

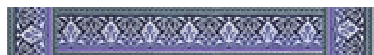
The Controversial Cauldron

Email Witches Yahoo Group Newsletter



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Issue: Samhain
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Samhain 2008

Written and compiled by George Knowles

Samhain is one of the greater Sabbats of the Witches' calendar and in the Northern Hemisphere is celebrated on the night of 31st October (in the Southern Hemisphere the equivalent Sabbat is Beltane 30th April). Samhain is the third and last of three autumnal harvests, the first was at Lammas (1st August), when in tribute to the waning Sun, the "Corn King" was sacrificed and his spirit returned to the ground for its period of rest. The second harvest was at Mabon (22nd September), when as the Sun grew weaker; the "Lord of the Harvest" was sacrificed and waits to be reborn in the New Year of the Goddess.

Now as we complete the third and final harvest, Samhain marks the change from summer into winter. Traditionally it is time to bring in the animals from their summer grazing and to stock up their winter feed supplies. A cull would be made and animals slaughtered, and the meat preserved to provide food for winter. As the animals died so the people could survive, so too does the "King of the Hunt" die in a final act of sacrifice. As the summer sunlight fades and the darkness of winter approaches, we celebrate the "Feast of the Dead", a farewell tribute to the Sun God. While the Goddess mourns his death, she also begins her own descent into the underworld, there to search for him again.

Welcome to the Email Witches Newsletter

Email Witches is a pagan friendly email group attracting people from all walks of life, from all spectrums of society and from all around the world. Most are individuals seeking a personal practical religion that can be adapted to their own needs and criteria, and Wicca is a wonderfully diverse religion that meets these needs. Email Witches

(Yahoo Group) is set up as a place where those of same interest can meet, discuss, share and gain more information about their chosen paths. All visitors to my website [Controversial.com](http://www.controversial.com) are welcome, so feel free to join us and make new friends.

Best Wishes,
Georges Knowles

<http://www.controversial.com/>

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Email_Witches/



Tree of Life by Jen Delyth
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Group Information

- Members: 697
- Founded: Jul 17, 2002
- Language: English
- Representing:
Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, England, France, Greenland, Hawaii, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Italy, Kuwait, Mexico, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Nova Scotia, Panama, the Philippines, South Africa, Scotland, Slovenia, the USA and Wales.

Samhain ~ (con't)

by George Knowles



Samhain means “Summer’s end”, and is known by many different names: November Eve, All Hallows Eve, Hallowmas, Feast of Apples, Night of Spirits, Halloween and the Feast of the Dead. In the Gaelic languages of Ireland, Samhain is also known as “*Oíche Shamhna*”, in Scotland “*Oidhche Shamhna*” and in Wales “*Nos Calan Gaeaf*”. Depending on where you come from, Samhain also has many pronunciations, like in Ireland it is pronounced “*sow-in*”, in Scotland “*sav-en*” and in Wales “*sow-eeen*”.

Samhain is one of the most popular and wide spread pagan festivals in the Celtic calendar and is traditionally regarded as the “Celtic New Year”. In modern times it is a night of fun and celebration, of glowing Jack O’Lanterns, trick or treating and dressing up in costumes as Wicked Witches. It is also a night for divination, for attending séances, tarot card readings and scrying with mirrors. For the occult minded, it is a night of power, when the veil between the unseen world and ours is at its thinnest, a night when the spirits of the departed are free to roam.

When Christianity arrived in the British Isles they tried to eradicate popular pagan practices by replacing them with their own customs, and so Samhain as celebrated on the night of 31st October was renamed “All Hallows Eve”, which later became shortened to “Halloween”. The following day 1st November was named “All Saint’s Day”, on which day they would celebrate the spirits of Heaven and pray for those they sent to Hell. On the eve of All Saint’s Day (All Hallows Eve) they developed the custom of banging pots and pans together so the lost souls in Hell would know they were not forgotten.

Down through the ages Samhain has always been considered an auspicious time for divination, for contacting ancestors and other departed souls. It was customary therefore to place lights along roadways to help guide spirits out for the dark, and to leave open a door or window with a candle or other light burning to lead them back from whence they had left. This was the beginning of the ever popular Jack

O’Lantern custom of today, in which lights or candles are placed in pumpkins so the

wind will not extinguish them. These are now used to decorate homes and to frighten off mischievous souls who may have lost their way.

Another old custom was to leave out food offerings on their doorsteps, a welcome invitation to the spirits of family members, ancestors, friends, pets and other loved ones to cross the threshold of their home and revisit. After all the hard work of collecting in the harvest, it was also a time for family reunions, when in the warmth and dimly lit smoky rooms of the home, wood and peat for the fire was stacked up high by the hearth, and members of the family all came together to celebrate a winter feast. During the feast bards re-told stories about those long gone, traditional songs would be sung, poetry recited and dances performed in honour of the ancestors.

Bonfires play a large part in the festival of Samhain. On the night of Samhain each household would extinguish their hearth-fires and then wait for the druids to light the village bonfire, symbolising a new light for the New Year. Most often two fires would be lit side by side, and during the evening’s celebrations, villagers would light torches from the common flame and re-light their own hearth fires. Later, they would parade and dance around the village and lead their animals between the fires in a ritual act of purification.

In Scotland, a child born on the night of Samhain was considered to be gifted with “*an dà shealladh*” (the Two Sights), which is more commonly known today as “second sight” or the ability of clairvoyance. At Samhain however, it was common for many people to practice the art of divination, females in particular would seek to identify future husbands, and determine if marriage would succeed or fail. Methods differed widely, but seasonal foods such as apples and nuts from the harvest were frequently used. An apple could be peeled in one long strip and tossed over the shoulder to determine the initial letter of a future spouse’s name. Nuts would be placed on a heated hearth and their movements closely watched; if the nuts stayed together so would the couple, but if they rolled apart the marriage would fail. Candles also play an important part in Samhain celebrations, and are often used to decorate the home

“On the night of Samhain each household would extinguished their hearth-fires and then wait for the druids to light the village bonfire, symbolising a new light for the New Year.”

Samhain ~ (con't)

by George Knowles

creating the right mood for the occasion with their hypnotic glow. Ever since fire was discovered, the naked flame has been regarded as sacred, and in ancient times lighted touches were used to invoke the Goddess and Gods. Similarly today the naked flame of lighted candles are used to aid divination, to commune with deities and more particularly at this time, to connect with ancestors and other departed souls.

To our ancestors winter was a time of famine and hardship, more so for the old and feeble when many failed to survive the following winter months. Samhain at the start of the winter season and the beginning of the Celtic New Year was therefore a poignant time to honour those who had died before them. To pagans and witches alike Samhain is a celebration in honour of our ancestors, much as they honoured us in the days before we were born. As the wheel of life continues to turn so will they honour us again, for time will come when we too cross the divide and take up our own place beside them.

In more recent times the association of death with Samhain has been maligned to include the assumption of evil, and today is often portrayed as a night when malignant forces combine to create all manner of baneful harm. Such could not be further from the truth, for while it may be possible for negative forces to cross the divide, it is not in any way a night of evil or hostile intent. Even though the holiday has changed over the years, its intent is still clear – it is a celebration of respect for the dead and of a new beginning to come. It is a holiday that commemorates both life and death, and recognizes the need to exist in harmony with the past, present and future.

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Forms of Divination



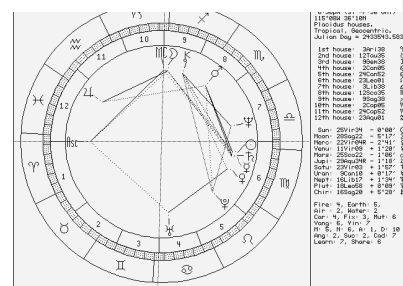
Scrying with mirror,
reflective water,
crystal ball or pendulum



Runes



Palmistry



Astrology



Numerology



Fire or Flame



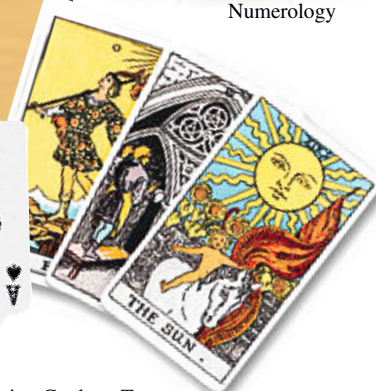
Smoke



Tea Leaves



Cartomancy: Playing Cards or Tarot





Cameo of Hacate
by Anonymous

The Bard's Corner



Dark Mother

Dea Hacate. The crossroads I keep.
My magickal promise? To wake you from sleep.
I dare you, your safety, pry open your eyes.
I test you, your mettle. Tempt fear, till it dies.

Release your misgivings. Day sight makes you weak.
The lazy like living when challenge is meek.
Little joys, little trials, little lives safe from blight
Your soul is too large and the mid-road too tight.

Indecision is cancer. It eats you inside.
Fear traps your choices, you cannot decide.
Do you follow your heart? Or let reason rule?
Let pagan blood burn or let civil light cool?

If you loose the flood gates, just what will you learn?
If you play in the dark, will you ever return?
Your courage is tested when shadows are deep.
But unlike the day, there, you sow what you reap

So, save you from sorrow? Save you from the cost?
Is to save you from Life! And the wonder is lost.
Dare you your limits, to test what is true?
To lose your illusions? You've nothing but you.

But you are enough, so much more than you know.
Dare you discover how deep you can go?
Swallow hard all your fear and let caution lie
Sage senses waken, as brute senses die.

Which road will you choose? By Hacate, an oath!
Neither right, neither left. Yes, you must choose them both!
While the Sun casts His light on the Magickal Moon.
The secrets of midnight make sense of the noon.

In your deepest darkness, when sight is unclear
My limitless insight will banish your fear
So tears will not harm you and pain is no test,
When patience is endless and trial, a jest.

Indecision is cancer. It eats you inside.
To meet your best self you must no longer hide.
Come cool as the night, pagan heart come free.
Next Moon, at the crossroads, come gather with Me.



<i>Symbols of Hacate</i>	
Torch	Owls
Cauldron	Bats
Dagger	Black Sheep
Keys	Willows
Dogs	Groves
Snake	Crossroads
Raven	Masks
Horse	
The Dark Moon	
The Number Three	



Reconstructed from a pediment carving
at Eleusis, Greece, 480 B.C.E

Hecate ~

by Lil

Hecate, Hecate, Hecate. The chant rises from the flames and smoke of the ritual fire spiraling upward into the night air carrying pagan prayers to the Goddess of the Dark Moon.

Hecate. Dark Mother. The One who is Three. Goddess of the Crossroads. Goddess of Witchcraft and the Dark Moon. Goddess of the Underworld and Goddess of midwives. Crone. Virgin Goddess? These are all names by which we know the Goddess Hecate.

There are some scholars who believe that Hecate arose out of the Karian civilization in Southwest Asia Minor and was integrated into Greek mythology some time in the 6th century BCE. There is also evidence of Hecate in pre-dynastic Egypt as the goddess of midwifery, Heqit, Heket, or Hekat.

