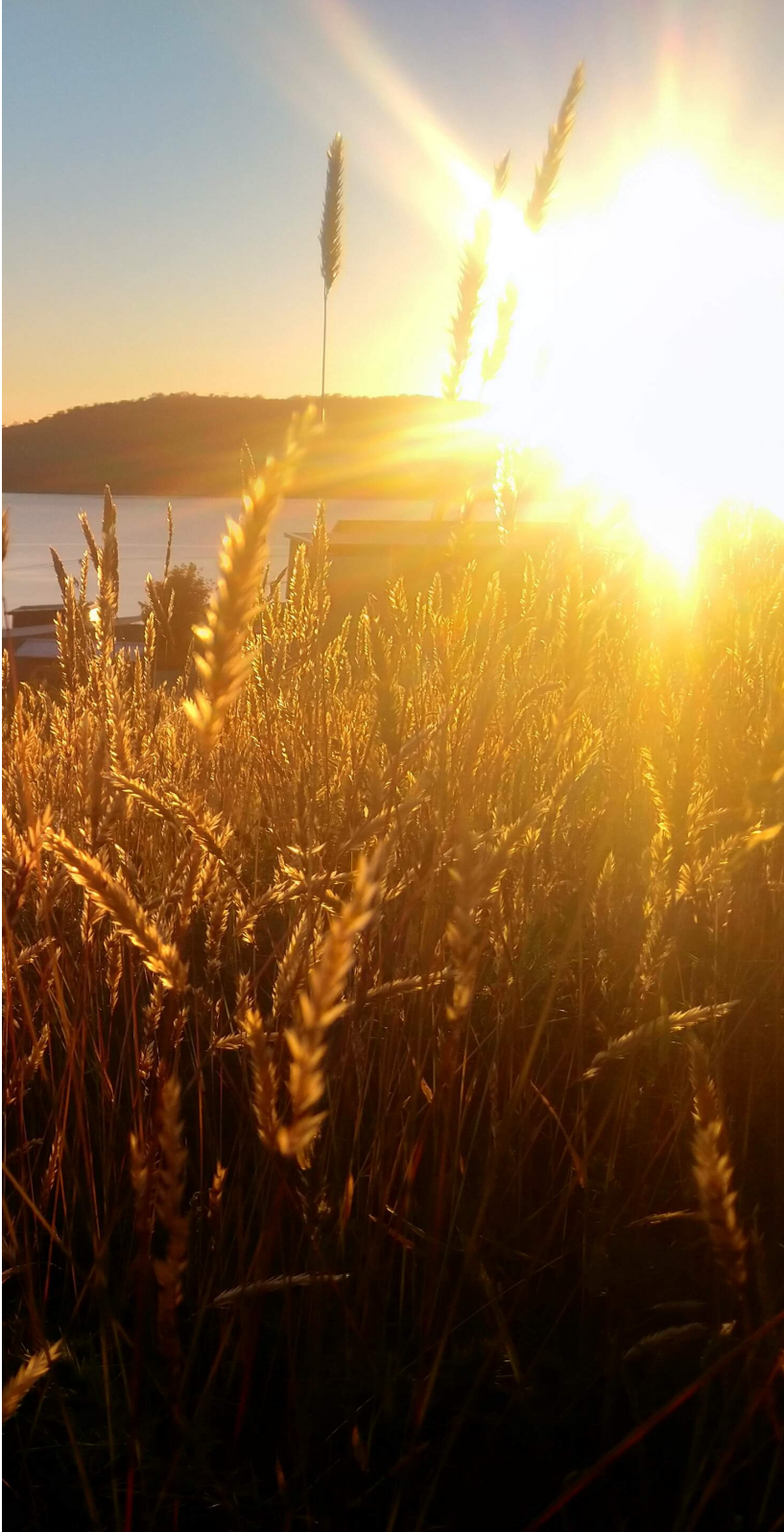


Southern Light Newsletter

Summer 2020/2021



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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.

*

December 21-22

The summer solstice. Known as Litha on the wheel of the year and by other names as well it is the time of maximum solar power, longest day and shortest night. From here the sun's power decreases. Associated with fire, the fey and/or faeries, growing things, fertility and early harvest.

