

TU B'SHEVAT: Celebration of the Trees

Tu B'Shevat: Jewish Arbor Day

Tu B'Shevat is an annual, Jewish holiday celebrating trees, nature, and the Earth. Much like the American Arbor Day or Earth Day, Tu B'Shevat is often used to bring awareness to ecological issues. This year, **Tu B'Shevat will be celebrated from sundown on Sunday, February 5 until sundown on Monday, February 6.**

What Does "Tu B'Shevat" Mean?

While Tu B'Shevat celebrates trees and nature, the name itself is actually just the date on which the holiday falls, much like how American Independence Day is called Fourth of July. **Shevat** is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. **Tu** stands for the Hebrew letters *tet* and *vav*, which in Hebrew numerology have a joined value of fifteen. So, the holiday literally translates to *the fifteenth of Shevat*. The holiday is sometimes also called **Chag Ha'Ilanot** (the festival of trees) or **Rosh Hashanah La'Ilanot** (the new year of the trees).

How We Celebrate

Tu B'Shevat is not a religious holiday, rather it's a secular celebration of ecology and nature. Therefore, there are no specific obligations on the holiday, but there are some fun traditions that date back to ancient times. Hosting a Tu B'Shevat Seder (festival meal with rituals) and serving the Seven Species (*see page 3*) is a great way to commemorate the holiday.

Other Activities

As with most Jewish holidays, there are several songs that are commonly associated with Tu B'Shevat (*see page 3*).

Often, planting a tree or donating to an organization that plants trees is an important part of Tu B'Shevat celebrations. By giving your Jewish residents small flower pots and letting them plant a seed, you can help them participate in the tradition of renewing the earth.



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Bubbe's Corner

This section highlights different Jewish traditions from both local and world-wide Jewish communities. Here, you can learn about the cultural variations of Jews and connect with your residents' personal traditions on a deeper level. Every Jewish community and family has its own traditions unique to their lives and experiences. Be sure to ask your residents about any Tu B'Shevat memories they have!

If you've had a child or grandchild in the last year, it's traditional to plant a tree in their honor— a Cedar tree for boys, and a Cypress tree for girls.

JNF, the [Jewish National Fund](#), raises money to plant an average of three million trees a year!



Tu B'Shevat is the designated birthday of the trees!

Tu B'Shevat was originally created to help farmers determine the best time to harvest fruit from their trees. The date was chosen to reflect the climate in Israel.

In the famous Tu B'Shevat story, a man found a world full of carob trees, and just as his ancestors planted for him, he too, plants for his descendants.

Important Terms for Tu B'Shevat

Hebrew...	It is pronounced...	It means...
Tu B'Shevat	Too beesh-vaht	The fifteenth of Shevat
Ilanot	Ee-lah-note	Young trees
Eitz/Eitzim	Aytz/aytz-eem	Tree/trees
Chag Ha'Ilanot	Hag ha ee-lah-note	The festival of trees
Shivat HaMinim	Sheev-aht ha-mee-neem	The seven species
Seder	Say-der	A Jewish dinner or feast
Boreh Pri Ha'Eitz	Bore-ay peh-ri ha'aytz	Blessing the fruit of the trees

Tu B'Shevat Foods: The Seven Species

Like most Jewish holidays, Tu B'Shevat celebrations center heavily around foods with symbolic meanings. This holiday features **Shivat HaMinim**, or the Seven Species mentioned in the Torah. These are various fruits, grains, and other produce that are biblically significant. Each food is said to represent a holy attribute or personality trait we should aspire to.

WHEAT

Wheat can be eaten in the form of bread, crackers, anything! It can symbolize material success.

BARLEY

At a Tu B'Shevat meal, barley can usually be found as crackers. It may represent *Shalom Bayit*, or in English, a peaceful home.

GRAPES

Grape juice and wine are staples in Jewish feasts and Tu B'Shevat is no different. Raisins can also fill the grape role, which can symbolize finding romantic love.

FIGS

Figs on Tu B'Shevat are often seen as symbols of patience. Enjoy them fresh or dried.

POMEGRANATE

Pomegranate is an important food in Jewish culture, as the number of seeds in each fruit are said to equal with the number of

commandments in the Torah (613). On Tu B'Shevat, they can also help us ward off gossip.

OLIVES

Green, black, or oil-cured olives are another staple of Jewish foods. They can represent righteousness and good deeds.

DATES

Dates, delicious and sweet, are nature's candy. They naturally represent health at Tu B'Shevat.



Music

Music is an important part of any holiday, and Tu B'Shevat is no exception. By playing some of the following songs for your residents, you can help them get into the spirit of the holiday. These songs are cultural, not religious, so some residents may have favorites not listed below. Ask them if they know any good Tu B'Shevat songs to play!