We will pick up Hecate's story at her birth in Greek mythology. She was born the only child of Titans Perses, god of man-made destruction, the destroyer, and Asteria, flaming one, starry one, goddess of fire. It is from her parents that Hecate inherits her powers over the heavens, the earth and the seas.

In early manuscripts and art she is described as a virgin goddess clad in a maiden's knee length dress. Original Greek representations of her show her to be a triple goddess, Maiden, Bride and Mother, which later transformed to Maiden, Mother, Crone. She has been called the One who is Three, able to see in three directions at once, also past, present and future. Thus, she became the Goddess of the Crossroads. Travelers would leave food for her where three roads met to ensure safe passage. This became known as Hecate's supper.

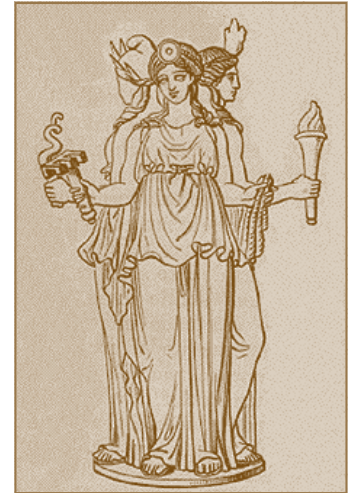
During Zeus' war with the Titans, Hecate was the only survivor. Zeus honored her and "allowed" her to retain her full powers and status. However, she never did take a place on Olympus, which at the time was populated by a majority of male deities. She chose

instead to stay earthbound, and lived in caves. Hesiod, in Theogony writes:

"Hecate whom Zeus the son of Kronos honoured above all. He gave her splendid gifts, to have a share of the earth and the unfruitful sea. She received honour also in starry heaven, and is honoured exceedingly by the deathless gods . . . For as many as were born of Gaia (Earth) and Ouranos (Heaven) [the Titanes] amongst all these she has her due portion. The son of Kronos [Zeus] did her no wrong nor took anything away of all that was her portion among the former Titan gods: but she holds, as the division was at the first from the beginning, privilege both in earth, and in heaven, and in sea. Also, because she is an only child, the goddess receives not less honour, but much more still, for Zeus honours her."

It is Hecate who finds Persephone when she is abducted by Hades. She is the only one who hears the screams from her cave when the earth opened up to swallow Persephone. Hecate knows that Helios, the sun, watcher of both gods and men, was the only one who witnessed the abduction so she confronted him and asked him about it. She took Demeter and with her torches, lit the way into the underworld where Persephone could be found. In a Homeric hymn Hecate is described as, "tender-hearted Hekate, bright-coiffed daughter of Persaios..." According to some, this is how Hecate becomes Goddess of the Underworld.

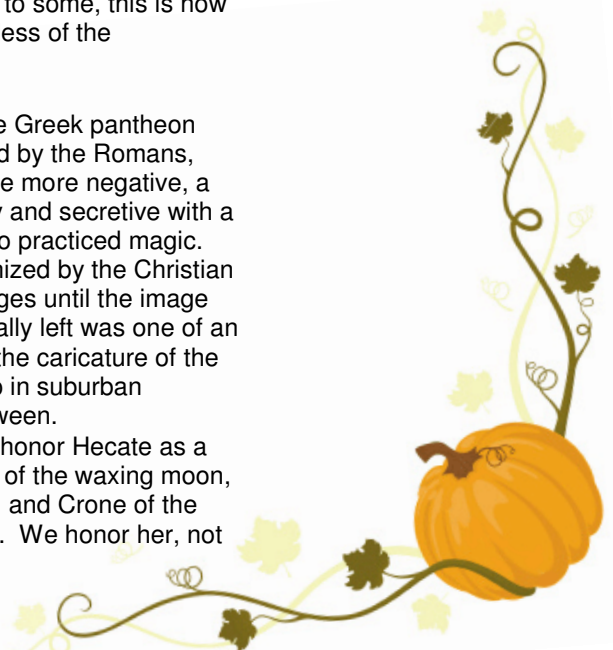
As time passed and the Greek pantheon began to be assimilated by the Romans, Hecate's image became more negative, a crone goddess, solitary and secretive with a following of women who practiced magic. She was further demonized by the Christian Church in the middle ages until the image with which we were finally left was one of an old hag, a dark crone, the caricature of the wicked witch pasted up in suburban windows around Halloween. Today, as Pagans, we honor Hecate as a triple goddess, Maiden of the waxing moon, Mother of the full moon and Crone of the waning and dark moon. We honor her, not



Hecate, Greek Triple goddess of the Dark Moon, Magick and the Crossroads



"Original Greek representations of her show her to be a triple goddess, Maiden, Bride and Mother, which later transformed to Maiden, Mother, Crone."





Hecate by Chiaramonti
1922

Hecate ~ con't

by Lil

only for her wisdom but also, for her swift justice and protection. As Goddess of Witchcraft, we evoke her to aid us in our magick. As Goddess of the Crossroads, we consult her in our decision-making.

Sacred to Hecate are the Willow, the Yew and the Cypress. Her animals are dogs, snakes, horses and black cats. The owl is her messenger. She rides a chariot pulled by dragons. Her feast day is celebrated on August 13, although Samhain is an appropriate time to work with her as the veils between the worlds are the thinnest.

Hecate, Hecate, Hecate. The chant continues to rise. Dogs bay in the distance as the wind sifts through the trees with a hint of warmth from the dragon's breath. Set an extra plate at your supper table Samhain night. Hecate approaches.

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Lil lives in northeast Ohio and is a solitary pagan witch.
She has been a member of EW since 2005.

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"As Goddess of Witchcraft, we evoke her to aid us in our magick. As Goddess of the Crossroads, we consult her in our decision-making."



Susan Cahill ~ Great grandmother



Ellen Geoghegan ~ Great grandmother

Legacy~ On Ancestor Worship

by Ardriana

They say that if you look far enough through your family tree you will find the blood of both kings and slaves flowing through your veins. I'm of Irish descent, so I have both in just that line of my history. I come from a long line of heroic people: a Great Grandfather who fought against slavery in a war that was not his own, a Grandmother who risked her life to nurse others during the last pandemic and a Mother who as a child, was haunted by a cross burning in her front yard because of our family's sacred traditions.

Because of these people and those who came before them, I am an ancestor worshipper. Many ancestor worshippers do not actually worship their ancestors. Leaving flowers at Grandmother's grave to show respect is not worship. The actions of showing reverence or devotion to the dead, honoring their memories on birth or death anniversaries, name days, or other cultural days of the dead like Memorial Day, Veterans Day, All Souls, Halloween, are not in the strictest sense "worshipping" the dead.

As an aside, when it comes to the word family, many of us have a less than

honorable remembrance. With the dysfunction of modern families, the idea of ancestor worship may seem ludicrous. The word Family often evokes feelings of abuse, guilt, obligation, inferiority, submission and distrust. I will admit that I am abundantly blessed with honorable kindred. However, that doesn't mean that there haven't been some sour apples. I feel that if you better knew your ancestors, there may be a few that you might honor or emulate or even, as the ancient Romans did, personally deify as a family or house god/dess.

My family tradition does, in fact, worship our ancestors. We do not need days of the dead to honor our ancestors because we do that every day. We practice what the Greeks called apotheosis. We raise our noble dead to the status of deification or divinification. We choose to worship many of our deceased family members as heroes or personal gods. We believe that after a life lived well, death is only a gateway to becoming appreciably wiser and more powerful than when we were alive. We believe that both bonds of blood and love make a family and cannot be severed by death. We believe that a heroic life holds a heroic place in the afterlife. In fact, we think of

Legacy~ On Ancestor Worship ~ con't by Ardriana

all the gods as ancient ancestors who once lived boldly or wisely but lived well enough to inspire songs and myths about their noble deeds. These myths often exaggerate their genuine outstanding gifts of strength, wisdom, courage or beauty in the telling of their larger than life experiences. Over time, those outstanding gifts are retold as extraordinary gifts, even magickal or miraculous gifts. Despite the fantastic embellishments to the ancient one's character, achievements or adventures, we see an ancestor's personal mythology compounded into a metaphor as instruction for our own lives lived honorably. As a descendant of Cormac McAirt, the last pagan High King of Ireland, I also choose to give in to that romantic myth that heroic ancestors can achieve transcendence and remain in the Summerlands as profoundly wise and helpful beings to all who call their names. They are personal "gods" after whom we can pattern our lives, to make something noble of ourselves and thus, make the ancestors proud of us.

I was taught that family members not ready for transcendence, still exist in the Summerlands for several generations before reincarnating in order to act as aids to the living and the newly dead. Most Near Death Experiences report grandparents as members of those who meet us when we cross over. I was taught that only the young ones can reincarnate quickly, since sometimes the ancestors send them promptly back. In most families there are some who experience the love of family so strongly in life that we know that what could not prevent them from aiding us before death can not prevent their aiding us after death. Neither man nor fate nor time nor space can prevent a great love from intervening in the affairs of kindred. Add to this knowledge, a long family tradition of metaphysics, witchcraft, nature-based spirituality and decidedly green blood and we dare anyone to tell us our way is impossible. Cause them's fightin' words.

The history of ancestor worship is nearly 3000 years old. The oldest traditions are rooted in the belief that when you die your spirit is bound to the place you are buried whether that is in a burial plot, mausoleum, crypt, tomb, pyramid or monument. It was incumbent upon the family to provide food and drink to the dead...because the dead still need it to live wherever they are. To forget this service to the dead creates hungry souls who will leave their afterlife abodes in search of food. (Thus, you can see how hungry ghosts are compared to terrorizing creatures like vampires and zombies in ages past.) To prevent these wanderings, libations of milk, mead or wines are poured into the ground to quench the thirst of the dead. Bread and fruit are buried near the remains or burnt offerings of meat transformed to smoke are sent out to feed the

dead. If these ritual meals are not offered at least once or twice a year, the dead will become hungry, hurt and angry at being forgotten by their kindred. In response to this neglect, the dead may become mischievous, baneful and even vengeful against the living, who have proved themselves dishonorable and uncaring. There are cultures today that still hold these "bound to the grave" beliefs.

During the Roman Empire, the Latin word for the dead was the *manes* (revered spirits of the dead) or *di manes* ('the divine dead'). Although ancestor worship was not a tenet of the state religion, it was practiced in every household. The *manes* were the family ancestors who, generation after generation, were buried on the family's property. An altar in the fields was erected for burnt offerings to the *manes*, to the *lares* (native spirits of the land, trees, and springs) and to the *penates* (the household gods).

The Greek word for the dead is *daemon*. There is no malevolence attached to this definition. However, with the injection of Eastern philosophy into Western civilization, Zoroastrian/Abrahamic concepts of evil spirits (what became known as demons) began to be equated with the mythology of the hungry dead ancestors. So, what originally was a dutiful, honorable, even joyous, food offering to a beloved daemon became equated with the forceful, fearful appeasing of evil spirits in general.

