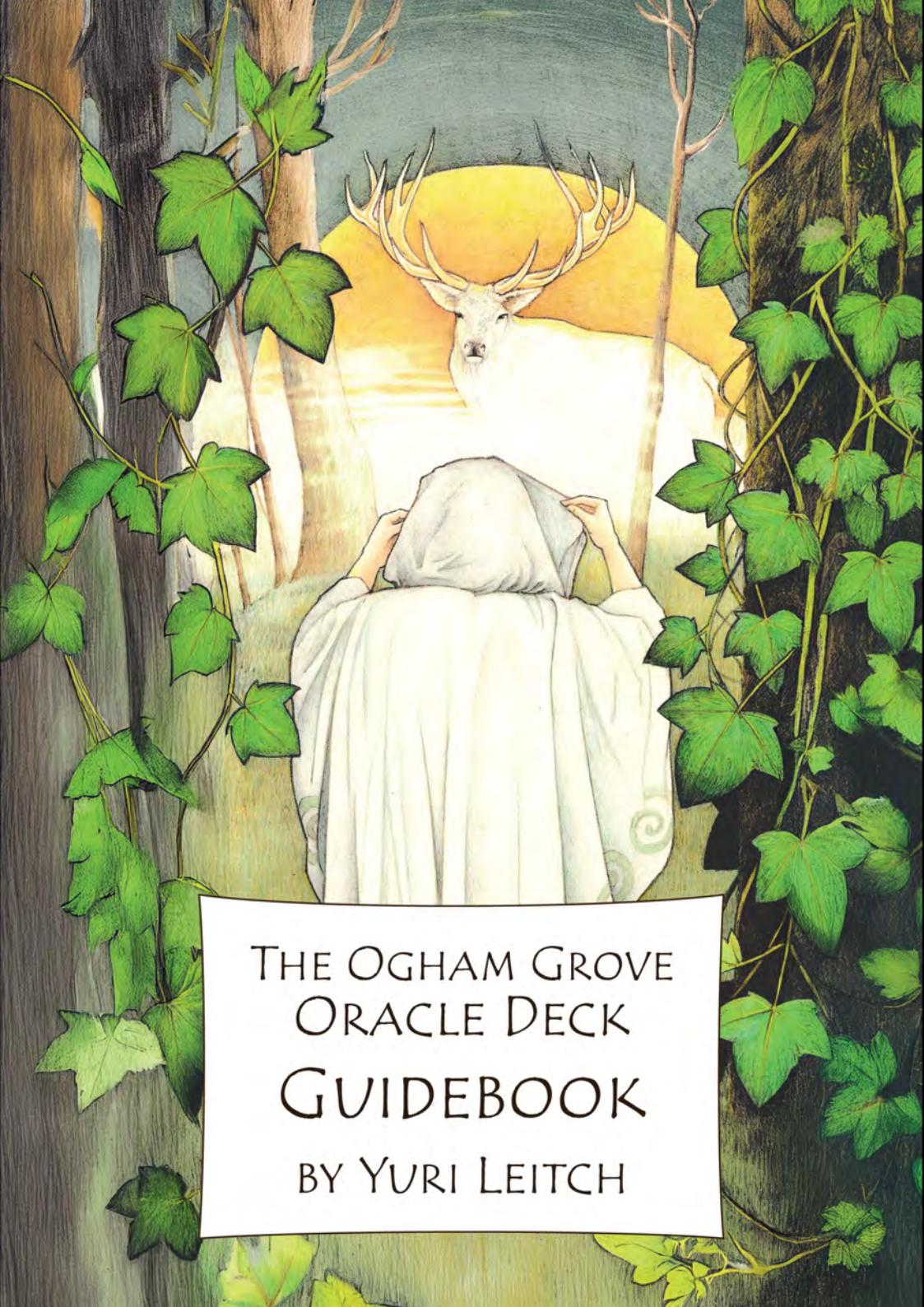




THE OGHAM GROVE
ORACLE DECK
GUIDEBOOK
BY YURI LEITCH

First Edition © Yuri Leitch, Spring 2025

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Production – Design: Alan Outten



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Ogham Grove Oracle Deck. This pack of cards burst forth in just one year which was an intense process. I have created other oracle decks, and on average, they have each taken about seven years to manifest. The birthing of this deck was helped by the persistent encouragement of my friend, Alan Outten, who has the technical skills to make the presentation of the cards so beautiful.

As soon as a book is published it becomes out of date, and as soon as an oracle deck is born, it has its own destiny – in the hands of others.

I created this artwork with love, to be a balm upon a troubled world.

Yuri Leitch
Spring 2025



THE OGHAM DRYADS

The Ogham Dryads are the first part of this oracle. They represent the spirits of the trees, and they are the psychopomps, soul guides, of the Ogham Grove. Each Dryad is a personification of the esoteric nature, and lore, of each tree – its star-lore, mythology, and divinities – and each Dryad governs her own arboreal area of the Ogham Grove (be it a Yew Grove, an Apple Orchard, or an Oak Forest, and so on). In a reading, each Dryad manifests to walk by your side for a while, or to beckon you to explore their part of the Grove – always with your wellbeing and personal growth at heart. Hold her hand for a while and listen to her guidance.



BEITH

Dryad of the Birch tree

First tree of the Ogham Grove.

Beith beckons you to embark upon a new journey, and to see everywhere as sacred ground. She embodies the first rays of light following the Winter Solstice rebirth of the Sun; the brightness of sparkling sunlight reflecting upon rippling water. She resonates with the goddess, Elen of the Ways, and all other goddesses of sovereignty. Walking upon pure white snow, carrying the life-giving Light of the land, following the reindeer herds, the way-clearers, crunching through virgin snow.

Meaning in a reading: Beith comes to you, to help you see clearly through the tangled forest of life, and to clear the mental brambles blocking your way.



LUIS

Dryad of the Rowan tree

Second tree of the Ogham Grove

Luis seeks to kindle the flame of inspiration within you. Let your gift to the world shine. Sacred to the goddess Brigid and her creative fire of inspiration. The quickening of the Light of the Land, awaiting the first sign of Snowdrops, the promise of Spring. Rowan takes us to Imbolc, the festival of Brigid. Each berry bears a five-pointed star, making Rowan a goddess tree of protection. In July, when the Sun is in Ivy, the Full Moon is in Rowan, and its berries are ripe.

Meaning in a reading: Luis comes to you, to inspire you to put energy into your soul's purpose.



FERN

Dryad of the Alder tree

Third tree of the Ogham Grove

Fern calls for emotional peace, especially after great heartbreak. She seeks mental tranquillity and peace of mind. Sacred to the divine siblings, Branwen and Bran, guardians of the Cauldron of Rebirth. Fern follows the festival of Imbolc and she leads one to the 'Water's Edge', reflecting upon the 'Heavenly Grail' of the Full Moon in Broom. Branwen, 'White Raven', is a goddess of mercy, compassion, and the healing of grief.