*

*

February 1-2

Lughnasadh, also known as Lammas is marks the first of the harvest festivals on the wheel of the year and is an acknowledgement of the coming autumn. The sun's power is fading and will soon be equal with night. Associated with the matchmaking, athletic competitions, trading and feasting.

*



The Altar

An in-depth look at a single correspondence

Bells

There's more to them than just how they look and sound.



Bells come in all shapes and sizes. Some have short, sharp sounds. Others, like large gongs, almost seem to go on forever. Still, they have some incredibly important uses, and can be an extremely useful tool for the magically- or spiritually-minded.

Some common bells and their uses

Let's quickly cover some types of large and small bells, and what they're used for.

Large bells

The sonorous tone ringing across the hills, city, or hamlet. Church bells, calling the faithful to their time of devotion, or declaring that now is the time to remember one who has recently left the world of the living.

Clock tower bells, being dutifully struck to inform the citizens that one hour has passed and the next has begun.

School bells, though not always as large as the former, still tended to be large bells housed in a school's own bell tower. Struck at particular times throughout the day to determine when classes were to begin, when breaks were, and when the school day was over.

Smaller bells

Sleigh bells/jingle bells were used to signify to others that the sleigh was in motion, and to take care not to get in the way. As such, if you were awaiting someone arriving, they were also a cheerful sound to listen out for.

Bicycle bells were (and are) used to inform pedestrians that there is something slightly bigger coming their way, that they may need to move out of the way for.

Altar bells are most commonly used in Catholic churches. Held in hand, they're often used to simply create joyful noise, and entice thanks for the Lord.

Hand bells were used for all kinds of things. Bigger hand bells could perform double-duty for any of the purposes listed before for the Large Bells, if a large one wasn't available. But they could also be used for everything from gently gaining peoples attentions for beginning meetings to performing musically as part of an orchestra.

For large and small bells alike however, they have one important common thread:

Calls To Action

Bells are used in *calls to action*, and for this they are well suited. The immediacy of the tone along with its drawn-out aftershock are incredibly hard for people to ignore. To wit, try striking a large bell in a crowded part of a modern city. The fact that bells aren't often used nowadays won't stop almost every child an adult from turning their head to make sure they're not missing something important.

Even when used musically, whether small jingle bells, or a large bell or gong struck once or twice as part of an orchestral piece, their sound draws us to them.

Their differences tend to be in their reception. Large bells tend to be reserved for more "serious" matters. Their calls to action tend to be things that people are expected to always pay attention to – the beginning of Church service, the passing of time in business-central cities, and to pay respect for the departed.

Perhaps that's also why tunes made with a succession of large ringing bells entices us so? A merry tune being made with such massive, commanding bells being an attractive juxtaposition in and of itself?

The calls to action for smaller bells tends to be less serious. Something to still pay attention to – e.g "watch out for the oncoming bike/sleigh", or "excuse me receptionist, I need some assistance" – but these calls to action tend to have a friendlier, "asking" energy, rather than the deep, "commanding" energy of larger bells.

Clearing energy

When using smoke isn't quite doing what you need it to do, some pagans find that bells work a real treat for getting rid of negative energy around the home. The kind of negative energy that truly seeps into the foundations and just doesn't seem to budge. This is using bells for something called "sound cleansing".

With all else being silent, the clear ringing sound of a bell can be very effective at removing this "sticky" energy.

~ The call to action ~

This kind of negative energy may already have proven itself quite adept at ignoring your wishes and attempts to be cleared away. If this is the case, you want a commanding call to action to "leave!"

One suggestion may be to find a decent-sized hand-bell with a deeper sound to it. Banishing energy mixed with this clear sign to pay attention to you may do the trick *very* nicely.

Invitations

You may have just finished banishing bad energy from your space, but what now? You can slowly charge it yourself with your own energy – and that’s certainly a valid option – but why not enlist some help instead?

Another common use for bells is as an invitation to friendly energy, or invoking spirits. Good energy can mix with your own, creating a space which is very inviting, yet still very “you”.

