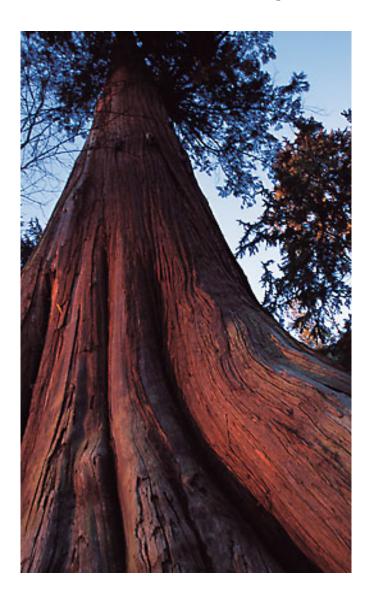# Cedar

Coastal Salish origin:

"There was a real good man who was always helping others. Whenever they needed, he gave; when they wanted, he gave them food and clothing. When the Great Spirit saw this, he said, 'That man has done his work; when he dies and where he is buried, a cedar tree will grow and be useful to the people – the roots for baskets, the bark for clothing, the wood for shelter.'" Bertha Peters to Wally Henry

Cedar

Symbolizes protection - it was used to build our houses, used for our tools and implements, it was used for our clothing and hats... It was even used for our transportation! (canoes).

Cedar Brushing:

The branches help brush off negativity. They are hung in door ways, used in special occasions, and if you are feeling bad, you can got for a walk and let the cedar branches gently brush away negativity. In a cedar brushing ceremony in Vancouver two years ago, the mayor and council were brushed off in order to cleanse their spirits, and open their hearts to collaboration and cooperation. Cedar brushing can be healing, restorative, cleansing, and purifying. It helps us do our work intentionally. It is a great alternative when buildings do not allow smudging.

Harvesting and Using Cedar:

The inner bark is gathered in a way that does not hurt the tree. The bark is used for clothing and baskets. The wood is used for canoes and split into perfect planks also the roots are used for cradles and baskets. We are able to utilize every part of the Cedar tree

Cedar can be used in ceremony, burning to smudge and cleanse. It can be used in work when getting ready to travel to the spirit world.

It is of great importance how one harvests the Cedar. It must be done with reverence and respect making sure to take only enough, and to care for the tree, as has been done today in order to prepare this cedar and bring this teaching to you all.

Thank you to all my relations, friends, colleagues, youth, and elders who shared their teachings about cedar with us all today.   – Jennifer Mervyn