Meaning in a reading: Fern comes to you to help you make peace with any emotional turmoil that weighs heavy upon your soul. Take time to feel your emotions. Take as long as you need. Find peace.



SAILLE

Dryad of the Willow tree

Fourth tree of the Ogham Grove

Saille helps you reflect upon all your memories. Remember who you are – love. The tree of the ‘Water’s Edge’, offering shelter to the Salmon of Wisdom. Sacred to the Nine Muses, the daughters of memory, whose breath keeps warm the Cauldron of Annwn – one’s centre of being and the compass of one’s soul. Reflections upon water, ripples of memory, retrieving aspects of self. Sacred waters and the Maidens of the Wells.

Meaning in a reading: Saille comes to you, to help you reflect upon your past – of this lifetime and of previous lives – all that you have been, all that you are, is your memories.



NION

Dryad of the Ash tree

Fifth tree of the Ogham Grove

Nion shines with the light of the Sun, at dawn, upon a brand-new day. Believe in yourself. Nion holds the 'Salmon's Leap', the jump from the end of one zodiacal year to the beginning of another. She holds the position of the Spring Equinox, the first light of dawn, and the power of Light triumphant over darkness. The radiant brow. The Ash tree is sacred to Lugh, sovereignty, and divine kingship. Alder and Ash, shield and spear, defend the sacred land.

Meaning in a reading: Nion comes to you, to empower you with self-sovereignty. Step up, into the truth of who you are, don't hide in the shadows.



UATHA

Dryad of the Hawthorn tree

Sixth tree of the Ogham Grove

Uatha personifies your heart's desire. What is it that you yearn for? Pursue it. Sacred to the May Queen and the blossoming time of the year, Hawthorn is the testing tree, heralding a rite of passage, and proving one's worth. Are you worthy of your heart's desire? Are you true to your destiny? Hawthorn embodies the beauty of desire, guarded by thorns – symbolizing the challenges and trials faced by those who seek to reach its heart.

Meaning in a reading: Uatha comes to you, to encourage you to never give up on your dreams. Be true to yourself, your purpose, and your destiny.



DUIR

Dryad of the Oak tree

Seventh tree of the Ogham Grove

Duir sings of the endurance of love that holds all kindred together, bloodline and mortality. The tree of Druids and Dryads, 'Oak-Knowers' and 'Oak Spirits' leads us to Beltane and the 'Rites of May' – the fertility and flirt-ility of Floralia. Nymph of the King of the Woods, strength and endurance, the King of Summer. In the days of Taurus the Bull, governed by Venus, goddess of Love. Lovers play in the forest, dappled sunlight upon naked skin. The lust for life.

Meaning in a reading: Duir comes to you, to remind you that physical existence is the manifestation of the spirit world, the soul's home and garden.



TINNE

Dryad of the Holly tree

Eighth tree of the Ogham Grove

Tinne reminds one of universal love, and that one is an ever-living eternal being – that one's soul is eternal. The first of the evergreen trees, which are symbolically immortal, ever-living. Holly follows Beltane, and so, after Samhain, a Holly Full Moon may shine upon the Winter King's wild hunt. But for now, at the dawn of summer, Holly stands as a quiet herald to the mighty Oak, King of the Woods, reminding him that all mortal reigns are but fleeting moments in time. Treasure the moment.

Meaning in a reading: Tinne comes to you to appreciate the passing of Time, the ever-flowing river of life, that all moments must pass.



COLL

Dryad of the Hazel tree

Ninth tree of the Ogham Grove

Coll is the spirit of wisdom, learning, and intuitive perception. Your words create your reality. There were nine sacred Hazel trees around Connla's Well, that dropped their sweet nuts into the waters below, from which the Salmon of Wisdom gained their Imbas. The Days of Hazel correspond with the Sun in the sign of Gemini. Hazel is a mercurial tree of wisdom, intuition, and its twigs were favoured for water-divining. Mercurial gods of magic and arcane writing – Odin, Gwydion, Merlin, and Ogma.

Meaning in a reading: Coll comes to you to help you expand your knowledge and to be mindful of wisdom, wise action, to not speak in haste.



QUERT

Dryad of the Apple tree

Tenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Quert guides us into Avalon, the realm of apples, the Summerland where all souls are healed. Apple stands at the heart of the Summer Solstice, embodying the essence of the Summerlands. The Norman-French word for 'place of apples' is Avalon, akin to Celtic Annwn, the inner-world. Apple crowns the Rose-Family Pentagram, eternally entwined with the Evergreen Pentagram: the golden apples of mystical islands; fruits of healing and immortality; the mystical treasures sought by Hercules, and the Children of Tuireann. The birds of Rhiannon.

Meaning in a reading: Quert comes to you to connect with your inner world, your inner muse, your unique point of contact with the eternal realm.



MUIN

Dryad of the Vine

Eleventh tree of the Ogham Grove

Muin is the sacred wine, the fruits of mystery, and relaxing one's inhibitions. Fruitful friendships. The fruits of the grapevine, raisins for sweetness, and grapes for wine. Vine opens the third quarter of the year, which holds the constellation of the 'Heavenly Grail', Krater the Wine-mixing vessel – the 'Cauldron' of many Celtic 'Mysteries'. Vine held the Celts of Ireland and Britain in friendship with their European kin – the wine-trade, and the Celtic Sea trade, being intrinsically linked together.

Meaning in a reading: Muin comes to you to seek inspiration from your friends, and to be a good friend unto others. Find your tribe and your gift to help the greater good.



GORT

Dryad of the Ivy

Twelfth tree of the Ogham Grove

Gort is the gatekeeper of the woods, binding into unity all the trees of the Grove. Ivy is the second evergreen, 'immortal', of the Ogham Grove. She eagerly climbs any tree that welcomes her, offering food in winter and shelter throughout the year to all birds. Ivy leaves are slightly mind-altering, making them the 'Key to the Woods', just her presence facilitates a change in consciousness – to help leave the mundane world behind. The days of Ivy hold the magical cusp between the Moon Crab and the Sun Lion.

Meaning in a reading: Gort comes to you, to be in the world but not of it.



NGETAL

Dryad of the golden-yellow Broom

Thirteenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Ngetal is the Grail Maiden of the Grove, guardian of your Middle Cauldron. The Leonine, golden-haired, Summer Queen, Bride of Lughnasadh. Celestial Maiden of the 'Heavenly Grail' – one's Middle Cauldron and centre of being. Sacred to Blodeuedd, Flower Maiden, born of Oak, Broom, and Meadowsweet. The golden light of the sun, shining with one's heart's desire. The Heart of the Rose. Always be true to yourself, follow your heart, one's soul's compass back home.

Meaning in a reading: Ngetal comes to you, to call you home to your soul's purpose. Where do you really belong? What is your true vocation? Do what you love, always be true to yourself.



