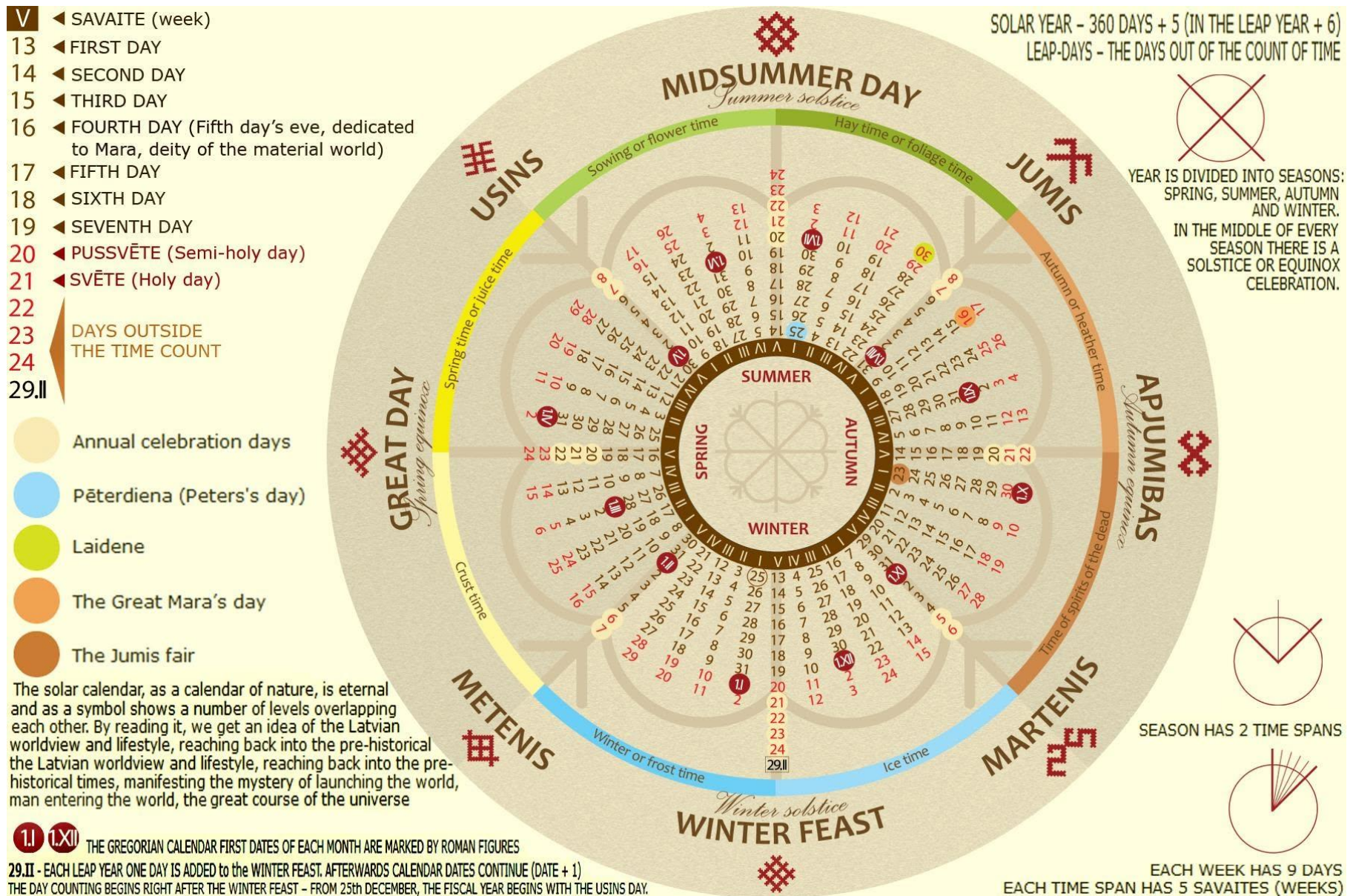


Folk Calendar – Solar Year



Embroidery symbols from Ukraine:

