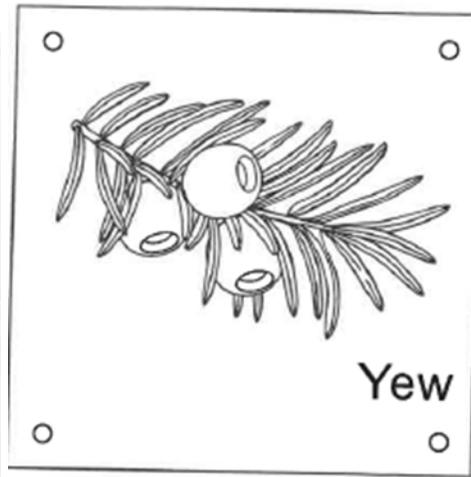


Yew

(*Taxus baccata*)



The yew tree is one of the oldest living trees in Europe, often found in ancient churchyards and steeped in mystery. With dark evergreen needles and bright red berries, it's both beautiful and deadly—every part except the berry flesh is toxic. In mythology, yews symbolized death and rebirth and were believed to guard the boundary between worlds. Historically, their strong, flexible wood was prized for making longbows, giving the yew a legendary role in medieval warfare and folklore.

Yew

Extended Facts

- Yew trees are exceptionally long-lived; some exceed 2000 years.
- Their foliage is toxic except for the fleshy aril around the seed.
- Yews are often associated with churchyards and ancient cultural traditions.

Curriculum-Linked Activities

- Evergreen leaf study: compare yew to holly and cedar.
- Folklore research project exploring yews in mythology.
- Growth-ring demonstration (using safe samples or diagrams).
- Forestry commission (OWL Scotland) Tree Story page 4

Useful Weblinks

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/yew/>