

TREES AND PLANTS IN MYTHOLOGY

Legends

Robinia pseudoacacia

The name locust tree is attributed to the religious sects that immigrated to North America in the 17th Century. According to the Bible, John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4). The "locusts" are believed to have been pods of the Carob tree, a member of the legume or pea family indigenous to the Middle East. Since the Locust tree resembles the Carob tree, its name reflects the biblical reference. The Carob tree is also called Saint John's Bread, and, ironically, Locust tree.

The longevity of locust wood is an article of faith in the lore and legend of agrarian society; locust fence posts reportedly lasting for over one hundred years and pioneer homes with locust corner posts still standing.



False acacia, locust tree, yellow locust, black locust

Robinia pseudoacacia



Because of its many attributes, the Locust tree has been spread by the conscious actions of good-intentioned arborists throughout the world. It was one of the first New World trees to be exported to Europe, entering England in the 1630's.

The Cherokee Indians chewed the root bark to induce vomiting and to ameliorate the pain of a toothache. The flowers contain the glycoside robinin, which has been shown experimentally to act as a diuretic. A tea made from the flowers was used to treat everything from headache to nausea. Juice from the leaves purportedly inhibited viruses.

Parts of the locust tree are consumed as food by both humans and animals. Honey produced by bees from Locust tree nectar is considered among the finest in the world.

Aconitum napellum

In Germany, where it is also "the devil's herb," for it is associated with the spells whereby witches invoke the devil. In Norway it is "Odin's helmet," there recalling the cap of darkness, which made its wearer invisible.

The plant's power for mischief has been recognized since the earliest recorded times, and even appears in the age of myth.

It was with the juice of this plant that ancient armies anointed their spears and arrows, that a scratch might cause death, and it is said to be still used by some savage tribes. Chiron, the centaur, discovered the mischief in it by accidentally dropping an arrow thus poisoned on his hoof, dying in the discovery. By reason of its maleficence it was dedicated to Hecate, queen of hell, in whose garden it was sown by Cerberus, the three-headed monster who guards the place of shadows.



Aconite, monkshood, troll's hat, iron hat, storm hat.

Aconitum napellum

Athena sprinkles Arachne with aconite upon which she is transformed into a spider and amongst Germanic tribes it is reported to have been used by the Berserkers when they transformed into 'werewolves'.

Aconite is said to cause a sensation on the skin of wearing a fur-coat or feathers and may induce hallucinations of transforming into different kinds of animals. In India aconite is sacred to Shiva, the God of All Poisons. According to legend the essence of all poisons spread from the whirling motion of the ocean of milk samudramathana, when it produced the holy cow.

Shiva took the poison in his hands and drank it. His wife Parvati feared for her husband and choked his throat so that the poison eventually would get stuck and upon which his throat turned blue. Because of this Shiva is also called Nilakantha = blue throat.



Ocimum

The first recorded mention of basil, in records dated to pre-206 B.C.E, states that it “exists only to drive men insane.” For the Greeks, and later the Romans, basil was associated with hatred. To grow, it had to be sown with swearing and ranting. However, basil later became a symbol of love in Italy, to the point that Giovanni Boccaccio used it to symbolize the tragic love between Lisabetta and Lorenzo in *The Decameron*. Sicilian folklore associates it with both love and death, and in Moldavian folklore a young man who accepts basil from a young woman will fall in love with her.



Basil, holy basil, tulsi, sweet basil

In India, holy basil (called Tulsi) is a sacred plant associated with Vishnu and Tulasi, another tangled love story with several variations. The Hindu tradition associates holy basil with purification, protection, love and eternal life, and it is used in burial rituals. Basil is also associated with the voodoo love goddess Erzuli and is recorded as being used in love spells for divination and ensuring faithfulness.

Ocimum

Other European magical uses include carrying a sprig of basil in your pocket to bring wealth, sprinkling it on the floor to ward off evil and setting it near doors and cash registers to attract customers. In the Christian tradition, basil is said to have grown at the site of Christ's crucifixion and is part of the St. Basil feast day celebrations in Greece on January 1st.



In Persia and Malaysia basil is planted on graves while in Egypt women scatter the flowers on the resting places of their dead.

Perhaps reflecting the plant's conflicted history, the Victorian language of flowers has two meanings for basil: common basil signifies hatred and sweet basil conveys the sender's best wishes.