What embroidery is about: ornaments and their meaning



Square

symbol of peace, prosperity, well-being



Diamond

symbol of the union of the Sun and the Earth, fertility



Circle

symbol of the Sun, continuity of existence and eternity



3opi

amulet against evil and negativity, protects against illness and impotence



Cross

a sign of harmony of the four elements, a talisman against evil spirits



Heart

a symbol of a happy family life



Tree of Life

a symbol of beauty, youth, renewal of soul and body



Plant motifs

symbol of purity, prosperity of the family and life



Infinity

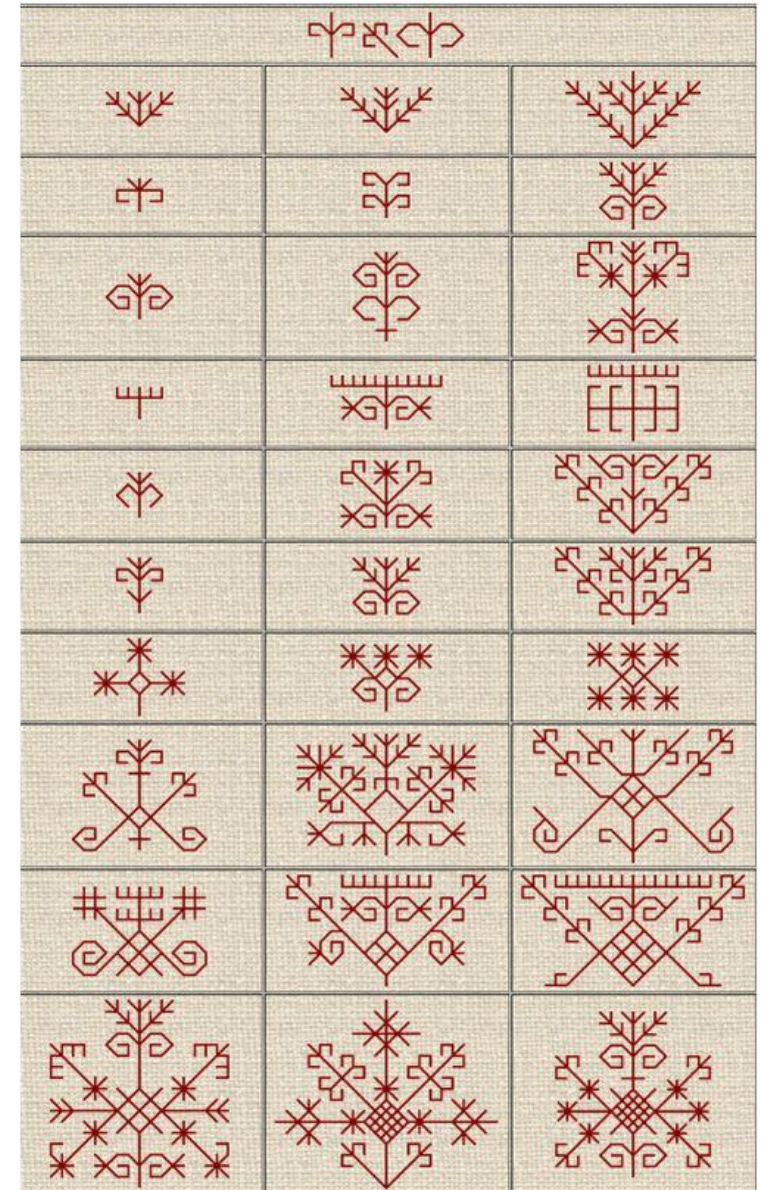
symbol of eternal existence, strength and vital energy



Chevrons

symbol of feminine and masculine essences, spirit and matter

Symbol development – meaning is the same, can be simple and can be very rich.



Basic Symbols in Latvian Design



Dievs - (God) is the supreme god. In ancient Latvian mythology, Dievs was not just the father of the gods, he was the essence of them all. This symbol represent the sky, as a roof over the earth.



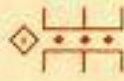
Māra - She is strongly associated with childbirth; children are said to enter the world "through the gates of Māra". She is the protector of women, especially mothers, and children. She is also the goddess of the hearth. Māra is also linked with death, and often takes the form of black animals such as ravens or black hens. She is also the goddess who was responsible for the land, the waters, and every living thing.



Laima - (Goddess of Destiny) the name Laima derives from the word *laime*, which means "happiness" or "luck". Laima determines whether one's life will be short or long, fruitful or poverty-stricken, carefree or worrisome. She also determines the moment of a person's death. The sign is thought to bring luck.



Jumls - fertility and well-being are personified through Jumis. He is associated with „double-plants," such as two corn stalks or trees which have grown together and share a trunk or stem. The basic symbol appears on wraps and jewellery from the Iron Age.



Ūsiņš - was the god of horses, bees and light. On Ūsiņš' Day, which falls in early May, the animals are let out to pasture for the first time. His sacrificial offering was a prize rooster. Ūsiņš is said to drive the chariot of the Sun across the sky with his two horses.



Zalktis (Serpent) - symbolized a deity which was significantly connected with general well-being, judging from the popularity of the symbol. This sign is very ancient, also dating from the Iron Age, and is seen often on the borders of shawls, on jewellery, and leatherwork.



Krusts, krusta krusts, Māras krusts - (Cross and Cross of Crosses) the oldest ornamentation in all cultures. It guards, blesses and brings happiness.



Ugunskrusts - (Sign of Fire or Thunder Cross) the sign of thunder, is one of the most ancient symbols in the world and has been used by all nations. The Latvian sign of thunder symbolizes light, fire, life, health and prosperity. No other nation has used the swastika so widely, nor developed so many variations of it as the Latvians.



Saule - (The Sun) was the goddess of fertility, patron goddess of the unlucky, including orphans. The design was originally a simple circle, which evolved over the years into many variations. Sun designs now usually consist of eight parts.



Mēness - (Moon) was the god of war. Warriors wore Moon signs for protection. The Moon Sign has been found on men's bracelets dating back to the Iron Age. Sword embellishments also boasted Moon Signs, as did pendants and pins.



Auseklis - (The Morning Star or Guardian Star) is the symbol of the morning star, the usher of the new day. Auseklis is thought to protect people from the forces of evil which roam at night. He is represented by the complex eight-sided star, which must be drawn in one continuous line without lifting your hand to receive the benefit of his blessings



Jānis - (Summer Solstice Deity) was sometimes referred to as a son of God. His Midsummer's Night festival (which is called "Jāņi" and which takes place on the evening of June 23rd) is the most important festival of the year for Latvians. Once every year, Jānis at midsummer came to bring luck and fertility to the people of Latvia.

Ukrainian Motanka doll – used to protect, like a talisman.



Patterns and Floral symbols on traditional Slovak easter eggs.



Romanian traditional folk clothing



Estonian traditional folk clothes



Bulgarian traditional carpet



Accordion decorated with traditional Polish folk floral patterns.



Traditional Lithuanian instrument- Kankles- decorated with folk ornaments.

