



Turf Topics

IF YOU MISSED US IN
SAN ANTONIO ...

then you missed a demon-
stration of the new ...

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With the coming of Arbor Day, last Friday in April,
why not plant a "Ward tree"?

"Ward tree" or "guardian tree" refers to no particu-
lar specie but can be any kind of a tree indigenous to
the area.

The Nordic mythology abounds with legends about
"ward trees", (Vard trad) Sw, and our pagan
forefathers planted them at their homesteads, for good
fortune and protection against evil forces. Oak, ash,
juniper but particularly Mountain ash, Sorbus aucu-
paria, were highly regarded as "ward trees" and
believed endowed with mystical powers and spirits.

If the "ward tree" became diseased and died it was a
forewarning of misfortune to come; if the "ward tree"
remained healthy and vigorous it signified health,
riches and good luck for the owner. Today, with our
grave environmental problems, we readily appreciate
our forefathers concern about his "ward trees".

Last summer, visiting my grandfathers cottage in
Sweden, I was attracted by a Mountain ash, healthy
and growing well. Recalling that no more than 5-6
years of age "helping" my grandfather plant that
tree, I felt pride and satisfaction because after so
many years "my tree" was still there and doing well.
The Mountain ash is not a long lived nor durable tree
and so I was pleased that this one was still holding its
own.

During the many intervening years many wanderers
passed by the Mountain ash. Some boys and girls
paused long enough to initial their names within a
heart, crudely carved in the bark, before resuming
their journey.

By now, new growth has blurred the initials in the
hearts. The Mountain ash however, tells us one thing
for certain--years ago when its bark was initialed by
the young couples they were strong, hopeful and
happy.

The Mountain ash is still lush and vigorous. Remem-
bering the pagan legend about "ward trees", we
believe happiness and good fortune has followed the
once young "carvers" on their long journey.

For Arbor Day, the last Friday in April, let your sons
plant a "ward tree". It will bring shade, beauty,
contentment; something fine to remember through the
years.

Credit - Nels J. Johnson
Tree Expert, Evanston, IL



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