Betula

In botanical terms the birch is referred to as a pioneer species. Similarly in early Celtic mythology, the birch came to symbolise renewal and purification. Beithe, the Celtic birch, is the first tree of the Ogham, the Celtic tree alphabet. It was celebrated during the festival of Samhain (what is now Halloween in Britain), the start of the Celtic year, when purification was also important. Bundles of birch twigs were used to drive out the spirits of the old year.



Birch, silver birch, warty birch, birke

Later this would evolve into the 'beating the bounds' ceremonies in local parishes. Gardeners still use the birch besom, or broom, to 'purify' their gardens. Besoms were also of course the archetypal witches' broomsticks, used in their shamanic flights, perhaps after the use of extracts of the fly agaric mushrooms commonly found in birch woods.

Betula

he birch also has strong fertility connections with the celebrations of Beltane, the second, summer, half of the Celtic year (nowadays celebrated as May Day). Beltane fires in Scotland were ritually made of birch and oak, and a birch tree was often used as a, sometimes living, maypole. Deities associated with birch are mostly love and fertility goddesses, such as the northern European Frigga and Freya. Eostre (from whom we derive the word Easter), the Anglo Saxon goddess of spring was celebrated around and through the birch tree between the spring equinox and Beltane. According to the medieval herbalist Culpepper, the birch is ruled over by Venus - both the planet and the goddess.

According to Scottish Highland folklore, a barren cow herded with a birch stick would become fertile, or a pregnant cow bear a healthy calf. The word birch is thought to have derived from the Sanskrit word *bhurga* meaning a 'tree whose bark is used to write upon'. The paper for the books of Numa Pompilius, written seven hundred years before Christ were made of birch, and the sybilline leaves bought by Tarquin were of its bark.



Campanula

Campanula speculum is held to resemble an ancient mirror; hence its name of Venus' looking-glass. Venus, it seems, owned a mirror which had the power of adding to the beauty of what was reflected in it. She mislaid this treasure, on one occasion, and it was found by a shepherd, who, suddenly enraptured of his own perfections, stood as a fixture, gloating. Cupid, who was seeking the glass, came upon him, struck it out of his fingers and left him wailing.

But the object, being divine, left its impress on the sod in a host of flowers—the campanula. There is a variety of this flower known as Canterbury bells, which takes its name from a resemblance to the bells rung by pilgrims while wending toward Canterbury to pray at the tomb of Thomas a Becket.



Bell flower, balloon flower, Jie geng, kikyau

Canna

Canna is precious to the oriental because its seeds are the beads of the Indian rosary. According to the Burman, the canna sprang from sacred blood. The diabolic Dewadat, jealous of Buddha's influence and fame, and hearing that he was to undertake a journey, climbed upon a hill and awaited the saint's coming. He had poised a monstrous boulder at the brink of a slope, and when the object of his hate was passing he pushed the mass over. The boulder plunged to Buddha's very feet, where it burst into a thousand pieces.

A single fragment, striking the good man's toe, drew blood, which, as it soaked into the earth, arose again—the canna ;while the earth, with equal sensibility, opened just under the feet of the wretched Dewadat and swallowed him.



Canna lily, sierra leone arrowroot, albara, Indian shot

Cedrus

Its name, " life from the dead, " that it bore two thousand years ago, betokens it an emblem of eternity, but this name may have signified no more than that its oil drove insects from the tombs. Because of its preservative qualities, the Egyptians used it for mummy-cases, and it has proven wonderfully lasting, for carved figures of a supposed age of three thousand years have been taken from the burial places and may be seen in our museums.



Cedar, cedar of Lebanon,
deodora

In Anatolia (Turkey) the Cedar of Lebanon was associated with a particularly violent form of Artemis. In the Himalayas the Deodor Cedar was associated with the equally violent Kali Durga, called the Root of the Tree of the Universe of Wisdom. And the Cyprus Cedar, from the island of Cyprus, was identified with Aphrodite Urania who killed or castrated her lovers & was much more like the violent Artemis & Kali than the Goddess of Love we today associate with the name Aphrodite.

Cedrus

The name of Lebanon is the same as the semitic Moon-goddess Lebanah, "She That Is White." It is no coincidence that the word for Cedar, Erez, is nearly homonymous with Hebrew words meaning heat, or sun, so that we also find the Cedar associated with Sun-gods & weather-gods throughout the biblical world.



In ancient Egypt the ceremonial barge of the god Amon-Re was made of cedars, & an ancient record states specifically that the cedar wood came from Lebanon. The idea of a Moon-goddess connected with a Sun-god via the highest cedar is not merely suggestive of Artemis & Apollo, Anath & Baal, Delilah & Samson, David & Bathsheba, but is still of signal importance in medieval & modern Kabbalah.

