

Southern Light Newsletter

Spring 2020



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Merry Meet

We are the family team of Southern Light Newsletter

We are a pagan family, living in the beautiful island state of Tasmania, Australia. We've always enjoyed reading pagan and family resources, but noticed most resources for pagans are northern hemisphere-focused. And while there are a few great resources around for those like us in the southern hemisphere, we realised there was still a space for more.

Our aim is to create content aimed at pagans; and pagan families; of all ages. From time to time there may be some articles that are not appropriate for the younger kids, these will have a disclaimer before the body of the article. We will do our best to convert dates to line up with the southern hemisphere (where appropriate) so that you don't have to. We welcome contributions from the community and if we do our job right we'll be creating a newsletter that we would appreciate reading.

For those who don't want/can't afford to pay for the seasonal newsletter, some of the articles will be making their way to our blog section (southernlightnewsletter.com/blog). We'll also be posting other content in our blog that won't exist in the newsletter, so make sure to keep up with both!

If you want to give us some feedback, contribute to the newsletter or just get in contact generally we would love to hear from you. Either contact us through the website at southernlightnewsletter.com/contact or send us an email at team@southernlightnewsletter.com

Happy reading,
The Holly and The Ivy



For information on how to get future newsletters please see details on the back page.

Up & Coming

Pagan holidays for the season

Here is a brief list of holidays for the season with dates for the southern hemisphere. Please let us know if there is a pagan festival you celebrate in the southern hemisphere that is not on here.

*

September 21-22

The spring equinox. Known as Ostara on the wheel of the year and by other names as well it is a time of day and night in balance. Associated with new life, beginnings, fertility and love.

*

October 14

Sigrblot, the first day of the Summer in the old Icelandic calendar (date adjusted for the southern hemisphere). In many of the Nordic countries this was a time for sacrifice to Odin but in Iceland it was important agriculturally.

*

October 31/November 1

Beltane, also known as May Day in the northern hemisphere. This time of year is celebrated around the world under different names. Associated with the fey or faeries, love, fertility, reproduction and acknowledgment of the coming summer.



The Altar

An in-depth look at a single correspondence for the season

Candles

Versatile. Warm. Alive. Friendly.

The very first spell that you cast was most likely the annual wish that you conjured upon your birthday candles.

- Veronica Varlow, enchantedlivingmagazine.com



A small flame, embodied in a wick, slowly fed by a flammable (but not *too* flammable) material. This simple, humble form of controlling fire has found its place in spiritual rituals the world over. It is easy to see why – from the controlled flame slowly combusting the material, and sending it up to the heavens, there are several aspects of the humble candle to love and use.

There's a couple of common threads in the various spiritual uses of candles. Firstly, that the light from the candle represents something spiritually "greater". Secondly, the smoke gently rising away from the candle can be seen/used as a way for your thoughts, prayers, intentions etc. to be carried up and away for you.

Me personally, I've always been enthralled with candles. Even without a particular spell or ritual in mind, having a candle burning every moment I can brings me a simple, unwavering joy.

Spiritual Candle Usage

Since very early on in Christianity, candles have been used to represent the light of Christ. As such, they're in use as a mainstay on altars, and also are used as part of particular religious events.

Judaism has the nine-branched candelabrum, the Hanukkah menorah, in use during the holiday of Hanukkah. Candles are also often used before the holidays of Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot.

In various religions and spiritual beliefs, the lighting of a candle can be used as a sign of respect. It's not uncommon to see people lighting candles in respect and remembrance towards someone who has recently passed away. Likewise for ancestors who you may never have met personally, a candle can be used to meet and talk with them spiritually.

In Wicca, candles can be coloured to represent many things. Most frequently, coloured candles are used for representing the cardinal directions – yellow for Air in the East, red for Fire in the North (at least, for us in the Southern Hemisphere given its direction towards the Sun), blue for Water in the West, and green for Earth in the South. A white or purple candle is also frequently used to represent Spirit, placed in the center of the other candles.

This idea of using colour for representing certain magic intentions is often referred to as “Colour Magick”, and is not only used for use around a magic circle. For example, a spell of healing may make use of a light-blue candle, a brown candle may be used for grounding, or an orange candle may be utilised for ambition and enthusiasm. (If you're quite interested in this manner of using candles, a simple internet search for Candle Colour Magick will get you well on your way.)

Colour Magick is not the only way to make use of a candle though. As mentioned at the start of this article, candles are also frequently used as a vehicle for carrying your intentions out into the wider world. One method for this is to write your intention on a small piece of paper, and burn it with the candle. Another method is to simply focus on the candle while concentrating on your intention.

Ideas for your own use

If you'd like to start using candles in your own rituals, great. As above, there are already some well-defined starting points depending on your own particular spiritual beliefs.

However, if you're a more enterprising sort of individual who enjoys creating your own rituals, it's very easy to integrate a good candle or two into what you're doing. The most obvious starting points come from looking to current uses for inspiration.

A candle can always find its way to a central part in a ritual involving sending your intentions out into the wider world – let its rising smoke or heat carry it for you.

Likewise, the light being emitted from a simple, physical body, can easily be used in rituals involving deeper meanings, hope, or finding your way.



