



Lady Elm

Deborah Coles, Simcoe, Ontario

Preparation: Set up a display of potted trees, tree books, posters depicting trees

Theme: Lady of the Forest — what the elm tree symbolizes

Thoughts on the “Lore” of the Elm Tree

It is interesting to note that the elm’s mythology is intimately bound up with death and the transition into the Underworld, and that the wood was used to such deadly effect in mediaeval warfare. The elm’s connection with death does not end there, as its wood is traditionally used to make coffins, though the wood’s durability underground may be part of the reason in this choice.

Perhaps people who knew elms well, were reminded of their own mortality when remembering the elm’s reputation for dropping large boughs without warning on otherwise still, warm days; “elm hateth man, and waiteth” as the old saying goes. news.sonorika.co.uk/news/American-hardwoods-elm

Notwithstanding the elm’s legendary associations with death and the Underworld, people also looked to the elm for medicinal cures. The inner bark was especially efficacious when chewed or boiled into a liquor to treat colds and sore throats, while the boiled bark was also used to treat burns.

Adapted from: Paul Kendall: Published: Caledonia Wild! Winter 2003-04 Trees for Life, The Park, Findhorn Bay, Forres IV36 3TZ, Scotland, UK

Song: SASB 8/TB 569 *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

Poem: Oh, To Be in England

*Oh, to be in England
Now that April’s there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!*

Robert Browning - 1812~1889

Readings

- Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence. (Hal Borland)
- The adjectives “majestic” and “stately” leap to mind when describing elms. These trees are truly one of our most recognizable trees whether lining our streets and boulevards or standing on guard in a farmer’s field. The number of “Elm” streets, parks and buildings demonstrates just how much a part of our lives this tree has become. (Elmcare.com)



- The majestic elm is one of the most beloved of all our trees. Unfortunately, Dutch elm disease has taken its toll and sadly the elm is disappearing from our landscape. Thankfully through community action, new research and a concentrated effort, the elm can make a comeback. Perhaps soon, the stately elm can reclaim its rightful place in our lives.
- Trees add not only beauty but value to a property. The value of a mature elm for insurance purposes is C\$3,600. The 7,700,000 elm trees in urban centres in North America have a combined value of over US\$ 19 billion.
- Dutch elm disease got its name because it was discovered by scientists in Holland in 1917. The seven Dutch scientists who first identified the disease were all women.

- Dutch elm disease hit England in the 1960's and within 20 years had killed 17 million of the country's 23 million elm trees. An out-break of the disease in 1945 destroyed second-generation elms in Eastern Canada and the United States. The elm population dropped from 77 million to 34 million by 1976.

Did you know?

- Fully mature elm trees can live as long as 300 years
- The cooling effect of one urban elm tree is equivalent to five air conditioning units
- North American settlers named the elm “the lady of the forest”
- The American elm grows to over 115 feet tall and can have a diameter in excess of ten feet
- The Iroquois used elm bark to make canoes, rope and utensils

Poem: Think Like a Tree

*Soak up the sun
Affirm life's magic
Be graceful in the wind
Stand tall after a storm
Feel refreshed after it rains
Grow strong without notice
Be prepared for each season
Provide shelter to strangers
Hang tough through a cold spell
Emerge renewed at the first signs of spring
Stay deeply rooted while reaching for the sky
Be still long enough to
hear your own leaves rustling.*

Karen I. Shragg. The above poem is excerpted with permission from Tree Stories: a Collection of Extraordinary Encounters edited. by Warren Jacobs and Karen I. Shragg Sunshine Press Publications Hygiene, CO (2002) www.sunshinepress.com

Quiz: “Trees”

(Fill in the blanks: “Trees”)

I think that I shall never see

A poem lovely as a _____ (tree)

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest

Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
 A tree that looks at God all day,
 And lifts her leafy arms to _____ (pray);
 A tree that may in summer wear
 A nest of _____ (robins) in her hair;
 Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
 Who intimately lives with rain.
 Poems are made by fools like me,
 But only _____ (God) can make a tree.