STRAIPH

The Dryad of the Blackthorn tree

Fourteenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Straiph protects that which is sacred – the Great Mother and the Maidens of the Wells. Blackthorn corresponds with the sign of Virgo and the Mother aspect of the triple goddess. The Scoti, the Irish Sea traders that used the Ogham and gave their name to Scotland, claimed descent from an Egyptian princess called Scota – their matriarch. Blackthorn protected the sacred springs from contamination, the life-giving waters, that all creatures depend upon. Blackthorn also corresponds with Ceridwen, the mother goddess of the Bardic Mysteries.

Meaning in a reading: Straiph comes to you, with the energy of maternal protection, wanting you to live a fulfilling life. Mother's love.



RUIS

The Dryad of the Elder tree

Fifteenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Ruis carries the wisdom of the tribal elders, and the cutting away of all that no longer serves your path. Elder plays the Grandmother aspect of the triple goddess of the Ogham Grove, And she holds the position of the Autumn Equinox concluding the year's light half. The Elder carries the lore of preservation, and wisdom, that helps the younger generations to survive the hardships of winter – always respect your elders. She is also 'The Washer at the Ford', cutting away all that no longer serves you.

Meaning in a reading: Ruis comes to you, to contemplate the fruits of your labour and whether you are helping the future generations?



AILM

The Dryad of the Pine tree

Sixteenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Ailm stands at the threshold between the worlds, overseeing preparations for the Wild Hunt. High ideals and spiritual aspirations. Pine is the first tree of the final quarter of the year, the time of the mysterious Wild Hunt – the psychopompic race to the Spirit World. Pine sets her sight to Samhain and the Winter Solstice. Pine is the vowel 'A', the first cry of a newborn baby, and the exclamation of a bright new idea, or sudden realisation.

Meaning in a reading: Ailm comes to you, to call you to journey to the realm of the ancestors, to honour your loved ones that have died.



ONN

The Dryad of the wild Gorse

Seventeenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Onn is a feral spirit of the wild heath, giving protection from the storm. Trust the unknown. The golden gorse of the 'Wild Heath' is prickly and sharp, scorpionic, and protective – offering shelter from harsh weather. The mother animal protecting her young. Nature, harsh in tooth and claw, survivalism. A landscape wild and feral. Threshold of the Otherworld, where the veil is thinnest, Fae abode of the free spirit. Gorse nestling rocks upon the forlorn moor, crowning cliff-tops above the Sea.

Meaning in a reading: Onn comes to you, to be a guiding light in the darkness. You must trust in spirit even if lost in the dark.



UR

The Dryad of the blooming Heather

Eighteenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Ur is a Fae spirit of the cliffs and windswept heights, offering comfort from the cold. The softer half of the 'Wild Heath', following on from Samhain, less prickly than the Gorse, hugging the ground. Giving winter protection to small creatures and hibernating snakes. 'Lucky Heather' gave domestic comfort to people, to help them endure the colder months – bedding for mattresses, kindling to light fires, and Celtic 'Heather Ale'. Heather guides the Wild Hunt across the heathland to the Aspen forest spirit realm.

Meaning in a reading: Ur comes to you to prepare for hibernation, to go inward and plant your seeds of intent for the future you want.



EADHADH

The Dryad of the Aspen tree

Nineteenth tree of the Ogham Grove

Eadhadh is a soul guide to the realm of the dead, the most ancient of ancestors. Tree of the spirit realm and stars – five-pointed stars run through its twigs. Aspen corresponds with Sagittarius and the Galactic Centre of the Milky Way. Aspen leaves shake and shiver, whispering the voices of spirit guides and ancestors. The most ancient of ancestors, the first people, whose footsteps we all follow. Psychopomp tree, preparing and protecting those that have died, until rebirth.

Meaning in a reading: Eadhadh comes to you, with the inescapable truth that our mortal bodies must one day die, that all our ancestors had to, but that spirit never dies.



IDHO

Dryad of the Yew tree

Conclusion of the Ogham Grove.

Idho is the eternal spirit of renewal. Know that you are loved and that you belong. Tree of death and rebirth. Tree of the Winter Solstice and the rebirth of the Sun. Sacred to the goddess, Nemetona, 'She of the Sacred Grove', goddess of all groves and nemeta. Yew trees can live for thousands of years. At the end of it all is Yew. Yew and the letter I: you and I: and the wheel turns.

Meaning in a reading: Idho comes to you as a messenger from Nemetona herself. Know that you are an integral part of the whole, that the Grove upholds you.



THE BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The twenty Botanical cards represent the plant medicine that comes from each tree of the Ogham Grove. This can be practical medicine like herbal teas and poultices, or the nutrition from nuts and fruits. But how can plant medicine offer a meaning for an oracle reading? Each tree holds a position upon the Sun's ecliptic and its corresponding seasonal star-lore – which can suggest symbolic significance. Each tree can also be interacted with as a 'Flower Essence' in a bottle, or by Tree Breathing below its branches. We have a symbiotic relationship with trees – they give us oxygen and when we exhale, we give them carbon dioxide. Breathing in the 'essence' of a tree can affect one's psychology and emotional moods.



BIRCH

‘Silver Birch’: *Betula Pendula*

9° Capricorn to 27° Capricorn

Pioneer of the First Aicme:

Budding Time of the Year

Symbolism: Rays of Light illuminating new landscapes, following the Winter Solstice.

Medicine: Birch Leaf Tea is detoxifying, and it is anti-cancer and an antioxidant.

Essence: The way-clearer, its essence helps to open one’s mind to new possibilities.

Meaning in a reading: Beginnings. Birch woods are often carpeted with bluebells in the Spring, and in the Autumn the iconic ‘Fly Agaric’, *Amanita Muscaria*, mushroom favours the Birch. Birch woods are Faerie realms, sacred to Elen of the Ways. Seek to connect with Nature, to create a better world, and she walks with you.



ROWAN

'Mountain Ash': Sorbus Aucuparia

27° Capricorn to 15° Aquarius (Imbolc)

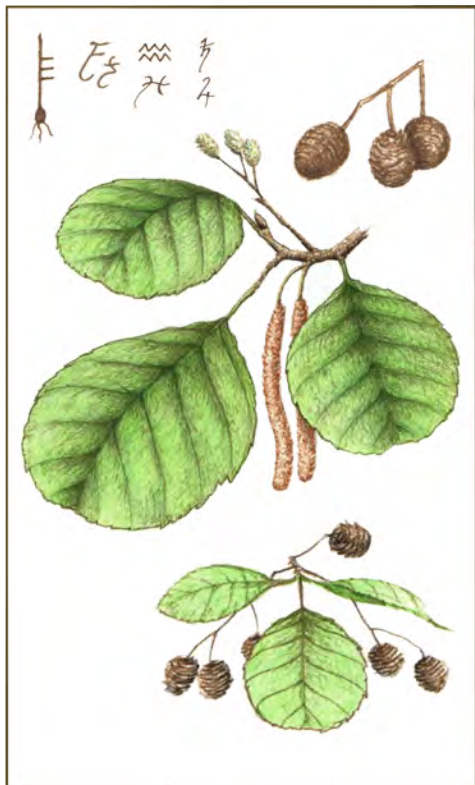
First Herald of Imbolc: Start of Spring

Symbolism: Bright flame of inspiration, quickening the fires of creativity.

