

CELTIC

An ancient system, the 13 trees of the Druid Zodiac were brought forward as they were seen imbuing distinct and important sets of qualities. These entities known as “trees” (but also inclusive of plants) were highly revered by the Druids, as was all of nature, and they were intrinsically linked to both the ancient Ogham alphabet as well as to the archetype and cycle of the lunar months. This combination of Tree (skills/qualities/patterns), Rune (sound/vibration/meaning), and Time (cycle/rhythm/pattern) reflect the distinct fields of energy that are here to be expressed through your Soul Print and life journey.



You are The Birch.

Written by Erin Scott

If born under the time of The Birch, you are imprinted with its qualities. How the Birch functioned and expressed itself was observed by the Ancients through all the human-knowledge pathways (mind, emotion, senses, and intuition); thus its wholeness was understood.

The Birch, known as “The Lady of the Woods” for its qualities of beauty and grace, is a tree that represented inception and renewal to the Druids as it was the first tree to come into leaf after winter.

Although the Birch is slender in form, it is known to be “hardier” than the Oak as it thrives in places the Oak cannot. This, in combination with its pristine light/white bark (representing purity to the Druids), made the Birch a symbol of “seed potential”: new pure fertile strong beginnings.

All components of the Birch have been used to fulfill diverse needs - from the creation of besoms, handles and cloth to the creation of oil from its bark to treat skin conditions and depression. Perhaps the most appreciated gift from the Birch was the thin peel-able bark to readily make writing parchment. The Birch, thus, was an invaluable tool for communication.

A beautiful note: In Wales, the Birch is considered a “tree of love” and wreaths are woven of its branches to create love tokens. Indeed, acting here as another tool to convey communications.

As one encoded with Birch, you inherently contain all of its qualities, patterns and expressions. Some of your gifts and growth edges include determination and persistence, ambition and a driven nature, tolerance and resilience, efficacy, catalyzing motivation in others, inherent leadership abilities, organization, loyalty and trustworthiness, enchantment, grace, a bringer of beauty and light into darker spaces, hope and strength, and an affectionate yet serious and reserved nature. Indeed, you as Birch are unique in that you contain the elegant quality-set of The Feminine combined with the resolute quality-set of The Masculine. When the whole of these qualities and patterns are recognized, accepted and allowed to express and evolve naturally, you

are optimally aligned with your intrinsic authentic nature. Your journey is always inextricably linked to evolving the balanced expression of each.

About The Birch

Written by Winter Cymraes

The White Lady of the Woods, also known as the White Birch stands, slender and graceful, with long branches reaching toward the sky. This Tree is rarely seen singly, growing most often in Groves.

She embodies the ideal of graceful femininity and light-filled grace. The Birch grows out of a common, joined trunk so that many appear to grow from the one. People who have been 'claimed' by Birch tend to be very gentle in nature and do not stand alone but are joined to others as supportive and close allies, showing devotion to their beliefs and having a strong desire to make others happy and to enhance growth and development.

Birch, as with all Trees, has specific attributes and associations. The Ogham are divided into classification of Chieftain, Shrub, Peasant and Bramble. Beith is a Chieftain. Birch relates, also, to the Tarot card, the Star. It represents the Bardic Grade of Druidry, the 'youngest' of the ranks.

Beith is the first Ogham and resonates with the number one. Its colour is white. In the Oghamic alphabet, it is the letter B. The animals associated with Beith are the pheasant and the white cow and its plant is the Fly Agaric mushroom.

Its name probably comes from the Sanskrit word bhurga which relates to the continuous phases of life, the alpha-omega principle. Taliesin represents the Birch. He was the offspring of Cel and Cerridwen. In the Arthurian legend, Taliesin was known as Merlyn. Although it is commonly accepted that the sage Taliesin was actually named Merlyn, this was the title of the person who was considered the Chief Bard among the Druids, a title that had passed from person-to-person throughout history.

Birch also represents the common everyday work performed to make a living, rather than being associated with a specific occupation or trade, as is the case with other Trees.

Beith is also known for its protective magical abilities, along with its role as the herald of new beginnings. A Tree of extreme hardiness, Birch thrives in places where Oak would die. Although the wood of Oak (Duir) is used for building due to its strength and durability, the resilience and specific magickal properties of Birch lend the use of its fibre to very specific ends.

In ancient times, brooms made of Birch twigs were commonly used to drive out the spirits of the old year and to 'beat the bounds' of property for protection. Thus, broomsticks made of Birch have the added benefit of these protective qualities.

This is the Tree commonly used by the shaman to climb the sky ladder to make contact with the Gods of the Air and Beith is associated with Air and winds. Maypoles were often of Birch, as were the twigs used to ignite the Beltane fires, signifying new beginnings and a fresh start. The Yule log is, traditionally, Birch also.