Alfred Joyce-Kilmer

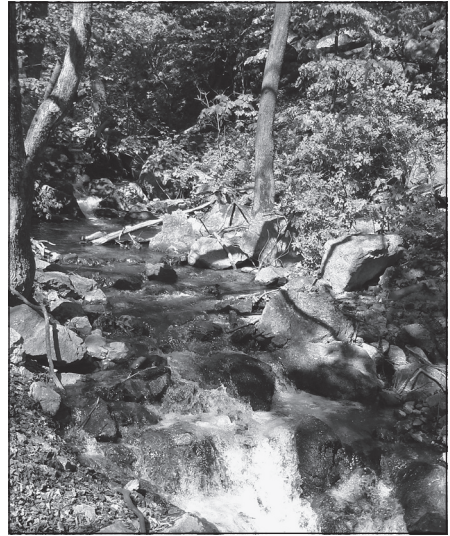
Song: SASB 28/TB 306 *For the Beauty of the Earth*

Scripture: Psalm 1

Poem: Advice from a Tree

*Dear Friend, Stand Tall and Proud
 Sink your roots deeply into the Earth
 Reflect the light of a greater source
 Think long term
 Go out on a limb
 Remember your place among all living beings
 Embrace with joy the changing seasons
 For each yields its own abundance
 The Energy and Birth of Spring
 The Growth and Contentment of Summer
 The Wisdom to let go of leaves in the Fall
 The Rest and Quiet Renewal of Winter
 Feel the wind and the sun
 And delight in their presence
 Look up at the moon that shines down upon you
 And the mystery of the stars at night.
 Seek nourishment from the good things in life
 Simple pleasures
 Earth, fresh air, light
 Be content with your natural beauty
 Drink plenty of water
 Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes
 Be flexible
 Remember your roots
 Enjoy the view!*

Ilan Shamir. Copyright 1993-2003 Your True Nature, Inc. for 'Advice from a Tree' books, journals, posters and other nature products, visit www.YourTrueNature.com or call 1-800-992-4769.



Song: *As a Tree* TB 448 *By the Pathway of Duty* (verses only)

*As a tree beside the water,
 Has the Saviour planted me;
 All my fruit shall be in season,
 I shall live eternally.
 Though the tempest rage around me,
 Through the storm my Lord I see,
 Pointing upward to that haven,
 Where my loved ones wait for me.*

*When by grief my heart is broken,
 And the sunshine steals away,
 Then His grace, in mercy given,
 Changes darkness into day.
 When at last I stand before Him,
 Oh, what joy it will afford,
 Just to see the sinner ransomed,
 And behold my sovereign Lord.*

Devotional: *Like a tree planted by the water.* Jeremiah 17:7-8, Psalm 92:1-15

Billy Graham tells of his experience at learning how to ride a bike. He was seven years old and his father and other family members tried to teach him the art of cycling. Mr. Graham says, "I soon

found out there was one thing I must do if I was to stay on the bicycle — keep moving forward. If I ceased to go forward, I would fall and hurt myself.” So it is in the Christian life. We can never live this life on the highest plane unless we are continually growing and moving forward.

Psalm 92:12-14 “*The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a Cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God.*”



Why would God choose a cedar tree as an analogy for Christian growth? Maybe the answer lies in the Hebrew word “Sagah” from which the word “grow” comes. “Sagah” is a word, which suggests a threefold growth — downward, upward, and outward. The cedar grows downward (it is deeply rooted), it grows upward (it is very tall) and it grows outward (it is wide).

Scripture reveals that Christian growth must be evident in the life of all believers.

Deeply Rooted: The function of the root system is vital to the growth of a tree. It anchors the tree and provides stability. If the roots sit in shallow ground, the tree will topple when the

storms come and it will dry up during seasons of drought. There are some desert shrubs that have roots which extend downwards in the earth as deeply as 230 feet. The cedar too has very deep roots.

Paul prayed that the Christians of Ephesus would be rooted and established in the love of Christ. Ephesians 3:17-19 “*...I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*”

We need to be deeply rooted in love, God’s love, so that we will not forget His love for us or take it lightly. The strength we gain from this love enables us to grow in our understanding of being deeply rooted in our faith.

Again in Colossians 2:6-7 Paul writes, “*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*”

‘Being rooted’ suggests the thought that something which took place in the past, but whose effects persist in the present. Because we are in union with Christ through faith, we gain more knowledge of Him in our lives and therefore, grow more like Him.

Psalm 92 reminds us that the chief reason for healthy trees is that they are planted by a good water supply. They spread their roots along the riverbank, so even in time of drought they can find the hidden nourishment beneath the riverbed.

When we plant our spiritual lives close to God’s water supply — ‘the Living Water’ — His Word and Prayer, we will never run dry, nor will we topple over when the storms of life come against us.

Isaiah 40:29-31 “*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired, weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles;*

they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

God has provided an abundant measure for us – we can never exhaust His supply.

His love has no limits,

His grace has no measure.

His power no boundary known unto men.

For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,

He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

My prayer today is that our hearts would long to be so deeply rooted in Christ that no matter the storms we face, God's supply will see us through. Without an adequate root system, a tree simply could not even survive. Is that not true of the Christian?

