

ETHICAL CEDAR HARVESTING PRACTICES

- As shared by Laura Manson from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation
- Cedar harvesting may only be done at a certain time of year, and that timing may vary from nation to nation. The time we harvest is typically during the spring season.
- We can only harvest from a tree that we are able to wrap our arms around. We don't want to harvest from any trees smaller nor bigger than that.
- We will only harvest from the side of the tree that is not touched by the sun. By following this practice, we avoid causing any harm to the tree.
- We only harvest what we need from the Cedar trees; we never take more than what we need.



**NATIVE COURTWORKER
AND COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION OF BC**

COMMUNITY
WORKSHOP, STORY, AND

CEDAR HARVESTING TEACHINGS



**INDIGENOUS YOUTH
ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING
COMMITTEE**

This workshop is presented by the
Native Courtworker & Counselling Association of BC
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BRINGING LIGHT TO DARK PLACES**

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Cedar Sapling was born on the traditional territory of The Cowichan people, her parents, siblings, grandparents and great great grandparents were all born from cedar seeds on the side of Mt. Tzehalum. However, there was something unique about cedar sapling, and they always felt a bit different from their family.

While all the other cedar trees and saplings were growing and standing tall together on the east slope of Mt. Tzehalum, cedar sapling was a little bit further up the slope, on the west side of the Mountain. Cedar sapling could see, hear, and talk to their family, but they were a bit isolated from them and received much less sun and rain than their family. Therefore, Cedar sapling wasn't growing as big and strong as their relatives. Many of the other cedar families, always asked what was wrong with Cedar sapling, why weren't they big and strong like their family and why did they bend in the wind, why were they dry and brittle, not bright green and thriving like their family?

This hurt Cedar sapling, and as time wore on Cedar sapling, began feeling isolated, alone, weak, and not a part of their family or community. Cedar sapling began pulling away from the sun, when the sun came, and was therefore thriving even less.

Raven, a visitor to the Cowichan Territory often flew over Cedar Saplings family's territory and had been keeping a watchful eye on cedar sapling. Raven with their keen eye and sharp mind, noticed that cedar sapling was not growing as big and strong and green as the other Cedar trees, that Cedar sapling was dry and brown, and small, their bark not good. Raven wanted the rich cedar bark that Cedar sapling could provide to them, so they could use it to become the richest Raven in the world.

During the dark months, mother earth created big wind and rain, it would go on for weeks, months and it was very dark and grey. Cedar sapling was bent, and cold, isolated and all alone out in the wind and rain, with no other Cedar trees for warmth, company, and protection. Cedar sapling had no sun at all during this time so could not grow.

One day during the dark months, Raven was flying high on the winds created by Mother Earth, and they took a special trip to see how Cedar sapling was fairing in the dark season.

Raven swooped down and landed beside Cedar sapling who stood up with a start. Cedar sapling, scared, cold and lonely, said-who are you? why are you here?

Raven- I am Raven, I am the King of the sky, and I am here to help you. I have noticed your family ignores you and you are alone, cold, and tired, without proper food and sunlight. I see that over time you have stopped talking to your family and are away from them in the darkness.

Cedar- I am not like them I am different and I won't grow big and strong like them. They are ashamed of me.

Raven- I know a place I can take you, where there is a lot of sun, magic soil and you will grow big and strong. Your bark will be the best bark in the land and I will be with you every day. You will have the richest treasure box in the Nation and your family will feel bad about the way they have treated you.

Cedar sapling wasn't sure, and told Raven so, Raven said that is ok I will come back and check on you.

Raven kept their promise, everyday day for a full moon cycle. 4 weeks Raven returned with a gift. The first week with rays of sun beams stolen from the sun way high up in the sky. Raven delivered the beams to the Cedar sapling and showered them only on Cedar sapling, Cedar sapling felt warm, loved, and alive, Cedar sapling grew and grew in a very short time. Cedar sapling was happy in the light.

The second week Raven spread their wings as big as they would go, covering Cedar

sapling from the wind and rain, giving sapling a rest from Mother earths cleansing. Cedar sapling was able to rest and didn't feel alone, they grew and grew from the attention and warmth.

The third week Raven came with special soil, this soil had magic in it, and as Raven used their wings to spread it around the base of Cedar sapling, they felt peaceful, warm, loved, and all their loneliness and coldness left. Cedar sapling grew and grew from the magic soil.

On the fourth week Raven brought a message from the two-legged, the message invited Cedar sapling to go to another place on earth, to grow in the sunlight, the magic soil, where there was little wind and rain, where Cedar sapling would be able to grow to be the richest of all Cedar trees. Cedar sapling would show their family, that they could be big, strong and have the best bark, even better than their bark.

Cedar sapling told Raven that they would go with Raven to the two-legged, Raven assured Cedar sapling that they would be safe, loved, warm and they would grow to be the richest Cedar Tree in all the land.