As death philosophy evolved, beginning with the great heroes of a culture, some of the dead were no longer bound to the place of their burial. They were awarded entrance into a sacred realm due to their status. Exceptional nobles, heroes, sages, saints and demi-gods gained access through achievement to the Elysian Fields, Elysium, Shangri-la, Avalon, Valhalla, Arcadia, Nirvana, Utopia, The Summerlands, Paradise or Heaven. Then more and more, going to a beautiful or ideal land become the concept of the afterlife for less heroic people who simply lived honorably. Depending on the culture, these "after places" could be under the ground, under the sea, in the sky, on the top of mountains or even side by side the living in an unseen parallel world. Servicing the dead changed from the familial duty to feed or appease one's hungry ancestors to the more simple memorial gesture of putting flowers on Grandmother's grave. Rituals for the dead became an honorary gesture to keep the memory of the dead alive for the generations who followed. Today, on "days of the dead" most cultures do memorials for the dead both specifically, but more often in the broadest term for the "dead" in general.

con't →



Nancy McLaughlin ~
Great grandmother



James Patrick McCormick
Helen McCormick Berry
Dorothy Berry Mills
Leigh McCormick~Roberts



John Andrew Berry ~
Grandfather



Earl Danforth Mills ~
Father



Danny Roberts ~
Husband



Dorothy ~ Mother



Helen ~ Grandmother



James ~ Great
Grandfather

Legacy~ On Ancestor Worship ~ con't

by Ardriana

As our concepts became less fearful about the afterlife...honoring the dead became less and less about tending a gravesite. We no longer bury physical tools for the afterlife beyond mementos and amulets of faith or family. We see the afterlife as a purely ethereal, non-material existence, but where pain and pleasure may still be experienced. Few believe that the dead are bound to the grave, even if their religion professes this concept as a tenet (like Christian Resurrectionists).

Halloween celebrations often include some hold-over fear of restless kin or evil spirits who must be appeased, but modern pagans more often see Halloween, Samhain, or Day of the Dead celebrations as a time to memorialize our sacred dead. For the past several generations, the study of genealogy has been lost except to only a few religious traditions. Pagan Recreationists have begun to instill the value of ancestor study in their attempt to recover the old stories and songs of one's heritage.

In Family Traditions, we maintained family trees to remember where we came from. The stories told around the dinner table of the heroic and noble achievements of those who came before us are staples of our childhood experience. Whereas, Bealtaine is a holiday that celebrated the living family, Samhain is the holiday that celebrates our dead family members. We call their names, tell their stories, ask for their guidance and in doing so, weave the red thread of heritage from one generation to another.

Since many modern pagans believe in reincarnation, they have trouble reconciling how we can evoke the dead who may have already reincarnated. Thus they treat the Samhain as a memorial service. We do not. We know that our sacred dead are not on our time clock and that they are still with us. Samhain is a sacred family reunion for us who get to eat with them, learn from them, share with them and thank them for their service to the family. A few years ago, one of my witchlings, Rhiannon, learned that a grandmother that she'd never known had died. As we made preparations for our Samhain ritual, she was bubbling all over. I asked her why she was so excited and she said, "I'm going to meet my grandmother, tonight!!!" And she did.

We call the names of all our sacred dead, including those personal heroes who had passed in the last year and our animal kindred. We share a feast. We tell family stories. We number our achievements and blessings. We give Garnets, a Karmic stone, to kindred as gifts, to ensure we will reincarnate together in the next lifetime. We make New Year's resolutions and ask for an ancestor guardian to help guide us to achieve them.

One of my family names is McCormick. Our family motto is Sine Timore, Latin for "Without Fear." My Family Tradition inspired me to write this for Mother over 25 years ago, before she passed. It was a poem to measure the height, depth and breadth of my love for her. I could not use metaphors of "higher than the sky." I picked metaphors that were nearly impossible and thus were another way of saying "forever." I think it is appropriate for any Samhain reading.

Sine Timore

As life unfolds now without fear,
I will remember you
When thought is pure and vision clear,
I will remember you

When man is measured by his worth,
and time is just a point of view.
When hate no longer treads this earth,
I will remember you

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Ardriana Cahill lives in Western USA and is a Hereditary Witch, den of Clan McCormick.

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On the Rocks ~ Garnet

by Pari

The stone I've chosen for Samhain is Garnet, and for very good reason. This beautiful, deep, dark red to red-violet gem is all about ancestors, family, love, devotion, and honor. Known as "The Stone of Commitment", Garnet insists that we live through our heart whispers if we wish to prosper and live abundantly. It is a stone that connects our heart to others, along with possessing the ability to further open the channels to our ancestors and the spirit world. As the veil that separates us is thinnest at this time of year, let Garnet strengthen our commitment to our family ties as we welcome their spirits briefly back into our realm in honor and celebration of our kinship.

There are many types of Garnet, but the deepest red varieties belong to Almandine and Pyrope (Rhodolite). Others include Andradite, Grossular, Uvarovite and Spessartine, with colors ranging from red to orange to brown, purple, pink, and even black. Most Garnets are aluminum silicates and occur in metamorphic or igneous rock formations, with most varieties forming dodecahedral and/or trapezohedral crystals. The word "garnet" derives from the Latin "granatum" meaning "pomegranate", and is in direct reference to the color of the fruit's seeds that mimic the stone's own color. It is interesting to note that it was the seeds of the pomegranate that originally kept Persephone bound to Hades, but that it was through her mother's love and devotion that she was allowed to return to the land of the living. The correlation is evident, and in such, this regenerative stone can be the very aid we need in reuniting with our own ancestors as it allows us to traverse between worlds with ease.

In myth and lore, Garnet was sacred to many ancient tribes around the globe. In ancient Egypt, it was called and believed to be the "Blood of Isis". It is mentioned in the Talmud as providing the only light on Noah's ark as they weathered the stormy darkness. And it was said to be one of the twelve stones used in the breastplate of the High Priest. Garnet is the birthstone for the month of January, and in the Zodiac it is associated with Capricorn, Virgo, Aquarius and Leo.

Garnet has a protective quality about it. Said to protect from both physical and emotional wounding, it is advantageous to carry this stone, especially at night or when traveling. It is also useful in banishing unproductive patterns from our lives, ridding us of what is old, stale and no longer needed. Thus, it renews vitality and regenerates. Garnet is a creation stone; it inspires and lives in the land of the creative. It can stimulate kundalini, arouse sexuality, and promote general well-being.

In the physical, Garnet aids with blood disorders, improves circulation, and assists with cell growth. In the mental, Garnet amplifies the intellect, relieves anxiety and depression, and makes way for clarity. In the emotional, Garnet soothes and heals, and brings the peace of understanding. It always brings passion and compassion to the forefront.

Garnet is a Fire stone - its brilliant flashes of color reaching from its depths teach us how to manifest our goals, loves and desires through its ability to align the Chakras from Root to Crown, which in turn facilitate the connection between the celestial and earth realms, thus making magick flow ever so easily. It is a stone devoted to devotion, and one that has the power to promote love, instill honor, and enhance familial expressions of both.



Garnet

Photo by: **Patricia J. Martin**
(EW member since 2003)



© 2008 Patricia J. Martin
Pari lives on the East Coast, USA, and is a Shamanic Witch. She has been a member of EW since 2003.

Sources:
The Book of Stones ~ Robert Simmons & Naisha Ahsian
Rocks and Minerals ~ Frederick H. Pough
Garnet, itself.

Garnet Necklace
Photo by: **Lillian Norman**
(EW member since 2005)

Deep red desire
bring your fire,
Call the Old Ones
with your lyre.
Dark the night
with sanguine lust,
We hail to thee
in perfect trust.
Three stones we cast
to those who've passed,
To reunite
in love at last!

© Patricia J. Martin

Animal Wisdom ~ Raven

by Pari



Then the ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "are sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore--
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

~from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"

On All Hallow's Eve, it is Raven who comes to tell of the omens he sees. On this Sabbat, I've decided to deviate from my usual Totem texts, and instead I present Raven Totem in short story form. So gather 'round the fire and snuggle in closely, for hidden within this tale lies the essence of Raven.



"So gather 'round the fire and snuggle in closely, for hidden within this tale lies the essence of Raven."

She awoke with a start and jumped to her feet, her eyes darting back and forth as she struggled to take in her surroundings. Where was she? How did she get here?...and why did she suddenly feel so all alone?

She peered through the darkness, only to find her dread increasing. She was in a strange, unfamiliar room, within the confines of four suffocating walls that seemed to close in around her. Nearby lay the cluttered furnishings of this dark and dreary abode. Behind her stood a large four-poster bed

flanked by dark cherry wood tables. To the side a dresser and cabinet hugged the walls; walls that seems to pulsate, matching the heavy beat of her own heart. And in front of her only a few steps away stood a small vanity. She squinted at the mirror there and rubbed her eyes - eyes that her memory told her were usually so sharp and clear-

but somehow everything here appeared blurred and slightly out of focus.

This surely must be death, she thought. But it seemed like only yesterday she was young and carefree. How could this be? She glanced down at her aging hands while massaging the odd pain she felt there. *Am I dreaming? Have I really died? Where am I!* The thoughts raced through her aching brain, filling her with fears she was so totally unaccustomed to.

Forcing herself to muster up a good dose of the courage, confidence and that sometimes downright cocky persona she instinctively knew she used to possess, she lit a candle and began to explore the room, skillfully maneuvering around tables and dressers that were filled with various knickknacks and interesting baubles...and photographs. Lots of photographs. Her eyes fell on the contents of each frame, and one by one their frozen-in-time faces pierced her heart with unfolding remembrance. These were her family...her ancestors...and those tied to her heartstrings, her loves.





Animal Wisdom ~ Raven ~ con't

by Pari

Looking deeply and reminiscing over each photo drove her at a perilous speed into the past, the present, and even the future as she envisioned new faces being added over time. One particular photo, though, gave her pause. It stood in a small gilded frame next to the mirror of the rosewood vanity and the image it held was that of a tall, young man leaning on an iron railing. He had blond hair and wore sunglasses, but she instinctively knew that behind those shades were hidden the most gorgeous blue eyes her own dark brown ones had ever seen. Draped over the frame lay a pearl necklace. *I once wore those pearls*, her memory mused. She picked them up and fondled each silky sphere as if they were mala beads and she counting her prayers. Still staring at the young man's image, her eyes filled with tears and her heart pulsed with the ache of love's longing.

Her reverie was broken when suddenly the room began to shift, becoming misty and momentarily wavering. Her breath caught in her throat and made a low garbled sound as she jumped back to outmaneuver and survey the unknown. And then there before her appeared a huge black bird atop the vanity - bigger than any crow she'd ever seen, but nearly a twin to one. It was a raven. And he stood there staring at her from within the mist. His dark lustrous feathers glistened in the candlelight.

