

Planetary relationships of trees

Excerpts adapted from Heavenly Gardens, by Enzo Nastati

From Rudolf Steiner's *Occult Science*, we can take the order of the planets according to their manifestation and understand that the planets act in their sphere of free astrality as mediators of communication between the Zodiac, the spiritual world, and the Earth, the etheric-physical world. In humans, the astral is linked to the soul, so we can also say that the seven planets resonate within the soul. Each planet has a sympathetic influence, which we call primary, and an antipathetic influence, which we call secondary. The primary influence of a planet tends toward incarnation, the secondary influence towards excarnation. That which is subject to this incarnation and excarnation is the lower self, the ego. For example, in humans, the influence of the planet Saturn is found in the bones, in the skeleton: its primary or incarnating influence shows in the formation of bones, while osteoporosis is a result of the secondary or excarnating aspect of Saturn.

We can therefore assign plants to each planet that show the greatest correspondence to both its primary (I) and secondary (II) influences.

Saturn

Saturn I is the starting point of incarnation. It leads to the formation of support tissues and corresponds to the world of conifers, extreme longevity in robust plants which express their essence in the timber rather than the leaf.

Saturn II is the principle of excarnation, the death of the plant when the seed is ripe. Saturn II helps escape from time. A plant of Saturn II is the cypress

Thuja shows a synthesis between the roles of Saturn I and Saturn II.

Jupiter

Jupiter I can be associated with all deciduous trees, but especially the maples. Jupiter I carries the formative principle that is expressed in trees forming the flesh of the fruits, and in an animal is expressed by forming muscle.

On the other hand, the forces of Jupiter II embody Light towards resurrection that is expressed in a rich flowering and in leaves that are bright, shiny and leathery. The plant that best embodies these characteristics is the Magnolia (*magnolia grandiflora*). Amongst bushes this comes through strongest in laurel and holly.

The synthesis between Jupiter I and Jupiter II is the *castanea* - sweet chestnut.

Mars

The oak tree fully embodies the forces of Mars I, the forces of the warrior. Mars I in people leads to finished activity, and governs blood circulation and the will (the will to take action which is primarily a force of for incarnation).

In Mars II, the forces that prepare us to struggle are directed inwards, to wage the toughest battle that an individuality can tackle: the transformation of the self. Mars II brings the forces for initiation in people, and is expressed in the red-leaved shrubs, the bushes with strong flowering but with little propensity to regrowth.

Sun

The tree that embodies the forces of the Sun is ash - *fraxinus*. Sun I brings the forces of materialization and governs the rhythmic system in humans. Sun II leads to dematerialization and the tree that embodies this influence is the lime.

Interestingly, many of the trees mentioned so far (oak, ash, lime.....) were considered sacred in ancient times, a sign that they were known as vehicles for special forces.

Venus

Venus presides over all types of assimilation, both of food and of ideas, and even of the spirit understood as veneration. (In Italian, veneration is *venere* - an instinctual sentiment that is deeply nourishing for the etheric body). Venus I is "taking within," acceptance. One can take in from the past, from experience, from inheritance. A plant that expresses the forces of Venus I is the *Robinia pseudoacacia*, black locust.

Venus II gives away what was previously received, after having developed and transformed it. This process is embodied in plants such as birch, trees with peeling bark (tamarisk, the vine, etc.), even when what the plant "gives away" is not its bark. To understand the meaning of this process, we can refer to the food that we eat and process, because what we can give away after having transformed the food is not the result of the food, but a result of what we have had to do to transform the food.

Mercury

Mercury I is notable for the fast repetition of a single gesture, without variations. This gesture can be a behavior, an idea, a way of relating to others, etc. In the world of plants, this is the elm with its rapid self-multiplication and reproductive forces spread around (for example it promotes the proliferation and spread of fungi), which embodies this aspect of Mercury.

Just because of this repetitive multiplication, Mercury II is represented in shrubs that tolerate pruning well and have a good capacity for regrowth. This gesture is mostly found in the concise shapes of leaves, as in the case of the boxwood.

Moon

Moon I governs reproduction, is related to the Element Water, and hence to plants that grow at low levels with broad leaves, like the alder.

Moon II governs the processes of cell division, and is linked to the fig and willow as well as the formation of sheaths and “skins.” Moon II is linked to the brain. An ill or materialistic thought produces viral diseases, and treatment for these diseases is “knowing how to think.” Boxwood is the plant that embodies the forces that can cure viruses.

The brain does not perceive the images, as this is performed in a “hidden” way by the lungs through inhalation of atmospheric nitrogen. In fact, the lungs are the bearer of cosmic images in us. At each breath, the cerebrospinal fluid rises and the brain that floats in it escapes more of the Earth’s gravity, undergoing a sort of rhythmic “massage” that bring life, thus promoting its elevation in resonance with the cosmic thoughts.

Earth

The forces of Earth I produce humus, mineral salts, rocks and provide the bio-physical components for plant growth. However, the forces that govern and direct the growth of plants are carried by the planets.

It is not easy to find a tree that can express the earthly forces. An example can be seen in the Judas tree (*cercis siliquastrum*) because flowers grow directly on its black trunk without first forming the thin branches. This idiosyncrasy shows that an Earth impulse connects directly to an Air impulse, without being mediated by Water. Recall that the square of the Elements has an axis joining the Earth element to the Air element and is called the axis of death.

If the primary Earth influence brings the forces of death, we might think that its secondary influence is related to the forces of resurrection which we can locate in the olive and palm trees that express these forces.