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RAINBOW EUCALYPTUS (Eucalyptus deglupta)

The only eucalyptus indigenous to the northern hemisphere, the rainbow eucalyptus can grow up to 76 metres tall in the rainy forests of Indonesia, the Philippines and New Guinea; it can also be found in frost-free regions such as Hawaii and parts of the southern states of the continental US, where its height may be limited to 30-38 metres. As the tree's bark is shed an inner bright green layer is exposed to the air and, over time, it changes to reds, oranges, pinks and purples, each layer falling off at different times creating a spectacular multi-coloured natural display.

Photo © Troy Harrison/Getty Images



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QUIVER (Aloidendron dichotomum)

Although tree-like in appearance, the quiver (or kokerboum in Afrikaans) is a species of succulent aloe, indigenous to the Northern Cape and areas of Namibia in southern Africa. The plant gets its common name from the indigenous San people who would create quivers for their arrows from the tubular branches. This slow-growing plant can reach up to nine metres tall, with a trunk one-metre across and yellow flowers that bloom each June or July. Namibia is one of the few areas where quivers continue to grow in the wild, as it is unfortunately in decline and is now a protected species.

Photo © Martin Harvey/Getty Images



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PINYON PINE (Pinus edulis)

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The slow-growing pinyon pine is a small variant of the pine tree, rarely growing above six metres in height but able to live for up to 600 years. As a species that is extremely water efficient, pinyon pines are able to survive on 38 cm or less of annual rainfall and so can be found surviving in tough conditions. The edible nuts – pine nuts – that the trees produce are widely harvested and commonly used in New Mexican food. Pinyon pines thrive predominantly in the Rocky Mountain region in southwest America, the name derived from the Spanish 'pino piñonero', used for both American and Spanish variants of the tree.

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Photo © Danita Delimont Stock/AWL Images



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There are around 200 species of maple (Acer) and the Japanese maple has been developed over centuries, resulting in numerous cultivated varieties, often used for ornamental effect in temperate climates across the world due to their rich variety of leaf colours and shapes, appealing overall shape and shade-giving foliage. They rarely grow above 15 to 16 metres, making them a favourite for gardeners and landscape designers looking to provide colour and interest in domestic and formal gardens alike. Extracts from the branches and leaves are used in some traditional Chinese medicines.

Photo © Joe Daniel Price/Getty Images



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'GENERAL SHERMAN' GIANT SEQUOIA (Sequoiadendron giganteum)

Giant sequoias are some of the largest trees on earth and the individual known as 'General Sherman' in the Sequoia National Park, California, is among the world's largest known living trees, measured by volume, standing at 83 metres tall with a trunk diameter of approximately 11 metres at its base. At between 2,300 and 2,700 years old this giant among giants is also thought to be one of the longest-lived specimens on the planet, and it is still growing. While the sequoia's bark is unusually fire resistant, giant sequoias' reproduction cycle rely on wildfires to clear natural competition and other vegetation.

