links to videos available for review/viewing on your own schedule if you are unable to attend live). We try to keep our costs reasonable and very much in line with adult and continuing education programs at other public gardens. The cost of the program is re-evaluated each year.

Arboretum Society Members receive discounted class registration fees.

Q: Do I have to be enrolled in the certificate program to register for the classes?

A: Adults 18+ are welcome to enroll in Adult & Continuing Education classes. You need not be enrolled in the certificate program. Students who begin taking classes and later decide to enroll in the certificate can count any class taken within one year prior to enrollment as a certificate of merit student.

Q: Is there a timeframe in which the program must be completed?

A: Our certificate programs are intentionally designed to be self-directed in order to accommodate students' varying schedules. There is no deadline at which those enrolled must complete their required credit hours and final projects.

Q: How long does it typically take to complete the program?

A: In general, most students are able to complete the Blue Ridge Eco-Gardener (BREG) program in one to two years, and the Blue Ridge Naturalist (BRN) in two to three years.

Q: Are there any opportunities for scholarships or sliding scale at this time, or in the future?

A: Members receive the member discount on all classes they register for while membership is current. There are a number of lower-cost online and in-person classes regularly offered through the year that carry credit to assist our working professional program participants.

At this time, we are exploring options for starting a Blue Ridge Scholars program that would allow those chosen to moderate/facilitate online or in-person classes even further reducing rates and waiving the cost from some classes where a Scholar assists in the field. This program won't be in place until the spring at the earliest and an application process will be announced to enrolled Blue Ridge Naturalists.

Other possibilities for program subsidies include Americorp awards, professional development and staff engagement awards from many non-profit organizations and private businesses.

Q: How do I obtain handouts for online classes for which I am registered?

A: Handouts are the intellectual property of the instructors. When they are provided by an instructor, we share them with registered students only in any of three ways:

1. For core classes: We use an online platform called Schoology that serves as a container for course materials and allows for students and instructors to start discussion threads. Links to join the class and links to video recordings of previous classes are stored on the Schoology site for up to six weeks following the end of a core course.
2. Shared Google Course Folder: For elective and other courses, we link registrants to a shared course folder that contains handouts and resource materials.
3. Attachments to Reminder Emails: If no shared course folder is created, any handout provided by the instructor will be attached to the reminder email.
4. Coming in 2023: Registered participants will find links to course materials for some courses that may be accessed through the "Supplemental Content" link through your online account. (Available on a limited basis currently and not for core courses that are accessed through Schoology.)

Be sure to enter your email address correctly when you sign up, and add adulthoodeducation@ncarboretum.org to your contacts so that our emails don't end up in your spam folder and you receive all course updates and materials.

For More Information and to Contact Us:

Links to our Pages on the Arboretum Website: Take a moment to look over our webpages for information on our classes, special talks and certificate of merit programs:

[Adult & Continuing Education Programs](#) - See the full range of programs we offer, including continuing education for landscape architects, green industry professionals and educators.

[Adult Education Classes](#) - See our current calendar of classes (as much as we have room to show on the webpage. We also send out a monthly e-newsletter Learn & Grow.

[Certificate of Merit Programs](#) - See enrollment information on our two acclaimed lifelong learning courses of study: The Blue Ridge Naturalist and the Blue Ridge Eco Gardener Certificates of Merit.

Better yet: We invite you to take an online or in-person Adult Education class to experience for yourself these unique learning opportunities that are offered through Education at The North Carolina Arboretum.

Adult & Continuing Education Programs

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Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Check our [Adult Ed Classes webpage](#) for updates!



Please be patient: Program staff (small in number, mighty in commitment) continue to work remotely and on flexible schedules to provide coverage for all our classes. We return voicemails and emails as promptly as possible. Email continues to be the best way to reach us.
