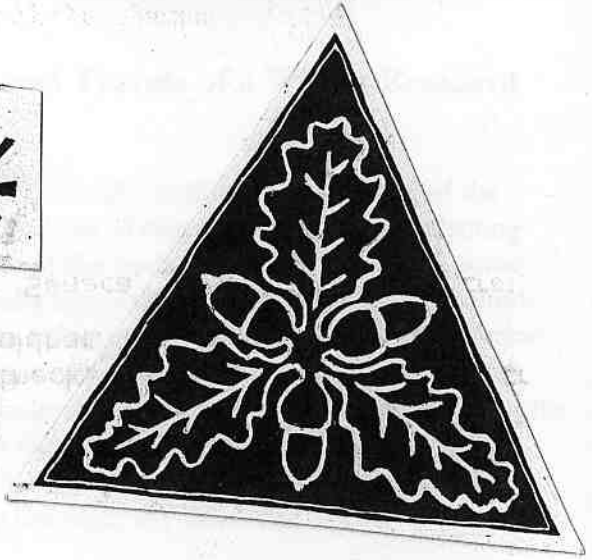


OPENING

THE

OAK

DOOR

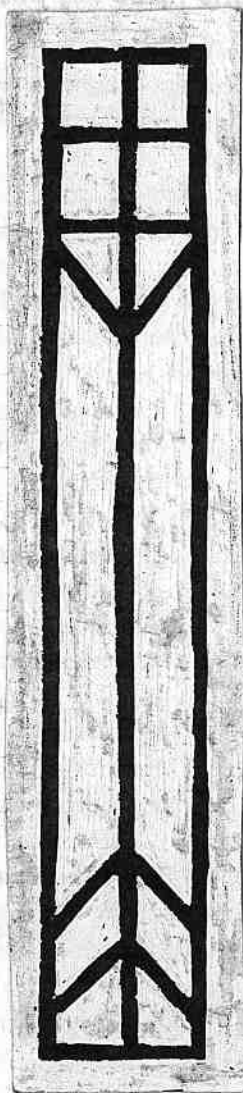


The Art of Gardening evolves constantly, and today's visionary gardeners are exploring how to let go of much of the control & work typically associated with raising bountiful gardens. Put another way, we are finding that the easiest way to "manage" gardens is to shed the mantle of command, and return to Nature many responsibilities we have long assumed.

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Key to this approach is an understanding that healthy gardens are created not by the simple presence of individual elements such as nutrients & plants, but by the briskness and depth of the Flows & interconnections between them.

And much as entire ecosystems consist of these synergistic (self-supporting, self-regulating, self-repairing, self-perpetuating) flows within particular plant & animal & other communities, nested within larger communities of synergies, and so on, so today's avant gardeners attempt to imitate these synergies by creating combinations of plants that "click!" Done well, the work of managing fertility and irrigation, and keeping pests in line, for example, is largely supplanted into the charge of the ecosystem itself.



What avant-gardeners are discovering is that each "pocket of synergies" tends to be concentrated around a "keystone plant", very often, a tree. In a sense, this is simply old wisdom rediscovered.

Although ancient cultures may never have understood the science of plant inter-relationships, they nevertheless recognized, through countless years of attunement and observation, that certain plants were possessed of pronounced "keystone" qualities. The central role and functions that such plants played in "weaving together" the living tapestry in which the ancients lived and moved was reflected in the esteem with which these plants were regarded, and the qualities associated with them.

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For example, on whatever continent and in whatever ancient culture it supported, THE OAK has been revered as one of the most sacred of all species. Oak means "DOOR" in many ancient languages. Oak trees were held

sacred by the Druids, who were priests of the oak god. The word "Druid" is said to come from the Welsh word 'derwydd', oakseer,