A Cedar-goddess is alluded to in the Song of Songs. Of Her it is said, "If she is a Gate, we will enclose her with boards of cedar", from whence the midrash that presumes Paradise is enclosed in cedar. The cedar doors of a gate symbolized the vagina or entryway to the Earthmother's womb, & by extension any woman's womb

Cupressus sempervivens

Cyparissos, a boy much liked by Apollo, was in turn attached, not to a god, but to a stalwart playmate—a stag that grazed on sacred Ceos. Having killed the animal in an accident, he begged the gods to let him mourn forever, and, that he might do so comfortably, Apollo changed him to a cypress, dark, drooping, distilling tearful dews.



Cypress, funeral tree

Venus wreathed twigs of the cypress for her brow when she mourned Adonis ; the tragic muse, Melpomene, was crowned with it; and its wood confined the Egyptian mummies. A cypress near the tomb of Persian Cyrus had the unhappy faculty of leaking blood every Friday hornetan Sabbath—hence it was an object of veneration ; but elsewhere it was freely cut and is thought to be the gopher wood of which Noah's ark was made.

Cupressus sempervivens

As its cone shape suggested flame to the Oriental, it was planted before temples of the fire worshippers in Persia, and Zoroaster himself lived in its shadow. Even in Cyprus—so named for the tree—it was worshipped as the symbol of a god. Ceres plugged the crater of Etna with it and thus imprisoned Vulcan at his forges beneath the mountain. Napoleon, who spared so little, allowed it to remain when he built his road across the Simplon.



Mainly the cypress represents the immortal soul and woe unspeakable which gives way, out of its darkness, to a mystery unfathomable. The cypress is sacred to a whole class of gods or Serpent-Adepts such as Aesculapius, whose sanctuary at Cos was famous for its cypress grove. The oldest tree in Europe is held to be a cypress at Somma, Lombardy, one hundred and twenty-one feet high and well grown in Caesar's day.

Sambucus

The elder came to be regarded as having a supernatural consequence: it was possessed of a spirit, and none might destroy it without peril to himself.

Its name associates it with Hulda, or Hilda, mother of elves, and the good woman in northern myth. In Denmark

Hulda lived in the root of an elder, hence the tree was appropriately her symbol, and was employed in the ceremonies of her worship on the Venusberg.



Elder, ruis, elderberry

If the forbidden wood is used in buildings, the occupant will presently complain that mysterious hands are pulling his legs. The dwarf variety is believed by some to grow only where human blood has been shed, and in Welsh its name signifies plant-of-the-blood-of-men. In Denmark, peasants would not cut down an elder for fear of Hyldemor, the Elder-mother, who dwelt in its trunk. This belief is also found in Eastern England.

Ficus

Native to the Mediterranean region, the fig tree appears in some images of the Garden of Eden. After eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve covered their nakedness with leaves that are usually said to be from the fig tree, and Islamic tradition mentions two forbidden trees in Eden—a fig tree and an olive tree. In Greek and Roman mythology, figs are sometimes associated with Dionysus (Bacchus to the Romans), god of wine and drunkenness, and with Priapus, a satyr who symbolized sexual desire.

The fig tree has a sacred meaning for Buddhists. According to Buddhist legend, the founder of the religion, Siddhartha Gautama or the Buddha, achieved enlightenment one day in 528 B . C . while sitting under a bo tree, a kind of fig tree. The bo or bodhi tree remains a symbol of enlightenment.



Fig, feg

Ficus

In classic myth the fig is Lyceus, a Titan, changed to a tree by Rhea, while another story ascribes its invention to Bacchus. It was growing on the site of Rome when the cradle of Romulus and Remus stranded under its branches, and was worshipped there, down to the time of the empire, the women of the city wearing collars of figs as symbols of fecundity in the Bacchic feasts and dances, and the men carrying statues of Priapus carved from its wood, in the holiday processions.

One of the Titans who fled from Zeus and was transformed by his mother, Gaia, into a fig tree.



Abies

The fir, which has been a sacred tree ever since it was hewn for the ceiling of the Temple at Jerusalem, was Atys —he whom Zeus changed to a tree, that he might thus appease the anger of Cybele, for Atys, a priest of Cybele, had lapsed from virtue: hence his punishment. So strong was the regard for the tree in France that when St. Martin arrived and began to raze the temple erected to heathen gods, his proposition to destroy the firs roused such anger that he was forced to desist.

