

## The Lorax of East Montpelier

*"I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees. I speak for the trees for the trees have no tongues."*

– Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

By Renee Kievit-Kylar

"We love trees" are the first words Nate Ebert uses to talk about his business, Foxfire Tree Care, which he founded in 2017. Nate is an arborist (sometimes called an arboriculturist), a specialist in the cultivation and care of trees and shrubs, including tree surgery, the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of tree diseases, and the control of pests.

Nate learned his trade from a neighbor who hired him to prune and remove trees. The enterprise was a small, one-man operation, using a beat-up old chipper and huge truck that didn't dump. He learned the basics of tree care, including rigging and pruning.

Actually, the deep roots of his career go back even further to when he was a teenager. He was an avid mountain biker, and the trails near his home were his stomping grounds. Then, seemingly overnight, the hundreds of acres of forest that hosted these trails were clear-cut. His sanctuary had become a giant corporate industrial park, which inspired his environmental activism. He learned to climb trees as part of forest defense campaigns. Years of advocating for forests deepened his love and curiosity about trees.

He continued his studies about trees and the basics of arboriculture and eventually joined a company in Minneapolis, where he gained experience and passed his arborist exam. Fifteen years later, he was certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). This means that he has been trained and is knowledgeable in all aspects of arboriculture and has agreed to adhere to the code of ethics that strengthens the credibility of the workforce. Nate and his partner, Usnea Granger, left Minneapolis a few years ago, looking for a change and for a new home.

Nate had visited Vermont years before, and after meeting with friends living in Vermont, it became



Photo by Jim Deshler

Nate Ebert, aided by a crane, takes down a large pine tree.

apparent that this was a place that would make them both happy. Since moving to Vermont, besides founding Foxfire Tree Care, he has completed a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) certification through the ISA. Nathan is also the vice chair of the Barre Tree Advisory Committee.

Nate believes that trees enhance our lives and the planet. He says, "I love trees because for so much of their lives, they seem to defy gravity. Upwards they climb, somehow moving water out to the tips of the branches."

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