Cradles made of Birch are said to protect the infant from harm, particularly of a psychic nature. For the same reasons it is said that a small piece of Birch carried upon a person will prevent kidnapping of the individual by the sidhe, or the Faerie Folk.

The Facts from Nature

Know the Qualities of your Tree

The Birch Tree details below sourced from the 2020site.org

Appearance of the Tree

Birches are enchanting trees that embody beauty and grace. While most types of Birch trees grow to roughly 40 feet, some, such as the Paper and Yellow Birch can soar to 80 feet tall.

Just as the height of the tree varies among species, so do the Birch's other characteristics:

- **Leaves:** The leaves of the Birch tree are typically oval to elliptical-shaped. For example, the leaves of the Yellow Birch are oval, while the Gray Birch has more elliptical-shaped leaves. In addition, the leaves range in color from light green to forest green during the summer months. In the fall, the leaves turn a spectacular array of yellow, brown and orange.
- **Bark:** Birch trees are known for their unique bark. All Birches, except for the Gray Birch, feature peeling barks. The thin bark peels off in long strips. Another identifying trait of Birch tree bark is its color. The young Paper Birch starts off brown but turns chalky white as it ages. Meanwhile, River Birch features a kaleidoscope of colors, including tan, pink, and silver. Birch bark is smooth during its younger years, but gets thick and deeply ridged as the tree matures.
- **Flowers:** The Birch tree produces flowers known as catkins. The bloom is long and droops from branches in clusters. The catkins can be seen in the late summer and early fall, though some hang on through the winter.

Birch trees are relatively hardy and can live up to 200 years in the right growing conditions.

Birch Tree Types

The Birch is a member of the Betula genus which features nearly 60 different species. Among the most notable types are:

- **Paper Birch:** Native to North America, the Paper Birch is treasured for its ornamental value. The tree has a creamy white bark and delicate green leaves. It is one of the largest Birches and can reach heights of 80 feet.
- **European White Birch:** The medium-sized tree is typically planted in urban areas where it explodes with color during autumn.
- **Gray Birch:** This is the only type of Birch whose bark does not peel. The trunk is tall and stately and thrives in moist soil.
- **Yellow Birch:** Bark is golden yellow to yellow-orange and peels into curled-up strips. The towering tree is a slow grower and has an extensive root system.

Other types of Birch trees used for decorative purposes include:

- Silver Birch
- Bog Birch
- Downy Birch
- Asian White Birch
- Blue Birch
- Sweet Birch
- Dwarf Birch

- Resin Birch
- Northern Birch
- Water Birch
- Cherry Birch

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Where the Birch Grows

The Birch tree can be found growing worldwide, from Russia and Japan to Europe and across North America, including Canada and the northern portion of the United States. The trees thrive in moist soil and require full sunlight. Birches are particularly fond of damp and cool environments, especially since their root systems are so shallow and they're susceptible to drought conditions.

Popular Uses

Birch trees are known for their stunning satin-like, fine-grained wood. Their strong wood is also valued for its color which deepens with exposure to air, making it look like mahogany.

The Birch's highly-prized trunk and branches can be transformed into a variety of items, including:

- Birch Tree Wood
- Bed frames
- Veneer
- Cabinets
- Doll houses
- Model planes
- Skateboards
- Guitar amplifiers
- Tool handles
- Baskets
- Doors
- Fence posts
- Railroad ties
- Pallets

Birch tree timber is also used for fuel. Water Birch is especially coveted for firewood which is sold throughout the United States.

Interesting Facts

The Birch tree plays an interesting part in European folklore where it is associated with death. Despite its dark past, the Birch is the national tree of Russia where it used to be worshipped as a goddess. In addition, New Hampshire adopted the Birch as its state tree and uses it to spruce up urban environments.

Other interesting facts about the tree include:

- On the night of May 1st young men in Germany decorate Birch trees and leave them in front of their sweetheart's house as a token of their love.
- Birch bark can be soaked in water and used as a cast for broken bones.
- The bark can also be consumed to alleviate stomach ailments.
- Beavers use Birch trees to build dams.
- Many animals, including birds, deer, moose rabbits, and turkeys use the Birch tree as a source of food.

With nature recognized as the teacher and informer, the Druids lived according to three foundational beliefs: 1) remembering and honoring the ancestors as well as the past, 2) understanding nature and the universe so to access its power, and 3) discovering the connection between material reality and the spiritual realm.

“According to ancient Greek and Latin writers, the Celts were advanced in astronomy and they were respected, especially by the Greeks, for their interpreting information from the stars. Hippolytus, in the first century CE, using an earlier source, wrote that the ancient Celts prophesied the future from the stars by ciphers and numbers.” – Jill Stefko