Fir branches are used for purifying and warding off ghosts in some Salish and other Northwest American rituals. They commonly burn fir needles as incense, and northern Algonquian tribes bundled spruce and fir needles into sachets or herbal pillows to protect against illness. Fir cones were used for weather magic in some Northwestern tribes, particularly in Washington state. Fir bark and resin have also been used as medicine herbs by many Native Americans.



Fir, christmas tree, balsam fir

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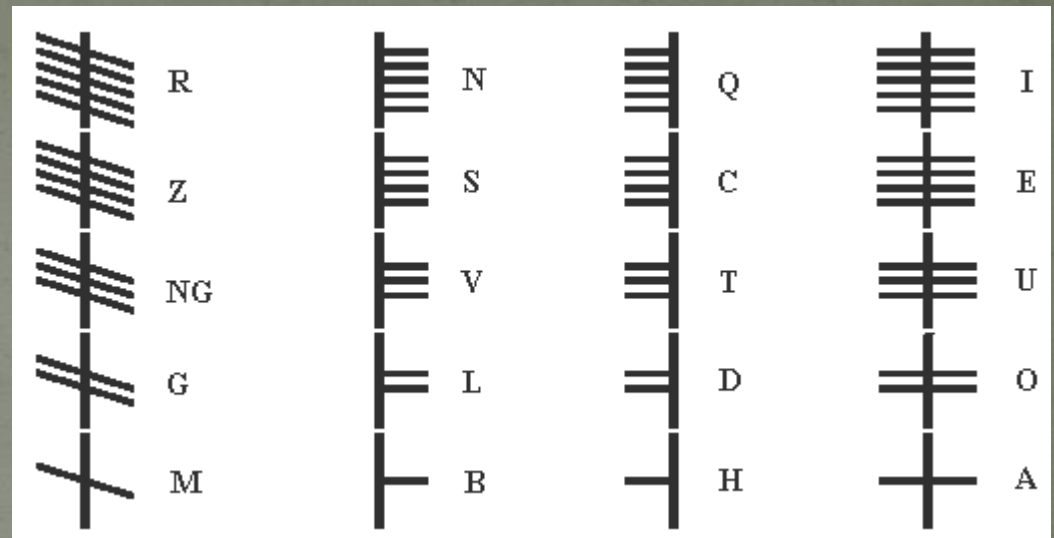
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CELTIC LORE – TREES OF LIFE



The Lunar Calendar consisted of 13 months, each 28 days in length. Each month of the Celtic Lunar calendar bears the name of a tree, which also stands for one of the consonants in the Celtic 'tree alphabet'. There are basically two different versions of this Lunar calendar: the Beth-Luis-Nion (which begins on the Winter Solstice) and the Beth-Luis-Fearn (which begins on Samhain).

- The Ogham script consists of twenty-five simple strokes centred on or branching off a central line. It is similar in purpose, but separate in origin from the Nordic runes.
- The Ogham characters were inscribed on stones or written on staves of wood.



As a method of writing it is laborious, but as a language of symbolism it is powerful. It is probably pre-Celtic in origin, although most of the existing inscriptions have been dated to the fifth and sixth centuries. Whether Celtic or pre-Celtic we can sense that it carries with it some of the very earliest of Druid wisdom. Ogham is sometimes called the "Celtic Tree Alphabet", based on a High Medieval Bríatharogam tradition ascribing names of trees to the individual letters.

Although we know the letters that each stroke represents, and can translate the ancient Ogham inscriptions accordingly, we cannot be so confident when we come to associate the trees with particular months.

Lunar Calendar

- Birch**, 1st Moon of the Celtic Year – (Dec 24 – Jan 21)
- Rowan**, 2nd Moon of the Celtic Year – (Jan 22 – Feb 18)
- Ash**, 3rd Moon of the Celtic Year – (Feb 18 – March 17)
- Alder**, 4th Moon of the Celtic Year – (March 18 – April 14)
- Willow**, 5th Moon of the Celtic Year – (April 15 – May 12)
- Hawthorn**, 6th Moon of the Celtic Year – (May 13 – June 9)
- Oak**, 7th Moon of the Celtic Year – (June 10 – July 7)
- Holly**, 8th Moon of the Celtic Year – (July 8 – Aug 4)
- Hazel**, 9th Moon of the Celtic Year – (Aug 5 – Sept 1)
- Vine**, 10th Moon of the Celtic Year – (Sept 2 – Sept 29)
- Ivy**, 11th Moon of the Celtic Year – (Sept 30 – Oct 27)
- Reed**, 12th Moon of the Celtic Year – (Oct 28 – Nov 24)
- Elder**, 13th Moon of the Celtic Year – (Nov 25 – Dec 23)

