

# Cypress Tree



Mortality and the Immortality of the Soul.

Cypress comes from the Greek word, "sempervivens," meaning, "live forever."

Cypress trees are among the oldest types of tree in the world, dating back over 150 million years to the late Jurassic period. They include the tallest and largest trees in the world, the coast redwood and the giant sequoia, respectively. They are long-living trees and are able to endure harsh climates, poor soil, flood waters and otherwise poor growing conditions. Cypress trees have multiple meanings including death, life and afterlife. Resurrection.

Life-Affirming, the cypress is also considered a mystical Sign of Life & endurance.

Cypress: Longevity, Healing, Comfort, Protection. This is regarded as a Gothic tree, as it was used to build funeral pyres and thus associated with mourning. Cypress symbolism includes an understanding of the meaning of 'self-sacrifice,' giving yourself over to a greater goal.

...symbolism includes understanding the role of sacrifice and is associated with the god of the underworld, Hades, and his mystical realm the Otherworld.

During the Middle Ages, (years of plague and instability), the subtle dual symbolism of cypress 'death and resurrection' eventually simplified into the more concrete concept of 'death.'

...the cypress was planted around graveyards as a representation of both death and the immortality of the soul.

Finally, Cypress trees have been long associated with both *death & healing*.

In Greek mythology, besides Cyparissus, the cypress is also associated with Artemis and Hecate, a goddess of magic, crossroads and the underworld. It's safe to say that the Cypress tree has been considered a special tree for thousands of years.

The Cypress represents youthfulness, truthfulness and was traditionally used to describe a person of upright character. It is said that in the presence of a Cypress, it would be impossible for someone who breathes in its scent to be deceitful. Mystics have believed that because the Cypress is an evergreen and that its branches are never barren, it is truly liberated and liberating.



In the end, I find it rather impossible to find a better visible symbol to represent the men of Arboretum than the Cypress tree. It is my hope we grow into men that can withstand the cruelest of temptations, and life's offerings of pain, all the while having the courage to encourage ourselves, as well as, encourage others.

In classical antiquity, the cypress was a symbol of mourning and in the modern era it remains the principal cemetery tree in Europe. In the classical tradition, the cypress was associated with death and the underworld.

The poet Ovid, who wrote during the reign of Augustus, records the best-known myth that explains the association of the cypress with grief. The handsome youth Cyparissus, the lover of Apollo, accidentally killed Apollo's beloved tame stag. His grief and remorse were so inconsolable, that he asked the gods to be able to mourn forever. Granting his wish, the gods turned him into a cypress tree, which would forever stand and mourn the dead. He was transformed into *cupressus sempervirens*, with the tree's sap as his tears.