Medicine: Its berries improve digestion and boost the immune system.

Essence: Its essence helps one to forgive and to let go of past hurts; to be inspired by the present moment and potential.

Meaning in a reading: Bright Inspiration. Rowan is a goddess-blessed tree of protection. Each of its orange-red berries bears a dark five-pointed star. Tree of the Aquarian Age, the acon of the Queen of the Gods. Rowan alchemises the struggles of the past into a brighter future. Hope shines.



ALDER

‘Common Alder’: *Alnus Glutinosa*

15° Aquarius to 3° Pisces

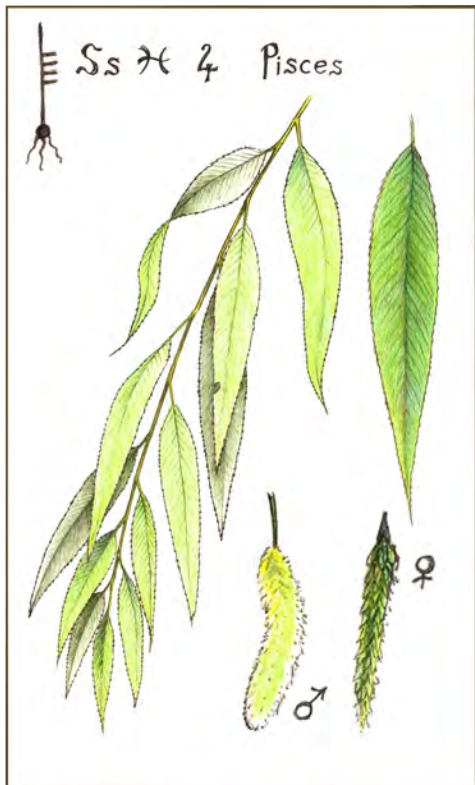
Second Herald of Imbolc

Symbolism: Alder is uniquely waterproof, untroubled by water (the emotions). Emotional troubles fall like water from a duck’s back.

Medicine: Tea made of its bark calms a fever and relieves headaches and rheumatism.

Essence: Its essence brings emotional peace, stillness and silence.

Meaning in a reading: Shield Against Rage. The vanguard of armies. Alder was favoured for making shields – its wood would never rot, and being waterproof it is ideal for making bridges. Like a bridge over troubled water. Alder could signify a need to be calm and detached during a time of emotional upheaval. Silence the storm.



WILLOW

'White Willow': *Salix Alba*

3° Pisces to 21° Pisces

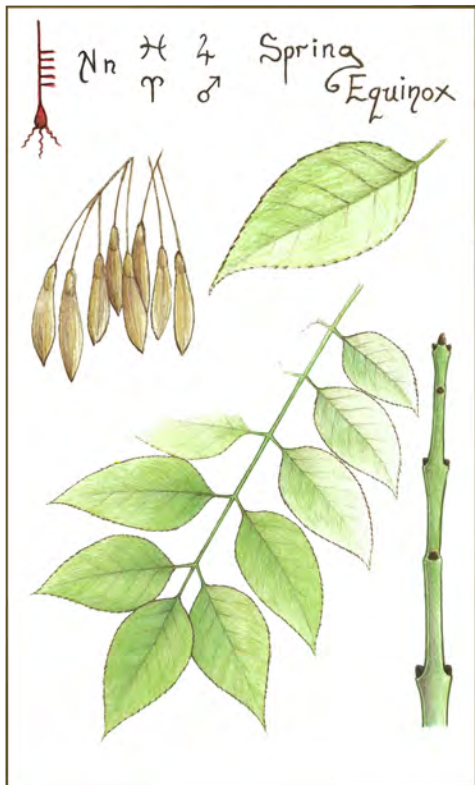
Warden of Early Spring

Symbolism: Willow grows by the 'Waters Edge' and Pisces corresponds with the Salmon Weir of bardic tradition.

Medicine: Its bark is used for pain relief, headaches, and for calming a fever.

Essence: Its essence helps to reflect upon the past, and to make peace with one's past.

Meaning in a reading: Reflections Upon Life. The journey of life is like a flowing river, events are forever running through our fingers. Time does not stop, and in truth, all that we can keep is our memories. Everything shapes us. Become peaceful, life is so much easier that way.



ASH

'Common Ash': *Fraxinus Excelsior*

21° Pisces to 9° Aries

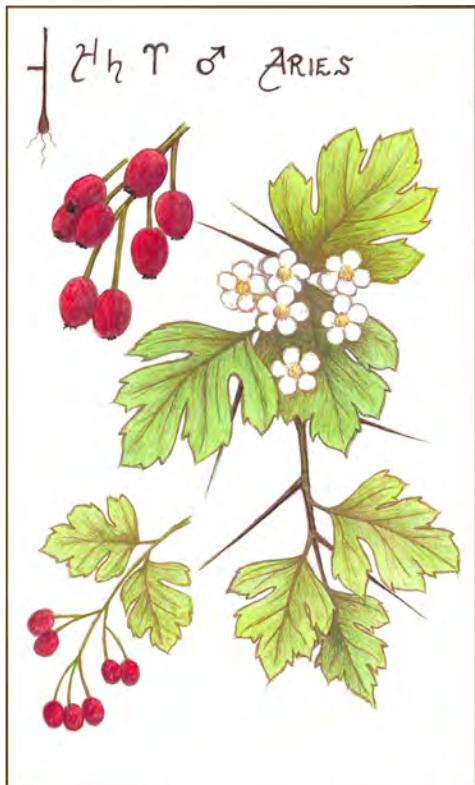
Guardian of the East: Spring Equinox

Symbolism: Aries is the fire sign that represents the Upper Cauldron, the Salmon's Leap, and the Spear of Lugh.

Medicine: Ash leaf tea for coughs; it is anti-inflammatory.

Essence: Its essence gives a positive boost to the feeling of one's self worth. It is the tree of kingship and self-sovereignty.

Meaning in a reading: The Radiant Brow. Aries governs the head, and the Ash tree holds the position of the Spring Equinox – the end of one zodiac year and the beginning of another. Light triumphant over darkness. Stand tall in your own power. Shine.



HAWTHORN

'May Flower': Crataegus Monogyna

9° Aries to 27° Aries

Pioneer of the Second Aicme:

Blossoming Time of the Year

Symbolism: Aries, governed by Mars, brings the passion and desire that drives fertility, procreation, stimulating the birds and the bees – sap rising and petals opening.

Medicine: Supports heart health and regulates high blood pressure.

Essence: Its essence helps one to trust and believe in love again, a process that begins with loving yourself.