Raven plucked up Cedar sapling with their beak and flew high up in the sky, circling over Cedar saplings family, laughing and mocking Cedars family as Raven took sapling far away from Mt. Tsuhalum to the land of the two-legged.

When Raven and Cedar sapling arrived in the land of the two-legged, Cedar sapling was shocked at all the tall, tall buildings, the black stuff on the ground, that the two-legged walked and drove on. Cedar sapling noticed right away that there was not much sun, that the rain and wind was still here with the two-legged and that there were hardly any other trees, flowers, or birds here. Most of all Cedar sapling noticed that there were no Cedar trees here.

Raven, asked Cedar sapling where will I go? There is no sun here, no other cedar trees, no birds, there is still much rain and wind here? I am scared, please take me back to my family on Mt. Tsuhalum.

No cedar sapling, I am going to plant you here on this big piece of earth that you will have all to yourself, the buildings on either side will protect you from wind and rain, sun will come every day, and you will have lots of magic soil to grown in.

Raven planted cedar sapling back into mother earth in a small patch of ground, surrounded by the black stuff that two legged drove and walked on.

Cedar sapling was very, sad, scared and lonely, but they rooted in the ground and tried to think positive. That maybe they would become the richest of all Cedar trees here in the land of the two legged and show all the other cedars back home that they really were important and valuable.

As the days, weeks, months wore on Cedar sapling was barely growing. It was cold, windy, and dark, the sun could barely reach cedar sapling between the two big tall buildings, but it did some sometimes. When sun came she would remind Cedar sapling to grow, that they were loved, they had a family and they should never give up hope.

Raven would fly down and visit Cedar sometimes, Cedar would cry and beg Raven to take them home to Mt. Tzuhalem, Cedar would tell Raven they made a mistake and needed to go home.

Raven would get angry at Cedar, but Raven would often bring a little bit of the magic soil, which Cedar sapling now relied on to feel happy. The magic soil only works for brief periods of time. When the magic soil dried up Cedar sapling would be left feeling scared, alone, and cold. Cedar sapling would beg Raven for more magic soil.

Raven would tell Cedar sapling that he would only bring more magic soil, IF Cedar sapling started growing strong and tall, as Raven needed Cedar saplings bark for the two-legged.

Cedar sapling tried to grow so they could give Raven good bark for the humans, but the parking lot didn't have healthy soil to root in. Cedar sapling was often to sad and lonely to bother to grow

The only time Cedar sapling grew was when Sun would visit, she would bring messages of hope, love and joy from MT. Tzuhalem, from all the other Cedar trees and encourage Cedar sapling to never give up on returning home to their community.

Raven was getting very angry with Cedar sapling for not growing big and strong, he began visiting Cedar sapling every day threatening them that they would never see their family again, unless they grew bigger. Cedar begged Raven for more magic soil, but Raven stopped bringing the magic soil. Raven said you grow, and I will give you more soil.

Cedar sapling began to get sick, from loneliness and no magic soil. Cedar sapling needed that soil. Cedar sapling was slowly starting to die.

One day Sun came to see Cedar sapling and told them that they needed to pray for help and pray to their family. Cedar sapling prayed for four days.

On day four, a big, huge cloud came down from the sky and hovered over Cedar sapling.....Cedar sapling got scared thinking it was Raven again. However, Cedar sapling soon realized it wasn't Raven, they heard a loud boom, Cedar sapling looked up and saw the powerful almighty Thunderbird.

Thunderbird addressed Cedar sapling. "My dear Cedar sapling, you are being used for the two-legged greed, it is hurting you and you will die if you stay here. The two-legged will continue to give you magic soil to make you sick, steal your bark and eventually you die here in this parking lot alone.

You must come with me, I will take you home to Mt. Tzuhalem, and you can be with your family again.

First you must get well and heal from the magic soil and the exploitation that you have experienced from Raven and the two legged.

Thunderbird opened his wings wide, wrapped them around Thunderbird, pulled Cedar sapling up into the sky and flew over the Traditional Territory of the Lekwugen peoples. Thunderbird whispered to Cedar sapling, I am taking you somewhere safe to get well, grow and heal before you go home to Mt Tzuhalem.

Thunderbird put Cedar sapling back down and earth, with other Cedar saplings that were also sick, together at " Marys Farm" they will heal and grow. This place had sun light, water and good soil, no magic soil was here. All the trees grew together and looked after each other to heal.

Cedar sapling stayed on the farm for 6 months during this time they grew big and strong, learned about how to grow good bark and not let the two legged take it from them. They were part of a group of other Cedar trees that were also learning how to be healthy so they could return to their communities of trees.

Thunderbird returned as promised, he came with a message from Cedar saplings family.

Dear Cedar sapling,

We want you to know that it is time to come home to your homelands, we have a spot for you on our side of the mountain in the sunlight, with water, and protection. We are all waiting for you, Thunderbird will bring you back when you are ready and we are here waiting.

