

VERMONT URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY CONFERENCE

Thursday, May 29, 2025
8:30 AM - 3:45 PM
Vermont State University
Randolph, Vermont

8:30-9:00am

Registration

9:00-9:45am

Welcome and Facilitated Networking

9:45-10am

Break

10-10:45am

Concurrent Workshops (Choose one)

- Using the Stockholm Planting Method to Grow Bigger Trees (*Judd Hall*)
- Keystone Trees for Songbird and Pollinator Conservation (*Conant 102*)
- Opportunities for Forest Protection (*Conant 101*)

10:45-11:00am

Break

11:00-12:00pm

Concurrent Workshops

- Managing the Urban Forest: Challenges and Solutions (*Judd Hall*)
- Establishing Woody Hedgerows for Pollinators (*Conant 102*)
- Breaking Point: Exploring the Logic of Tree Risk (*Starts Outside Judd Hall*)

12:00-1:00pm

Lunch (*Provided in Judd Hall*)

1:00-1:45pm

Concurrent Workshops

- Nature-Based Climate Solutions Programming at Burlington School District (*Judd Hall*)
- Investing in Rutland's Urban Forest (*Conant 102*)
- Lightning Round (Three 10-minute presentations) (*Conant 101*)

1:45-2:00pm

Break

2:00-3:00pm

Concurrent Workshops

- Statewide Seed Coordination & Collection: Building a Network for Restoration (*Judd Hall*)
- Root Of It: Ground Penetrating Radar to Inspect & Assess Tree Root Quality (*Conant 102*)
- Tree Tour (*Starts Outside Judd Hall*)

3:00-3:15pm

Break

3:15-3:45pm

Awards Ceremony

Workshop Descriptions

9-9:45am Welcome & Facilitated Networking

Welcome and Facilitated Networking (Judd Hall)

Elise Schadler, VT Urban & Community Forestry Program

One of the top reasons people attend this conference is to network—so let's make the most of our time together! This guided session will help you connect with fellow participants, share insights, and explore collaboration opportunities through interactive prompts and discussions. Whether you're looking for new ideas, potential partners, or fresh perspectives, this session is designed to strengthen relationships and spark meaningful conversations.

10-10:45am Workshops

Using the Stockholm Planting Method to Grow Bigger Trees (Judd Hall)

Alec Ellsworth, Montpelier Tree Warden; **Joseph Ferris**, Montpelier City Arborist; **John Snell**, Montpelier Tree Board

Join us for an in-depth exploration of the Stockholm Planting Method, a cutting-edge approach to urban tree planting designed to enhance tree health, stormwater management, and long-term resilience. Using real-world examples from Montpelier's two rounds of implementation, we'll walk through the step-by-step process, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of this innovative technique. We will also discuss efforts to integrate the method into the Vermont Stormwater Manual through an exciting partnership with UVM.

Keystone Trees for Songbird and Pollinator Conservation (Conant 102)

Desiree Narango, Vermont Center for Ecostudies

Across ecosystems, trees are critical components to ecosystem function and wildlife support. In this talk, Desiree will speak about coevolutionary relationships between trees, insects and birds and provide information about which native trees are the 'power plants' that support local food webs based on her research across New England and beyond. Desiree will also speak about steps you can take to conserve biodiversity at home and how your backyard observations can contribute to advancing our understanding of plant-animal interactions.

Opportunities for Community Forest Protection (Conant 101)

Gannon Osborn, Land Conservation Program Manager; **Kate Sudhoff**, Forest Legacy Program Manager

Learn how to conserve community forestland with funding and partnership opportunities from the Forest Legacy Program and Community Forest Program. Staff from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation will share strategies to secure support and protect local forests for future generations.

11:00am-12:00pm Workshops

Managing the Urban Forest: Challenges and Solutions *(Judd Hall)*

V.J. Comai, Burlington City Arborist

Join V.J. Comai, Burlington City Arborist, for an insightful look at the complexities of urban forest management. V.J. will share real-world challenges and practical solutions for maintaining a healthy, resilient city canopy. This session will cover key strategies, from species selection and maintenance to navigating urban development pressures. Whether you're a municipal leader, tree care professional, or community advocate, this workshop offers valuable takeaways for managing trees in the built environment.