Get creative with this – a candle could be performing double-duty in some rituals. For example, a ritual based around discovering your inner divinity, and gaining strength to share it with the world could very easily be represented through the lighting of a simple candle, and ruminating on its warmth, light, and wisps of smoke dispersing into the environment without hesitation.

One idea I see quite persistently is that if you're using a candle as an integral part of spellwork, it's ideal to let it burn itself out completely. This makes sense to me – after all, if you're partway through a job for someone, I'm sure you wouldn't appreciate being snuffed out partway through your work for them *by* that same person. This is important to keep in mind though – a bigger candle *may or may not* give greater results depending on the spell, but if you don't think you can be concentrating on your spell, your intentions, and that multi-day candle the whole time you're awake and it's still burning, it might be wiser to step the candle size down a notch and burn it through, rather than using a bigger candle and having to snuff it out.

A candle flame is a little life. Treat it as such, work with it in respect, and I have no doubt you'll find it works hard with you too.



The Playroom

Something for the young ones

What's Spring?

What marks the season, and why don't some places get it.



Spring! Baby animals, plants coming to life, birds and bees return after the winter. Its a wonderful time of the year. However, spring doesn't come everywhere on this jewelled earth. We only get the classic four seasons in parts of the world known as the mid-latitudes. There are two other areas of the world in both the northern and southern hemisphere. These are known as the tropics and the polar regions. Neither of these areas get a true “spring”.

In the tropics, which forms the belt around the middle of the earth, there are 2 distinct recognised seasons known as wet and dry. These are dictated by the rainfall and depending on where you are in the world you can experience two wet and two dry seasons in a year. Other areas of the tropics get just one wet and one dry season a year. In the polar regions, the top and bottom of the globe, there is summer and winter, dictated by the sun and amount of daylight. In the polar summer the sun does not set and in the polar winter the sun does not rise. This is due to the tilt and rotation of the earth around our Sun – for a more thorough discussion see the 2020 winter edition of Southern Light Newsletter freely available on the website.

Thanks to the Earth's tilt, in the mid-latitudes we can experience summer, autumn, winter, and spring for roughly three months of every year. These four seasons can be followed in two different ways. An astronomical season is based on the sun's movements. The season falls between the relevant equinox (day of equal day and night) and solstice (longest day/longest night). In the case of spring this would be between the spring equinox around September 21st and the summer solstice around December 21st. A meteorological season however is based on the temperature. In the case of spring it is the rising temperature that defines it and in Australia the official start of the season is September 1st and ends on November 31st.

So what does spring represent in the areas of the world that experience it? It is often associated with new life, rebirth, fertility of plants and animals, flowers and the earth waking up. What does spring represent to you?

Kids Herbal

Dandelion

“I am born as the sun,
but then turn into the moon,
As my blond hairs turn
Greyish-white and fall to the ground,
Only to be buried again,
Then born again,
Into a thousand suns
And a thousand moons.”



- Hymn of the Divine Dandelion, Suzy Kassem, 1993-1994

People love dandelion (mostly), and dandelion loves people. Every time you pick a dandelion and blow it to make a wish you help to spread its seeds on the wind, ensuring it continues to thrive. In turn the dandelion can help us to thrive too.

Dandelion is best known as a weed and the bane of neat lawns, but like many weeds it is actually a good friend to humans, providing food, medicine, beauty, and entertainment in the form of wishes and garlands. Here we will discuss collecting and using dandelion safely around the home – be sure to do this with an adult the first time.

Gathering

Gathering dandelion is an enjoyable task that comes with a sense of proud accomplishment, with the added bonus of often not even having to leave the yard! It is important that you know how to identify dandelion correctly and how to make sure the ones you are gathering are safe to do so.

I cannot stress enough. Never gather (to consume) any plant that has been sprayed with pesticide or herbicide. If in doubt, don't pick it. It is also best to gather plants for consumption away from areas of pollution, such as roadsides and water run-offs.

Dandelion, a common fixture in many lawns and gardens, is easiest to identify when its going to seed (see above picture), but to make sure you have the right plant: The flowers are a golden yellow with hundreds of tiny petals radiating out from the centre. The leaves grow in a basal rosette (all growing out from a single point on the ground) and are deeply lobed, like teeth. The leaves are soft and hairless. The stem that holds the flower grows from the centre of the leaves. Dandelions are often small, but if the conditions allow they can grow 30cm across and 30cm tall. The leaves and flowers are best gathered when young and the roots are best gathered in autumn.

Food

Now that you have gathered it, what do you do with your dandelions? The whole of the dandelion plant can be eaten and each part offers us a different flavours, textures and nutrients.

The flowers impart their wonderful sweet flavour when baked in bread, put in fitters, made as a tea, used in lemonade or simply eaten fresh.

The leaves, slightly bitter and sweet, are fantastic in a salad, made into a pesto (see below), thrown into an omelette, or sauteed with mushrooms and served on toast.

The roots flavour is rich, dark, and slightly bitter. It makes a yummy drink (roasting the roots until they are dry makes the flavour richer and darker). It can be used in making bitters or vinegar based drinks. They are good baked alongside other vegetables for a roast dinner too.