He wasted no time in announcing his intrusion and let out a loud raucous squawk, then took a confident hop toward the oval mirror where, craning his scruffy neck forward, he tapped on the looking glass with his beak. He turned back to face her and brashly let out another loud beckoning call. It wasn't the bird she was afraid of, for Crow, the cousin of the Raven, had long been her personal Totem. It was more that she didn't particularly like looking at herself in the mirror - neither in the physical sense nor emotionally - but somehow she felt compelled to mimic the bird's antics as if it were the most natural thing in the world to do. She made her way slowly back to the vanity chair, never taking her eyes off the ebony creature that now stood off to the side silently watching.

As she peered into the mirror, the mists that only a moment ago had so quickly gathered around her, began to swiftly dissolve. Her image, though, was not quite so clear, as it slowly shifted, revealing her true essence...an ebony feathered beauty - the littlest of the Raven Clan. And as swiftly as she had awoken earlier to that strange but now familiar room, she found herself flying between worlds until she was back with her family.

"You have done well, Young Feather," said Grandfather Raven, his very essence making her feel safe and secure, and his words coming through to her more intuitively than out loud. "Your journey into how the human lives and loves has brought you new understanding. And you will now know best how to aid them in their quests." Then with a matter-of-fact and knowledgeable air, he ended with a simple but commanding, "Go now."

As Young Feather looked around at all the sage dark eyes of the family of ravens circled around her, a soft Knowing settled within her breast. And almost as if in lieu of her triumphant initiation, she let out a loud squawk of her own and ruffled her wings - a ruffling that caused her to shed one small black feather.

The feather fell through the ethers, swaying and floating gently to the Earth. It landed softly on the pavement in front of a tall, thin, aging man whose once blond hair was now peppered with gray. Startled but curious, he bent down to pick up the feather. And as he did, he glanced toward the sky...and thought of her. And he wondered.



The Reed~

Written and Compiled by George Knowles



Scotch Broom



"As it's name suggests, it was popularly used for making brooms and brushes, and was commonly used for basketwork, especially on the island of Madeira. In the north of England and Scotland it was used for thatching cottages and making fences or screens."

The Reed (*Cytisus scoparius*) is more of a shrub plant than a tree, which in England is better known by its folk name "Scotch Broom". The Reed or Broom was revered by the ancient Druids, and is one of the sacred trees of Wicca/Witchcraft. According to the Celtic Tree calendar, the Reed dates from the 28th October to the 24th November, which includes the Celtic New Year of 31st October (better known today as Samhain or Halloween). In folklore, Reeds or Brooms symbolize purification, protection and fertility; they also represent established power, for wands, rods and scepters made from their wood were often carried as symbols of authority.

The Broom is a densely growing shrub plant indigenous to England and the temperate regions of Europe and northern Asia. It can be found in abundance on sandy heaths and pastures where it commonly grows wild. In the sandy soils of America due to its proliferation, Broom has been regulated as a "class b" noxious weed under state law, and is designated for control in most counties of Washington and Oregon where Local, County and State weed control boards have regulations controlling its movement and harvest.

Broom is a member of the "*Leguminosae*" family, which includes beans, peas, clover, vetch, locust, lupine, acacia and alfalfa. Broom plants convert nitrogen from air that is used for growth, making them hardy and able to invade and flourish in harsh areas. The Broom is also the only native medicinal plant used as an official drug. The Latinized name "*Scoparius*" is derived from the Latin "*scopa*", meaning "besom" (hence the common folk name Broom), and "*Cytisus*" is said to be a corruption of the name of the Greek island Cythnus, where the Broom once grew in abundance.

As a young plant the Broom will often spend 2 to 4 years in a grass-like state until it grows an extensive root system. Once established, it can grow from 12 to 30 inches a year and attain heights of over 8 feet. Most Broom plants have a single base with many upwardly spreading stems or branches. The stems are bright green, long, straight and slender, but are tough and very flexible. Many of the stems are almost leafless, but those that do develop leaves, do so by late April. Its leaves are mostly dark green in colour and spiral up the plant's stem from its base. The leaves are hairy when young and the lower ones are shortly stalked with small oblong trifoliate leaflets. The upper leaves near the

tips of the stem are sessile, smaller and often reduced to a single leaflet, many of which will fall off after a frost or during a severe drought.

The flowers of the Broom are fragrant and about ¾ inch long, ranging in color from light yellow to orange with crimson wings. The shape of the flower is irregular with a top banner petal, two side wing petals, and two keel petals on the bottom likened to a butterfly. The flowers are in bloom from April to July and occur on plants as young as 2 years old, growing more abundantly on plants of 4 years old or more. Bees are attracted to the flowers, not in search of honey but more because they contain an abundance of pollen.

The flowers are followed by flat oblong seedpods about 1½ - 2 inches long, these are hairy on the edges but smooth on the sides. The pods are dark green or nearly black when mature and each contain several seeds. The seeds are oval about ⅛ inch long, dark greenish-brown and have a shiny surface. The pods begin to dry out as the seeds inside mature and warp in different directions. Eventually, they are forced open and the seeds burst out with a sharp report landing some 4 to 12 feet away. The continuous popping of the bursting seed-vessels can readily be heard on a hot sunny day. The seeds have a hard shell and can remain viable in the soil for more than 50 years before they germinate. This long-term viability enables the Reed to repopulate areas even after they have been cleared and even when no plants are visible on the site.



Broom seed pods

Today there are many differing species of Brooms and the identification and naming of them has undergone steady change, resulting in considerable confusion. Due to the toxicity of some species it is important to recognize that there are other Brooms, and that different names for the same plants can be found. There are also a great number of Brooms grown for ornamental purposes. Some of the more common Brooms are:

May the roots of your family tree grow deep and strong.

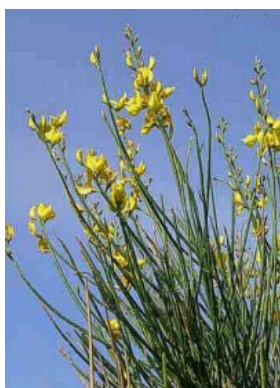
~ Irish Blessing

The Reed~ con't

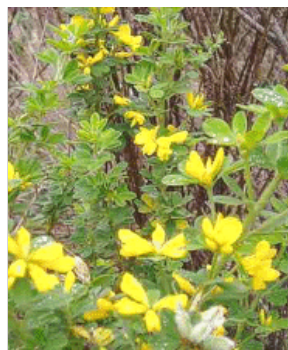
by George Knowles



Portuguese Broom (*Cytisus striatus*): This is a Scotch Broom look-alike except for the seedpods. These are inflated and hairy all over giving the plant the appearance of being covered with pussy willow buds. Its stems are more silvery, but this is difficult to distinguish until after its leaves and flowers fall off.



Spanish Broom (*Spartium junceum*): This plant is the most drought-resistant of the Broom species. It has coarse thick stems that are round and almost leafless. Its flowers are similar in size to Scotch Broom but less numerous.



French Broom (*Genista monspessulana*): These are very leafy and retain their leaves the entire year. All its leaves are trifoliate, whereas Portuguese and Scotch Brooms have simple leaves or trifoliate leaves only on the lower part of the plants. Its flowers are yellow but smaller than those of the Scotch Broom, and appear well before-in March and April. The stems are finer than and not as erect as those of Scotch Broom. The *Genista* species of Broom is the one most referred to in ancient texts.

Physical Uses:

The Broom is such a versatile plant that it has many uses. It is commonly planted on the sides of steep banks where its roots serve to hold the earth together. On some parts of the coast it is one of the first plants to grow on sand dunes, together with the stems of mat grasses and other sand-binding plants. Broom will flourish within reach of sea spray, and like gorse, is a good sheltering plant for seaside growth. Inland it is grown extensively as shelter for game, and is one of the more important species of shrubs used to protect them and other small animals from the wind and weather.

The Broom seldom grows large enough to furnish useful wood, but when its stems acquire a sufficient size, it is beautifully veined, and being hard, provides valuable material for veneering. As its name suggests, it was popularly used for making brooms and brushes, and was commonly used for basketwork, especially on the island of Madeira. In the north of England and Scotland it was used for thatching cottages and making fences or screens.

The bark of the Broom yields excellent fiber, which is finer than but not so strong as the Spanish Broom. The bark is easily separated from the stem by simply macerating them in water. This has been done since ancient times, and from its fibers paper and cloth were manufactured. The fibers were also used to make quill-pens as used by old scribes. The bark contains a considerable amount of tannin, which can be used for tanning leather. The leaves and young tips of the Broom produce a green dye that was once used to colour clothes and garments.

Myths, Folklore and History:

The Reed or Broom has always been associated with music, for since time began pipes and flutes were made from reeds. In mythology we see a connection to reeds through the panpipes of the Greek god Pan (Roman god Faunus). In legend, Pan had a contest with Apollo to determine who could play the most skillful and sweetest music, Pan on his reed pipes or Apollo on his lyre. Pan was judged to be the winner, which Apollo considered an insult. In rage, Apollo turned Pan into half a man and half a goat. In art, Pan is often depicted with the legs, horns and beard of a goat.

To the Greeks, Pan was a god of the woodlands, pastures, herds and fertility. Hills, caves, oaks, reeds and tortoises are all sacred to him. In another legend Pan fought with the gods of Olympus during their battle against the Titans. As the battle raged, he fashioned a giant seashell into a trumpet and raised such a noise with it, the Titans thought they were being attacked by a sea monster and fled in terror. The word "panic" is said to have come from this myth.

Pan is thought to be the offspring of Hermes, whose cult was centered in Arcadia where he haunted the woodlands, hills and mountains. After sleeping at noon, Pan would then dance through the woods playing the panpipes. Pan was a lusty leader of satyrs and loved nothing better than chasing nymphs; from this he became associated with Dionysus/Bacchus. Pan's symbol was the phallus, and of old he was invoked for the fertility of flocks or an abundant hunt. Every region in Greece had its own



Greek God Pan

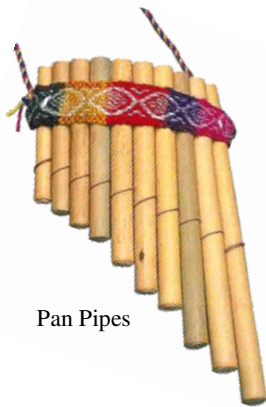
*Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came,
there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go.*

~ James Baldwin

con't →

The Reed~ con't

by George Knowles



Pan Pipes



“Pan, who was known by various names, and eventually he came to symbolize the universal god of nature, the Horned God.”

Pan, who was known by various names, and eventually he came to symbolize the universal god of nature, the Horned God.

In folklore the Pied Piper of Hamelin played a magickal tune on a pipe made from reeds, and rid the town of a plague of rats. As the story goes, in 1284 the Pied Piper was hired to rid the town of Hamelin of a plague of rats. He walked through the streets playing a magickal tune on his pipe, and on hearing the music all the rats followed him. The piper led the rats all the way to the banks of the river Weser, where all the rats fell in and were drowned. Although the town council had agreed to pay the piper, they changed their minds once the task was done and refused to pay him.

