

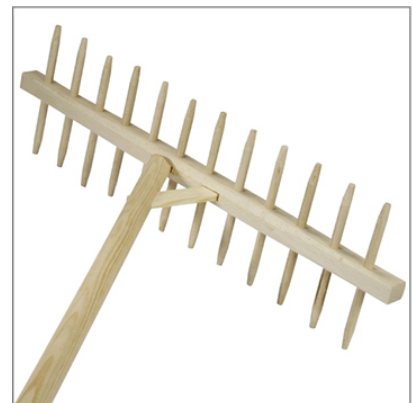
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ASH

Fraxinus

 1987

It is easy to identify an ash tree in winter. It has smooth twigs with distinctive black, velvety leaf buds arranged opposite each other. In spring these give way to spiked clusters of purple red flowers which later develop into bundles of seeds, commonly known as keys or helicopter seeds. An ash tree can grow to a height of 45 meters and can become 250 years old. It has always been of great value to man and forms an ideal habitat for a variety of wildlife species. The leaves are excellent feed for goats, sheep, cows, horses and deer. Certain lice nibble on the leaves leaving behind a kind of honey which can be made into a sparkling ash wine. Ash is a tough, dense hardwood. It is strong but elastic and easily absorbs shocks without splintering. It is extremely useful for making tools, handles for sports equipment and musical instruments like guitars. It was even found in the chassis of cars and airplanes. The ash plays an important role in traditional medicine. Ash tea is a diuretic and the leaves protect against infection. As it has so many good qualities it is easy to understand why elves and gnomes like to shelter in it. Can you see any here today?



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