Medicine

The quintessential spring tonic, dandelion's medicinal uses are extensive and could be talked about for pages. However, here is a very brief summary of some.

Dandelion, due to its bitter flavours, improves liver function and increases the flow of bile from the gallbladder. This means that it will help improve digestion and mildly detox your digestive system, very useful after all the comfort food over winter.

Dandelion is also a diuretic. This means that, while it can make you pee more, its is useful for dealing with water retention and can help to lower blood pressure. It can also help to decrease swelling and inflammation.

Dandelion is mild sedative. Working gently it can reduce excitement, stress, and anxiety. Good for helping to calm kids after a very good, or a bad day.

Dandelion Pesto



Ingredients:

- ½ cup pine nuts
- 2 cups young dandelion leaves
- ½ cups olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1-2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- ¼ cup Parmesan
- Salt and pepper to taste

Put all the ingredients into a blender or food processor. Blend until mostly smooth, adding more oil if it is too thick.

Store in fridge for up to 3 days – though once tasted, unlikely it will last that long.

The Deck

For teens and those just getting started

What's a Pagan...?

The first part in our Paganism Overview series.

“Paganism Overview” is going to be a multi-issue series covering some of the basics around paganism, including a bit of a dive into specific pagan traditions. As such, it seems fitting for us to make the first issue focus on the fundamentals: What’s a pagan, and what’s paganism?



The history of the word

The word “pagan” can be traced back to the Latin word “paganus”, which was associated with regions beyond markers, or people who are rural/live in the country (as opposed to living within towns or cities).

As such, there’s a common line of thinking on the origin of the word Pagan and its modern meaning. The explanation usually goes along the lines of: The word “paganus” was used to denote those who lived on the outskirts of towns or cities. Thanks to these people being rural, Christianity did not permeate out to those people in the same way it did to those who lived within more populous towns and cities. Hence these “pagans” were not Christian.

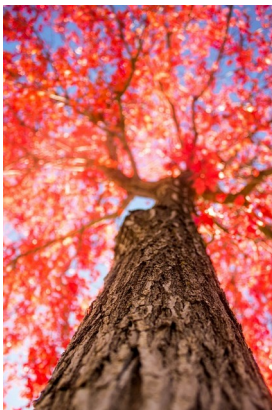
However, it’s likely the truth is a little more complicated than that – after all, isn’t it always? A big thorn in the above explanation is that “paganism” (as we think of it – worshipping of non-Abrahamic religions) was actually *common* in towns and cities.

In the fifth century AD, a time did eventually come when the word was commonly used to mean anyone non-Christian. This change in meaning (from its original “rural person” meaning) was particularly helped along by the sacking of Rome in 410 AD. To help the grieving populace of the Roman Empire understand why the Christian god did not protect the city like some believed the old gods would have, Augustine of Hippo (a.k.a Saint Augustine) wrote the book *Dē cīvitāte Deī contrā pāgānōs*, translated to English, *On the City of God against the pagans*. Among the several arguments and theories made within, he contrasts those who are physically citizens of earthly cities (e.g Rome), and those who are citizens of The City of God – a.k.a Christians. Those who aren’t Christians, then, are not citizens of The City – hence, they are “rural” to The City – hence, they are *paganos/paganus* – hence, eventually, “pagans”.

An interesting side-note is that, given the term that would eventually come to be known as “pagan” simply originally meant anyone non-Christian, then technically atheists are pagan too. Of course, in modern usage we wouldn’t use the word to describe atheists *nowadays*, but this tidbit is interesting to us nonetheless. Modern usage tends to not include atheism or agnosticism, or other non-Christian Abrahamic religions. But in other ways, “pagan” now encompasses more – including many religions that existed *before* the word Pagan was used in a religious sense in Ancient Rome, for example many pagans would argue the Ancient Egyptian religion falls under the paganism umbrella.

What does it mean to be pagan?

This question is a hard one to pin down. The main reason is because there isn’t one single “pagan religion”. Instead, the term pagan or paganism is used as an umbrella term – it covers a wide variety of specific religions and/or spiritual practices.



Let’s start with some commonalities. Pagan religions tend to (though do not always) have some of the following in common:

Respect or Reverence of nature: From full nature worship, to at least some implicit or explicit understanding that natural systems work pretty well without human interference.

Some semblance of Pantheism or Animism: Whether a full embracing of one of these philosophies or passing acceptance, there’s often beliefs around everything being a part of a single connected divinity, or otherwise a belief that more than just humans have a soul.

Drawing on past beliefs: Particularly for pre-Christianity regionally-based belief systems. On this note, there are some pagans who believe an adherence to the ancient ways is the only true way forward. There are others who believe that we should gain inspiration from the past, but use that inspiration to build and grow new religious systems just as humans have evolved over times in other ways. Neither belief is “incorrect”, and there are various shades of grey too – but both of them have the same starting point: beliefs originally rooted in the past.

As can be expected, there are also plenty of ways that various pagan religions are *not* like others. For example, beliefs around what happens to your “soul” after you die are incredibly varied, as are beliefs around how much you as an individual can have an impact on the world around you.

There are so many options. Where do I begin?