Friendly spirits may take the form of your own ancestors – why not enlist that help? If you know of any ancestors which were open to your practice or beliefs at all, as your own flesh and blood, they may be better poised than most to help you with creating your space, and assisting you in your working.

~ The call to action ~

Invite the good in, while ignoring the bad. Note that an invitation is just that: an invitation, not a command. Particularly when dealing with spirits, you want to ask in a friendly, inviting manner, and still be open to getting a “no” in return without prejudice.

Maybe a less persistent bell is better in this case. A bell with a calm, friendly energy, inviting that which you want to you, but still not so loudly that less-welcome energy or spirits catch on and decide to crash the party after all.

A small bell (or bells) are most likely the choice here.

Note: You can buy some bells online, but you won’t usually get a chance to hear them first, which carries a risk. What if that bell looks nice, but instead of the warm, friendly tone you were hoping for, you get a cold, almost-too-clear sound? This bell could certainly be used for something else instead – perhaps for clarifying and clearing up energy or a spell you’re about to do – but it might not fit with the friendly invitation purpose you’d intended.



If you’re planning on buying a bell, it’s better to see and ring it in person first, wherever possible.

Keeping them on your person

Though this is a less frequent use for bells, some people swear by a bell’s effects in their day-to-day life.

Don’t jingle bells make everything seem merrier? Doesn’t a random ringing of a small hand-bell make an otherwise mundane moment suddenly feel full of life?

There’s something undeniable about it. A random tinkling sound catches most people off guard, but I’ve never heard it and been unaffected by it, at least.

~ The call to action ~

Don’t get so worked up by the small stuff. Life is for living and enjoying, after all!

Carrying around a large bell all day would be a great workout, but not exactly practical. The friendly, almost giddy sound of a jingle bell or two, or just the tiniest of hand bells, wouldn't go amiss here.

In celebration!

A handfasting. A sabbat. A birthday. Celebration of the new or full moon. There are so many things throughout each and every year to celebrate.

Even with a year like 2020, focusing on the good stuff is *more important than ever*, not less. Why not use a bell to help keep the good times ringing-, err, rolling?

~ The call to action ~

Celebrate! Celebrate! Time for celebration!

This one is definitely a personal choice. But me, I feel that a nice large hand bell – or a larger hanging bell, if available – is a great idea. Something amazing is happening! People, rejoice!

Much like earlier in this article, when it was quickly discussed how large, tuned bells, rung in unison to create a merry tune is a beautiful juxtaposition given the large bells usual use for serious matters, a large bell with a deep, commanding tone, *somehow perfectly fits* with a great big celebration.

There's a bell for each occasion, and for each occasion a bell.

Don't be afraid to go out and try a few. Find some you truly connect to, and use them.

The bells will thank you for using them and letting their unique voices be heard far and wide!



The Playroom

Something for the young ones

The Summer Solstice

What does it mean?



Blessed Litha, the Summer solstice! On Litha each year, the Sun has reached the height of its power, and reaches as high in the sky as it ever will. From here on (until Yule – the Winter solstice), the Sun's power will slowly diminish – though we've yet to experience it's building heat.

Some people call the Summer solstice “midsummer”. This term largely has Christian origins, associated with the birth of St John the Baptist. In some regional calendars, the Summer solstice is actually in the middle of Summer. However, for most calendars used worldwide, the Summer solstice is either a few weeks after the beginning of Summer, or is actually used to *mark* the beginning of Summer.

To this day, at the Summer solstice, celebrations erupt worldwide. A central tenet in most of these celebrations is the use of fire, particularly in great bonfires or keeping a sacred fire burning throughout the day and night.

The Summer solstice lends itself well to a time of momentary reflection. In terms of gardening and agriculture, most of your planting should be done by now, and most of your harvesting should still be to come. Take a moment to enjoy the full, sunny days, and join in the festivities!

Kids Herbal

Lemon Balm



'Balm causeth the heart and mind to become merry'

- Avicenna

Heavenly smell, friend of bees, thrives on neglect. Lemon balm, like many plants in the mint family, has a reputation for taking over. If you don't want this to happen in your garden then a pot is the way to go.

