

The Ash Tree

Fraxinus excelsior

Yggdrasil, the World Tree in Viking mythology, grew on an island surrounded by the ocean, in the depths of which the World Serpent lay. This ash tree's trunk reached up to the heavens, and its boughs spread out over all the countries of the Earth. Its roots reached down into the Underworld.

Wood

Its timber is strong, tough, elastic and shock-resistant, making its use perfect for tool handles and sporting equipment. It is said that a joint of ash will bear more weight than any other wood. Chariot and coach axles were made of ash. If oak built the ships of Britain, their oars were made of ash. Ash is a pale, rich, creamy wood, with a touch of brown and a strong, swirling grain.

 Many species of Fraxinus, the ash tree, exude a sugary substance which the ancient Greeks called *m_h*, i.e. honey. This substance was harvested commercially until the early part of this century, and is found on Fraxinus excelsior in northern Europe and Fraxinus ornus in the mountains of Greece.

Medicinal: Leaves are used today for arthritis.

Burning: "Ash wood green and Ash wood Brown, fit for a King with a golden crown"

The density of the wood also makes it an ideal fuel, as is reflected in its Latin species name Fraxinus meaning firelight. One of the traditional woods used as the yule log was ash. To this day ash is the most highly valued firewood, burning for a long time with an intense heat, whether seasoned or green.