Establishing Woody Hedgerows for Pollinators *(Conant 102)*

Toby Alexander, NRCS State Forester and Biologist;
Cheyenne Rico, NRCS Outreach Coordinator

In urban areas where forests are scarce, woody hedgerows offer critical habitat for pollinators. In this workshop, participants will explore the benefits of hedgerows for pollinator health and key considerations for establishing them, including site and species selection. We'll also cover funding opportunities through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to support hedgerow and pollinator habitat creation in urban residential spaces.

Breaking Point: Exploring the Logic of Tree Risk *(Starts Outside Judd Hall)*

Adam McCullough, VT Urban & Forestry Program

Join UCF's Adam McCullough for an interactive outdoor session on tree risk assessment. Through visuals, demonstrations, and hands-on activities, explore how tree parts withstand loads and how to estimate the likelihood of failure over time. This session is perfect for anyone looking to sharpen their tree risk evaluation skills.

1:00-1:45pm Workshops

Nature-Based Climate Solutions Programming at Burlington School District *(Judd Hall)*

Diane Hannigan, Nature-Based Climate Solutions Field Coordinator, City of Burlington; **Zoe Richards**, Director of Burlington Wildways

This collaborative program between Burlington Wildways, Burlington Parks & Recreation, and the Burlington School District engages students in habitat restoration and climate resilience projects on their school campuses. Students participate in planting pocket forests, tending nurseries, and monitoring wildlife, while gaining hands-on experience in climate action. This presentation will cover the history and impact of this 4-year pilot program, highlighting the challenges and successes of cross-agency collaboration, its effects on students, and its role in climate adaptation across the city. We'll also explore the development of nature-based programming and its integration with classroom curriculum.

Investing in Rutland's Urban Forest *(Conant 102)*

Tim Smith, Rutland City Arborist; **Joe Epler**, Rutland Assistant City Arborist

Learn how Rutland is expanding its urban tree canopy through strategic planting and infrastructure improvements. This session will cover plans to enhance green spaces, support tree growth in challenging environments, and strengthen climate resilience while improving community well-being.

Lightning Round *(Conant 101)*

Learn from four short, impactful presentations on key topics in urban and community forestry.

- Green Your Tree Care, **Glenn Johnson**, GoGreen Tree Care Products
- Creating Soil for Healthier Trees with Fungi and Microbes, **Gaal Sheppard**
- Forest Pest Roundup, **Ginger Nickerson**, UVM Extension
- Emerald Ash Bore Management, **Greg Ranallo**, Teacher's Tree Service

2:00-3:00pm Workshops

Statewide Seed Coordination & Collection: Building a Network for Restoration *(Judd Hall)*

Jess Colby, NorthWoods Stewardship Center

Native tree and shrub seeds are the foundation of successful restoration efforts that support climate mitigation, water quality, and biodiversity. The Intervale Conservation Nursery is leading a statewide initiative to expand seed collection efforts. Learn about the importance of local seed collection, discuss best practices for sourcing and storing native seeds, and explore opportunities for organizations and individuals to contribute to this growing effort.

ROOT OF IT (ROI) Ground Penetrating Radar to Inspect & Assess Tree Root Quality *(Judd Hall)*

Marie Ambusk, CEO, Founder, PI at TreesROI™

It's hard to fix what you can't see! But-what if we could assess tree root quality noninvasively before planting? Introducing INSIGHT™, the first 3D GPR Tree-CT system combining tree biology/biomechanics and AI/machine learning data science with GPR geophysics! Research for this groundbreaking tool, developed by TreesROI™ in collaboration with GSSI, is supported by the National Science Foundation. With INSIGHT™, we can improve the value, benefits, quality, and lifespan of the trees we grow where we live. Join Marie to discuss how this innovation can transform urban forestry. Then, step outside for a live INSIGHT™ demonstration!

Tree Tour *(Starts Outside Judd Hall)*

Tim Parsons, Landscape Horticulturist, Arborist, and Visiting Professor, Middlebury College

We all share a deep love for trees, but how do we inspire others to join our passion? Tree identification can be overwhelming for newcomers, and explaining tree growth, species selection, and the importance of our managed landscapes can be a challenge. Join us for a hands-on walk through the grounds, where you'll learn how to effectively communicate tree biology and urban forestry concepts, while inspiring and advocating for trees in your community.

3:15-3:45pm Awards Ceremony

The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program and Council recognizes Vermont 2025 Tree Stewards and the recipients of national Arbor Day Awards for Tree City, Line and Campus USA.