Gathering

Lemon balm is a perennial plant that is part of the mint family. It has a square stem, bright green heart shaped leaves with a serrated edge and a strong lemon smell, small white flowers and growing from 20-50cm tall depending on conditions. When in flower it is often covered in bees. The leaves are used for food and medicine and they are best collected when not in flower and early morning before the sun is on it.

Use fresh or dry the leaves for later use. Either strip the leaves and air dry in a single layer in a shady spot or hang whole stems upside down in a cool shady area with good airflow and take the leaves off once dry.

Food

Lemon balm has a wonderful smell and taste and has a place in drinks, baked goods and savory dishes of all kind. It can be used instead of lemon if a less strong flavour or a herby lemon flavour is desired or in conjunction with lemon to enhance its flavour and smell.

Some ideas:

Put the leaves in lemonade, tea or punch to enhance it. Chop the leaves and mix with butter to bake lean meat and fish with. Add finely chopped fresh or dried leaves to a shortbread mix for a delicious summer treat.

Medicine

Lemon balm has a huge range of medicinal uses, and it's a medicine kids love. Here is a short summary of some medicinal uses below.

Lemon balm helps to relax the muscles and digestive organs of the body helping with muscle spasms and tummy cramps. This in turn helps to relax the person having it calming them down and reduce anxiety.

Lemon balm has been used topically to treat cold sores and as well as internally as a tea or capsule to help the body respond better to other viruses, this area of lemon balm's medicinal properties is continuing to expand.

Rubbing the leaves of lemon balm on your skin works as a mild insect repellent good for the spring and summer days. Test a small patch on an elbow or upper arm first and wait a few hours to see if you have a reaction, if not then rub away!

Honey Lemon Balm spritzer

Ingredients:

- *1/2 cup honey (a light honey is good here)
- *3 cups warm water
- *1/2 cup lemon juice (or lemon and lime)
- *1 cup lemon balm, lightly packed
- *(substitute mint leaves for a minty version)
- *lemon slices
- *2 cups soda/mineral water



Method:

1. In a jug mix honey and water until combined, add the lemon juice and mix well.
2. Crush lemon balm and add to the jug. Using a wooden spoon handle tap the lemon balm into the bottom. Add the lemon slices and refrigerate mixture until chilled.
3. Add 2 cups of soda/mineral water. Stir. Pour through a strainer into glasses and garnish with lemon balm leaves and lemon slices. Add ice for an extra refreshing drink.

The Deck

For teens, and others who are just getting started on their pagan journey

Paganism Overview - Eclectic

The path for when other paths seem to either not gel with you, or just seem too prescriptive for your tastes.



In our last issue (Spring Equinox 2020), we had the first article in our Paganism Overview series, “What’s a Pagan...?” In it, we explored some origins of the word itself, some simple definitions, and some advice on where to start – and how it all comes down to you.

In this part of our Paganism Overview series, we’re going to be exploring a path that many people take – particularly solitary witches or other solitary practitioners. That is, being “eclectic”.

What’s eclectic?

The word itself, “eclectic”, means something which is “composed of elements drawn from various sources”. For example, a song which is neither Rock, nor Country, nor Blues, but borrows from all of these genres to create something in its own right. You can of course dive right in and analyse it to pick out the individual parts which are Rock, vs the complementing parts from Country and Blues. But you could also just call the song an eclectic mix of genres.

It’s the same for people who would otherwise describe themselves as an eclectic witch, or eclectic pagan, etc. However it started for each individual person – whether coming originally from a strict doctrine or path, from an atheistic background, or always having picked and chosen beliefs and traditions as they grew up – these people now have a set of beliefs and practices which are an eclectic mix of beliefs and practices from, potentially, all over the world.

Similarly, like all people and their beliefs, “eclectic” isn’t an end-goal. Someone who currently has eclectic beliefs may maintain their eclectic beliefs until the day they die, or they may find after a while that a more specific belief system works for them after all.

All life is a journey, and this applies to our set of beliefs just as much as everything else.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As part of this article, we enlisted the help of a friend of ours. Someone who started off following the Wiccan path, but has since found her own way as an eclectic witch. What follows is our interview with her.

How would you describe your beliefs and/or tradition?

