

The Secret Lore of Trees



The lore involving trees usually has a basis in fact and makes sense even if the source is somewhat obscure. Although most of these “tree facts” can’t be scientifically tested or proven, they are interesting reading. People without access to “modern” medicines and healthcare had to determine what materials would soothe ailments and affect cures. Housing, tools and transportation were also of primary concern. The observation of the attributes of native trees and trial and error use lead to the selection of trees for different purposes and their place in folklore.

ASH (*Grandeur*) Strips of black ash were split to make splints for baskets and hoops. It was also used in weaver’s beams to weave cloth. The seeds of the ash are said to divine love. If seeds are not produced on a tree the owner is unlucky in love, or it may be that a future venture will not be successful. If you find an ash leaf, success will be certain if the ash leaf is kept or worn. Fresh ash leaves kept under the pillow encourage psychic experiences.

BEECH (*Prosperity*) Beech tablets were used as writing surfaces. Beech and book share the same word origins. Beech is associated with ancient knowledge as in old objects, places and writings. According to Greek myth, the God and Goddess Apollo and Athena transformed into vultures and sat in a beech tree to observe the war between the Trojans and the Greeks.

CEDAR (*Strength*) This tree has been used by Native American Plains Indians for spiritual purification. The Pawnee burned twigs of the cedar tree for relief from nightmares and nervous conditions. In the ancient world, incense made from the cedar tree was highly valued. Cedar is still used in closets today for it’s scent and it’s properties as an insect deterrent.

HAWTHORN (*Caution*) The hawthorn tree is said to bring bad luck to its owner. Bringing any part of the tree into a house especially the flowers will result in someone in the house passing away. Cutting down a hawthorn tree predicts the same dire result. However, another belief is that a hawthorn branch placed above the door will warn negative forces not to enter. Some believe that the hawthorn is a holy plant, and that negative energies will be repelled by it. A flowering hawthorn tree is a sure sign that winter is over and spring is coming. Hawthorn wood provides the hottest fires known. Its leaves and blossoms are used to make a tea to aid with anxiety, appetite loss and poor circulation.

HAZEL (*Mysticism*) In Europe and North America, hazel is commonly used for water witching, the art of finding water with a forked stick. Hazel wood is used to gain knowledge, wisdom and poetic inspiration. Hazel nuts were believed to possess mystical powers and could be used in divining.

MAPLE (*Abundance, Success*) Sugar maple has the highest sugar content in its sap but all maple species can be tapped for syrup and sugar. It was a vital resource to early North American settlers. Putting a maple branch in a house is also said to ensure that bats will not enter. The maple encourages good health and a long life for a child passed through its branches.

WALNUT (*Intellect, Strategy*) Walnut is regarded as a sinister tree. It kills any vegetation near it. Walnut trees seem to especially dislike oaks. A heavy crop of walnuts indicates a harsh winter. To dream of walnuts implies unfaithfulness in relationships. Carrying a spider in a walnut shell is supposed to prevent fevers. The nutshells of the walnut make a dye that was used by settlers.

YEW (*Vision*) All parts of the yew are poisonous except for the fleshy covering of the berry. Long associated with magic, death, rebirth and the runes, ancient yews can be found in churchyards all over Britain where they often pre-date even the oldest churches. Yew wood was used for making bows. The Pacific yew is used by the Haida and by other tribes to make masks and boxes. Yew is used to enhance magical and psychic abilities, and to induce visions.