If you haven't started on a particular pagan path, yet you would like to, it can be daunting to take that first step. After all, there are so many different religions, how will you know which one is right for you?

The answer is to start small. Look up details of as many religions as you can – for example, Heathenry (a.k.a Germanic Neopaganism), Wicca, Druidry, or Eclectic Paganism. See if any of them “gel” with you.

Another option (if you're a more extroverted person) would be to find a pagan group near you that has meet-ups or online chat rooms you can join. Listen in on conversations from people of all different religions, and once again see if the beliefs of any particular group of people sound “right” to you.

Once you've decided on one, start delving deeper. See if there are any groups or chatrooms for people of that *specific* religion that you can easily join. Talk with people. Learn through books and online resources.

At a certain point, if it still gels well with you, you can start doing some rituals – either on your own or as part of a group.

It's just as important to remember that even if you get quite involved with a particular religion, if at a certain point you start realising it's not for you after all, there's no shame in taking a step back and starting a new search. It's not “losing years of life”, it's continuing to grow as a person. Some people may stay involved with the first religion they ever got involved with, but if that's not you, that's perfectly fine.

In future articles of this “Paganism Overview” series, we'll delve into specific religions, and other more generic concepts to do with the wider neo-paganism movement. Stay tuned.



The Lounge

For the adults and parents in the room

Pagan parenting

Religion and Magic in the preschool years



Religion can be complex at any stage of life, particularly a non-mainstream religion. For young children religion is simple, it is what your parent says and this is perhaps why one of the more challenging times is parenthood. Not only are you thinking about your own beliefs and applying them to your life but you face many paths in how you might influence the beliefs of another person, your child.

There are several ways to approach religion and how you might integrate it into your family/child's life, below is a few followed by the pros and cons of intergrating a pagan religion into a child's life.

Do Nothing

Your religion is just that, your religion. There is no need to share your religion with anyone if you don't want to or feel it might be better not to. You can practice in your own time and allow your kid to decide what they believe about the world and when.

Small doses

Maybe you want to share your religion with your kids but don't want to feel like you are pushing them one way or another. This could be because they have asked you, you want to pass on the morals and ethics of your religion, or just because you like sharing. Sharing small doses of what you believe could be the way forward for you.

This could be in the form of mentioning to your kid what holiday it is and that you observe it and why. Or maybe when they ask you why the stuff turns green in spring you could respond with both the science and with myths of your path, for example the myth of Ostara waking and bringing spring to the land as she walks it. Pointing out that it is what you believe and that other people might believe different things is a good way of building tolerance and letting them know they are free to make their own decision on these points.

Partial involvement

This approach adds to the above, maybe instead of just mentioning the holiday but privately observing it you could get your kid/s involved in the celebration but stop short of involving them in ritual (if that is a part of your path). Maybe you all make a family feast, craft activities or do a nature walk. If you have the time and desire you could treat the time around a holiday (Yule for example), much like the general population treat the time around Christmas. Take some time off, play games, throw a party.



In this approach you may also dive deeper into your beliefs and how you see the world through the eyes of your faith and how that integrates with the reality of the modern world. Seeing and functioning in two different realities at once is something that seems to come naturally to kids.

Full integration

This approach would once again build on the above and might be familiar. It could involve formal worshipping and teaching sessions in which kids are involved or expected to participate in. Through discussions on your beliefs and how the world, people and experiences are viewed through that lens. The kids could be involved in the ceremony and ritual of the practice and integrated more into holiday celebrations.

This approach is not overly common in pagan religions as for many pagans who came to the path at a later stage it can remind them of the religion they were born into. It can however open up great discussion around your personal path and help kids find their own.

The Pros and Cons

There are many good things about raising a child in a pagan religion. Many of the religions we think of as pagan are nature-centred, not only are children very aware of nature but through paganism a sense of reverence can be instilled and care of the earth becomes second nature.

As many of the pagan religions are nature-centred children raised within a pagan framework often learn about the weather, seasons, animals, plants, stars, planets, sun, moon, how the earth works, and the interconnection of everything before many kids their age. It also allows their faith, to easily move around the globe, for those who follow the wheel of the year Yule is always in winter as Litha is always in summer, no matter where you are/which hemisphere you're in.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits of introducing pagan beliefs to kids is teaching tolerance. You don't need religion to do that of course, but it can help. Deities from many cultures and stories from around the world show children the diversity of belief and helps them understand that people everywhere believe different things, and that is just fine. Ideologies, like ecosystems, are healthiest when they are diverse. This applies to religion.

Like everything though there are downsides. In raising your kids within a pagan framework you do run the risk of bullying and stigma which has unfortunately not completely disappeared. You may have to field questions about why you don't celebrate Easter and Christmas when everyone else (society as a whole) does and perhaps have those moments at family gatherings where the kids announce to your catholic grandparents that they are pagan....

It is important to take the direction that suits your family, which could be a combination of the outlines above, or maybe a progression through them as they show interest.

