



# Yew: A History

*Fred Hageneder*

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**Yew: A History** Fred Hageneder

**A fascinating look at all aspects of the botany, cultural history, and remarkable mythology of the genus *Taxus***

The yew is one of the most fascinating and versatile life forms on Earth, botanically rich and intriguing, and culturally almost without comparison. This impressive study of the yew reveals that in history, mythology, religion, folklore, medicine, and warfare, the yew bears timeless witness to a deep relationship with mankind. It is the tree that Darwin often rested beneath and under which he wanted to be buried. In 1803 Wordsworth celebrated the great yew in Lorton Vale, "single, in the midst of its own darkness," a tree under which both the great Quaker George Fox and John Wesley preached. In many cultures it is the Tree of Life, and its association with European churchyards has given it a particular claim on the popular imagination as a living link between present landscapes and those of the distant past. This history of the yew makes the case for better conservation of this extraordinary life form and includes a worldwide gazetteer of yew stands and other useful information for those wishing to explore further the study of the yew.

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