

The Hawthorn Tree

Crataegus commonly called hawthorn, quickthorn, whitethorn, thornapple, hawberry, May-tree, or Mayflower is a genus of several hundred species of shrubs and trees in the family Rosaceae native to temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere in Europe, Asia, North Africa and North America.

The Hawthorn (*crataegus monogyna*) is a small tree with an abundance of foliage growing on its thorny branches. It is known for its longevity and can live over 400 years. In March the Hawthorn tree's leaf-buds open and pale green leaves appear. These leaves are joined by masses of delicate white flower buds, which open in May to reveal blossoms with five white petals surrounding stamens with bright pink heads. Each flower produces a fruit, called a 'Haw' which appear in July and ripen in October resembling small bright red apples which are loved by our birds. In May, the May Tree, or Hawthorn, is often celebrated. It's known for its beautiful white or pink blooms that typically appear in early to mid-spring. The Hawthorn is native to much of Europe and Eastern North America, and is also known as the May Tree due to its blooming season.

In many cultures, the hawthorn tree is associated with love, romance, and new beginnings, particularly during springtime and the Celtic festival of Beltane. The Hawthorn Tree has many different symbolic meanings and nicknames. It's often seen as a symbol of love and fertility, with hawthorn blossoms sometimes worn by brides in their hair or bouquets. The tree's connection to the Fae, or fairy folk, and its role in Celtic mythology further enhance its romantic symbolism. Thus, it is also known as the “Faery Tree,” as faeries live under the Hawthorn as its guardians. In Celtic mythology the Hawthorn is one of the most sacred and most magical of trees and symbolizes love and protection.

The Hawthorn is a tree of magical enchantment and is strongly associated with Beltane, the ancient festival celebrating spring., and so was treated with great respect and care. However, politely collecting Hawthorn sprigs and flowers was allowed on Beltane—known as “Brining in the May”—, especially by brides, who wore Hawthorn blossom in their hair or bouquet to symbolize their union of love. It also has a strong connection to unity and marriage. Thus, the Hawthorn tree was also known as the “The Marriage Tree,” with Celtic Tree Calendar dates (May 13th – June

9th). The Hawthorne was regarded as a sacred, wild and enchanted tree. Because people perceived it as having dual energies, it gained the image of a tree of contradictions, a tree with beautiful flowers and harsh thorns. Representing opposites and the balance that duality and opposition can bring. Hence the name the “Marriage Tree.”

The Hawthorn tree or bush is a mystical and enchanting plant that holds deep spiritual meaning. They are powerful symbols and are believed to possess powerful energies that can bring love, protection, healing and renewal. Their branches reaching skyward while their roots delve deep into the underworld. They weave together the realms of above, middle, and below, reminding us of our interconnectedness with the world around us. Just like these majestic trees, we are part of a larger community, sharing wisdom, energy, and nourishment. With a lifespan of up to 700 years, Hawthorn is steeped in stories and ancient medicine. It is strongly associated with the Fairy realm and the Aos Sidhe and considered a gateway to the otherworld. They are often found near ancient sacred sites, they are guardians of the land and a symbol of protection. They embody the in-between, the Hawthorn blooms on Beltane and fruits on Samhain. These trees

stand alone in fields, weathered yet strong, revered and protected, as harming them is thought to bring misfortune (usually at the hand of disturbed faeries).

The Hawthorn is popularly known as the “May Tree.” As the pagan symbol of fertility, this tree is the ancestor of the Maypole and the source of May Day garlands. The flowers make up the crown of the Faery Queen and the wreath of the Green Man.

The Hawthorn has long been used in herbal medicine to promote heart health and alleviate emotional distress. It is also believed to have a calming effect on the emotions, providing comfort and support during times of grief or heartache. Hawthorn has a profound medicinal effect on the heart and circulation. It is said that by building a relationship with the energy of hawthorn people can tap into its healing powers and experience a deep sense of renewal and spiritual growth.

Beltane and Springtime:

Hawthorn is strongly associated with Beltane, a Celtic festival celebrating spring and the beginning of summer, which is a time of renewed love and fertility.

Symbol of Love and Romance:

In many traditions, Hawthorn is a symbol of love, romance, and new beginnings.

Love and Fertility Magic:

The Hawthorn's association with love and fertility has led to its use in love and fertility magic, with dried berries and other parts of the tree used in talismans and charms.

Bridal Symbol:

Hawthorn blossoms were often used in bridal bouquets and worn in hair, symbolizing the union of love.

Fae Connection:

Hawthorn is considered a "fairy tree" and is associated with the Fae, further adding to its magical and romantic allure.