Magic

Introducing magic or magick to kids is easy, as much of their own world is filled with it. Creating an understanding of the difference between the magic of Hollywood and the magic that exists in our world is a bit trickier and sometimes best left until they are not a young child. Spell work and ritual work are just that, work. Doing rituals and casting spells takes time and energy and should only be attempted once the person is able to perform basics such as grounding and centering, let alone sitting still for more than 5 minutes at a time. With that said you could



certainly introduce the concept of a ritual circle to a younger audience in a fun way. A popular kids ritual is the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Chocolate Rabbit, fun for everyone and silly enough to keep the kids entertained. Magic can also be introduced through mythology and stories of the fey, elves and spirits.

Where to draw the line

Ultimately, everyone's beliefs are their own and a time will come when your children decide their own path. A couple of things to keep in mind:

- *It is always important to not force a religion on anyone and there is no reason to object to anyone's personal path if it is not hurting anyone.
- *Lead by example and show interest and tolerance of your child's spiritual path.
- *Consent above all else, do not force anyone to do something they don't want to. This is personal beliefs not instructing young kids on physical safety.

Hopefully you found this article to contain something that you can take away and apply to your life and family.

Blessed Be

The Kitchen

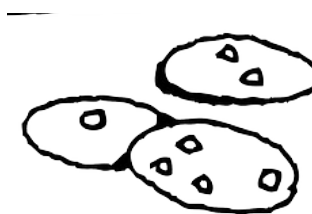
Recipes for the season

Oat Cakes

These are a favourite in our house, fresh from the oven spread with cheese, honey or butter. They are a savory oatcake that has its roots in Scotland. We like using rolled oats for the texture it gives and adding raisins makes it festive but you can leave them plain and swap the rolled oats for oat meal if you prefer. You can also swap out the wheat flour for gluten free oatmeal to make them gluten free.

Ingredients

- *1 cup rolled oats
- *1 cup whole wheat flour
- *40 to 60g of raisins, chopped fine
- *1 teaspoon of salt
- *1 large pinch of baking soda
- *1/2 cup softened butter, cubed
- *Some warm to hot water on hand



Method

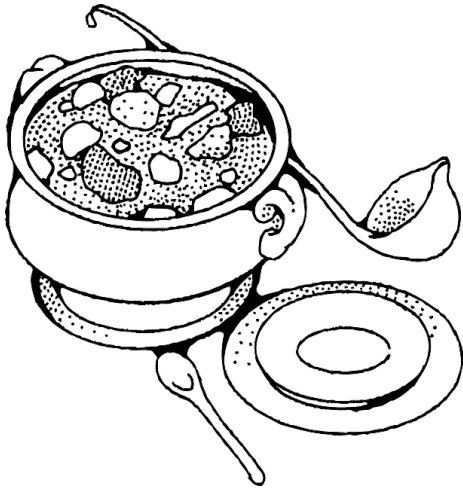
1. Pre-heat oven to 180C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Mix together all dry ingredients.
3. Rub in the butter to the dry mix with your fingers until it is all crumbly.
4. Add enough water to make a thick dough.
5. Turn out the dough on to a floured surface and make an even thickness.
6. Cut out desired shapes from the dough, put on tray and then into the oven for 20-30mins or until golden brown.
7. Transfer to cooling rack and allow to cool for 2-3mins then serve (or allow to cool completely and store in an air-tight container for up to a week).

Enjoy!

Forage Soup

This was a recipe we came up with to utilise the plants from a neighbour's paddock. It is a great spring cleansing soup and a good activity for the family. When gathering plants make sure you correctly identify them and your sure they haven't been sprayed/polluted. It is best to use fresh ingredients and young leaves. All plant quantities are a guide but play with what you have.

Ingredients



- *2-4 cups nettle leaves (before flowering)
- *1-2 cups dandelion leaves
- *1 cup knotweed (chopped fine or it clogs the blender)
- *2 cups mallow leaves
- *1 cup dock leaves
- *1-2 cups mushrooms sliced or diced
- *2-4 cloves of garlic chopped fine
- *½ teaspoon salt
- *¼ teaspoon black pepper
- *1.5L water

Optional

- *200g chicken or bacon
- *200g diced potato for extra body
- *150ml thickened cream
- *1 tablespoon butter or oil to saute mushrooms
- *750ml stock (in this case add only 750ml plain water)

Method

1. Saute mushrooms and in butter or oil with half the salt and pepper, if using meat add before mushrooms to seal and then cook together until meat is done (if using). Set aside for later.
2. Add water, stock, garlic, remaining salt& pepper, potato and all leafy greens to a pot. Bring to boil then reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat.
3. Blend everything in the pot to desired consistency, we like ours mostly smooth. Add mushrooms and meat to the pot and return to the heat for a further 3-4 minutes. Add cream and cook for another couple of minutes then take off heat.
4. Serve with warm crusty bread.

Enjoy!

