

Playful springboards: LIME



Facts and Folklore

The Lime tree is also known as the Linden tree. Spring/Summer: Leaves: The toothed heart shaped leaf is very distinctive of all species of Lime tree. The soil beneath a Common lime tree can receive 1kg per square metre of sugar as a result of the sticky sap (honey dew) created by its leaf Aphids. These sugars are likely to trigger nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the soils. In the UK, look out for place names with the prefix 'Lynd' or 'Lin' which indicate a link to the presence of Lime Trees from the old Wild-Woods of pre-historic times which may no longer survive there.

Facts and Folklore

In Europe, Linden trees were associated with the goddess Freya and were dedicated to her when planting village squares. Freya was a goddess of love, so the tree is sometimes known as the tree of love. Women hoping to become pregnant would hug the tree. The romance associated with the tree is still visible today, with its heart-shaped leaves and fragrant flowers.



Facts and Folklore

Linden tree is the national symbol tree of the Czech Republic. The linden tree was chosen as the national tree of the Slavs as early as 1848, allegedly thanks to the design of the poet František Ladislav Čelakovský. It was said that a Linden tree planted next to house was considered to protect the home. All parts of the linden tree are edible, leaves, flowers, seeds, sap, and bark; the flowers can be eaten fresh or made into medicinal linden tea or tincture. The linden tree was also planted for its beauty – it is quite simply, versatile.

In the Czech Republic the linden tree (as a symbol) is found on the presidential standard, state seals, military uniforms or on banknotes.

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Facts and Folklore

In general, Linden trees were worshiped by old Indo-European tribes (thanks to its size and longevity) and it was planted after the birth of the first child. To this day, the linden is a symbol of protection (thanks to a typically spreading crown), help and love. Many linden trees were planted during the founding of Czechoslovakia (1918) and then again on the 50th anniversary of this event (1968). Many old linden trees are even protected by law today; there are 3,000 memorable linden trees in the Czech Republic.



Recipes: Lime flower syrup

Ingredients:
Lime flowers
Sugar
Water
Lemon juice and zest
Agave nectar

Recipes: Lime flower tea

The lime tree is famous for its flowers from which tea can be made. This tea is good for bad colds. Lime tree flowers are also a source for bees to make honey from. The lime tea has a mildly relaxing effect and can be a good tea to drink before bed.

Equipment:

Lime flowers in blossom collected on a dry day

Instructions:

Having collected the flowers, remove all the green stalks until you are left with the flowers. These should be spread out on newspaper or a sheet in a warm dry sunny spot to dry for a few days. Once dried they can be stored in tins. To make tea, apply a handful of dried flowers to the pot or cup and pour over hot water. Leave to infuse for 5 minutes and then drink.

Recipes: Lime flower syrup

Instructions

Heat the sugar and water, add agave or other natural sweeteners if you prefer. While the sugar and water is heating, clean the flowers in water. Once the simple syrup is ready, add the flowers along with some lemon juice and zest and give it a stir. Let it come to room temperature then put it in the fridge (covered) and wait a 2-4 days for the flavour of the flowers to infuse the syrup. After a few days, sieve the mixture. Storing the syrup in an air tight glass container in the fridge for up to a month. Use it to make cocktails adding to sparkling wine, or just add it to some sparkling water with a slice of lemon for a delicious spritzer. It also tastes great with fruit or yogurt.

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Practical Ideas: Wood

Coppice lime trees, much like hazel grow long straight poles that can be used in various projects such as creating a bow and arrow. In addition, the young suckers are very flexible and can be used in weaving, baskets and other such structures.

Practical Ideas: Bow and arrow

Equipment:

Knife, cotton, string, cardboard

Instructions:

Making the bow, find a living stem which is flexible. Cut it to the right length, shorter ones have less power. Carve notches 2cms from each end to help attach the bow string to. Attach the string, pulling it tight so the wood bends in to an arch. Make sure both ends of the string are firmly attached and will *not* move from their positions in the notches. The arrow must be thin and straight and can be dead wood; hazel is good for this purpose. Remove the bark and create the arrow end through whittling. Make quivers for the end of the arrow using cardboard and attach to the end of the arrow by cutting in a cross 2cms into the end of the arrow and sliding the cardboard in place.

Practical Ideas: Bow and arrow

Alternatively a more traditional arrow using feathers and attached with cotton can be used, trimming the feathers to size and then attaching either side of the arrow using cotton and wrapping it around.

Practical Ideas: Carving

Lime wood is the most popular timber to carve as it works extremely well with hand tools. Lime wood has a fine grain structure which provides a much smoother finish and is a light cream colour. Lime wood is extremely soft and is therefore ideal for beginner wood carvers. With some simple wood working tools you can create easy projects, such as three-dimensional carvings of a simple bird shape or a fish. You could also try to carve a simple shape into a flat surface of the wood and use a simple flower shapes or other such design.

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Practical Ideas: Pyrography

Sometimes known as basswood, the wood of the lime is the best wood to use for pyrography as it has very fine grains.

Pyrography is an art form, where wood is decorated, free handed, with images using a heated object such as a poker. It is best for older children as it involves using heated tools for marking designs into wood. Simple pyrography toolkits can be purchased from craft shops. The internet has wonderful ideas and inspiration for creating simple projects such as Christmas tree decorations on flat rounds of wood with a hole cut in to attach something to hang them to.

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Practical ideas

Art: Use the beautiful heart shaped leaves and delicate flowers as a starting point and an inspiration for an art project.

Threading Leaves:

Create a craft project by threading specially chosen, foraged leaves on to string and then hang from a linden branch outside to display. This can be an especially fun project during autumn as the colours of the leaves start to change.

Games: Heart shaped leaves & scavenging

Create a scavenger hunt, this is a list of things to collect on a walk. As the lime tree is often a street tree and planted throughout Europe, if you know you will pass by one on your walk, add heart shaped leaves to your list. Add other plants to find too and bring in textures like crunchy, velvety, and soft and spiny. You can also add in a range of colours of objects to find, feathers and so on.

Have fun hunting!

Games: Summer scents & smelly cocktails

Inspired by the beautiful smelling lime tree in summer, but can be played at any time. Give the players a container to collect wild 'finds' in; ask them to go in search of things that have a nice or interesting scent. Mash their findings in their pot using a stick and some water to create interesting scents. Once they have their finished scented cocktail, ask them to give it a name and then wow and amaze the other players with their invention and smells!