BIRCH-BEITH



1° MOON

Long associated with fertility and healing magic, new beginnings, purification, protection, creativity, fertility & birth. It was known as 'The Lady of the Woods'. Birch twigs were used to bestow fertility on cattle and newlyweds, and children's cradles were made from its wood. Birch is one of the first trees to grow on bare soil and thus it births the entire forest. Criminals were at one time birched to drive out evil influences on them, to renew them for the new year. Birch is an incredibly useful tree - nearly every part of it is edible, and its sap was an important source of sugar to Native Americans and early settlers. The inner bark provides a pain reliever and the leaves are used to treat arthritis. It's bark was used for everything from paper to canoe hulls, and axe handles were also made from Birch.

ROWAN –LUIS



2° MOON

(*Sorbus aucuparia*) - The Rowan tree (also called Mountain Ash and 'Witchwood') is long known for aid and protection against enchantment. It is also associated with divination, astral work, strength, protection, initiation, healing, psychic energies, working with spirits of the dead, psychic powers, personal power, and success. Sticks of the Rowan were used to carve Runes on. It was also used in the art of metal divining. Rowan spays and crosses were placed over cattle in pens and over homes for protection. The berries have a tiny pentagram on them. The pentagram is the ancient symbol of protection. The Rowan tree indicates protection and control of the senses from enchantment and beguiling. The Rowan was sacred to the Druids and the Goddess Brigit. It is a very magical tree used for wands, rods, amulets and spells. A forked Rowan branch can help find water. Wands are for knowledge, locating metal and general divination.

ASH-NIOH



3° MOON

(Fraxinus spp.) - A Druid sacred tree. Druid wands were often made of ash because of its straight grain. The Ash is one of the sacred Druidic three: 'Oak, Ash & Thorn'. The Ash is associated with applications in magick for sea power, ocean rituals, karmic laws, magical potency, healing and health, protection, love, women's mysteries, prophetic dreams, prosperity. The European variety (Fraxinus excelsior) was referred to in the Eddas as the species of Yggdrasil - the 'World-Tree'. The first man, named Ask, was created from an ash log. Ash was commonly used to make spears because of its 'springiness' and straight grain. In North America, strips of black ash were split along the grain to make splints for baskets and hoops. It is used in weaver's beams. Women would weave cloth and intermingling threads together in a tight pattern as the microcosm and the macrocosm are united. Ash can be used in spells requiring focus and strength of purpose, and indicates the linking of the inner and outer worlds. Put fresh ash leaves under your pillow to stimulate psychic dreams.

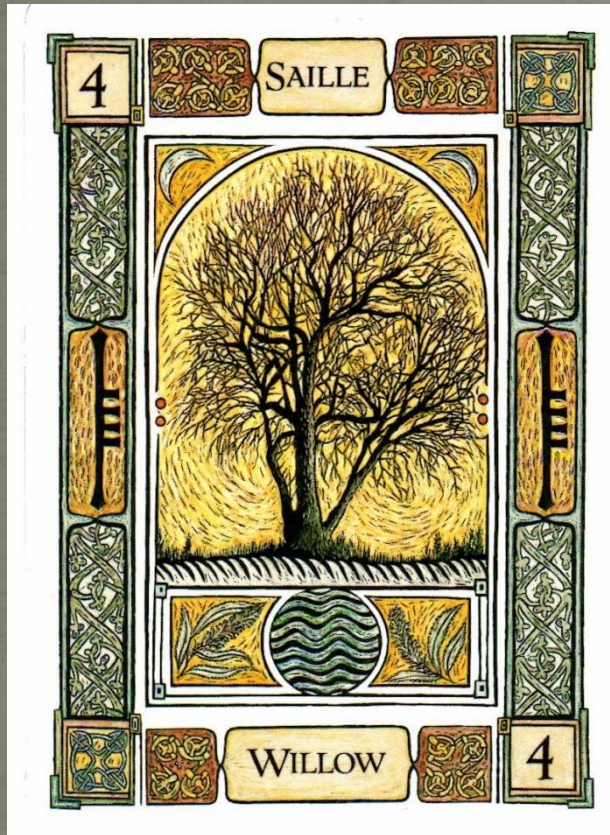
ALDER-FEARN



(*Alnus* spp.) - This tree was sacred to the Druids and is generally associated with protection and oracular powers. The pith is easily pushed out of green shoots to make whistles. Several shoots bound together by cordage, can be trimmed to the desired length for producing the note you want and used to entice Air elementals. The old superstition of "whistling up the wind" began with this custom. The oily water resistant wood has been used extensively for underwater foundations and pilings in Venice and elsewhere. It is used in dairy vessels and the branches in making whistles. It is associated with Bran, as he used his body as a bridge to span dangerous waters. It is used in the construction of bridges. Bran's Head was oracular.