I would say eclectic. I believe in multiple Gods and Goddesses from different traditions, with many emerging as aspects of the one God and Goddess. I would describe it as earth based.

And what does your belief and/or tradition entail?

My belief entails recognising things that are happening in the natural world as part of the web to which we are all connected, and as such should do our best to help and support everyone around us. Placing good karma forward to others.

Does this fit within the wider, or more formal, Wicca framework/traditions? Or are your beliefs more eclectic in nature?

As I said before it is more of an eclectic nature, what works best for me may not for others and thats okay.

Do you practice magic work? If so, do you consider your magic work an integral part of your religious beliefs, or separate (if related), and why?

I believe everybody has some magic inside of them, so it isn’t a part of my beliefs as much as working with magic is exploring and becoming one with yourself.

Were your first spiritual beliefs in life similar, or has there been a bit of a journey to get to where you are today?

I have always believed that there was more to life. With help from friends I explored and researched to get where I am now.

How did you come across this particular set of beliefs/tradition? For example, were you introduced to it by someone, or did one bit of research lead to another until you found yourself where you are now?

I came across Wicca at a young age which I found interest in. Through my own natural growth I decided that it wasn't for me, and used bits and pieces to discover my own beliefs.

Do you practice by yourself, or as part of a group? Do you find it's easier to be solitary or part of a group?

I practice with myself at this time. I enjoy doing group rituals but at this time it isn't possible.

Each has its own benefits, like most things.

Is there any part of the "mundane world" that you feel is improved, or easier to deal with, through your practice?

Growing up with anxiety, I found that doing my practice helps me feel more connected to myself and others out there who could be of help. This means I find social situations and other gatherings a lot easier to deal with. It also brings a new layer to gardening, cooking, as you can embed magic and growth within these things, as well as making them delicious.

Is there a particular piece of your beliefs/tradition that you enjoy or appreciate most of all?

For me I enjoy communicating and knowing that I am not alone in the world. Another is candle magic, there is something about candles that just make you feel warm and seen.

Were you ever "In the Broom Closet"? What was your experience, and if you've "come out" since then, what was that like?

I haven't really come out. What I do in my private time is just that – private. There are those who know and those who don't, and that's okay.

What would you recommend to someone who's just beginning down this path?

It may sound cheesy but I recommend following your heart, make sure that what you're doing, you're doing it for you and for the right reasons. Don't worry if it seems like something isn't working the first time, everything comes to experience and learning.

Trust yourself and breathe.

What are some resources you've found that you'd recommend to others? Books, articles...

Everyone sees things differently, has different ideas of what they would like to learn. I would suggest research absolutely everything that you're even slightly interested in, and finding out where you fit. It's perfectly fine if you end up changing your mind halfway through, that's what learning is.

The Lounge

For the adults and parents in the room

Pagan Parenting

Religion and magic in the primary years



The primary years are when children start to really question what people have to say, particularly their parents. Hopefully this trend continues throughout their life but this is where it really begins.

This is a wonderful age, the world still holds an immense amount of magic for children but the questioning and analysing skills they start to develop allow for child and parent to have much deeper conversations and for kids to retain the information from those conversations. This new level of understanding is also where we start to see the lifelong moral conscience arise and the deep values that govern our children's lives in the most part. These can of course change but in many cases the late primary years are formative in this way, right before the upheaval of puberty.

In the first part of this pagan parenting series (see the Spring 2020 edition), we looked at different approaches you could take in raising a child pagan (or in a pagan household). Keeping those in mind, now might be a good time to touch on what a pagan childhood should and shouldn't be.

What a pagan childhood shouldn't be

Raising a child pagan or in a pagan household should not be to the exclusion of other spiritual paths. Kids are curious and that curiosity should be encouraged. After all it is through this curiosity coupled with exploration that many people find who they truly are. Children need to feel safe to question and explore, discuss and disagree. Feeling threatened and like one is being forced is often cited as a reason many pagans dislike their former religions and as a group we should remember the lesson of safety and inclusion. And a pagan childhood shouldn't be boring. Make sure the child is interested and that what you're presenting to the child is at their level.