In retaliation, the piper walked the streets again, only this time he played a different tune on his pipe. On hearing the music, all the children in the town follow him as he led them out of town and into the foothills of the mountains. As they approached, a door in the side of the mountain opened and the piper and all the children vanished, never to be seen again. After their disappearance, the spirits of the piper and children forever haunted the town of Hamelin. From this story the magickal qualities of the reed and music can be discerned.

Throughout history the Broom has been featured as a heraldic device and was adopted at a very early period as the badge of Brittany. Geoffrey the 5th, Count of Anjou, thrust it into his helmet at the moment of going into battle so that his troops might see and follow him. As he plucked it from a steep bank which its roots had knitted together, he is reputed to have said: “This golden plant rooted firmly amid rock, yet upholding what is ready to fall, shall be my cognizance. I will maintain it on the field, in the tourney and in the court of justice.”

From Geoffrey of Anjou and his wife the empress Matilda, daughter of the English king Henry I, the Plantagenet royal dynasty began. However, the name Plantagenet was not hereditary and is thought to have originated from his nickname, given after the sprig of Broom he wore in his hat or to his practice of planting Brooms to improve his hunting covers. The Medieval Latin name for Broom was “*Planta genista*”; from which it is thought Plantagenet was derived. The Broom is depicted on the Great Seal of Richard I, this being its first official heraldic appearance in England.

Some historians differ on the naming of Kings as Plantagenet, some giving the name to Count Geoffrey’s descendants beginning with Edward I. Richard Plantagenet or Richard 3rd Duke of York was the first to use the surname officially when he claimed the throne in 1460. The Plantagenet dynasty ended when the last legitimate male heir, Edward Earl of Warwick was executed in 1499.

Another origin is claimed for the heraldic use of the Broom in Brittany, in that a prince of Anjou

assassinated his brother and seized his kingdom. Overcome by remorse, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in expiation of his crime. Every night on the journey he scourged himself with a brush of “genets” or “genista”, and adopted the plant as his badge in perpetual memory of his repentance.

St. Louis of France continued the heraldic use of the Broom as a symbol of chivalry and honour, and on the occasion of his marriage in the year 1234 he founded a special order called the “*Colle de Genet*”. The collar of the order was decorated alternately with the fleur-de-lis of France and a Broom-flower. His bodyguard of a hundred nobles also wore on their coats a Broom-flower emblem with the motto “*Exaltat humiles*” (“He exalteth the lowly”). The order was held in high esteem, and to be bestowed with it was regarded as a great honour. King Richard II was honored with it, and a Broom plant with open empty pods can be seen ornamentally decorating his tomb in Westminster Abbey. In 1368 Charles V of France bestowed the insignia of the Broom pod on his favourite chamberlain, and in 1389 Charles VI gave the same decoration to his kinsmen.

In Scotland the Broom is the badge of the Forbes clan, and according to Scottish lore: “it was the bonny broom which the Scottish clan of Forbes wore in their bonnets when they wished to arouse the heroism of their chieftains”. In the Gaelic dialect of the highlands they called the Broom “*bealadh*” in token of its beauty: “This humble shrub was not less distinguished than the Rose herself during the civil wars of the fourteenth century”.

Apart from its use in heraldry, the Broom has been associated with several popular traditions. In some parts it used to be considered a sign of plenty and fertility, for it bore many flowers and flourished quickly. The flowering tops were used for house decoration at the Whitsuntide festival, but it was considered unlucky to use them for menial purposes when in full bloom. In Christianity, when Joseph and the Virgin Mary were fleeing into Egypt, the Broom was cursed by Mary for the popping noises made by the pods as they touched them in passing, which increased the risk of drawing attention to their whereabouts from Herod’s soldiers.

Medicinal Uses:

The properties of Broom as a healing herb was well known to the ancients and such early writers as Virgil (70-19 BC) and Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) speak of the “*Genista*” species of Broom. It was also mentioned in some of the earliest printed Herbals, such as: the Passau (1485), the Hortus Sanitatis (1491) and the Grete Herball (1516). John Gerard in his Herbal of 1597 tells us: “The decoction of the twigs and tops of broom doth cleanse and open the liver, milt and kidneys.”



The Reed~ con't

by George Knowles

The Broom is also mentioned in the first London Pharmacopoeia of 1618, from which Nicholas Culpepper (1616-1654) made an unauthorized translation published in 1649 called "*A Physicall Directory*". Later in his celebrated Herbal "*The English Physician*" (1652), Culpepper considered a decoction of Broom to be good not only for dropsy, but also for black jaundice, ague, gout, sciatica and various pains of the hips and joints.

The flowers of Broom were used for making an unguent to cure the gout. Henry VIII used to drink a water infusion made from the flowers of Broom, and it being purgative, he believed it acted as a guard against his overindulgences. A decoction of Broom is recommended in herbal medicine for bladder and kidney afflictions, as well as for chronic dropsy. Bruised seeds after being infused in rectified spirit was allowed to stand for two weeks and strained, then taken daily in a glass of peppermint water to cure liver complaints and ague. The seeds were also used as a substitute for coffee.

Broom juice in large doses can disturb the stomach and bowels, and is therefore more often used as an auxiliary to other diuretics, rather than used alone. Called (*Infusum Scoparii*) it is made by infusing the dried tops of Broom in boiling water for fifteen minutes and then straining. It was introduced into the British Pharmacopoeia of 1898 and replaced the decoctions of broom in the preceding issues.

Caution:

Regardless of what you read in books and articles such as this, before using any plant, herb or spice for medicinal purposes, specialized or professional advice should be sought. Experimentation is not an alternative to be considered when dealing with toxic plants.

Magical Uses:

Ritual wands made from Broom are used in purification and protection spells, and if working outdoors (the best place to perform magic) sweeping the ground with a brush of Broom (if it grows nearby) will clear the area of unwanted influences. To raise the winds, throw some Broom into the air while invoking the spirits of the Air, and to calm the winds burn some Broom and bury the ashes.

Of old, Broom was hung up in the house to keep all evil influences out, and an infusion of Broom sprinkled throughout the house was used to exorcise poltergeist activity. An infusion of Broom was also drunk to increase psychic powers and awareness through its intoxication properties, but this is no longer recommended as the plant can also be poisonous. The Broom is known by many folk names: Banal, Basam, Besom, Bisom, Bizzon, Breeam, Broom Tops,

Brum, Genista, Green Broom, Irish Broom, Link, Scotch Broom and Hog Weed. Its gender is Masculine. Its planet association is with Mars. Its element association is Air. Its deity associations are with: Pan, Hermes, Apollo and Dionysus/Bacchus. It is used to attract the powers needed for: Purification, Protection, Fertility, Wind, Divination and all spells associated with the element Air.

Astrologically people born between the 28th October and the 24th November, are practical people who enjoy making themselves useful to others. They will often be found organizing charity or other events. They love to use their hands and are not afraid to get them dirty, and have always been good at handicrafts. Others are attracted to them for their artistic abilities, and they can also be very imaginative.

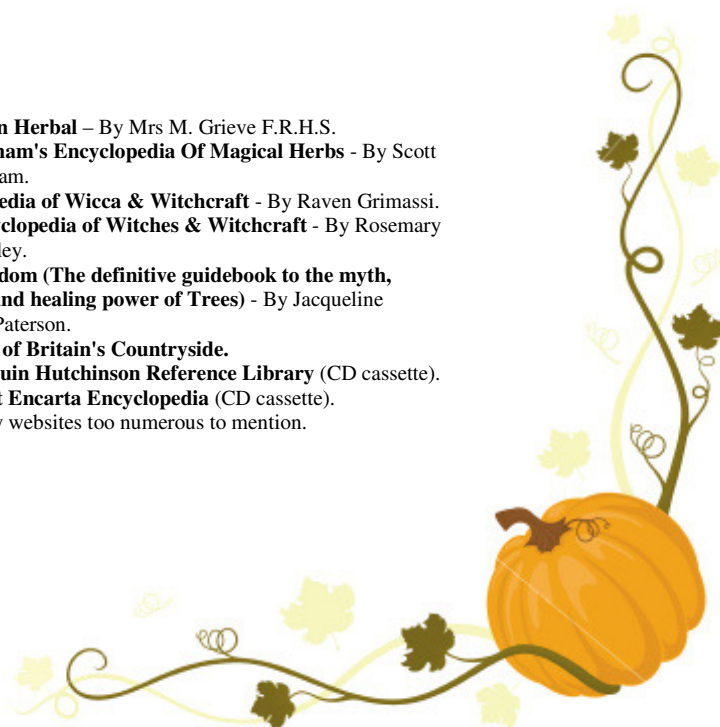


Scotch Broom

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<http://www.controversial.com>

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Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia (CD cassette).
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Bath Salts

by Graham

Since ancient times, bathing has been a popular pursuit associated with the promotion of health, social interaction, and religious observance – as well as performing its more obvious role as providing a means of cleaning the body of the built-up grime from everyday life. In ancient Rome, bathing in public bath houses was an important part of community life, and many ruins of these venues remain to this day, with perhaps some of the best examples being in the city of Bath, England. Through the centuries, many other cultures have valued and revered the benefits of



Ancient Roman Baths in the city of Bath, England

bathing and associated activities, with relevant examples being the ritual bathing by Hindus in their sacred river Ganges, steamy relaxation in Turkish Baths and Finnish Saunas, and spiritual journeying in the Sweat Lodges of Native North Americans. For me personally, there are few things more relaxing, or restorative, than the pleasure of a long hot bath. This experience can be greatly enhanced through the use of bath salts, which add softness, colour, scent and nutrients to the bath water. For Wiccans, bathing with bath salts can be used to cleanse and charge the body both physically and spiritually before ritual. Bearing this in mind, let us examine more closely the making and use of bath salts.

According to the book by Scott Cunningham (see sources), the primary ingredients of bath salts are Epsom Salts (Magnesium Sulphate), Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate) and Sea Salt. All of these ingredients can be found in supermarkets at reasonable prices. The recommended ratio of these three ingredients for bath salts is 3:2:1. For a single bath I use tablespoons as my measure, and so the ratios translate to 3 spoonfuls of Epsom Salts, 2 spoonfuls of Baking Soda, and 1 spoonful of Sea Salt.

