



Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians

Hilary Stewart

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From the giant cedar of the rainforest came a wealth of raw materials vital to the way of life, art and culture of the early First Nations people of the Northwest Coast.

All parts of the cedar tree had many uses. From the wood, skilled men made ocean-going canoes, massive post-and-beam houses, monumental carved poles that declared history, rights and lineage, and powerful dance masks. Women dextrously wove the inner bark into mats and baskets, plied it into ocordage and netting or processed it into soft, warm, water-repellent clothing. They also made the strong withes into heavy-duty rope and wove the roots into watertight baskets.

Hilary Stewart explains, through her vivid descriptions, 550 detailed drawings and 50 photographs, the tools and techniques used, as well as the superbly crafted objects and their uses--all in the context of daily and ceremonial life. Anecdotes, oral history and the accounts of early explorers, traders, missionaries and native elders highlight the text.

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