



Insect Study Merit Badge at Riverbend Park

Welcome to the Insect Study Merit Badge program at Riverbend Park. The program may be held at either the Riverbend Visitor Center located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street in Great Falls, or the Riverbend Nature Center located at 8814 Jeffery Road. Please review your confirmation email or call the park at 703-759-9018 for location.

Important general Merit Badge information for parents:

Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements for the merit badge your scout has selected. Some badges may take considerable time and planning to complete and may not be appropriate for younger scouts. Blue cards must be signed by your Troop Leader prior to attending the merit badge class. Park staff will not sign off on any blue cards missing this signature.

Most merit badges are not designed to be completed in a single session with an instructor, so it is not always possible to walk away with a completed and signed blue card at the end of a program. Every badge requires some independent work by your scout.

Please be prepared for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout. We encourage that one or more adults remain. There is no fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the boys individually if necessary. Additionally, adults may help keep the atmosphere calm and productive. It is also in keeping with the scouting guidelines for youth protection.

Below is the recommended homework to be completed before the program:

Please download the merit badge worksheets from meritbadge.org and bring these worksheets to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork. We will go over all of the merit badge requirements during class but it is helpful if the scout has reviewed the worksheet ahead of time.

1. Do the following:
 - a. Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards associated with exposure to ants and bees and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
 - b. Discuss the prevention of and treatment for health concerns that could occur while working with ants and bees, including insect bites and anaphylactic shock.
7. Explain the symbiotic relationship between bees and humankind. Explain what colony collapse disorder (CCD) is and some of the possible causes. Discuss how CCD affects our food supply.
9. Raise an insect through the complete metamorphosis from its larval stage to its adult stage (e.g. raise a butterfly or moth from a caterpillar). *

10. Do ONE of the following:
 - a. Observe an ant colony in a formicarium (ant farm). Find the queen and worker ants. Explain to your counselor the different chambers found within an ant colony.
 - b. Study a hive of bees. Remove the combs and find the queen. Estimate the amount of brood and count the number of queen cells. Explain how to determine the amount of honey in the hive.
13. Find out about three career opportunities in insect study. Pick one and find out about the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

**Some insects are endangered species and are protected by federal or state law. Every species is found only in its own special type of habitat. Be sure to check natural resources authorities in advance to be sure that you will not be collecting any species that is known to be protected or endangered, or in any habitat where collecting is prohibited. In most cases, all specimens should be returned at the location of capture after the requirement is met. Check with your merit badge counselor for those instances where the return of these specimens would not be appropriate.*

What to bring to the program:

- Bring your completed homework. It is OK if you cannot complete the homework before class. You can bring completed homework in at a later date for sign-off.
- Come prepared to discuss and present your homework. As we move from one topic to the next during class, scouts will be asked to present homework elements completed. It will be more important to prove that you have understood a requirement orally rather than just presenting written information.
- Bring a tent, if you have one.
- Bring your blue card. (Riverbend does not have blue cards.)
- Bring/wear weather appropriate clothing/outerwear. We will not go outdoors in heavy rain or thunderstorms. Boy Scout uniform not required.
- Bring a pencil and pen.
- We recommend that you download the merit badge worksheets from meritbadge.com and bring these worksheets to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork.
- Bring a snack and drink or money to purchase some at the visitor center. Bring more substantial food if your program is longer than four hours.

Work completed after the program:

During the program, the merit badge counselor will do a demonstration or explain the process for completing the final merit badge requirements. Your scout must provide evidence of completion in order to obtain blue card sign-off. Digital photographs of your scout doing the element and a picture of the completed requirement will be sufficient evidence, unless otherwise stated.

If your scout needs blue card sign-off after the class date, please call 703-759-9018 to arrange a time to meet with a merit badge counselor. We're looking forward to working with your scout.

703-759-9018

8700 Potomac Hills Street

Great Falls, VA 22066

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/>