

## LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS:

# The GREEN MAN

*Every culture has a wealth of mythology tales of the Green Man found in Egyptian, Greek and Celtic legends.*

**Y**our next section in *Charms and Symbols* will explore a diverse range of cultural folktales and show how you can draw upon the magic of these ancient beliefs through symbolism. The first folktale brought to you is the story of the Green Man, the male spirit of nature; a fertility deity representing the cycle of life. He is thought to have his roots in Egypt's vegetation god, Osiris, and Greece's wild woodland god, Dionysus.

### Arthurian figure

The Green Man first appeared in Britain in Arthurian myth, in the tale of Gawain and the Green Knight. By the 12th century, he had infiltrated Christianity and his image appeared in churches; he was said to represent Christ through the words, "I am the true vine". Yet he also stayed within Pagan circles as Jack-in-the-Green, the leaf-covered man of May festivals.

*The legend and folklore of the Green Man are among the oldest in the world.*



## SYMBOLISM OF THE GREEN MAN

The Green Man is depicted in three main forms and from these stem his various symbols.



He is often portrayed with his head formed from a single leaf or mask of leaves, with vegetation

**Create your own Green Man using leaves and berries; you can use his image to harness the energies of nature.**

coming out of his mouth; or with the head being a fruit or flower in bloom.



Certain plants are associated with the Green Man, such as the vine emerging from his mouth and the oak and hawthorn, whose leaves were used to depict his face. Hazel leaves and hazel nuts were also included in portraits of the Green Man.



The Green Man's association with trees connects him to an ancient tradition found in cultures all around the world – the Tree of Life, which links the Earth to heaven and other worlds.

You can create your own Green Man for your altar or to hang in your home; simply make a bearded face from leaves, vine, berries and flowers.