Photo © Jon Hicks/Getty Images

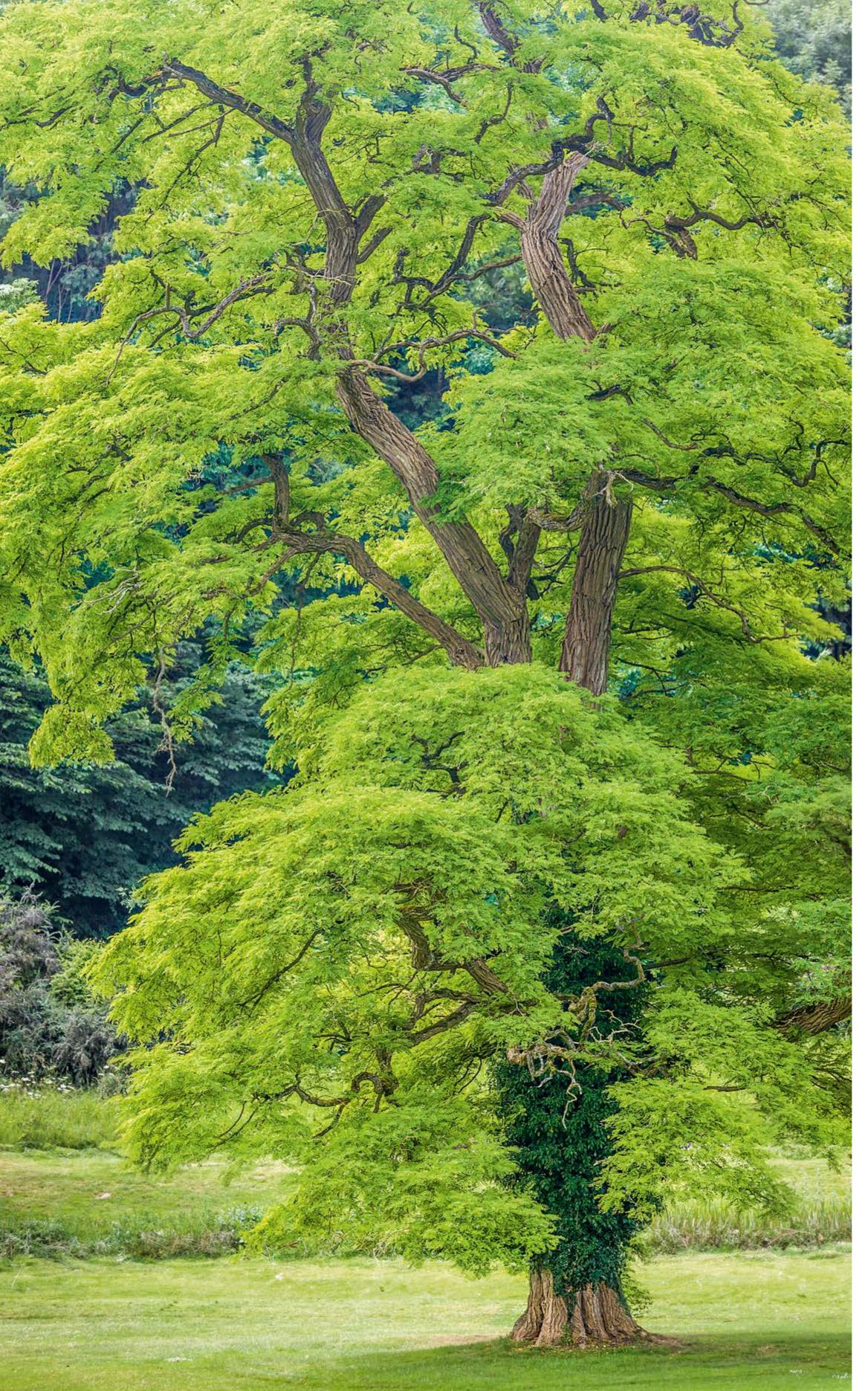


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TRAVELLER'S PALM (Ravenala madagascariensis)

Native to Madagascar, as its species name implies, the traveller's palm is not a true palm tree, but rather part of the Strelitziaceae family. Its distinctive fan-shaped crown of leaves reaches eight to 12 metres high after ten to 20 years of growth and they commonly grow in an East-West alignment, providing travellers with a crude natural compass. As the tree ages, the oldest and lowest leaves tend to be lost, leaving a grey trunk. An alternative origin for the tree's common name is that rainwater collects in the sheaths of the leaf stems, offering an emergency source of refreshment for thirsty travellers.

Photo © Dennisvdw/Getty Images



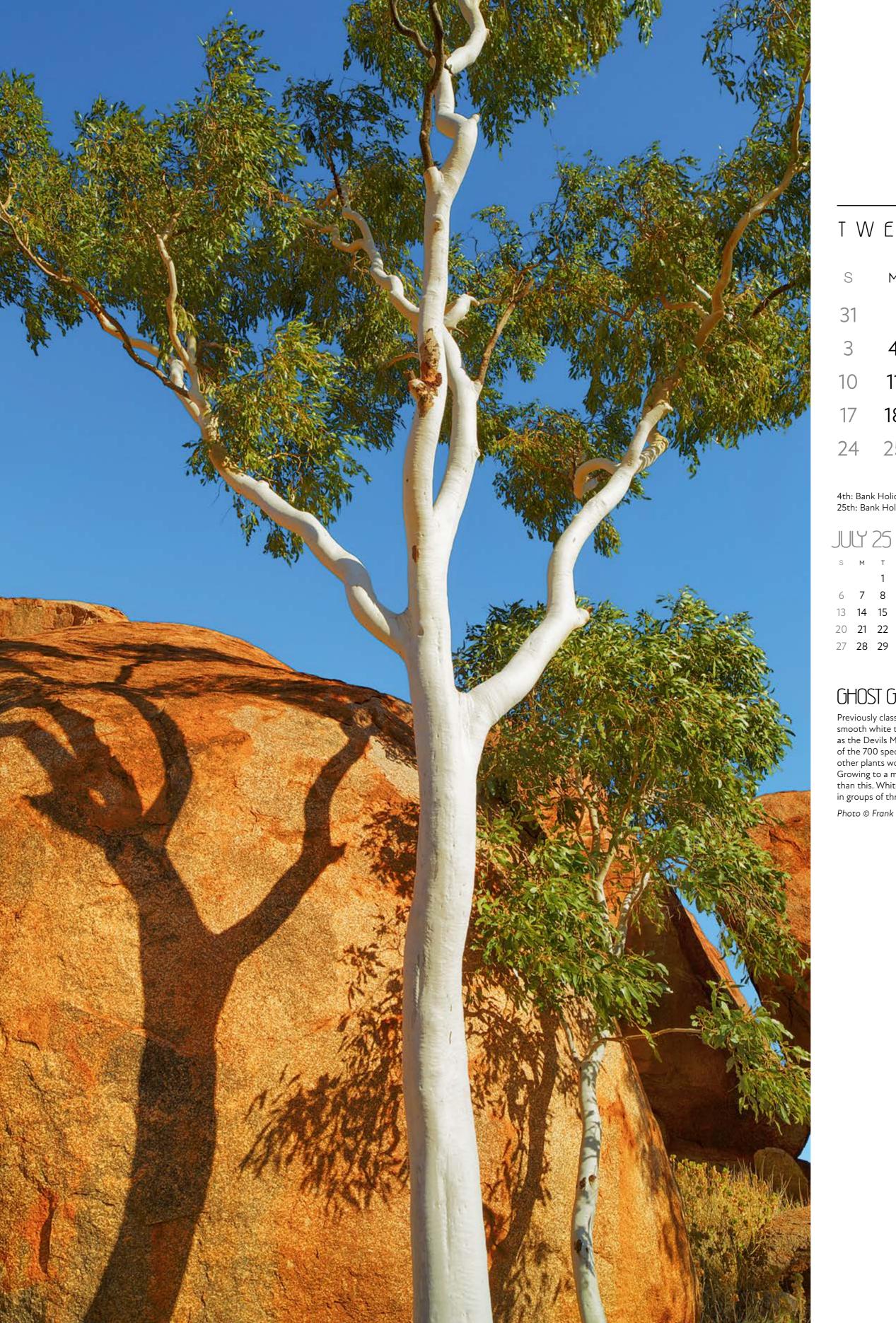
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BLACK LOCUST (Robinea pseudoacacia)

