

Songs & sermon for Yew celebrations



As often the oldest living thing in our landscape, our yews are to celebrated. This song and sermon can be used to support your yew tree plantings, celebrations and other events. They were gathered as part of The Conservation Foundation's *Millennium Yews* project in 2000, but are still relevant today. They were aimed at religious ceremonies – the majority of our ancient yews are to be found in churchyards – but can be used by any group.

You may also be interested in research the story of your yew, and articulating it to others. To help with the costs of revealing your yew story to community, download our small grant application form from www.weloveyew.org



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The Yew Tree Song

“

Long, long ago through the mists of time,
There grew the yew, sacred tree sublime,
Symbol of life and eternity,
Protector, guardian, sanctuary.

Down through the ages its strength did grow,
By humble gravestones the mighty bow,
A holy marker, the Easter palm,
A deadly poison, a curing balm.

Standing alone or in stately row,
In quiet churchyards those yews still grow,
Keeping their watch by the wicket gate,
Immortal markers of God's estate.

Patient, enduring, they self renew,
Where once stood one, now grows many a yew,
Their timeless beauty for years to come,
Strength for the new millennium.

So as we gather to plant our tree,
A branch of faith for eternity,
Hope for the future when we are gone,
The living proof that our love will live on.

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Download The Yew Tree Song audio files at:

www.weloveyew.org/1_The_Yew_Tree_Song.mp3

www.weloveyew.org/2_The_Song_of_the_Tree_of_Life.mp3

www.weloveyew.org/3_The_Yew_Tree_Song_Accompaniment_only.mp3

Download The Yew Tree Song sheet music at:

www.weloveyew.org/millenniumyews_song_sheet_music.pdf

Words and melody: Graham Preskett
Organ accompaniment and descant: Sean Farrell
Sung by the boys of Rochester Cathedral Choir
Director: Roger Sayer
Recorded in Rochester Cathedral

Sermon

To launch the We Love Yew project in May 2015, a sermon was read by the Bishop of Salisbury as one yew sapling was blessed for each Church of England diocese. The sermon is by Revd John Mason Neale (1818-66), warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead (West Sussex), who preached on the biblical text *'O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord'*:

“ The yew... may be accounted a fit emblem of a Christian. You see it hath little outside bark, only a small rind; to teach us not to make a great outside show of religion. Then it has a very lasting timber, much harder than oak, to show the soundness and sincerity of a Christian. It has many branches, large and fair, to remind us to be plentiful in good works. It is always green and prospering, to declare unto us that a Christian should always grow and thrive in grace. Yea, green in winter and the hardest weather, to show that a Christian is best in affliction; yea, then it hath berries on it, to teach us, as then we are the best of Christians, so then to bring forth most fruits of righteousness. It is a long-lived and lasting tree, to be unto us a type of immortality and lasting life... All this we confess when we set up the Yew.

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- Quoted in *Yew: A History* by Fred Hageneder. The History Press, 2007. p.132