Christian growth is evident in our lives when we absorb.

Godly Light: *A healthy tree is naturally drawn toward the light.* An encyclopedia of trees tell us that young cedars can grow in partial shade but will eventually need full sun to realize their potential.

To be a healthy growing Christian we are naturally drawn toward the light. To realize our full potential in Christ, we need the light of God. Psalm 36:9 *"For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."*

Only as we seek to understand more about the True Light can we reach our full potential spiritually, and become effective in proclaiming this wonderful gospel to others. The daily living of our faith is what really counts, because many people do not read the Scripture, rather they watch to see if the 'Light' we talk about has made a difference in us and the way we live.

A healthy tree grows from a sapling to full maturity at a very slow rate.

Down through history the Cedars of Lebanon have been a valuable source of wood. It was from Lebanon's cedar forests that Solomon got the wood for his temple and palace. These trees have been so sought after that they are at near extinction but they are today being protected. Hundreds

of young cedar trees have been planted around the area during the last 30 years. But since they only grow at a rate of 1 cm every year, it will be many generations before these saplings reach the impressive size of those in the forest.

There are two lessons for us here: *God decides the growth pattern and we need to depend on Him.*

We need to be so careful in our haste to work for God that we don't lag behind Him or run ahead of Him. His timing is perfect. Our work for God is not always about the work, it is about what God can do in us and through us while we work.



We are not commodities to God. We are valuable and not easy to replace.

We need to take a lesson from what has happened to the Cedars of Lebanon. They have been reduced greatly by harvesting over the centuries, but because growth is so slow, they've not been replaced at the same speed as to their being cut down.

It is so important to protect God's investment and replant when replacement is needed. Disciplining of all believers in the faith is crucial so that God's work continues. Long after we are gone to be with the Lord, others will need to take the gospel to the lost of this community.

Christian growth becomes evident when we allow our lives to be a 'covering shade'.

A healthy cedar is a broad tree — it provides a sanctuary for others.



Our lives should be such that others feel comfortable to come to us — so that we could provide a comfort zone where spiritual needs are met and where they can give birth to new ideas. A fresh incentive and a change of perspective will point us to the Lord in our personal spiritual growth.

Ezekiel 31:6 *“All the birds of the air nested in its boughs, all the beasts of the field gave birth under its branches....”*

It provides shade and protection — all the great nations lived in its shade.

Isaiah 32:1-2 *“See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.”*

Shortly before his death, Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote “Youth and Age” in which he reflected over his past and the strength of his earlier years. In this work he makes a beautiful statement ... “Friendship is a sheltering tree.”

There is nothing like a sheltering tree ... a true friend ... to give us relief in its cool shade. Beneath the branches of such a sheltering tree many discouraged souls have rested. I thank God for the many sheltering trees in my life.

God desires that we reach out to others so that they would see in our lives a place where they can find relief from the scorch of life’s hardships — a protection from the heat of the moment and the heat of the day.

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Galatians 6:2 *“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

Jeremiah 17:7-8 *“But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”*



What you need to know about Slippery Elm

The use of slippery elm in cultural and traditional settings may differ from concepts accepted by current Western medicine. Before taking slippery elm, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or health care professional.

If you have allergies (especially to plants), have a medical condition, or if you take medicines or other herbal/health supplements, slippery elm may not be a viable option.

Information about the herb Slippery Elm

Slippery Elm is a deciduous tree found from Canada to Florida, west to the Dakotas and Texas.

Common Names: American Elm, Indian Elm, Moose Elm, Red Elm, Rock Elm, Sweet Elm, Ulme, Winged Elm

History: The Red American Indians used the bark and as a food called Oohooska meaning ‘to slip’.

Slippery Elm as a healing agent:

- anti-inflammatory (an agent to ease inflammation)
- antiseptic (an agent for inhibiting the growth of microorganism on living tissue or destroying pathogenic or putrefactive bacteria)
- emollient (an agent used externally to soften and soothe)

- expectorant (an agent that promotes the discharge of mucous and secretions from the respiratory passages)
- nutritive (gives nourishment)
- pectoral (remedy for pulmonary or other lung and chest diseases)
- remedial (has a healing effect)

Usage of Slippery Elm

Medicinal parts used: The inner bark of the slippery elm is the portion which can be used for healing ailments such as:

- bronchitis
- chest disorders
- coughs
- irritation of the pharynx
- soothes coughs
- soothing to the whole respiratory system
- sore throat

Externally can be used as a poultice, ointment, wash, etc. for:

- abscesses
- boils
- burns
- congestion
- poison ivy
- skin cancers
- skin diseases
- swollen glands
- ulcers
- wounds