4° MOON

WILLOW-SAILLE



5° MOON

(*Salix babylonica*) - The willow is a water loving tree, associated with Moon Magic, the Willow is used for enchantment, wishing, romantic love, healing, protection, fertility, magic for women, femininity, love, divination, friendship, joy, love, and peace. Her catkins, which appear in early spring before her leaves, attract bees to start the cycle of pollination. In western tradition it is a symbol of mourning and unlucky love. The Latin name for the weeping willow refers to the psalm in which the Hebrews mourn their captivity in Babylon by the willows. Willow indicates cycles, rhythms and the ebb and flux. The willow is a Moon tree sacred to the White Lady, Its groves were considered so magical that priests, priestesses and all types of artisans sat among these trees to gain eloquence, inspiration, skills and prophecies.

HAWTHORN-HUATHE



(*Crataegus oxyacantha*) - Hawthorn is associated with protection, love & marriage, health, prosperity, fertility, purification, fishing magic, purity, inner journeys, intuition, female sexuality, cleansing, and happiness. The fey (Earth spirits/Fairy Folk) are said to especially like Hawthorn since it is sacred to them. The wood from the Hawthorn provides the hottest fire known and wands with the greatest power. The blossoms are said to be highly erotic to men. Its leaves and blossoms are also used to create a tea to aid with anxiety, appetite loss and poor circulation. The Greeks and Romans saw the hawthorn as symbolic of hope and marriage, but in medieval Europe it was associated with witchcraft and considered to be unlucky.

6° MOON

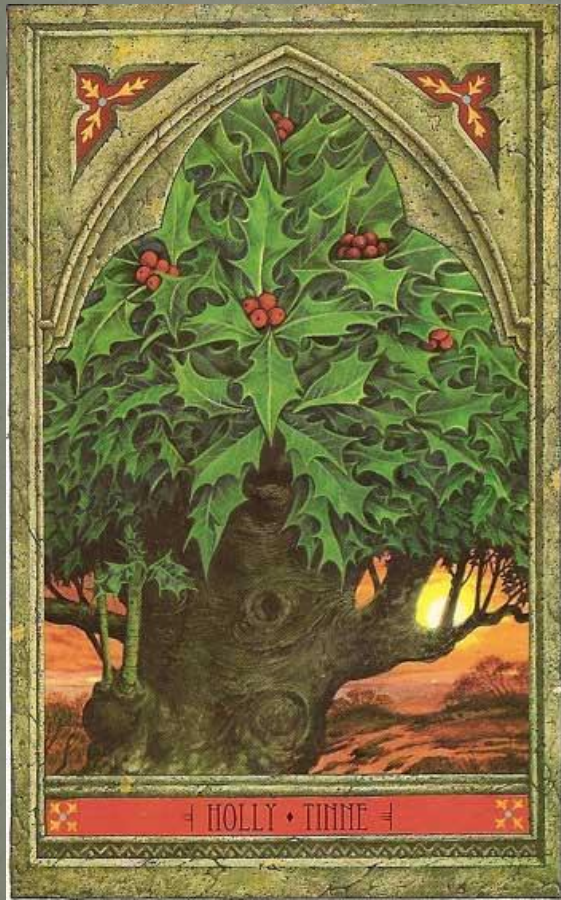
OAK-DUIR



7° MOON

(*Quercus* spp.) The Oak is one of the sacred Druidic three: 'Oak, Ash & Thorn'. In general, Oak is associated with spells for protection, strength, success and stability, healing, fertility, health, money, potency, and good luck. Oak has been considered sacred by just about every culture that has encountered the tree, but it was held in particular esteem by the Norse and Celts because of its size, longevity, and nutritious acorns. The oak is frequently associated with Gods of thunder and lightening such as Zeus, Thor, and the Lithuanian God Perkunas. This association may be due to the oak's habit of being hit by lightening during storms. Oak galls, known as Serpent Eggs, were used in magical charms. Acorns gathered at night held the greatest fertility powers. The Druids and Priestesses listened to the rustling oak leaves and the wrens in the trees for divinatory messages.