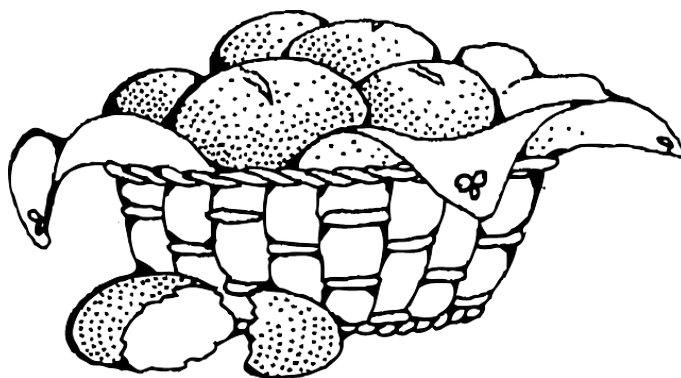
Sweet Fruit Buns

Ingredients

- *60g raisans
- *60g currents
- *50g grated orange peel
- *400g flour (the higher the gluten the fluffier the bun)
- *60g butter
- *60g raw sugar/brown sugar taste dependant
- *10g dried yeast
- *2 pinches of salt
- *200ml milk
- *1 egg
- *2 tsp cinnamon
- *1 tsp nutmeg
- *½ allspice
- *½ clove

Optional Glaze

- *150g of sugar
- *150ml water
- *Juice of 1 orange



Method

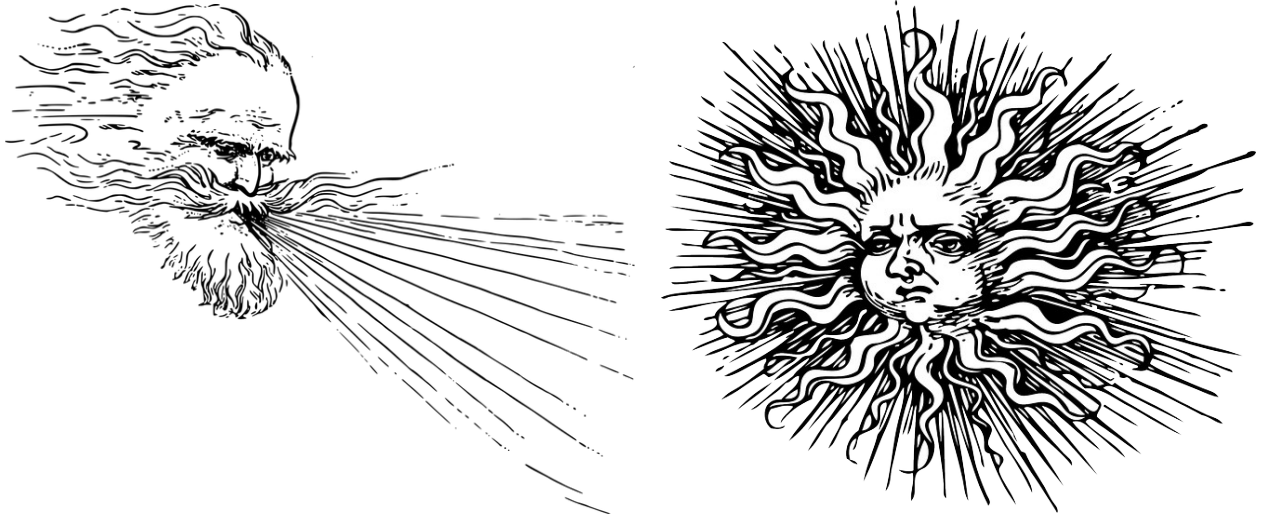
1. Re-hydrate the dried fruit by covering it with boiling water and letting sit for 15mins. Drain and mix through the orange peel.
2. Place remainder of ingredients (excluding glaze) into a bowl and mix thoroughly to combine.
3. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead well for 10mins, mixing in the fruit mix at the end and making sure it is spread evenly out.
4. Put in an oiled bowl covered with a damp tea towel or plastic wrap and leave in a warm spot.
5. When doubled in size turn out onto a floured surface and cut into 12 even portions. Roll each of these into a ball and place on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Cover with a tea towel leave in a warm place to double in size. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees C while you wait.
6. Once doubled in size place in the oven and cook for 15mins then reduce the heat to 170 degrees C and bake for a further 15mins until golden brown. Make the glaze while they bake.
7. Heat glaze ingredients in a saucepan until the sugar has dissolved and starting to boil, reduce to a simmer for a further 5mins or until thick and syrupy.
8. Take the buns out and while hot brush with glaze. Set the buns aside to cool.

Enjoy!

The Session Room

Here you'll find song, story and poem

This short story, said to be one of Aesop's fables, brings to mind spring. The powerful winds of spring and the unexpected warmth after winter keeps you on your toes.



The Wind and the Sun

A dispute once arose between the wind and the sun, which was the stronger of the two, and they agreed to put the point upon this issue, that whichever soonest made a traveller take off his cloak should be accounted the more powerful.

The Wind began, and blew with all his might and drove a blast, cold and fierce and wild as a storm; but the stronger he blew the closer the traveller wrapped his cloak around him, and the tighter he grasped it with his hands.

Then broke out the Sun. With his welcome beams he dispersed the vapour and the cold; the traveller felt the genial warmth, and as the Sun shone brighter and brighter, he sat down, overcome with the heat, and cast his cloak on the ground.

Thus the Sun was declared the conqueror, and it has ever been deemed that persuasion is better than force; and that the sunshine of a kind and gentle manner will sooner lay open a poor man's heart than all the threatening and force of blustering authority.

This is a well known Australian folk song worth a sing and a laugh on a spring evening.

