

THE ENCHANTED FOREST

Civilization no longer needs to open up wilderness;
it needs wilderness to help open up
the still largely unexplored human mind.

David Rains Wallace

Spring equinox, Easter, and Earth Day all fall within the same two months at the most, each year. This is a time of renewal and of celebrating the deeper currents of being. The time is ideal for connecting with and going back to our earth roots, and for letting “wilderness help open up our unexplored human mind”, for being reborn with a greater understanding of the great web of life on earth, like trees reawaken to a new cycle of life in spring.

ENTER: THE FOREST

The forest is a mysterious place; it is a place of testing, a realm holding the secrets of nature which man must penetrate to find meaning. In legends and fairy tales, they are usually inhabited by mysterious creatures, symbols of all of the dangers with which young people must contend if they are to become adults. In analytical psychology, the forest represents femininity in the eyes of a young man, an unexplored realm full of the unknown. It stands for the unconscious and its mysteries.

The forest has great connection with the symbolism of the mother, it is a place where life thrives. However, as it can be seen as a contrast with the city and comfort of the home, the forest harbors all kinds of dangers and demons, enemies and diseases. It is also the home of the outlaws. Since it is outside cultivation, it is often outside reason and intellect, it is the deep, wild psyche (taken from

Entering The Forest will be letting nature, the unconscious and imagination - where anything is possible - take over. It is written, that on the day the trees will wake. And they will walk the earth, reclaiming their souls, possessing blood, bones and spirit...

Two worlds will be superimposed – the real and unreal - making part of neither. Trapped...coming out reborn a different being...

TREES

Rooted in earth but with their branches pointing to the heavens, trees are, like humans themselves, creatures of two worlds, intermediaries between above and below. The archetypal symbol of life (tree of life, tree of the world, family tree) and for being human, rooted in the earth. The crown of the tree, like the head of a human being, reaches for the sky. They are part of two worlds - reality and obligation (earth) and spirit and freedom (heaven). Personal development and growth of the dreamer. Connected to nature, with concern for the environment as well as personal growth. ¹

The flowering apple tree...symbolizes a beautiful aspect of women, the side of our nature that has its roots sunk into the world of the Wild Mother, where it is nurtured from below. The tree is the archetypal symbol of individuation; it is considered immortal, for its seeds will live on, its root system shelters and revivifies, it is home to an entire food chain of life. Like a woman, a tree also has its seasons and its stages of growth; it has its winter, it has its spring. ²

The fruit tree, which in ancient times was called the Tree of Life, Tree of Knowing, Tree of Life and Death, or Tree of Knowledge. Unlike trees with needles or leaves, the fruit tree is a tree of bountiful food--and not just food, for a tree stores water in its fruit. Water, the primal fluid of growth and continuance, is soaked up by the roots, which feed the tree by capillary action--a network of billions of cell plexuses too small to see--and water arrives in the fruit and plumps it out into a beautiful thing. Because of this, the fruit is considered to be invested with soul, with a life force that develops from and contains some measure of water, air, earth, food, and seed, which on top of it all also tastes divine. ³

Not only were specific trees or an entire grove revered in many ancient civilizations as the abodes of supernatural beings (divinities, elemental spirits), but also the tree was widely seen as the axis mundi around which the cosmos is organized--for example, the world-tree Yggdrasill in Norse mythology, or the sacred ceiba or yaxache tree of the Yucatan Mayas, which grows in the center of the world and supports the layers of the sky: in each of the four regions of the world one colored tree of this species serves as a corner-pillar for the heavens. The importance of forbidden trees in Eden is well known; for Buddhists the peepul or bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) under which Guatama Buddha attained enlightenment, is the symbol of the "great awakening." Ancient Egypt venerated the sycamore, from out of which the goddess Hathor extended fortifying drink and nourishment to the souls (the mobile, winged ba) of the dead. The Sumerian god of vegetation, Dumuzi (Tamuz) was revered as the tree of life. For the ancient Chinese the pear and mulberry trees were sacred; for the Druids it was the oak, which was also the sacred attribute of the Germanic god of thunder and the (Greek) king of the gods, Zeus. Sacred trees of this sort are found among virtually all ancient peoples, to some extent trees idealized into cosmic symbols.

In Christian iconography the trees symbolizes life lived in accordance with God's plan: its annual cycle refers to life, death, and resurrection: a barren or dead tree, to the sinner. The Tree of Knowledge is believed to have provided the wood for Christ's cross, thus making it from then on, for the believer, the Tree of Life.

Tree symbolism and reverence for trees carry some trace, finally, of the natural religion of old, in which trees were not merely a source of wood but the abode of nymphs, and entities to which humans related emotionally. Trees with saints' images on their trunks (called "forest devotions" in Austria) go back to this, as does the Christmas tree, today an almost universal symbol, consoling us in mid-winter with the prospect of greening and rebirth.

SOURCE: Dictionary of Symbolism, p. 350-352).

SOURCE: http://www.scootermysdaisyheads.com/fine_art/symbol_dictionary/tree.html]

1. SOURCE: The Little Giant Encyclopedia of Dream Symbols, p. 446-447

2. SOURCE: Women Who Run With the Wolves, p.398

3. SOURCE: Women Who Run With the Wolves, p.415

TREES SYMBOLISM

Apple tree symbolism includes magic, youth, beauty and happiness. The apple has long been associated with the symbolism of immortality. The mystical Isle of Avalon, famed place of eternal rest for Celtic heroes including King Arthur, is literally "the apple land" or "apple island." In Scandinavia, the North-European gods and goddesses were fed an apple every evening by Iduna, the goddess of spring who nurtures an apple orchard in Asgard.

