



The Ash Tree

by Logan Nelson with excerpts from
The Meaning of Trees by Fred Hagender

Symbolism: Mastership and Power

Astrological Affiliation: Sun

Natural Healing Qualities: Tea made from ash trees is said to remedy gout and rheumatism. Also, essential oils derived from ash are said to enhance a sense of strength and flexibility.

Superstition: In 19th-century England and France, the finger and toenail clippings of a person who had a fever or who was suffering from toothache were buried under an ash tree in the belief that this would cure their affliction.

History of Practical Uses: In Europe, many warriors of the Bronze and Iron Ages (including Celtic and Germanic tribes, as well as the Greeks and their neighbors) used straight, strong and tough ash wood to make their spears and shield handles. In Greek legend, Achilles kills Hector with an ash spear. In peaceful times, it was

used to make tool handles, oars, gates and sports equipment.

Perhaps, however, the ash's greatest significance is in its function as a living tree that contributes to farmyard and forest economies. In and north of the Alps, its leaves are second only to elm foliage as leaf fodder, as they are rich in nutrients and soft for cattle, sheep, goats and deer to chew.

The lopping of ash trees on the farm was a vital, traditional practice until the agricultural industry developed artificial supplements for stockfood and bred cows that thrived on such food.

Today, in the Alps, an increasing number of farmers have begun to question such artificial feeding practices (which are often mandated by legislation) and they are searching back into history for ways to return to traditional cattle breeds and grazing methods.