

Foreword

ROBIE ANDERMAN—OR BEAVER, as he’s known locally—has been my friend and fruit Tree guru for over twenty years. He is the quintessential back-to-the-land hippie. And I don’t mean the tie-dye, two-dimensional TV version. I mean someone who became “hip” to what was going on in the late 1960s and has embodied that consciousness and worked toward social change and raising environmental awareness ever since.

Robbie not only schooled me in how to graft fruit trees and care for an orchard; he’s such a good researcher that when I made my own mixed orchard, I surrendered to his proven abilities and wisdom and looked nowhere else but to him and his son Ethan for my scions. So, I have raised and cared for his thirty-year-old orchard’s fifteen-year-old children, as it were. And I suppose that makes us kin of a sort. We share a great love for all plants and Trees, but we both have a particular predilection for pears, which in our climate borders on extravagance. But I believe the ecstasy of the orchard in spring blossom, and the sweet weight of their golden fruit in fall, is worth the risk of life itself to both of us.

In *The Healing Trees*, Robbie has given us the tools to claim back something essential that we lost long ago: a home. This book is the ABCs of Trees and, as such, should be in every schoolroom, household, and library of northeastern America, until the facts herein come to be known by heart. Long ago, in rural schools, they actually did teach some of these things, like how to identify Trees, as well as their historic and industrial uses. The fact that we don’t teach or know these things is to me a glaring act of negligence that betrays a deep prejudice toward nature.

These old ones who surround us wherever we go, in temperate or tropical climates, give us the very air we breathe. They have also given us heat to cook with and the ability to live in climates we weren’t built for (like the northern hemisphere). And, as if that wouldn’t be enough to warrant our eternal thankfulness, they have made our shelter, our furniture, and our utensils; as instruments have entertained us; and clothed us with their fibre and dyes. And long before the first monument builders came and carved their fields from the rich forests, they also fed and healed us for at least a hundred millennia. Trees have watched over and taken care of us throughout our human existence.

So I implore you to bow to these Old Tall Ones who gave us life and use this book as a tool to find your way back to being responsible for the health of the planet and our loved ones.

We would do well to emulate the approach Robbie has taken to the Trees. While his writing contains scientific perspectives and many medicinal facts, this book is also down-to-earth and respectful—even reverential—toward its subject, the Trees.

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