Fast-growing and with attractive, rounded leaves, the majestic black locust tree (also known as a false acacia) is native to North America but is adaptable and can also be found across Europe, being tolerant to drought conditions and atmospheric pollution. Its lush, pale green foliage turns a pale yellow in the autumn and clusters of white, fragrant flowers bloom in late spring and early summer, attracting bees and hummingbirds. The bark is rugged and furrowed, and this characterful spreading tree provides the perfect nesting habitat for a variety of wildlife, including several species of woodpeckers.

Photo © Christian Mueringer/AWL Images



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ALLAN & BERTRAM

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GHOST GUM (Corymbia aparrerinja)

Previously classed as a eucalyptus (eucalyptus papuana or eucalyptus aparrerinja) the smooth white trunk of a ghost gum casts its shadow on the granite formations known as the Devils Marbles (Karlu Karlu) in northern Australia. Often confused with one of the 700 species of eucalyptus trees and shrubs, ghost gums thrive in areas where other plants would struggle to survive, in arid regions, rocky slopes and dry creek beds. Growing to a maximum height of 20 metres, most individuals remain much shorter than this. White flowers, pollinated by birds rather than insects, appear in the summer, in groups of three to seven buds.

Photo © Frank Krahmer/AWL Images



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EUROPEAN ASH (Fraxinus excelsior)

Part of the olive family Oleaceae, ash trees can grow as tall as 35 metres, forming a domed canopy of branches and foliage. The small purple female flowers appear before the leaves in spring and, once pollinated by the wind, form into winged fruits, known as keys, in late summer and autumn. Unusually for a deciduous tree, ash leaves often fall while still green. Native to Europe and parts of Asia and Africa, it is currently the third most common tree in the UK but much of this population is afflicted by ash dieback, a fungal disease. It is feared that tens of thousands of trees will die, forever altering Britain's woodlands and landscapes.

Photo © Matt Anderson Photography/Getty Images



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JOSHUA TREE (Yucca brevifolia)

The twisted, bristly shapes of the Joshua tree characterise the dry and rugged desert landscapes and open grasslands of southern North America where these slow-growing but long-lived individuals grow. A succulent that stores water, rather than a tree, these plants do not have growth rings so determining their age is difficult, but based on average growth rate, one Californian specimen is estimated at around 1,000 years old. Joshua trees are vulnerable to climate change because they need a dormant period of cold weather in order to produce their white flowers.