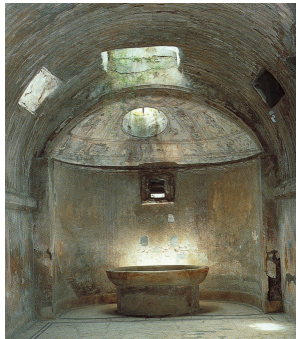
Regarding the nature of these ingredients: Epsom Salts are very interesting - being named, not surprisingly, after the town of Epsom in the south of England. Apparently, in the year 1618 it was an exceptionally dry summer and herdsman noticed that even so, stock would not drink from a watering hole near the town. The water was found to be richly mineralized with Magnesium Sulphate. Consequently, when people realized the benefits to be gained from bathing in the water, Epsom became a popular spa town. Magnesium is the second most abundant chemical element in human cells and is vital for many bodily functions. Both the magnesium and sulphate components from the Epsom salts are absorbed through the skin when bathing. This contributes to a number of health benefits including improved heart and circulatory health, the flushing of toxins and heavy metals from cells, improved nerve function, stress relief, reduced inflammation, and the easing of migraine headaches. Epsom Salts also work to prevent the temporary skin wrinkling (“pruning”) that can occur when soaking for extended periods. Baking Soda softens the water and helps to neutralize any excessive acidic or alkaline characteristics. It also draws oils and impurities from the skin, and is excellent for relieving minor irritations. Sea Salt makes the water slightly antiseptic



Bath Salts

Bath Salts~ con't

by Graham



**"A bath should be
taken every day."
Hippocrates**



which helps the healing of damaged skin. Importantly, it also symbolically purifies the bath water.

The addition of colour to the bath salts will add the energy of that colour to the mix and consequently the bath water, enhancing the symbolic significance of the bath. This can be achieved by using standard food colouring, which is readily available at supermarkets. If a compound colour is required it is better to combine the primary colours together first before adding to the salts. However, having said this, as I tend to make up my bath salts mix for each bath as required, I don't follow this as a rule. After the drops (typically no more than 4) of colouring have been added to the bath salts, stir them in with a spoon, steadily turning the salts over until the colour is evenly mixed throughout. Visualize the symbolism and energy of the colour permeating the mix as you do so. A colour that I like is turquoise, which can be made by adding 3 drops of blue and 1 drop of green food colouring to the salts. The following table shows some basic colours and their symbolism (taken from the source by Raje Airey):

Colour	Symbolism
Red	Associated with the planet Mars and the element of Fire. Passion, power, physical energy, courage.
Pink	Love and kindness, reconciliation, peace and harmony, compassion, gentle emotions.
Orange	Abundance, fertility, health, joy, attraction, luck, friendship.
Yellow	Associated with the planet Mercury and the element of Air. Communication, the intellect, learning, concentration.
Green	Associated with the planet Venus and the element of Earth. The heart and emotions, love, gardens and growth, money, prosperity, employment.
Turquoise	Confidence, inner strength, positive self-esteem, the expression of wishes.
Blue	Associated with the Moon and the element of Water. Wisdom, patience, possibility, the healing of the spirit, idealism, truth and justice.
Purple	Royal and priestly, a link with the higher dimension, inspiration, magic, spiritual strength.

The addition of herbal oils to bath salts will add the properties of the herbs to the salts, including most noticeably, their scent. I often use lavender and eucalyptus oils – which are available at relatively low prices in supermarkets.

con't →



Bath Salts~ con't

by Graham



In this form, the oils are less concentrated, and so I may add anything up to a total of a dozen drops to the salts for one bath. However, a much broader range of oil types is available in the form of "Essential Oils" that can be obtained from specialty shops. These oils are much more concentrated, and so only a few drops of them are required. Combinations of various oils can be added to the bath salts – for example, I sometimes use the combination of 7 drops of lavender oil and 3 drops of eucalyptus oil in a single bath mix. As with the addition of colouring, use a spoon to stir the oils through the salts, slowly and deliberately visualizing the energy of the oils being infused into the mix as you do so. The following table shows some common herbal oils and the magical goals that they work in sympathy with:

Oil	Goals
Cinnamon	Astral Projection, Healing & Health, Love, Lust, Money & Riches, Protection, Psychic Awareness, Purification, Spirituality
Eucalyptus	Healing & Health, Protection, Purification
Frankincense	Courage, Exorcism, Protection, Purification
Ginger	Love, Lust, Magical Power, Money & Riches
Jasmine	Astral Projection, Love, Money & Riches, Prophetic (Psychic)
Lavender	Happiness, Love, Protection, Purification
Lemon	Love, Purification
Myrrh	Exorcism, Protection, Purification, Spirituality
Neroli	Love
Orange	Divination, Love, Luck, Money & Riches, Psychic Awareness
Patchouli	Lust, Protection
Peppermint	Exorcism, Healing & Health, Love, Lust, Money & Riches,
Pine	Exorcism, Healing & Health, Money & Riches, Protection,
Rose	Healing & Health, Love, Luck, Prophetic (Psychic) Dreams,
Rosemary	Exorcism, Healing & Health, Love, Lust, Purification
Sandalwood	Astral Projection, Exorcism, Healing & Health, Protection,
Ylang Ylang	Love



Your bathing experience can be further enhanced through the use of candlelight, and by having some appropriate music playing in the background. The use of a natural soap, such as that made from olive oil, is also recommended. Wishing you blessed bathing.

3 October 2008 Copyright Graham D. Furnell

Graham lives in South Australia and is a student of the Correllian Nativist Tradition of Wicca. He has been a member of EW since 2006.

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Calendula Officinalis

by Lyric

There are many herbs associated with Samhain, including Mandrake, Mugwort, Oak leaves, Rue, Sage, Wormwood and Calendula.

Calendula is the one I have chosen to write about; not only because it is both beautiful and ever so versatile, but also because I just love saying it: cal-en-DU-la, cal-EN-du-la or even, cal-en-du-LA!!! Whichever way you choose to say it, Calendula is a little known "rock star" of the herb world.

Its official name is Calendula Officinalis and it is also known as pot marigold, bride of the sun, bull flower and butterwort and it is related to the daisy family. It should not be confused with the common garden or French marigold, African marigold or Inca marigold. It is native to Mediterranean countries, although it is grown throughout Europe, Asia and most of the world, and thrives in the cooler temperatures of spring and fall.

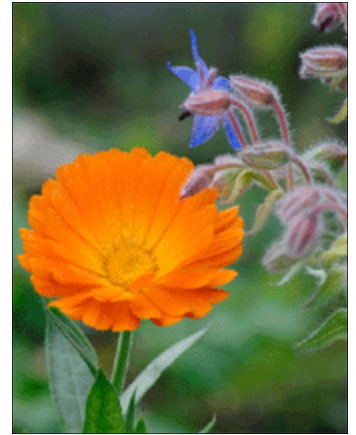
Magically speaking, Calendula is ruled by the Sun and is an elemental fire. The magical properties of Calendula include its association with comfort, health, psychic dreams, protection and legal matters. You may want to scatter petals under your bed for prophetic dreams and protection while sleeping. Try taking a bath in calendula infused water to receive an extra dose of respect and admiration. Be sure to carry calendula petals in your pocket when going to court for favorable legal outcome.

The ancient Greeks, Romans used Calendula in the same way the people of the Middle East and India use it today. Calendula is used for its medicinal properties, as a dye for fabrics and as a food flavoring (used as a saffron substitute). The flowers are said to "smell like honey, slightly spicy and woody - reminiscent of fresh rhubarb or angelica flowers - and their flavor is pleasantly mild and vegetable-sweet". (1) The petals of the flower should be removed by gently pulling them away from the center disk. The disk is bitter and should be discarded. The petals can be used chopped or whole, or they can be dried and stored in a dark, glass jar. The leaves should always be protected from light and moisture. If stored correctly they have a shelf life of up to three years. At the end of this article I have included some recipes you may want to try. [Editors note: In future, all recipes will be included in the Pagan Kitchen section.]

Medicinally, Calendula is a gold mine. It is chock-full of flavonoids (which is a plant-based antioxidant) known to protect us from the nasty free radicals known to cause cell damage. No one is really sure which active ingredients make it such a powerful healing agent, but it is known to have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antiviral properties. As a tea it is used to treat stomach ailments, ulcers and menstrual cramps. As a tea, use 1 tsp dried petals in 8oz of water, steep 10-15 minutes, and drink two to three cups per day.

However, Calendula is used most often to heal skin problems and wound healing. As a tincture (5-10 drops three times a day) or ointment (2-5% calendula applied 3-4 times per day) it is used to heal burns including sunburns, acne and bruises. As a personal aside: I was at a pagan festival this summer and suffered a terrible reaction to something in my sunscreen. My wonderful, friendly, helpful fellow pagans offered many different options to heal the terrible rash - but the only one that worked was a calendula gel given to me by a homeopathic practitioner who camped near by. So I can personally attest to the healing qualities of this magnificent plant.

Precautions: All herbs and supplements should be taken with care and under the supervision of a homeopath or physician. Topical use of calendula is generally safe unless you suffer allergies to daisies, asters, chrysanthemums or ragweed. Calendula is believed to affect the menstrual cycle and should not be used by pregnant or breastfeeding women. It may also affect conception when taken by men or women and should not be taken by couples trying to become pregnant. If you take sedatives or blood pressure medication, theoretically, there may be an interaction with calendula. Be sure you let your healthcare provider know you are taking any herb or supplement.



con't →



Calendula Officinalis~ con't

by Lyric

As I mentioned Calendula is a "rock star", not only because of its beauty and versatility, but also because it is the 2008 Herb of the Year!!!! Congratulation Calendula!!! So, celebrate Samhain with a little bit of calendula in your pocket for protection, and a glass of Calendula Wine at your table - no matter how you want to say it!!

Recipes:

Calendula Cornmeal Crisps

Makes about 4 dozen cookies

I use a little whole-wheat flour for nutrition and body, but you could use all unbleached flour for a more delicate cookie. Also try almonds or pistachios in place of pecans, or cherries or chopped dried apricots in place of the cranberries.

1 cup sugar
 ½ cup fresh or dried calendula petals
 1 cup pecans
 ¾ cup dried cranberries
 1 cup unbleached white flour
 ⅓ cup whole-wheat flour
 ⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon stone-ground yellow cornmeal

1 teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon salt
 Scant ½ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
 1 extra-large egg
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 12 tablespoons softened, unsalted butter cut into twelve (12) pieces

In a food processor, combine sugar and calendula; pulse until calendula starts to break down into smaller pieces. Transfer calendula sugar to a shallow bowl.

Pulse (or chop with a knife) pecans and cranberries until coarsely chopped; transfer to a large bowl and set aside.

In another bowl, combine flours, cornmeal, baking powder, salt and nutmeg. Toss to mix. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Measure ¾ cup of the calendula sugar and put it in food processor with butter. Process until creamy and blended, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides if necessary. Add egg and pulse for about 1 minute; add vanilla and pulse to blend. Add dry ingredients and process until just blended; do not over mix.

Transfer dough to bowl with nuts and fruit; stir to distribute nuts and fruit evenly. Using a spoon or your fingers, scoop about 1 tablespoon of dough and roll it into a ball about 1 inch in diameter or slightly bigger. Roll balls in remaining calendula sugar and place on baking sheets, spacing balls about 2 inches apart.

Using a flat-bottomed glass, gently press balls to about 1/4-inch thickness. (Dip bottom of glass into sugar occasionally to prevent sticking.)