HASHKEDIYAH PORACHAT

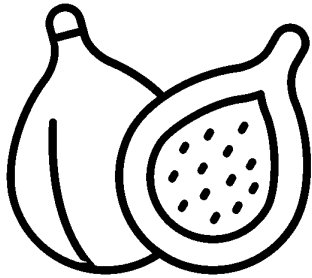
This song title translates to "the almond tree is blooming", a celebration of the spring foliage. The lyrics include the line "Tu B'Shevat is coming, the holiday of the trees!" making it the consummate Tu B'Shevat song. [You can find the music here](#) and English [transliteration of the lyrics here](#).

KACH HOLCHIM HASHOTLIM

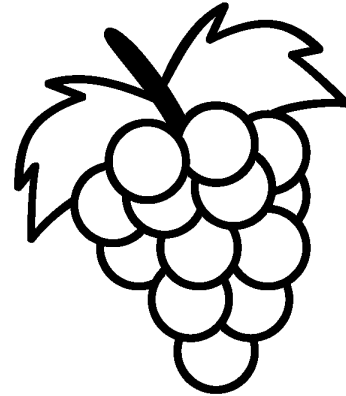
This song is about gathering gardening tools and going to plant trees! Enjoy this catchy call-to-action song by [clicking here](#).

The Seven Species

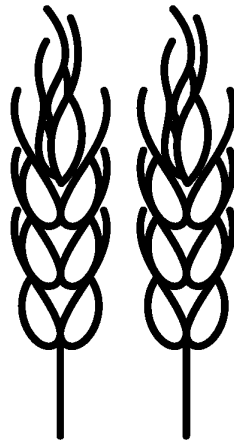
Of Israel



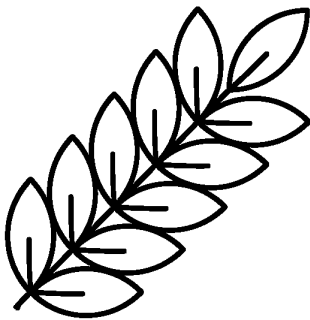
Fig



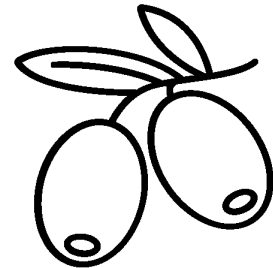
Grapes



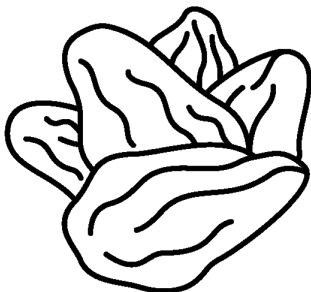
Barley



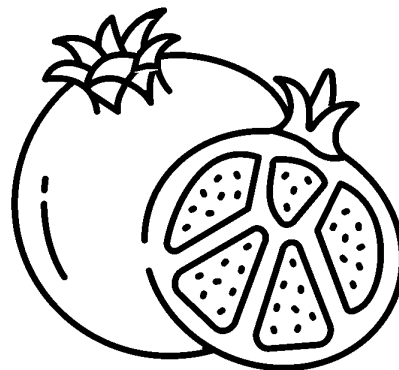
Wheat



Olives



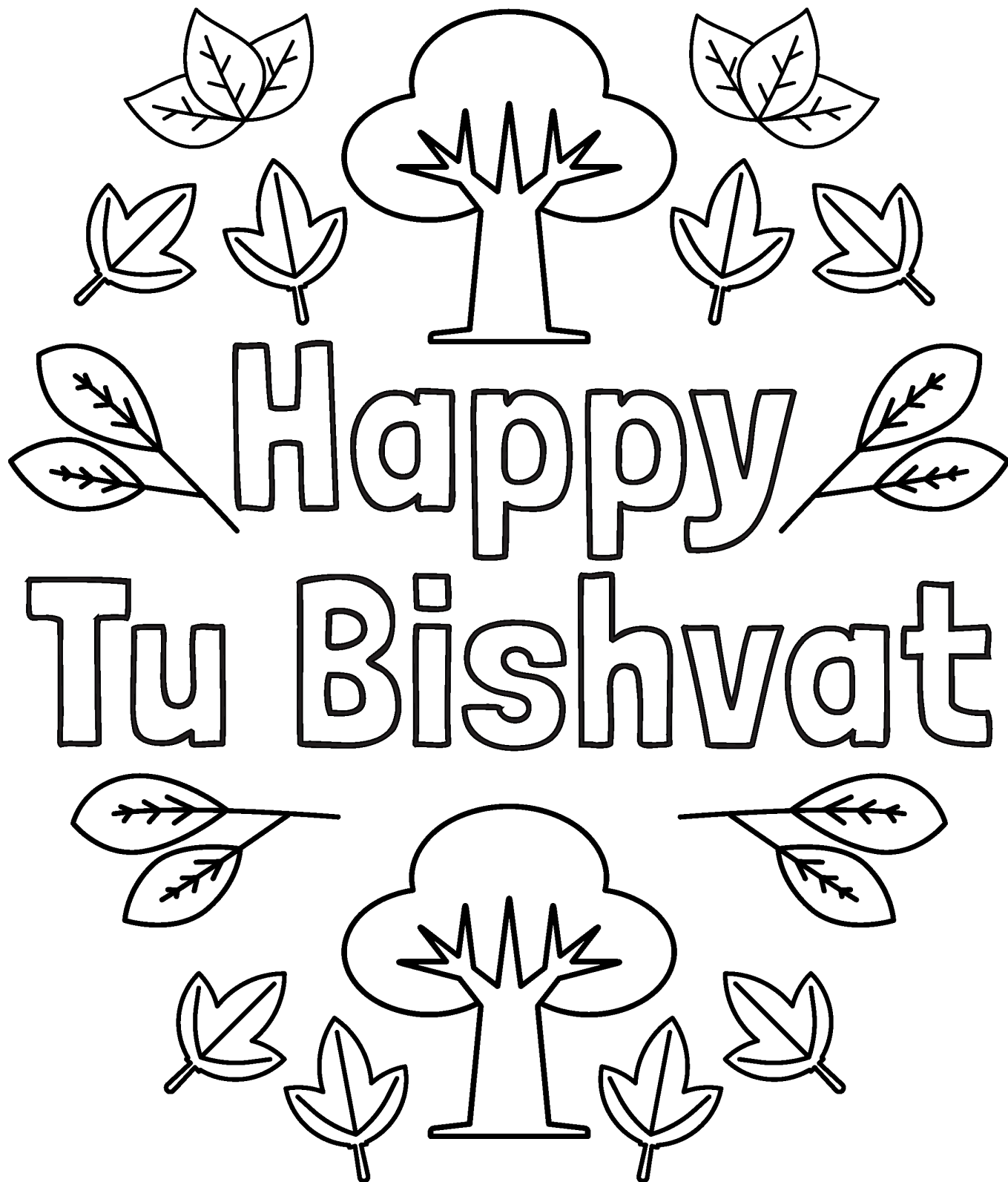
Date



Pomegranate



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Jewish Holidays Calendar 2022-2023*

HOLIDAY	DATE
Tu B'Shevat (1 day)	Sunday, Feb. 5* – Monday, Feb. 6, 2023
Purim (1 day)	Monday, March 6* – Tuesday, March 7, 2023
Passover (8 days)	Wednesday, April 5* - Thursday, April 13, 2023
Shavuot (2 days)	Thursday, May 25* – Saturday, May 27, 2023
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Friday, Sept. 15* – Sunday Sept. 17, 2023
Yom Kippur (1 day)	Sunday, Sept. 24* – Monday, Sept. 25, 2023
Sukkot (7 days)	Friday, Sept. 29* – Friday, Oct. 6, 2023
Shemini Atzeret (1 day) & Simchat Torah (1 day)	Saturday, Oct. 6* – Sunday, Oct. 8, 2023
Hanukkah (8 days)	Thursday, Dec. 7* - Friday, Dec. 15, 2023

*** All holidays begin at sundown**

Tu B'Shevat Fundraising

Jews are known to be charitable. One of the most recognizable and world -renowned charities is Jewish National Fund. This JNF tzedakah box (charity box) is a familiar image and is just one of the many ways JNF raises money in support of Tu B'Shevat and planting trees in Israel.



About JFS

Since 1854, JFS has continuously provided a range of support, services and resources for individuals and families of all ages and backgrounds since.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and the community by providing compassionate, collaborative human services, guided by Jewish values.

Our staff have expertise in:

- Helping older adults maintain their safety and independence
- Providing resources and guidance to older adults and their families
- Private transportation to medical appointments and synagogue services
- Counseling and case management (JFS accepts major insurance plans including Medicare and Medicaid.)

Support Our Chaplaincy Program

JFS created the Dr. Rela Mintz Geffen Jewish Community Chaplaincy Fund to enable us to provide spiritual connection and support for Jewish residents in long-term and elder care in the Capital Region.

This publication and the visits and programs offered by our Community Chaplain, Rabbi Ami, are made possible through philanthropy.

If you would like to support or sponsor this vital program, please consider supporting this program:

Online: jfsneny.org/donations

Call: 518-516-1102



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