Meaning in a reading: Matters of the Heart. Hawthorn is the tree of the May Queen, the heart's desire, that inspires all rites of fertility. What drives you? What gets your juices flowing? Listen to your desires, be happy.



OAK

'English Oak': Quercus Robur

27° Aries to 15° Taurus (Beltane)

First Herald of Beltane: Start of Summer.

Symbolism: Oak is the iconic tree of the Druids, the King of the Woods. As it corresponds mostly with Taurus, it is governed by Venus, her love, the Bull of Summer.

Medicine: Oak leaf tea is a restorative, anti-oxidant, and it helps to relieve stress and anxiety.

Essence: Its essence helps one to keep plodding on when exhausted, to be able to see things through until the end.

Meaning in a reading: Strength and Endurance. Every mighty Oak tree was once an acorn. Persistence and time ensure the growth of one's potential.



HOLLY

'English Holly': *Ilex Aquifolium*.

15° Taurus to 3° Gemini

Second Herald of Beltane

Symbolism: Holly is the first evergreen of the Ogham, and it is symbolically immortal. It is mostly Taurus (Venus and love) as much as Oak is. Mortal Oak and immortal Holly in balance at Beltane – our mundane and higher selves.

Medicine: Holly leaf tea improves brain function and increases energy.

Essence: Its essence helps one to connect with one's higher self, to be free of fear or anger.

Meaning in a reading: The Eternal Self. Holly literally rises above problems, its lower leaves are spikey, to protect itself, but higher up, its leaves are smooth, safe from harm.



HAZEL

'Common Hazel': *Corylus Avellana*.

3° Gemini to 21° Gemini

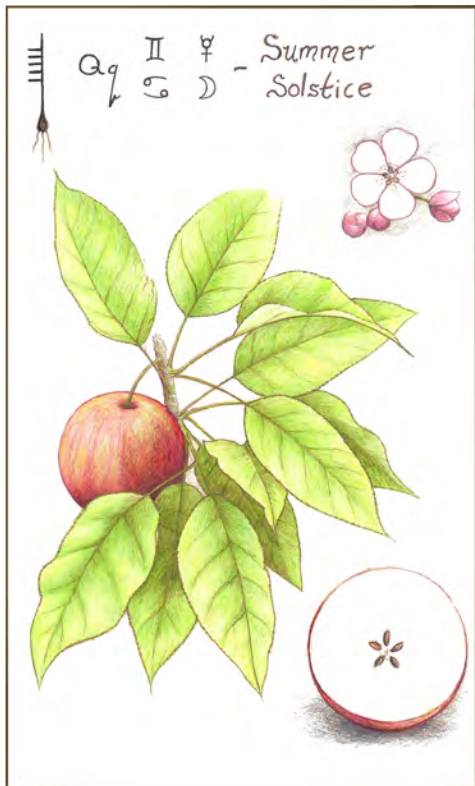
Warden of Early Summer

Symbolism: Gemini is governed by the planet Mercury, quick-thinking brilliance, and the Salmon of Wisdom gained their knowledge from the nuts of this tree.

Medicine: Hazel leaf tea is anti-inflammatory, and it aids digestion. Hazel nuts are highly nutritious and have many health benefits.

Essence: Its essence brings clarity of mind, diffusing confusion, to perceive the hidden truth of things.

Meaning in a reading: Intuition and Gnosis. To think outside the box, or rather, see through the illusions of life – that the outer world is but an expression of the inner world, and to act accordingly.



APPLE

'Common Apple': *Malus x domestica*

21° Gemini to 9° Cancer

Guardian of the South: Summer Solstice

Symbolism: Apples have been cultivated so widely that more than 7,000 varieties now exist. Governed by both Mercury (Gemini) and the Moon (Cancer), Apple expresses the hidden realm, Avalon. The golden apples of immortality, star-lore.

Medicine: Apple leaf tea improves the immune system and boosts heart health. Apples have a great many health benefits.

Essence: Its essence is that of golden light and youthful vitality.

Meaning in a reading: Health and Wellbeing. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food. Please look after your health.



VINE

'Common Grapevine': *Vitis Vinifera*.

9° Cancer to 27° Cancer

Pioneer of the Third Aicme:

Fruitful Time of the Year

Symbolism: Whilst not a native plant, the Celtic Sea trade thrived on wine; it literally brought tribes, and their cultures, together. Vine opens the third aicme, which holds the constellation of Krater the Wine-mixing Cup.

Medicine: Grapes and grape juice have many health benefits, and so too does wine in moderation.

Essence: Its essence relaxes inhibitions and liberates one from expectations.

Meaning in a reading: Friendships. The fruitful rewards of working together with others, be they business, social, or sacred relationships. Trade, and wine, is about enjoying the good things in life.



IVY

'Common Ivy': Hedera Helix

27° Cancer to 15° Leo (Lughnasadh)

First Herald of Lughnasadh:

Start of Autumn

Symbolism: Vine and Ivy were worn by followers of Dionysus and Bacchus, and Ivy takes us to the festival of Lugh – Lughnasadh – the Celtic god of the Mysteries.

Medicine: Ivy is not suitable for digestion, it can be chewed and spat out, for one's gums to absorb its mind-altering properties. Its best medicine is that it purifies the air, and that it is a late source of nectar for honey-making bees.

Essence: Its essence relaxes the mind.

Meaning in a reading: Key to the Woods. A time to meditate beneath the trees.



BROOM

'Scotch Broom': *Cytisus Scoparius*

15° Leo to 3° Virgo

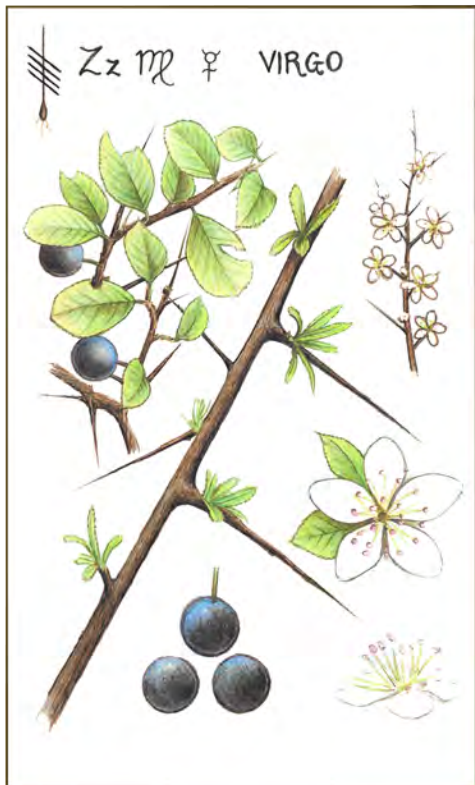
Second Herald of Lughnasadh

Symbolism: Broom is the maiden aspect of the triple goddess of the Ogham Grove (the maiden aspect of Virgo). Leo is the fire sign that governs the Middle Cauldron, and Broom corresponds with the constellation of Krater the Wine-mixing Cup – she is the Maiden of the Grail.

