



Swedish National Heritage Board

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## VeteranTrees

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### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

Magic trees, and trees with particular traditions, are often trees of remarkable age or shape.



### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

#### Sacrificial trees (Swedish *offerträd/offerlundar*)

Pagan sacrifices to gods. Dead animals are put in special trees or groups of trees.

In the North of Sweden Sami people sacrifices bears. The sacrifice of bears is also known from other parts of Sweden and Europe.



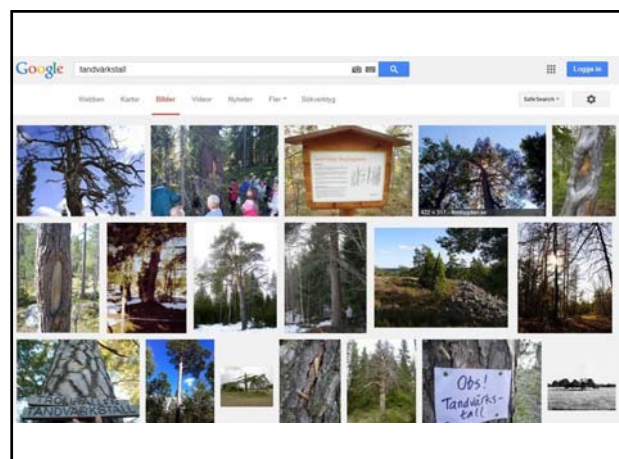
### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

#### Curing / healing trees (Swedish *boteträd/värkträd/offerträd*)

Curing trees are trees with magical powers and strength. Pain and illness could be transferred to the tree by:

A/ Inserting a stick or needle in to the tree. Metal needles were commonly used during the 19-th century.

B/ Pulling a sick person through an opening in the tree, or between branches or big roots.





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### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

#### Guard trees (Swedish *vårdträd*, *vård*=vakta)

One or a few trees planted close to the farmstead in order to guard and give happiness and success to the inhabitants. The age of the tree is often as old as the building.

These trees are often hard wood species.

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### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

#### Wishing trees (Swedish *önsketräd*)

Wishing trees were decorated and wishes were made. Wishes were sometimes written on paper and hung in the trees as a decoration.

Such trees were locally well known and they were used during centuries.

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### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

#### Meeting trees (Swedish *mötesträd*/*vägräd*/*supträd*)

Meeting trees were often large or particular in shape. Such trees were located at Crossroads, functioning as a kind of 'bus stop' when the main source of transportation was by horse.

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### Categories of trees with particular culture tradition

#### Scarred / marked trees (Swedish *ristade träd*)

Trees were scarred in connection with forest cattling or marked to indicate paths or tracks in the forest. Such trees were often scarred several times during the decades they were in use.

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### Veteran trees

Many trees can live to become very old!

All old trees are not necessarily big. Trees grow slowly under difficult growing conditions (climate and/or soil) or when they are regularly and heavily pruned. Almost any tree species can get very old!



### Veteran trees

Why are old trees rare in Europe?

Trees have been used and felled as young or middle-aged trees!  
Land-use has change with total clearance.



### Present and historical land-use

Production of:

*Firewood*  
*Thin wood*  
*Charcoal*  
*Leaf-hay*  
*Bark*  
*Construction wood*  
*Paper production*  
*Etc.*





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### Veteran trees

Old trees belong to the cultural or semi-natural landscape.

Today they can be seen in abandoned pasture lands or old park landscapes and gardens. An exception is the North European taiga zone which is not managed by the forest industry.

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### Veteran trees

The reason old trees can be found in Europe can often be explained by:

- 1/ old trees are or were good producers of branches, olives, bark, etc.
- 2/ complex ownership has regulated the cutting of collectively owned trees.
- 3/ it is a slow/small growing trees on an inaccessible mountain.
- 4/ old trees have given its owner status.
- 5/ old trees linked to culture tradition.
- 6/ Esthetical reason (more common during 20-th century urban area).

Rich people could afford old trees and show this off for others. The largest and oldest in Europe appear on the estates of noblemen.

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### Old trees tell stories about man and land-use

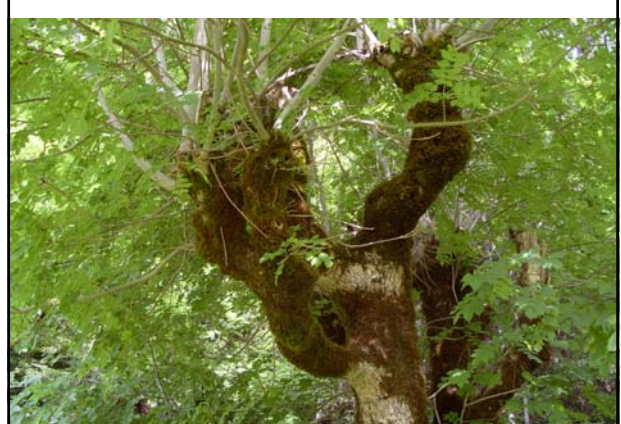
The shape of old trees tell a story of the trees historical use as well as it's nearest surrounding: 50, 100 or 300 years ago.

- \* The shape and size of the tree's trunk and branches.
- \* The lack of branches.
- \* Scars from old cuttings and decay.

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### Biological heritage

By using the term *biological heritage* for these old trees we indicate that they also have historic and culture value.



Thank you!

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