

Trees and the Otherworld in Scotland



Rowan/Ash, *Sorbus acuparia*. Scots Gaelic: *caorrain*

Rowan and hawthorn appear at gates to the fairy realm or at meeting places of the *sìth*. Both trees' flowers smell like sex and death, associating them with liminality. Both have white flowers, red berries, and green leaves— colors of the Otherworld— and cutting down either can get you in trouble with the *sìth*.

Hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*. Scots Gaelic: *sgitheach*



>> Yew, (*Taxus baccata*) Scots Gaelic: *iubhair*. The Fortingall Yew is up to 5,000 years old and stands at a church that was likely a pagan site. Yews are long-lived and toxic, associating them with death, ancestors, and the Otherworld.

<< The Fairy Tree is a Scots Pine on Doon Hill, said to contain the soul of a Minister. This is one of many “cloutie trees” in Scotland where visitors tie rags to trees as a prayer for healing.