Ash tree symbolism includes sacrifice, sensitivity and higher awareness. The wood is white, strong, and straight-grained. Ash is the timber of choice for production of baseball bats and tool handles. The wood is also favorable for furniture and flooring. Ash is a large deciduous tree with smooth, gray bark on young trees which becomes fissured with age. The leaves are green above, white below, and turn yellow, red, or purple in the fall.

Aspen tree symbolism includes determination and overcoming fears and doubts. They are renowned for their golden autumn foliage. Individual aspen trees live only 100 years. However, aspen trees reproduce by sprouting shoots from their roots. This allows them to grow in a cohesive grove. Thus, a grove is actually a single living organism which can reach several thousand years in age. Even fire damage will not kill a grove of aspen trees if the roots remain alive.

Beech tree symbolism includes tolerance, past knowledge and softening criticism. The beech family comprises about 900 species of both evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. Beech trees have alternate simple leaves with pinnate venation. Beech trees produce edible nuts and are commonly used as timber for floors, furniture, cabinets, and barrels. Birch tree symbolism includes new beginnings and cleansing of the past. Birch trees are also associated with vision quests. The common name birch is derived from an old Germanic root meaning "white, bright or to shine." The birch is considered the national tree of Russia, where it used to be worshipped as a goddess during the Green Week in early June.

Cedar tree symbolism includes healing, cleansing and protection. It is widely grown as an ornamental tree, planted in parks and large gardens for its drooping foliage. It is the national tree of Pakistan. The name "deodar" is derived from modern Indian language derivatives of the Sanskrit name 'devdar', meaning "timber of the gods".

Cherry tree symbolism includes death and rebirth and new awakenings. Because of their considerable value as both food and ornamental plants, many cherry and other fruit tree species have been introduced to parts of the world to which they are not native. Many of the Old World species are grown for ornament or fruit, and have been planted throughout the world. Some have become naturalised beyond their native range.

Cypress tree symbolism includes understanding the role of sacrifice and is associated with the god of the underworld, Hades. Many species are grown as decorative trees in parks and in temples. A few species are grown for their timber, which can be very durable.

Elder tree symbolism includes birth, death, and the fairy realm. The berries are a very valuable food resource for many birds. Both flowers and berries can be made into elderberry wine and an elderberry brandy is produced in Hungary. The flowers may be used to make an herbal tea, which is believed as a remedy for colds and fever. In Europe, the flowers are made into a cough syrup, which is diluted with water before drinking.

.../... TREES SYMBOLISM

Elm tree symbolism includes strength of will and intuition. During the 18th and 19th centuries, elms were popular as ornamentals by virtue of their rapid growth and variety of foliage and forms. This popularity lasted until World War I when the consequences of hostilities, notably in Germany, and the outbreak of Dutch elm disease saw the elm slide into horticultural decline. Elm wood is valued for its interlocking grain, and consequent resistance to splitting, with significant uses in wheels, chairs and coffins. The wood is also resistant to decay when permanently wet, and hollowed trunks were widely used as water pipes during the medieval period in Europe.

Hazel tree symbolism includes hidden wisdom, dousing and divination. The nuts of all hazels are edible. The Common Hazel is the species most extensively grown for its nuts, followed in importance by the Filbert. Nuts are also harvested from the other species, but apart from the Filbert, none is of significant commercial importance. A number of cultivars of the Common Hazel and Filbert are grown as ornamental plants in gardens. Holly tree symbolism includes protection, overcoming of anger and spiritual warrior. In many western cultures, holly is a traditional Christmas decoration, especially in wreaths. The wood is heavy, hard and whitish. One traditional use is for chess pieces, with holly for the white pieces, and ebony for the black. Other uses include turnery, inlay work and as firewood. Looms in the 1800s used holly for the spinning rod. Because holly is dense and can be sanded very smooth, the rod was less likely than other woods to snag threads being used to make cloth.

Maple tree symbolism includes balance, promise and practicality. Maples are important as source of syrup and wood. Dried wood is often used for the smoking of food. They are also cultivated as ornamental plants.

Palm tree symbolism includes peace and opportunity. In many historical cultures, palms were also symbols for such victory and fertility. Today, palms remain a popular symbol for the tropics and vacations. Many common products and foods are derived from palms, and palms are also widely used in landscaping for their exotic appearance making them one of the most economically important plants. Most palms are distinguished by their large, compound, evergreen leaves arranged at the top of an unbranched stem.

Pine tree symbolism includes creativity, life, longevity and immortality. Pine trees are recognizable by both their needle-like leaves and cones. Pines are commercially among the most important of species used for timber and wood pulp in temperate and tropical regions of the world. Some species have large seeds, called pine nuts, that are harvested and sold for cooking and baking.

Willow tree symbolism includes magic, healing, inner vision and dreams. The leaves and bark of the willow tree have been mentioned in ancient texts from Assyria, Sumeria and Egypt as a remedy for aches and fever. Native Americans across the continent relied on it as a staple of their medical treatments. This is because they contain acetylsalicylic acid, also known as aspirin. The willow is a famous subject in many East Asian nations' cultures, and the image has been employed in a variety of Korean poetry.