HOLLY-TINNE



8° MOON

(*Ilex aquifolium*) Holly is associated with the death and rebirth symbolism of winter in both Pagan and Christian lore. Holly is also associated with magic for protection, prophesy, healing, animals, sex, invulnerability, watchfulness, good luck, Holiness and consecration. It is also said to have the ability to enhance other forms of magick. In Arthurian legend, Gawain (representing the Oak King of summer) fought the Green Knight, who was armed with a holly club to represent winter. It is one of the three timbers used in the construction of chariot wheel shafts. It was used in spear shafts also. The qualities of a spear shaft are balance and directness, as the spear must be hefted to be thrown the holly indicates directed balance and vigour to fight if the cause is just. Holly may be used in spells having to do with sleep or rest, and to ease the passage of death. A bag of leaves and berries carried by a man is said to increase his ability to attract women.

HAZEL-COLL



9° MOON

(*Corylus avallania*) Hazel, The Tree of Immortal Wisdom has applications in magick done for manifestation, spirit contact, protection, prosperity, divination-dowsing, dreams, wisdom-knowledge, marriage, fertility, intelligence, inspiration. In Celtic tradition, the Salmon of Knowledge is said to eat the 9 nuts of poetic wisdom dropped into its sacred pool from the hazel tree growing beside it. Each nut eaten by the salmon becomes a spot on its skin. The Hazel tree provided shade, protection and baskets. In Europe and North America, hazel is commonly used for 'water-witching' - the art of finding water with a forked stick. Magically, hazel wood is used to gain knowledge, healing, wisdom and poetic inspiration. Forked sticks are used to find water or buried treasure. If outside and in need of magical protection quickly draw a circle around yourself with a hazel branch. Magically, hazel wood is used to gain knowledge, wisdom and poetic inspiration.

VINE-MUIN



10° MOON

(*Vitis vinifera*) Interconnections and winding vines are commonly seen on tapestries, writings, knot work and carvings. This indicates the symbolism of connection, eternity, and diversity (branching and expanding in new directions). In the Druid perspective, the vine earned its symbolism from its growth patterns. They recognized the vine grows opportunistically, and would dig in wherever feasible in order to gain a strong foothold to assure its own growth.

This is a powerful metaphor of flowing. Celts also recognized the vine's predominant growth formation is in the shape of a spiral. This has long been considered a sacred symbol for consciousness and development.

IVY-GORT



11° MOON

(*Hedera helix*) The Celtic meaning of the ivy deals with connections and friendships because of its propensity to interweave in growth. Ever furrowing and intertwining, the ivy is an example of the twists and turns our friendships take - but also a testimony to the long-lasting connections and bonds we form with our friends that last over the years.

It is also a symbol of vibrancy as the druids admired its bright green hue. Often, sprigs of ivy would be woven into chain necklaces or head adornments to represent clarity of thought as well as celebrate the vitality of nature surrounding them.

The ivy is also a symbol of survival and determination for the same reasons. It seems to be virtually indestructible and will often return after it has suffered damage or has been severely cut back.

REED-NGETAL



12° MOON

(*Phragmites communis*) Reed gained a reputation as a protective tree from its use as thatch for the rooftops homes. For this reason it was also made into talismans and charms believed to protect the wearer from evil. Mats were often woven out of reeds which gave the house a sweet smell, associating the reed with cleansing the home. The Druids also used reeds to make writing implements and paper, thus associating the reed with knowledge, scholarship and wisdom.

Following along with the reed's association with death, the Celtic tree calendar has the reed representing the time of Samhain (now known as All Saints Day, which follows Halloween) when the door to the Otherworld would dissolve allowing the souls of the dead to join the living.

During this time, fires were burnt and feasts were held in which places were set for dead loved ones thought to join in the festivities.

ELDER-RUIS



13° MOON

(*Sambucus nigra*) The leaves and berries are used for protection and in breaking spells that were cast against you or to undo spells of evil intent. Growing an elder in your garden will protect your property from misfortune and harm. In Europe they planted elder in cemeteries to keep away the evil spirits. The elder is a tree of beginnings and endings, of birth and death, so the elder fairy is a spirit of transformation and the crossing of thresholds. Generally seen as an old woman, the elder fairy advises on what to cast away and what to take up. Witches were said to be able to turn themselves into elder trees. Gypsies believe that it is very bad luck to cut down and burn elder wood and that the Elder Mother will take revenge. This superstition arises from an instinctive realization that a lack of respect for Nature is dangerous, ultimately, to the human race.