Medicine: While broom flowers were traditionally used in herbal medicine for heart problems and poor blood circulation, modern science considers them unsafe due to their toxicity.

Essence: Its essence dispels sadness and pessimism.

Meaning in a reading: Be True to Yourself. You must always follow your heart, that's when the healing begins. By healing yourself you heal the wasteland.



BLACKTHORN

'Sloe': *Prunus Spinosa*

3° Virgo to 21° Virgo

Warden of Early Autumn

Symbolism: Blackthorn is the mother aspect of the triple goddess of the Ogham Grove (the mother aspect of Virgo). Often described as 'the blasting rod', and favoured for walking sticks by witches, Blackthorn defends against those that would do you harm.

Medicine: The fruits are used for Sloe Gin; they are anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial; they can also be boiled and strained, then drank as a Cherry-like juice.

Essence: the essence of Blackthorn wards off feelings of despair and hopelessness.

Meaning in a reading: Protection. A mother animal protecting her young. Sometimes nature is red in tooth and claw.



ELDER

'European Elder': *Sambucus Nigra*

21° Virgo to 9° Libra

Guardian of the West: Autumn Equinox

Symbolism: Elder is the grandmother aspect of the triple goddess of the Ogham Grove (the grandmother aspect of Virgo). Wise Elder, and 'the Washer at the Ford', cutting away all that no longer serves your journey.

Medicine: Elderberry Tea has many health benefits – for colds and flu, boosting immunity, it is anti-inflammatory, and a general tonic.

Essence: Its essence guides one through all difficulties and obstacles.

Meaning in a reading: Preservation. The wisdom of the wise elders, having all of the experience of life and survival, to pass on to younger generations. Seek guidance.



PINE

'Scots Pine': *Pinus Sylvestris*

9° Libra to 27° Libra

Pioneer of the Fourth Aicme:

Seeding Time of the Year

Symbolism: The Preparations for the Mystery of the Wild Hunt; the psychopompic chase to the spirit world, whether for shamanic-type vision-questing or for one's final journey.

Medicine: Pine Needle Tea is high in Vitamin C and is also an anti-oxidant.

Essence: Its essence helps to connect with one's higher, noble, eternal, self.

Meaning in a reading: Spiritual Aspirations. Pine trees hold the threshold between the physical world and the spirit world. Seek communion with, and guidance from, the spirit world. Your loved ones that have died, and your ancestors, are with you.



GORSE

'Common Gorse': Ulex

27° Libra to 15° Scorpio (Samhain)

First Herald of Samhain: Start of Winter

Symbolism: Gorse (and Heather) are the natural shrubs of the Wild Heath, the habitat of the Wild Hunt, and the days of Gorse take us to the moment of Samhain

Medicine: Gorse flowers are edible in small quantities; they can improve blood pressure and are beneficial to people with diabetes.

Essence: Its essence brings the renewal of hope.

Meaning in a reading: Shelter from the Storm. Gorse is a defensive shrub, gnarly and spikey, and it offers protection to many creatures during harsh weather and the winter. It is also a happy plant that shelters lovers.



HEATHER

Common Heather': Calluna Vulgaris

15° Scorpio to 3° Sagittarius

Second Herald of Samhain

Symbolism: 'Lucky Heather' is the softer shrub of the 'Wild Heath' of Samhain. Like Gorse it gives shelter to many small creatures, and it made getting through the winter easier for human beings – being used for bedding, kindling, and ale.

Medicine: Heather Tea is a calming detox and sedative.

Essence: Its essence alleviates the feelings of loneliness. It is a comforting hug.

Meaning in a reading: Domestic Comforts. Heather signifies a time to 'bed down' and hibernate. A time to eke out your rations throughout the winter. A time to sit around the fire and support one's community.



ASPEN

'Common Aspen': Populus Tremula

3° Sagittarius to 21° Sagittarius

Warden of Early Winter

Symbolism: Aspen corresponds with Sagittarius, which is the fire sign that governs one's Lower Cauldron. Aspen is the tree of the spirit realm, five-pointed stars run through its twigs, and Sagittarius holds our Galactic Centre.

Medicine: Aspen bark can be used for pain relief, common colds, and arthritis.

Essence: Its essence helps one to face one's fears.

Meaning in a reading: A Light in the Dark. Aspen is the tree of the spirit realm. Rods made of Aspen were used to measure bodies for burial. It is the psychopomp tree, that guides souls to the spirit realm.



YEW

'English Yew': *Taxus Baccata*

21° Sagittarius to 9° Capricorn

Guardian of the North: Winter Solstice.

Symbolism: Yew is the conclusion of the Ogham Grove. The end of one year and the beginning of another; the rebirth of the Sun.

Medicine: The Yew is a very toxic tree. It does have fruit, little red berries called arils, and the flesh can be eaten but not the tiny stone. The arils contain iron and zinc.

Essence: Its essence helps one to just trust the unknown; to trust in spirit.

Meaning in a reading: Death and Rebirth. A time of renewal, of letting go of the old, and preparing for the new.



THE GROVE CARDS

The Ogham Dryads and Botanical illustrations represent the circumference of the Ogham Grove, the cycle of the year, and the Sun's annual journey along the ecliptic – a concept of external boundary, space, and Time. The Grove Cards represent sixteen esoteric concepts, ideas, to explore within the centre of one's own Ogham Grove. The Welsh word, *Annuwn*, literally translates as 'Inner World', as in one's realm of dreams and visions – the source of *Awen* (Welsh) and *Imbas* (Irish), poetic inspiration and self-gnosis. Some of these Grove Card topics are very deep, unnecessarily so for oracle card readings, as such they are topics to be explored in a future book; meanwhile, these following passages focus upon just simple meanings for readings.



THE SELF

First of the Grove Cards

The Self represents the beginning of a vision-quest. The figure wears a hooded robe, which allows for it to represent any gender, youth or elder, initiate or wise one. The raising of the hood represents the lifting of the veil between this world and Annwn. The White Hart represents the spirit of the inner world, the guardian of the forest, and beloved consort of the goddess, Nemetona ('She of the Sacred Grove'). One's heart has been called to the heart of the grove.

Meaning in a reading: You have been called to Annwn, your inner world, to a new journey of discovery, and reconnection with the spirit world.



MYCELIUM

Second of the Grove Cards

Mycelium follows on from The Self being called into the heart of the grove. Beneath the forest floor is the fine, sometimes almost invisible, web of mycelium – connecting tree to tree, so that they can communicate their need to share nutrients and water. The Self, through the souls of the feet, can energetically connect and ‘plug-in’ to the energy matrix of the living grove, and become one with the forest. The body has its own mycelium, its nervous system, connecting its three cauldrons.

Meaning in a reading: Develop an awareness of the interconnectedness of all things, and the psychical threads between kindred souls. Connect with the web of life.