Drover's Dream

One night when travelling sheep, my companions lay asleep
There was not a star to illuminate the sky
I was dreaming, I suppose, for my eyes were nearly closed
When a very strange procession passed me by
First there came a kangaroo, with his swag of blankets blue
A dingo ran beside him for a mate
They were travelling mighty fast, and they shouted as they passed
"We'll have to jog along, it's getting late"

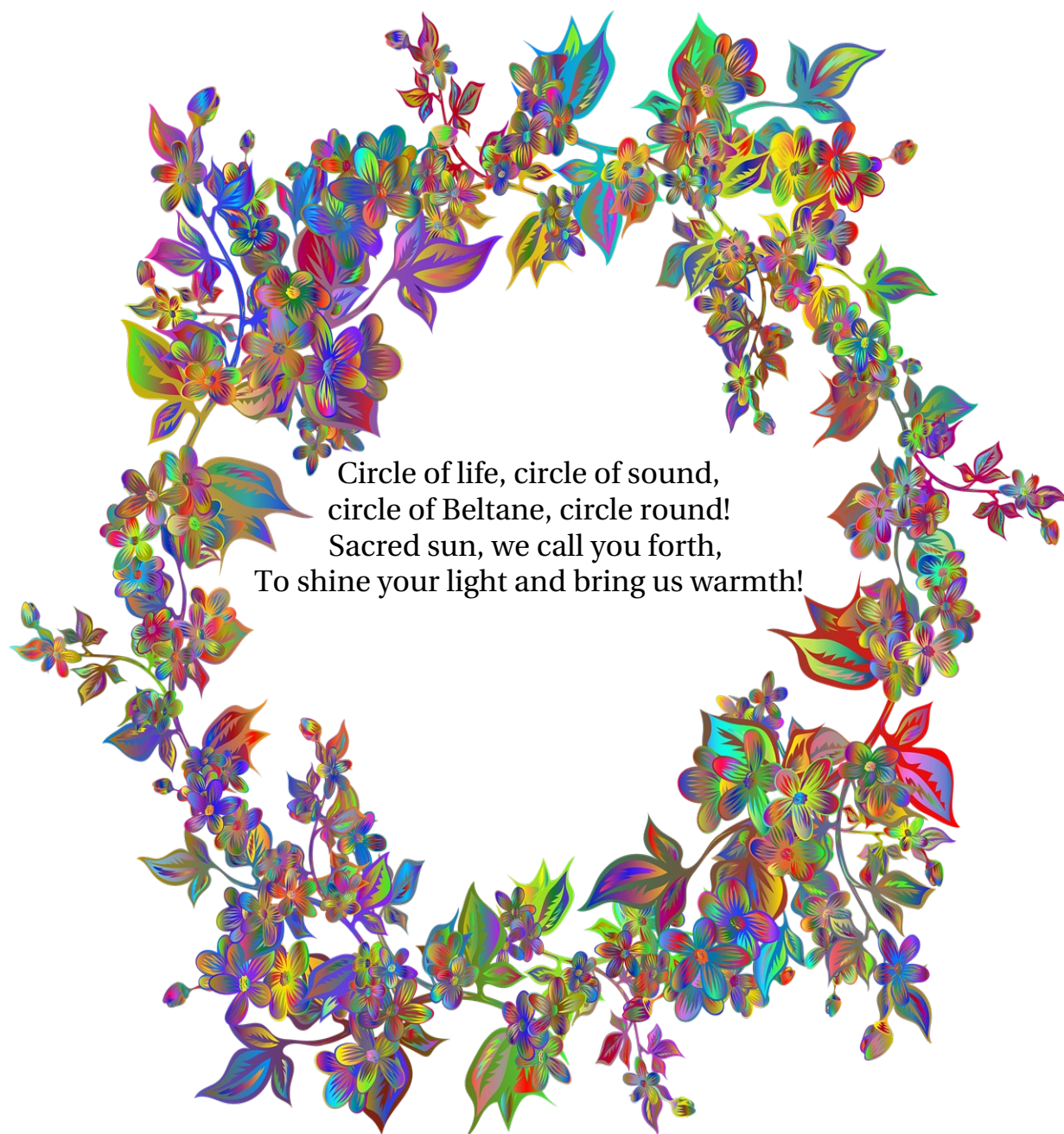
The pelican and the crane, they came in from off the plain
To amuse the company with a Highland Fling
The dear old bandicoot played a tune upon his flute
And the native bears sat round them in a ring
The drongo and the crow sang us songs of long ago
While the frill-necked lizard listened with a smile
And the emu standing near with his claw up to his ear
Said, "Funniest thing I've heard for quite a while"

The frogs from out the swamp, where the atmosphere is damp
Came bounding in and sat upon the stones
They each unrolled their swags and produced from out their bags
The violin, the banjo and the bones
The goanna and the snake, and the adder wide awake
With the alligator danced "The Soldier's Joy"
In the spreading silky oak the jackass cracked a joke
And the magpie sang "The Wild Colonial Boy"

Some brolgas darted out from the tea-tree all about
And performed a set of Lancers very well
Then the parrot green and blue gave the orchestra its cue
To strike up "The Old Log Cabin in the Dell."
I was dreaming, I suppose, of these entertaining shows
But it never crossed my mind I was asleep
Till the Boss beneath the cart woke me up with such a start
Yelling, "Dreamy, where the hell are all the sheep?"