Photo © Vsevolod Istratkin/Getty Images



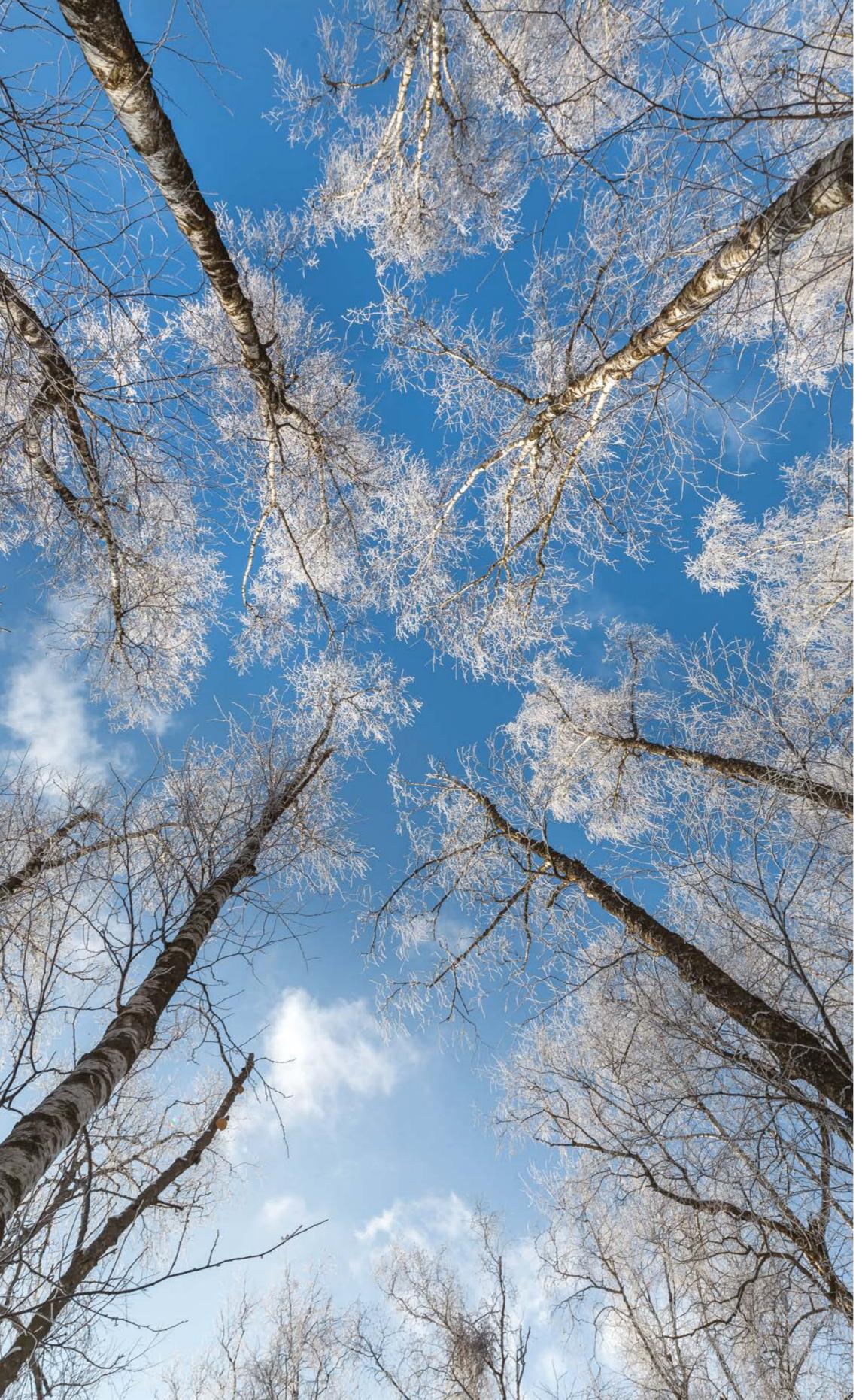
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ASPEN (Populus tremula)

The slightest breeze disturbs the delicate foliage of aspen trees, commonly named the quaking aspen. The round, irregular-edged leaves have flattened leaf stalks that are flexible, allowing the leaves to flutter so easily. Forests of aspen provide a vibrant display of colour throughout spring, summer and autumn, when the bright green leaves turn to a bright yellow or sometimes red before falling from the trees. Surrounded by tales of myth and folklore, the pale-barked aspen has contributed much to ancient cultures and beliefs across the regions where it is found. The Greek 'aspis' means shield, leading the Celts to carve shields from aspen wood, believed to have protective qualities against all forms of harm.

Photo © Danita Delimont Stock/AWL Images



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Known for its silver-white bark that sheds in delicate papery strips, the silver birch is one of around 40 species of birch that grow naturally throughout Europe from Spain to Lapland. Their open canopy allows light to reach the woodland floor, providing the perfect growing conditions for bluebells, violets, grasses and mosses. Birch trees commonly live for just 90 to 100 years but are hardy and fast-growing, so provide valuable protective cover for other plants and prevent soil erosion. In Celtic mythology the silver birch was a symbol of purity and renewal, and bundles of twigs were used to sweep out the spirit of the old year.

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