

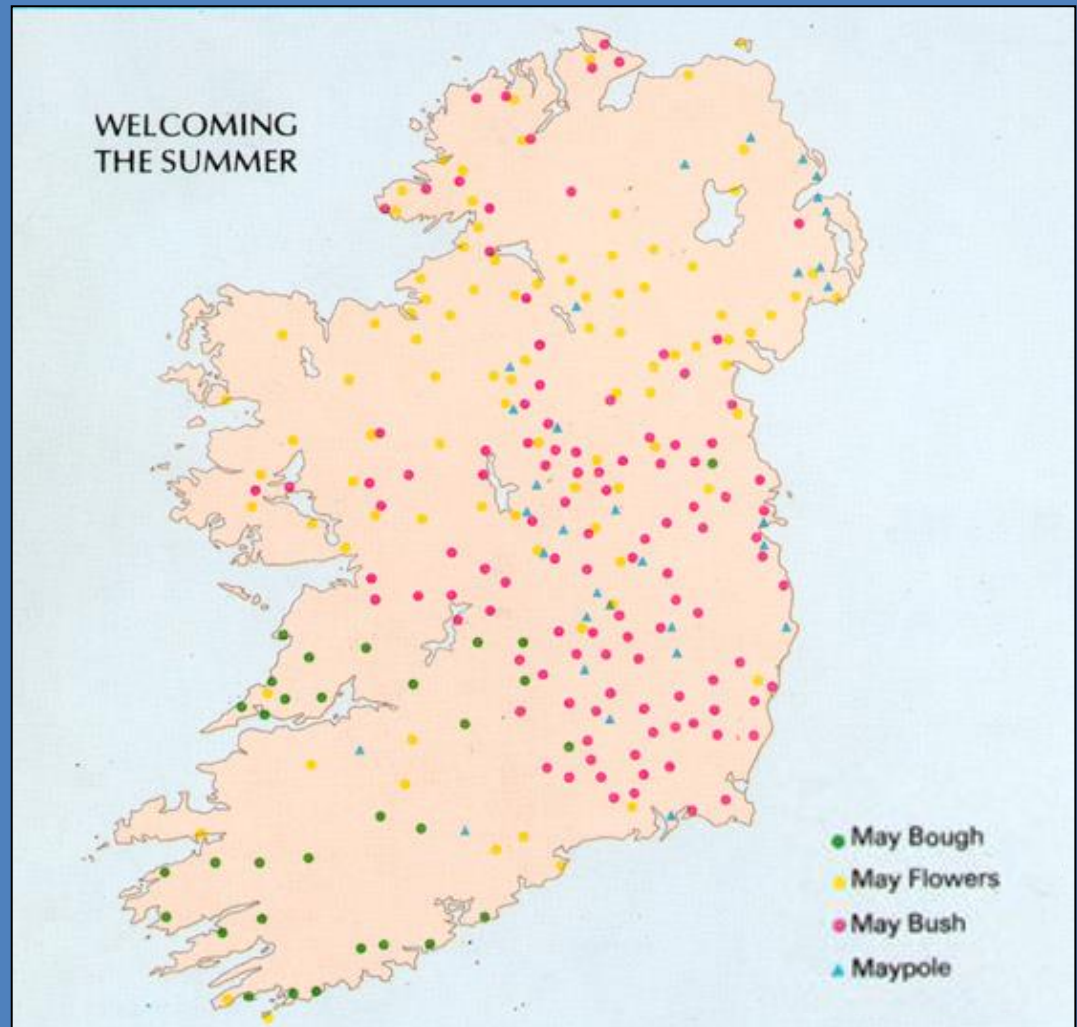
A photograph of two young girls standing in a garden. The girl on the left is wearing a patterned sweater and red pants, and the girl on the right is wearing a blue cardigan and blue pants. They are standing in front of a white building with a window. A large banner is overlaid on the image, featuring a red bar on top, a blue bar in the middle with the text 'May Day', and a white bar at the bottom with a blue leaf logo and the text 'dúchas.ie'.

May Day



dúchas.ie

May Day traditions around the country



May Day, Co. Kildare



The **May Bush** is most common in **Leinster**, although it is also known in other parts of the country.

It is set up outside the house on **May Eve** and is decorated with **flowers, ribbons, pieces of paper** etc. **Whitethorn** is the most popular type of bush.

In the **west** of Ireland, it is traditional to festoon the doors and windows of the home with **flowers**.



Co. Kildare
(Bróna Nic Amhlaoibh 1980)

'We procure a branch preferably cross-shaped. Then we send the children to pluck a bunch of primroses and we string them onto the branch we have procured. The branch thus decorated is then erected in the midden [dunghill] before sunset.

The belief was prevalent that neighbouring witches could steal the milk during the entire year if they succeeded in taking it on May-eve before sunset. It was believed that the witch could not exercise her charm near the homestead where a May Pole was erected.

Another custom is to throw a handful of the same primroses at your neighbour's door in honour of the Blessed Virgin.' [\(Kilmacrennan, Donegal\)](#)



Bonfires on the evening of May Day, Sligo town
(Bairbre Ní Fhloinn 1995)

The 'May Baby'

Céad de Cheoltaibh Uladh, Énrí Ó Muirgheasa (1915)



Song referring to the practice of dressing up a doll which would be paraded by a boy and girl as part of May Day celebrations.

74. babóς na béaltaine.

I.

Babóς na Béaltaine, mairgean an t-raíraíó,
Suar ζαé cnoc, ir ríor ζαé gleann;
Cailíní mairéaca bán-ζeala ζléarta,
Ir tuzamar féin an raíraíó linn.

Saíraíó buíde na neoinín ζlé-ζeal,
Ir tuzamar féin an raíraíó linn,
Ó baile ζo baile, ir un ar mbaile na óiaíó rin—
Ir tuzamar féin an raíraíó linn.

More stories on
www.duchas.ie

'It is the belief of the people of the district that if the face is washed in the dew on May morning, sunburn or freckles will not spoil the complexion in the Summer.' ([Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim](#))

[May Customs \(Ballintra, Donegal\)](#)

[May Day Customs \(Ballycurrane, Waterford\)](#)

[May Day \(Oughterard, Galway\)](#)

[Taking the Butter on a May Morning \(Aghanlish, Leitrim\)](#)

[May Day \(Killorglin, Kerry\)](#)

[May Day Customs and Superstitions \(Rathangan, Kildare\)](#)

[Festival Customs – May Day \(Adare, Limerick\)](#)

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Customs on May Eve

On May eve, people
all ten leaves of Yarrow
and as they pull them
they say "Good morrow
good morrow fair yarrow.
Good morrow thrice to the
Tell me before this time
to-morrow who my true
lover will be." When you
go into