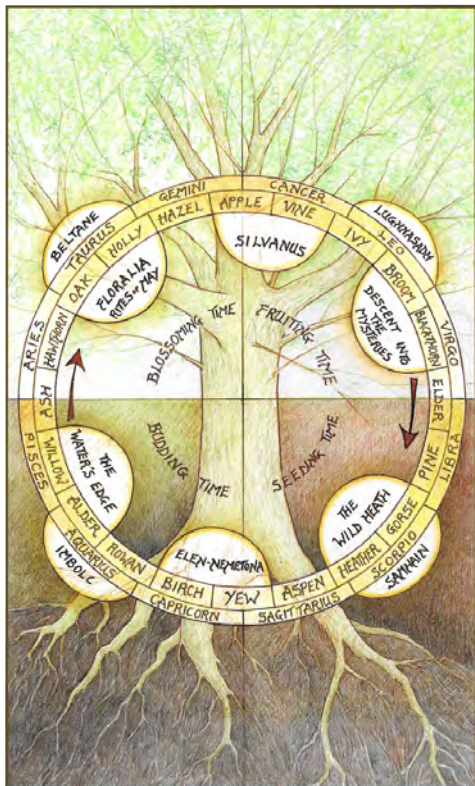


NEMETONA

Third of the Grove Cards

Like most Celtic sovereignty goddesses, Nemetona is expressed as three-fold – the triple spiral of life, the queen of each world, each realm, each cauldron. The Self has arrived, has connected to the wood-wide-web, and now the goddess of the grove sings to be heard. She is Nature herself, goddess of soil, fertility, and life on Earth. Gaia; ever-spinning in the vast infinity of stars. She is our home and our mother. Her endless rotation gives us day and night, dawn and dusk, and the dance of the heavens.

Meaning in a reading: The goddess of the Grove calls for your attention; seeking union and love; service to heal the land, our home.



THE MYSTERIES

Fourth of the Grove Cards

As Gaia spins upon her axis, delineating the Pole Stars, she also orbits around the Sun. This dance creates the star-lore Mysteries of the year wheel – Imbolc and the 'Waters Edge', Beltane and the 'Rites of May', Lughnasadh and the 'Descent into the Mysteries', and Samhain and the 'Wild Hunt'. Wisdom and teachings sung by the stars and the seasons of the year. The dance of life. Sympathetic magic in harmony with the music of the spheres. The Dagda's Harp.

Meanings in a reading: These seasonal rites of passage are the teachings of the Grove. For Nemetona we heal the land, and we develop ourselves to help future generations.



BRIGID

Fifth of the Grove Cards

Nemetona's orbit around the Sun creates the Mysteries of the year, the circumference of her grove, while her rotation creates the circumpolar stars – those that are ever-present, always above the centre. The next 2,500 years belong to the goddess Brigid, so she represents 'now' and the destiny of future generations. Here she is depicted with the circumpolar constellations – the 'W' of Cassiopeia, the two bears, and Draco the Dragon as the red serpent entwining her spear.

Meaning in a reading: The Exalted One. Goddess of the Aquarian Age, shining above the centre of the grove. The Aeon of now. Ever-pouring the waters of inspiration into the Middle Cauldrons of all of us.

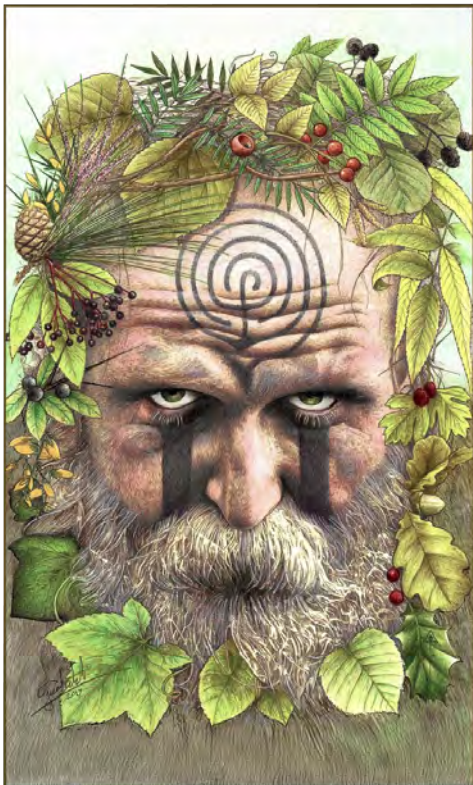


OGMA

Sixth of the Grove Cards

Ogma is the brother of The Dagda (whose harp keeps the seasons turning) and he is the uncle of Brigid. Ogma created the Ogham writing system, and his niece is the goddess of poetic inspiration. Dagda's harp sings the music of the spheres, Ogma's Ogham records thoughts into wood and stone, Brigid sings the poetic expression. Divine inspiration becomes manifest in the world.

Meaning in a reading: Uncle of Brigid, creator of the Ogham writing system, teacher of wisdom and the power of eloquent speech. Your words have power, to harm or heal. Ogma has 'honey-speech', speaking sweetly and beautifully. The 'pen is mightier than the sword', words create reality.



SYLVAN MERLIN

Seventh of the Grove Cards

Nemetona, Brigid, and Ogma, are just some of the deities of the Ogham Grove – and you can call in as many as you like. Sylvan ‘Woodland’ Merlin was semi-divine, having a mortal mother and an un-named divine father. As such, our woodland wizard is a bridge between mortals and the eternal. His mortal nature understands the confusion of human mentality – signified by the labyrinth upon his brow. The Arch Druid, wise teacher, ready to guide us through the complexities of the forest of life.

Meaning in a reading: Sylvan Merlin represents the wizardry of the trees and the cosmos; he understands the ‘Mysteries’ of all of the wonders and treasures to be won from Annwn.

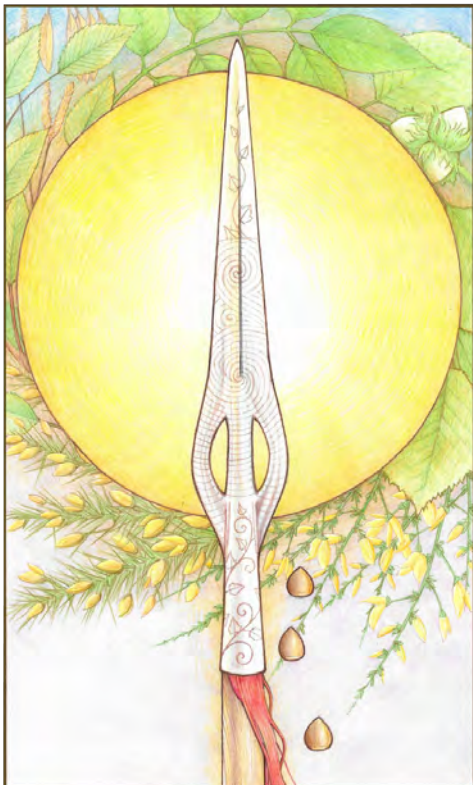


THE CWN ANNWN

Eight of the Grove Cards

The Cwn Annwn, or 'Hounds of the Inner World', are the famous hunting hounds of the Wild Hunt. They are the hounds of the lord of the 'other world' – the 'Winter Hunter' who is known by many names, like Arawn (in the first branch of the Mabinogi) and Gwyn ap Nudd, and Cunomaglos (Lord of Hounds). The hounds are ready and waiting to hunt, initiating an expedition into Annwn, to seek adventure and the 'spoils of Annwn'.