YEW-IODHA



(*Taxus baccata*) Yew was used to enhance magical and psychic abilities & to induce visions. Transformation, reincarnation, eternal life and immortality sum up the attributes of the Yew tree. It has been associated with death, rebirth, change and regeneration. All parts of the tree are poisonous except the fleshy covering of the berry, and its medicinal uses include a recently discovered treatment for cancer. Long associated with magic, death, rebirth and the runes, there are some convincing arguments for it being the original 'World-tree' of Scandinavian mythology. Another important tree to the Winter Solstice and the deities of death and rebirth. The Irish used it to make dagger handles, bows and wine barrels. The wood or leaves were laid on graves as a reminder to the departed spirit that death was only a pause in life before rebirth.

APPLE-QUERT



(*Malus* spp.) - In Norse myth, Idunna was the keeper of the 'apples of immortality' which kept the Gods young. The 'fruit-bearing tree' referred to by Tacitus in his description of Norse runic divination may have been the apple. Apple indicates choice, and is useful for love and healing magic.

BEECH-PHAGOS



(*Fagus* spp.) At one time Beech tablets were used as writing surfaces. Beech and book have the same word origins. Beech is concerned with ancient knowledge as revealed in old objects, places and writings. Beech indicates guidance from the past to gain insight which protects and provides a solid base upon which all relies.

BLACKTHORN-STRAIF



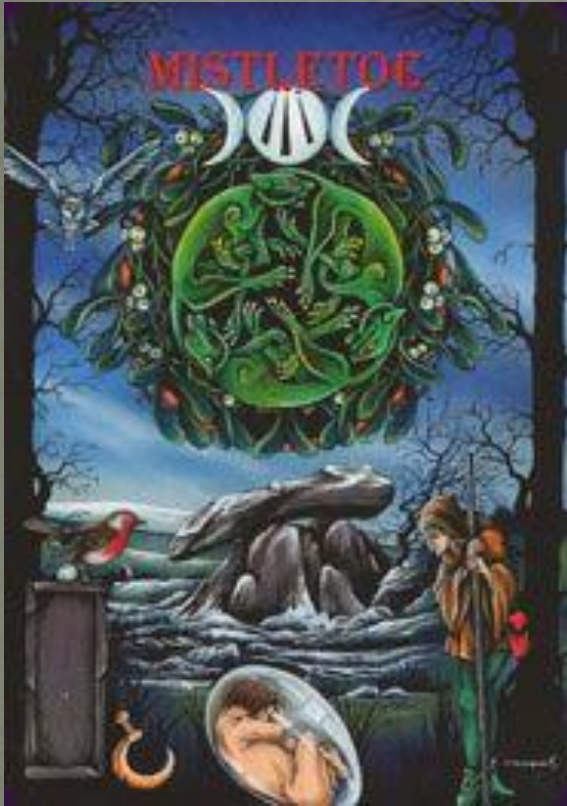
(*Prunus spinosa*) - Blackthorn is a winter tree. Blackthorn is used for purification & protection, ridding the atmosphere of negative energy. It aids in combating fear, depression and anger. Associated with inner work and assessment, grounding and protection. It represents the strong action of fate or the outside influences in life. The wood is used in the cudgel shillelagh and Blasting Stick. Its thorns are used to pierce waxen images. Blackthorn indicates strong action of fate or outside influences that must be obeyed.

ELM



(*Ulmus* spp.) - Elm is often associated with Mother and Earth Goddesses, and was said to be the abode of faeries, explaining Kipling's injunction; "Ailim be the lady's tree; burn it not or cursed ye'll be". Elm wood is valued for its resistance to splitting, and the inner bark was used for cordage and chair caning. Elm adds stability and grounding to a spell.

MISTLETOE-MISTELTAN



(*Viscum album*) Also known as Birdlime, All Heal and Golden Bough. It was the most sacred tree of the Druids, and ruled the Winter Solstice. The berries are poisonous. Bunches of mistletoe can be hung as an all-purpose protective herb, also for kissing under. The berries are used in love incenses.

PINE



(*Pinus* spp.) - The Pine tree is an evergreen, its old title was "the sweetest of woods". Its needles are a valuable source of vitamin C and can loosen a tight chest. The scent of Pine is useful in the alleviation of guilt. The Bach's flower remedies lists it for dealing with feelings of guilt. Pine indicates issues of guilt within you. It was known to the Druids as one of the seven chieftain trees of the Irish. Mix the dried needles with equal parts of juniper and cedar and burn to purify the home and ritual area. The cones and nuts can be carried as a fertility charm. A good magical cleansing and stimulating bath is made by placing pine needles in a loose-woven bag and running bath water over it. To purify and sanctify an outdoor ritual area, brush the ground with a pine branch.