CELEBRATING TU B'SHEVAT: THE NEW YEAR OF TREES

The 15th of the month of Shevat—Tu B'Shevat--is commemorated as the time of the first signs of spring in Israel— the appearance of buds on the trees. Like Passover, this holiday observance includes a haggadah, a meal, and symbolic foods.

However the haggadot vary widely. For example, a haggadah might emphasize one or more of the themes of appreciating the natural beauty of the earth and its bounty in food and nourishment, the importance of preserving the environment, and dealing with climate change.

Tu B'Shevat occurs on January 21, 2019

Some common features include eating a new fruit, or one from each of the seven species that were abundant in Israel in biblical times: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates/honey. Participants frequently eat almonds, since they are thought to be the first trees to blossom in Israel. It is also customary to drink four cups of wine, starting with white to symbolze winter and gradually mixing it with red, until the last cup is deep red to symbolize summer.

Resources for Creating or Adapting a Haggadah: In the Temple Library & Online

- *Seder Tu Bishevat: The Festival of Trees,* by the Reform Movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis, contains two alternative haggadot and songs for the festival.
- *Rabbi Rocketpower in a Tooty –Fruity Tale for Tu Bishvat,* by Rabbi Susan Abramson, with illustrations by Laura Standley, is a popular novel that introduces families to the festival and includes recipes, a glossary, and an invitation to get Rabbi Abramson's own haggadah by emailing author@rabbirocketpower.com.
- *Trees, Earth and Torah: A Tu B'Shvat Anthology,* edited by Ari Elon et al., includes essays and poems on trees and nature, appropriate for incorporation into a homemade Tu B'Shevat haggadah.
- A sample haggadah prepared by a Temple Sinai member can be found at https://tinyurl.com/TSTuBiShvatSeder2019. The library would welcome other haggadot written by Temple congregants.
- On-line resources can readily be found by searching "haggadah for tu b'shevat" (note alternative spellings for web searching, e.g., "tu b'shvat"). Exemplary websites for haggadot, recipes, and activities are www.rac.org/sites/default/files/Tu%20BiSh%27vat-Seder.pdf; www.pjlibrary.org ; www.myjewishlearning.com; www.circleboston.org; and www.reformjudaism.org.