Beltane Circle and Sun Calling Chants

By Selena Fox



Circle of life, circle of sound,
circle of Beltane, circle round!
Sacred sun, we call you forth,
To shine your light and bring us warmth!

The Table

Seasonal craft activities for the family

Naturally Dyed Eggs

A great spring activity that creates beautiful eggs that can then be eaten in rainbow fun or hidden for a sugar free egg hunt. White eggs are best for dying so we used duck eggs as we were unable to source other white eggs at the time.

What you'll need:

*Spices/fruit/vegetables/herbs that dye well. We used onion skins(brown and red), hibiscus, blueberry, turmeric, coffee and paprika.

*Eggs, as many as you want

*Water, plenty of

*White vinegar as a mordant

To make:

1. Scrub the eggs clean and hard boil them, to avoid cracking put the eggs in cold water first and bring to the boil and transfer to a cold water bath once finished to stop the cooking. Using vinegar in the water during the boiling will help with the dye colour later.
2. Make the dye bath by adding 1 ½ cups of water and dye material (2 tablespoons for spices/powders, 4 tablespoons for dried herbs and 1 cup chopped fruit or veg) to a saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to a simmer for 10-15 minutes then remove from heat, strain and allow to cool before adding 1 tablespoon of vinegar. Make a separate dye bath for each colour. Enjoy experimenting here.
3. Once ready add the eggs and allow to sit until the desired colour is achieved, anywhere from a couple of minutes to a few hours, check every so often until you get the desired colour. Remove from dye bath and put on a cooling rack to drain.
4. Now they are dry you can have your fun, rubbing some oil on the eggs will give them a nice sheen or you could paint them if you used blown eggs for a keepsake.



Basic Flower Wreath

Super easy to make and endless fun for kids this is a basic flower wreath that works well with daisies, lavender, dandelions or similar. Ideally you want a fairly strong stem for a flower that is thick enough for you do slice a small section long ways with a knife or fingernail.

What you'll need:

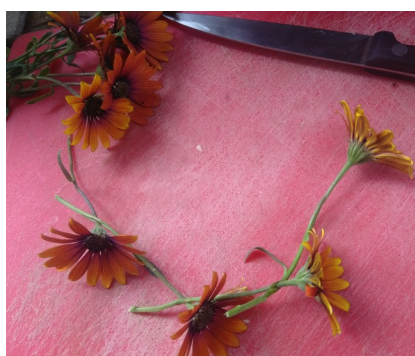
*Flowers with a stem between 5cm and 10cm long depending on how far apart you want the flowers.

*Knife and chopping board (if you don't have fingernails)

To make:

1. Collect your flowers and make all the stems roughly the same length
2. Take you first two flowers and, where you would like your next flower to sit, cut a small slit along the stem of each of them so that you can open it slightly making it look like a button hole.
3. Take one flower and thread it through the hole you made in the stem of the other flower. Pick another flower and make a slit in the stem. Repeat until the chain of flowers is as long as you want.
4. Take your last flower and make an extra long slit in the stem, it needs to go over the head of the first flower. Slide the last flower through the hole in the previous one and then gently open the stem of the last flower and put the head of the first flower through.

Done!



DIY Birdseed Ornaments

Now that spring is here, attract the birds to your garden by hanging some of these up. It is best to avoid sweeteners, but maple syrup should be fine; please don't use honey and avoid corn syrup. Also, these contain gelatin which may melt in the heat, so hang these in the shade.

What you'll need:

*Birdseed, enough to make several ornaments. A mix without large seeds works best

*Gelatin, 1 pack with amount of water as directed on pack

*Shortening, 2-3 tablespoons

*Cookie Cutters

*Spray oil

*Baking paper

*Straw

To make:

1. Make up gelatin as directed on pack. Set aside.
2. Mix the birdseed and shortening together in a bowl and pour in the gelatin. Mix well.
3. Spray the inside of the cookie cutters and put on baking paper. Press in the birdseed mixture to fill the cookie cutter.
4. Make a hole need the top using a straw. Wiggle the ornaments out of the cutters and put on the baking paper.
5. Put in the fridge to chill for 2-3 hours. When set take them out, thread string through them and hang in the garden in the shade.

A Note on Future Newsletters and Supporting Us

Felt like getting access to our newsletter? Maybe wanted to show us additional support as well?

Southern Light Newsletter is run entirely in the spare time of its creators, but we hope it can become a focus in our lives. So we decided that it would be primarily run through Patreon.

It's important to point out that some of our lowest membership tiers are all that's required to get the digital or print version of our newsletter sent your way, but going with Patreon also allows us to offer you many other rewards for wanting to support us. Which we like, as if someone wants to support us by sending some of their hard-earned cash our way, we feel obliged to say thanks!

Our Patreon page can be found here: patreon.com/SouthernLightNewsletter
Spread the word. As always, we're also easily reachable through our Contact page if you want to talk about anything else with us.

Much love and blessed be,
The Holly and The Ivy