Bake cookies about 14 minutes, until their edges are lightly browned. If baking two sheets at once, switch places halfway through baking time.

Remove cookies from sheets immediately and cool on racks. (If the cookies cool on the pans, they will harden and break when removed.) Store in a tightly covered tin.

*October is nature's funeral month. Nature glories in death more than in life.
 The month of departure is more beautiful than the month of coming - October than May.
 Every green thing loves to die in bright colors."
 ~Henry Ward Beecher*

Calendula Officinalis~ con't

by Lyric

Egg Salad with Calendula and Chives

Serves 6

For a beautiful presentation, serve this on a plate lined with salad greens, and scatter additional calendula petals over the top, along with fresh-snipped chives and/or dill. Good crusty country-style bread is the best accompaniment; however pitas, rye, pumpernickel or thinly sliced bagels are good too.

Note: For a quick herbal sandwich, simply slice hard-boiled eggs onto bread that's been spread with a little mayonnaise and mustard; sprinkle with chopped onion or chives and calendula petals and chopped pickles. Season with salt and pepper.

12 hardboiled eggs	2 tablespoons snipped chives
½ cup mayonnaise	2 tablespoons snipped dill leaves
2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard	½ teaspoon Hungarian paprika
2 tablespoons ea. chopped sweet pickles & juice	Salt and freshly ground pepper
¼ cup thinly sliced green onions or minced onion	1 handful fresh calendula petals, coarsely chopped
⅓ cup finely diced celery	Petals for garnish

Dice eggs and put them in a bowl, along with mayonnaise, mustard, pickles and juice, onions, celery, 1 tablespoon of chives, 1 tablespoon of dill, paprika, salt and pepper. Mix well, then stir in chopped calendula. Refrigerate 1/2 hour or more before serving.

Remove from refrigerator 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Arrange salad greens on a platter and heap egg salad on top. Garnish with additional calendula petals and the remaining chives and dill.

**Recipes are by Susan Belsinger, contributing editor of The Herb Companion.

Calendula Wine

2 quarts Calendula (use Calendula officinalis only)
1 gallon boiling water
1 campden tablet, crushed (sterilizer)
thinly pared peel and juice of 3 tangerines or other soft citrus fruit
thinly pared peel and juice of 1 lemon
5½ cups sugar
1¼ cups white raisins, finely chopped
wine yeast
yeast nutrient

Wash the flowers and put into a large container. Add the boiling water and stir in the Campden tablet. Leave for 24 hours.

Draw off 1 cup of the liquid, add citrus peel and heat to just the point of boiling. Add the sugar, stirring until dissolved. Cool to body temperature, then pour back into the original container. Add raisins, citrus juice, yeast, and nutrient. Cover and leave 5 days to ferment, stirring twice each day. Strain through a double thickness of muslin. Pour into a fermenting jar fitted with a fermentation lock and leave to continue fermenting. Rack the wine as it begins to clear. When completely clear, store in a cool, dark, dry place for six months to mature. (4)

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Calendula Officinalis



Samhain

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The Pagan Kitchen

by OwlOak



Greetings folks.

Well, the Wheel of the Year has taken another turn and the time of Samhain, the final harvest, is upon us. Here in New England the days are cool and the nights produce a white frost. The fields are about barren, having been gleaned of usable produce and ready to be tilled and prepared for the long winter.

In this issue I have posted some fast and easy recipes knowing that, for most folks, the day will be busy with final holiday decorations, preparations for the Trick-or-Treaters, community parties for the children, or Samhain Ceremonies.

Cool mornings are the ideal time for this breakfast treat:

Applesauce Waffles

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons white sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 eggs
1 1/3 cups milk
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup applesauce

Directions:

In a large bowl sift together the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and cinnamon.

In a separate bowl, mix together the eggs, milk, applesauce, and oil. Pour into the flour mixture and stir well.

Put manufacturer's recommended amount of batter in waffle iron and cook for 4-5 minutes until the steaming stops and the waffles are golden brown.

Serve topped with fresh butter and maple syrup.



For a quick, hearty, and satisfying lunch this combo is hard to beat:

Creamy Tomato Soup

1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup olive oil
1 large onion - chopped
5-6 large tomatoes - cored, peeled, and quartered
1 palm-full of chopped fresh basil leaves
salt and ground black pepper to taste
2 -14 oz. cans low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup heavy cream

Directions:



Samhain Symbols: the ancestors, bonfires, divination tools, costumes/disguises, masks, mirrors, dumb suppers, jack-o-lanterns, gourds, apples, grain, oak leaves, fall leaves, acorns, straw, besoms, bats, crows, ravens, black cats, dogs, bones, cauldrons, goal setting.

The Pagan Kitchen~ con't

by OwlOak

Heat the butter and olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in onions and cook until tender. Mix in tomatoes and chopped basil. Pour in the chicken broth, reduce heat to low, and continue cooking 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat and allow soup to cool a bit then run it through a blender until smooth. Return to the pot, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and gradually mix in the heavy cream. Pour soup through a strainer into a large bowl before serving.

Can be served with some fresh parsley sprinkled on top, oyster crackers, or my favorite saltines for crumbling up into the soup.

Roast Beef Melts

Ingredients:

1 - 1 1/2 lbs. thin sliced beef
8 pieces whole wheat bread
butter
8 slices of your favorite cheese
Dijon mustard

Directions:

Heat a griddle or large skillet on medium-low heat.
Butter 4 slices of bread and place them butter side down on the griddle.
Place 2-3 slices of beef on the bread & spread a teaspoon of Dijon mustard.
Add 2-3 more slices of beef and a slice of cheese.
Top each with another slice of buttered bread with buttered side up.
Cook until the cheese has melted & the bottom piece of bread is golden brown.
Using a spatula, flip the sandwiches and cook the same as the first side.
Remove from the griddle and serve.



And, for a fast and filling dinner here is a casserole recipe that is older than I am, and I'm 61.

Grandma Little's Goulash*

Ingredients:

4 Cups mashed potatoes
1 lb. ground beef
1 medium onion - chopped
salt and pepper to taste
1 can creamed corn
1 can whole kernel corn - drained
1 small can tomato sauce
1/2 lb. fresh sauerkraut - drained

Directions:

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**Goulash**

Photos by

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EW member since 2003

Gods and Goddesses of the Underworld, Death/Rebirth or Magick

Hecate (Greek)**Arianrhod** (Welsh)**Caillech** (Irish-Scottish)**Macha** (Irish)**Baba Yaga** (Russian)**Al-Ilāt** (Persian)**Bast** (Egyptian)**Persephone** (Greek)**Hel** (Norse)**Kali** (Hindu)**Osiris** (Egyptian)**Mari** (Basque)**Inanna** (Sumerian)**Lilith** (Mesopotamian)**Loki** (Norse)**Anubis** (Egyptian)**Hades** (Greek)**Arawn** (Welsh)**Cernnunos** (Greco-Celtic)**The Morrighu/Morrighan** (Irish)**Horned Hunter** (European)**Gwynn ap Nudd** (British),**Coyote Brother** (Native American)**Cerridwen** (Welsh-Scottish)**Ishtar** (Assyrian/Babylonian)**Dis** (Roman)



The Pagan Kitchen~ con't

by OwlOak



Preheat oven to 350° F.

Combine the ground beef, chopped onion, salt and pepper in a skillet and cook over medium heat until the beef is browned and the onions are transparent. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon and reserve. Place the mashed potatoes in a large casserole dish and smooth to cover the bottom. Combine the whole kernel and creamed corn and pour over the potatoes. Cover this with the ground beef and onion mixture. Top with the fresh sauerkraut. Pour the tomato sauce over the sauerkraut. Bake uncovered at 350° F until the sauerkraut starts to lightly brown and the casserole is bubbly. Remove from oven and allow to cool for several minutes before serving.

*Gram always called her casseroles goulash as she swore that is what goulash meant...casserole. I'm sure many of you may disagree but will recognize this casserole, and it's variants, by a number of different names, but to me it was and still is "goulash".

**For a variation the sauerkraut can be replaced with your favorite sliced or shredded cheese.

For a dessert, a nice warm loaf of fresh pumpkin bread puts a smile on everyone's lips:

Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups flour	1 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp. baking soda	4 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 tsp. salt	1/2 cup water
1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 cup raisins
1 tsp. nutmeg	2 cups cooked and mashed pumpkin- strained, or one 15 oz. can solid pack pumpkin (not the pie mix)
3 cups sugar	

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour 2 loaf pans. Sift flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and sugar in a large bowl. Mix oil, eggs, water, raisins and pumpkin in a separate bowl. Make a hollow in the center of the flour mixture and pour the pumpkin mixture into it. Mix until smooth and pour into the pans.

Bake for 1 hour. Cool and remove from pans. Unused loaves can be frozen.

Well, there you have it folks. A few simple, tasty and filling recipes for a busy holiday.

May you all have a happy, safe, fun-filled Samhain surrounded by loving friends and family.

Until next Sabbat.....Huggs & B*B ~ OwlOak

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OwlOak lives in New England, USA and is a Wiccan High Priest. He has been an EW member since 2003.

New Years History

2000 B.C.E. **Mesopotamian**: the Vernal Equinox, in mid-March.

Egypt, Phoenician, and Persian: the Fall Equinox

Egyptian: on July 20

Greek: the Winter Solstice.

Early Roman: March 1st

46 BC Julian Calendar

153 B.C.E. New Year moves from March to January

567 C.E. Council of Tours abolished Jan 1 as New Year's for being **too pagan**.

Christian Europe, variously on Dec. 25, March 1, March 25, and Easter

1582 C.E. Gregorian Calendar

January 1st as New Years restored

American Colonies: in March

Eastern Orthodox: Jan 14

Hindus of **Nepal**: in the third week of March

Hindus of **Kashmir**: the second week of March

Zoroastrian, Iranian: the Fall Equinox

Chinese: Dark Moon, January 21 - February 21



Seasonal Festival~ Deepavali~ by Graham & Pari

Take a stroll down the highways and byways of India on the night of the new moon in *Karttika* (the eighth month of the Hindu lunisolar calendar, generally falling during October-November) and you will invariably encounter the vibrant celebrations associated one of that nation's greatest Hindu festivals. Called *Deepavali* (sometimes known as *Dipavali*, or abbreviated to *Divali* or *Diwali*), its name is a compound of the Sanskrit words *Deepa* (meaning "light of the dharma") and *avali* (meaning "a continuous line"). A literal interpretation of the name is "A row of clay lamps". Consistent with this interpretation, the most characteristic feature of the festival is the lighting of houses and public places with numerous arrangements of oil lamps and colorful paper lanterns called *kandils*. Not surprisingly, Deepavali is also widely known as "The Festival of Lights".