Meaning in a reading: if the hounds of the hunt appear, a quest must begin. Adventure into Annwn to seek one, or more, of the treasures of Light. In this deck there are four, but in mythology there are many more.

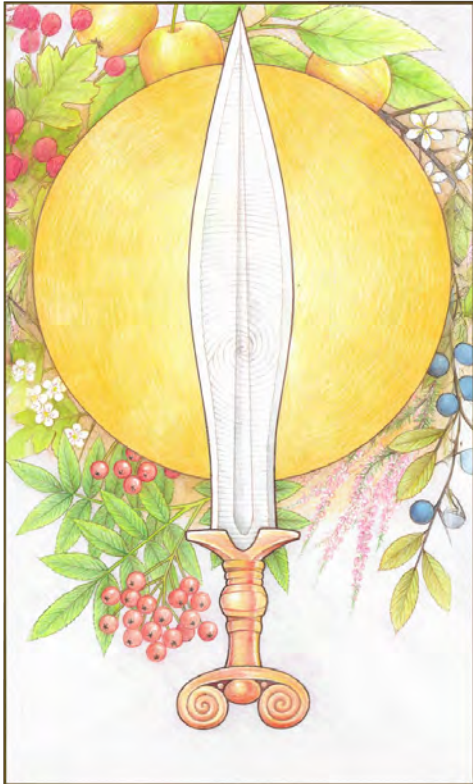


SPEAR of LUGH

Ninth of the Grove Cards

The Spear of Lugh is the first of the four royal treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The spear came from the mystical city of Gorias, and it belongs to Lugh, the brilliant young warrior god that is destined to become king. The charm of Lugh's spear was that no army could stand against it – Lugh has the power to defeat all forces that oppose him. It corresponds with the Ash tree and the Spring Equinox.

Meaning in a reading: The rising Light of the hero, the spinal cord aligned, straight, like the pole-axis to the centre of the stars, which can pierce the veils of darkness, three cauldrons aligned, shining.



SWORD of NUADA

Tenth of the Grove Cards

The Sword of Nuada is the second of the four royal treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The sword came from the mystical city of Findias, and it belongs to Nuada, the first king of the Tuatha Dé. The charm of Nuada's sword was that once drawn no one could survive against it – it is the original sword of Light (forerunner of Excalibur), the sword of the king. It corresponds with the Apple tree and the Summer Solstice.

Meaning in a reading: the achievement of self-sovereignty, and the power to rule one's realm. Be peaceful, kind, and content, as self-sovereignty can all too easily be lost. Is there peace in the Grove?



CAULDRON of the DAGDA

Eleventh of the Grove Cards

The Cauldron of the Dagda is the third of the four royal treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The cauldron came from the mystical city of Murias, and it belongs to the Dagda, the old king and father-god of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The charm upon the Dagda's cauldron was that it would never leave someone unsatisfied – it was the original cauldron of plenty, and abundance (the forerunner of the Holy Grail). It corresponds with the Elder tree and the Autumn Equinox.

Meaning in a reading: How abundant is your Middle Cauldron? How giving is your heart? The loving-heart gives freely, and it never runs dry. All goodness spirals outward from within.



STONE of DESTINY

Twelfth of the Grove Cards

The Stone of Destiny is the fourth of the four royal treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The stone came from the mystical city of Falias, and it is the sacred omphalos that marks the centre of a kingdom, where the alchemical-marriage between any would be king and the goddess of sovereignty should take place. The charm upon the stone of destiny is that it would audibly cry out under any rightful king. It corresponds with the Yew tree and the Winter Solstice.

Meaning in a reading: The physical world is the womb of incarnation; the sacred omphalos is its energetic heart-centre. Whom do you marry at the centre of your grove?



THE FEGE FIN

Thirteenth of the Grove Cards

The Fega Fin is better known as Fionn's Window, or Fionn's Ridgepole, but these names may not be the correct meaning of the title. It is an enigmatic diagram from the Book of Ballymote – a late 14th century collection of manuscripts. The Fega Fin shows each aicme of the Ogham being drawn into the centre of some concentric circles; and the forfeda (five extra Oghams) are placed in such a way as could correspond with the festivals of Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh, and Samhain. The Fega Fin holds other intrigues, like the Elke Spirals, that will be discussed in the future.

Meaning in a reading: concentric circles forming a mandala for contemplation, suggesting perception and insights gained through meditation.



THE FORFEDA

Fourteenth of the Grove Cards

'Forfeda' literally means 'additional woods' (*fid* means wood, singular, *feda* is plural). The Forfeda were added to the original twenty Ogham 'woods' long after the Ogham had been established. As placed in the Fege Fin, the Forfeda correspond with the four cross-quarter fire-festivals, and thus an asterism known as the Royal Star Cross – which is esoteric complexity that leads to understanding the flow of *nwyfre* (life-force) through one's body, heart, and palms – for Tree Breathing and 'Tree Gung'.

Meaning in a reading: the evolution and expansion of lore, the ongoing song, one's purpose, and gift to the world. Inspired by the past, with hearts of integrity, we step into the new.



WEAVE of the FAE

Fifteenth of the Grove Cards

Hidden in the Ogham Grove are four pentagrams; the first to make itself known was that of the evergreen trees, anchored upon the Yew, at Winter Solstice. Next to be realised was the pentagram of the Rose-Family trees, anchored upon the Apple at Summer Solstice. The other two pentagrams are anchored upon the equinoxes. A hidden weave of the Rose Queen and the Fae. Thus, Yew and Apple are intertwined for all time, just like the legend of the young lovers, Baile and Aillinn.

Meaning in a reading: the interconnected weave, between the seen and unseen, between mortal and spirit, the alchemical marriage between the self and one's muse.



ANIMA MUNDI

Sixteenth and final Grove Card

Anima Mundi or the 'Soul of the World' could be another way of describing the consciousness of Nature herself, or Nemetona – 'She of the Sacred Grove', or the Rose Queen – 'The Queen of Every Hive'. The first letter of each aicme, following Apple and the Summer Solstice, spells MABH – a variant of Medb, the sovereignty goddess of the Hill of Tara in the centre of Ireland – the origin of Mab, Queen of the Fae.

Meaning in a reading: one's muse, the first point of contact between the Self and the Soul of the World. One's destiny. Know yourself, know your muse. Be true to yourself, be true to your muse. Anything else is a disconnection from true wholeness.



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