Deepavali is thought to have originally started as a harvest festival, as its timing coincides with the last harvest before winter. In an agrarian society, this is also a time when merchants close their accounts, and begin a new accounting year. The Hindu deity of wealth, *Lakshmi*, is thanked for the bounties of the past year, and wishes are made for a successful year ahead. Consequently, Deepavali is associated with celebrations of the New Year in Hindu culture. However, there are a number of other perspectives to the meaning of this festival, which largely depend on where you are in the vast country of India. For example, in southern India, the festival is

associated with the symbolic triumph of light (good) over darkness (evil) when *Lord Krishna* killed the demon *Narakasura*. In northern India, the laying out of rows of lamps marks the return of *Lord Rama* to Ayodhya, after 14 years of exile and a war in which he killed the demon king *Ravana*. The laying out of lamps mimics the mythical actions of the people of Ayodhya, who are believed to have done so to illuminate the way home for their revered Lord.

As well as displaying lamps and lanterns, those celebrating Deepavali often rise before dawn to ritually bathe, as it is believed that the holy waters of the river Ganges are present in all water at this time. New clothes are put on, and houses are cleaned and decorated with fresh flowers. Women and girls wear colorful clothing and jewelry, and decorate their hands with henna designs. Sweets are given as gifts, ensuring that Deepavali is always one of the most popular festivals for children. The celebrations are often accompanied by fairs called *melas*, where farm produce is bought and sold, food stalls are set up, and attractions may include jugglers, acrobats, snake charmers and fortune tellers. At night, fireworks are lit in a manner similar to our Guy Fawkes celebrations.

Underlying the above celebrations, there is a deep spiritual context to the festival of Deepavali. This is reflected in the Sanskrit origins of its name, and is discussed in the following passage, which has been taken from the Wikipedia source...

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"Deepavali is associated with celebrations of the New Year in Hindu culture."



Oil lamps on the eve of Deepavali.



A Deepavali kandil (lantern)



Lakshmi– Goddess of Wealth...with Saraswati, Goddess of Knowledge, Music and the Arts and Lord Ganesha, Remover of Obstacles





Seasonal Festival~ Deepavali~ con't by Graham & Pari



“Central to Hindu philosophy is the assertion that there is something beyond the physical body and mind which is pure, infinite and eternal, called Atman. Just as we celebrate the birth of our physical being, Deepavali is the celebration of this Inner Light, in particular the knowing of which outshines all darkness (removes all obstacles and dispels all ignorance), awakening the individual to one’s true nature, not as the body, but as the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality. With the realization of the Atman comes universal compassion, love, and the awareness of the oneness of all things (higher knowledge). This brings Ananda (Inner Joy or Peace). Deepavali celebrates this through festive fireworks, lights, flowers, sharing of sweets, and worship. While the story behind Deepavali varies from region to region, the essence is the same – to rejoice in the Inner Light (Atman) or the underlying reality of all things (Brahman).”

The religion of Hinduism is a very ancient and scholarly one, whose roots extend back thousands of years to the dawn of India’s history. Over the centuries, its principles have been passed down through music, recitation, dance, drama, and devotional poetry. The oldest texts are the famous *Vedas (Books of Knowledge)*, which are comprised of four collections of hymns and ritual treatises - the *Rigveda*, *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Atharvaveda*. Later texts include the *Brahmanas (Discussions of the Ritual)*, *Aranyakas (Books Studied in the Forest)* and *Upanishads (Philosophical Writings)*. Aspects of Hinduism have found their way into many other spiritual paths, including those of Wicca. Many of us will be familiar with, and may have even worked with, some of the major gods and goddesses of Hinduism such as Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti and Saraswati. Similarly, Hindu concepts such as reincarnation, karma and chakra are accepted by many practitioners of The Craft. There are also a number of parallels between Deepavali and the Wiccan sabbat of *Samhain* that takes place at about the same time of year. The name Samhain (pronounced “sow-ain”) means “first frost” and, similarly to Deepavali, it was traditionally seen as a celebration of the New Year in Celtic culture. As the days continue to get darker, Wiccans celebrate this time as one when the spiritual connection between the seen and unseen worlds is strongest. The relationship between the Atman (self) and Brahman (totality) that is celebrated at Deepavali is also an expression of this spiritual connection; and surely the following passage taken from the *Mundaka Upanishad*, which describes the underlying nature of our existence, would sit just as well with Wiccans as it does Hindus...

As sparks fly from a large fire by the thousands,
So from the Imperishable manifold beings are produced
Only to return.



The Great One is without form, like ether,
Within and without, unborn, breathless, mindless, pure,
It is higher than imperishable.

The Great One brings forth breath, mind, and all the senses,
Space, wind, light, water, and earth, who supports all.
Its head is fire, its eyes sun and moon, its ears space.
Its voice the Vedas, its breath the wind,
Its heart is the whole world.



Truly, this is the Inner Self of all.

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<http://www.peacefulpaths.com>

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Samhain / Beltaine

by Nan

It depends where you are!

Spring has burst its banks here in my corner of South Australia and we're looking forward to celebrating Beltaine and its earthy focus on procreation and rebirth.

Beltaine's a funny time of year here in Australia, as we overlay the "appropriate" festival for our hemisphere with the popular Halloween of Celtic origin. Halloween is gradually becoming a small fixture in our October calendar, with a few parties and festivals and some occasional trick or treat door knocking - although this still isn't very common.

Those of us who follow the path of the witch can poke fun at each other, especially if we have taken ourselves too seriously through the past year. But Halloween is still very much a "fun" and non-spiritual festival for most of us in October.

We did however have a lovely Samhain celebration in February - both at home and with a Pagan group in our district. Our personal home observances for Samhain always include setting an extra place for our loved ones in their memory, and filling it with a collage of names - from family and friends to beloved pets. This becomes part of the place setting, which we decorate beautifully and give the place of honour. We also create a home altar in our dining room to honour our dead, which we leave up for seven days after Samhain.

On Samhain night our family shares a meal with our dead, and we try to keep the conversation on the memories we have of those we miss. It's usually an entertaining evening with someone bringing up some little known fact or anecdote about a pet or human. When the meal is over we take our collage of names out to our home circle, cast and call, before inviting everyone on the list to join us. Someone calls out a name on the list, one at a time, and each person in the circle says one thing they loved or liked about the one who is named, if they wish, sometimes adding a personal message. At the end we thank and farewell, before burning the collage in a small container surrounded by water (February is usually hot and can be dangerous when it comes to lighting fires) and then properly dousing the ashes.

I belong to a pagan discussion group that meets monthly. It's a safe and friendly group of people who become an ever extended family as new members join us. We only have one rule, which is that everyone has a right to express their opinion, and no one is wrong. In this family atmosphere we decided, this year, to hold a Samhain gathering at a local restaurant, which opened especially for us. We chose grey and white as the theme, because the restaurant décor is dominated by stunning monochrome murals of fantasy creatures and vistas. Ornamentation includes a full suit of armour that guards the front door and other medieval accoutrements.

Two of our group organised the celebration, bringing pin up boards covered with black velvet, to which they fixed death cards from all the tarot packs they owned. Guests were then invited to place an object or photograph in memory of their dead on the large "altar" table that had been set out with the tarot cards, pumpkins and a plate with several potatoes. During the ceremony we were asked to speak briefly about our dead and then light a candle in their memory and place it into ready-made holes in the potatoes. It was a lovely evening, which concluded with several of us offering one card tarot readings for the coming year.

But, as I said earlier, in October in Australia we are setting our sights on Beltaine. Here in Australia the crops are beginning to turn and make good their promise of the harvest to come and the fields are swaying with golden wheat and barley. Canola glows gold in the paddock and is the perfect foil for the smoldering grey and green of peas. After undergoing severe



There is plenty of hope after drought as the lichen encrusted old fig trees waken.



A representation of Nan's home altar to commemorate the dead.



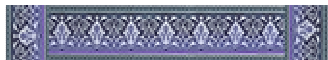
Our group pagan gathering displayed death cards from the tarot deck as part of the altar.

Photos, this column,
by: **Nan Berrett**
(EW member since 2003)



Samhain / Beltaine ~

by Nan



"I can feel the pulse as the earth quickens. I've seen my spring butterfly and am ready to move on in the cycle.."



Buds on the vines, by Beltaine they will be a hovering carpet of green.

pruning, the grape vines across the road are now already budding and by the time you read this will have sent out new shoots and leaves, turning the currently brown vista into a hovering carpet of vibrant green.

This season is littered with the discarded pupa cases of insects, washed-up octopus and cuttlefish eggs, molted feathers and animal fur as they prepare their summer suiting. Native birds, including Galahs are much more vocal, Sturt's Desert Pea is in flower, early tree blossoms are lost and Australia's wonderful array of wild flowers put on a spectacular show.

I can feel the pulse as the earth quickens. I've seen my spring butterfly and am ready to move on in the cycle.

****Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
Jack jumped over the candlestick****

(Refers to Jack O' the Green, a Beltaine nature figure jumping over the Bel-fire)

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Nan Berrett lives in rural South Australia, is an eclectic Wiccan, hereditary hedgewitch and healer. She has been an EW member since 2008.



Even the gorse looks pretty.



Soursobs - a useful weed used in dyes by weavers.

Photos, above, by: **Nan Berrett**, (EW member since 2003)



Reflections

Photo by: **Patricia J. Martin**
(EW member since 2003)



The Bard's Corner

Proud Heritage

**Within my veins five thousand years
Of history imprints my life,
In the way I've told of the love I hold
Honor bound
In the blood of my fathers**

**A people blest in beauty, rich
With songs of sweeping splendor won,
Rose from their worth to ring the earth
With delight
In the blood of my fathers**

**They bowed their head to none but the gods
Acclaim to their unconquered souls
For this they fought the harpers taught
Of the pride
In the blood of my fathers**

**Bold Men and Women, side by side,
Lived life and knew what that word meant,
They shall not die
As long as I
Shall live
By the blood of my fathers!**

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Ardriana Cahill lives in Western USA and is a Hereditary Witch, den of Clan McCormick.
<http://www.ardrianacahill.com>



Artwork by **Harrison Fisher**
(1875-1934)

*They that love beyond the world, cannot be separated.
Death cannot kill what never dies.
Nor can Spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle;
the Root and Record of their Friendship.
Death is but crossing the world,
as Friends to the seas; they live in one another still.
~ William Penn "Fruits of Solitude"*

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mail Witches is a pagan friendly email group attracting people from all walks of life, from all spectrums of society and from all around the world. Most are individuals seeking a personal practical religion that can be adapted to their own needs and criteria, and Wicca is a wonderfully diverse religion that meets these needs. Email Witches (Yahoo Group) is set up as a place where those of same interest can meet, discuss, share and gain more information about their chosen paths. All visitors to my website Controverscial.com are welcome, so feel free to join us and make new friends.

Best Wishes,

Georges Knowles

Cut and past the links below

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Symbol on the Email Witches home page.

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October (Samhain)

December (Yule)

February (Imbolc)

March (Ostara)

May (Beltane)

June (Litha)

August (Lammas)

September (Mabon)



Next Issue

Yule

Fall Gate

Photo by: **Patricia J. Martin**
(EW member since 2003)