What a pagan childhood should be

Ideally a pagan childhood should be filled with exploration, fun, magic, and celebration of nature and be full of parental support. Talk about dreams and encourage imagination, read mythologies and fairy tales but balance it all with science, history and reality. Teach the names of plants and the scientific uses for them, explore the stars through astronomy and astrology, give scientific explanations for nature alongside mythological and folk lore ones and model how to find the answer to questions you don't know.



Respect and inclusiveness are both natural and learned outlooks, and need to be encouraged. Respect of elders will hopefully lead to respect for ancestors as the child ages, an important tenant in almost all religions. Involve family and friends who come from different walks of life and have honest discussions with children. They should understand your path but also understand that not everyone believes the same thing and that is ok, model how a well adjusted adult behaves even when your beliefs aren't the same.

Oh and be patient... even when its stressful to be so.

Bringing religion in

During these years is often a good time to introduce religion if you haven't yet but intend to do so. It can be a good time to introduce altars and the concept of sacred space: We recently had an experience with one of our kids when we explained what a sacred space was and how you can use it, suddenly looking as though something had been clarified they said "oh, I have one of those". It turns out they had been using an area in the yard as sacred space but now had the words to describe it, and has since talked a lot about the concept. It can also be a good time to introduce honouring ancestors as many kids are now old enough to fully understand what honouring those who have passed on really means.

Differentiating grateful from thankful is a good way to bring in some discussion of religion. Being grateful for the everyday things is certainly a healthy way to live but being thankful implies that you are thanking someone or something for say the weather. Its a very simple way to introduce the concept of "the other", and can lead to further discussion of who it is you're thanking.

Aside from reading stories and open discussions, using art and craft can be a wonderful way to introduce pagan concepts and deities as kids are often ready for more advanced craft such as creating sculptures from salt dough or clay, dollies from harvest stems, garlands from plants and such that can play a practical role in celebrations.

Magic

During the primary school years the magic of a child's earlier years starts to change with their understanding of the world. This can be a good time to slowly bring in magic as it functions within reality or as adults see it. Understanding that magic isn't bangs and flashes and things flying from shelves can be a lesson hard learned.

Kitchen magic and garden magic can both be easy to introduce and appropriate for kids in this age range. Children can stir in love to mummy or daddy's coffee by adding cinnamon or if helping to make a pie for dinner can draw a symbol of house protection (such as a sigil) on the pie filling with a butter knife before the top is put on. They can plant seeds in the garden with you in the cycle of the moon or plant rosemary and lavender by the door.

Introducing the concept of the 4 or 5 elements as aids in magic or spirits of their own can also be done during this time as the elements are an integral part of many pagan celebrations and a constant in everyone's life. It is also made easier thanks to popular franchises such as Disney's Frozen universe.

A personal useful resource we have found for this age are the Elsie and Pooka stories by Lora Craig-Gaddis (<http://www.pookapages.com>). They follow a witch and her familiar through the seasons in the northern hemisphere and aside from being an entertaining read they walk a nice trail between the whimsical and the mundane life of a witch fitting nicely with this period in a child's life.

Regardless of how basic you want to introduce magic at this age, it is still best to leave spell work and the complexities of magic out for now as most children are either too young to fully appreciate its effects or too immature to be responsible for the magic they work at the moment.

In the next issue, we will look at the secondary years – talk then!



The Kitchen

Recipes for the season

Solstice Fruit Fizz

From recipes for a pagan soul

Delicious and oh so refreshing on a hot day, this is also the perfect Litha party drink and is kid friendly. Use soda or mineral water for a less sugary but still sweet and bubbly version.

Ingredients

- *400g cherries
- *4 nectarines
- *250g strawberries
- *300ml lemonade (or soda water)
- *6 lemon balm leaves
- *A few cherries and strawberries to serve
- *Ice cubes



Method

1. Remove seeds from cherries and nectarines, cut leaves off strawberries and wash fruit.
2. Juice the fruit reserving a handful of cherries and strawberries to serve. You could also use a blender if you don't mind a pulpy version.
3. Put in a jug with the lemonade/soda water, add the ice cubes, lemon balm and extra fruit.

Enjoy!

Yoghurt Bark

Scrumptious on a hot summers day, this frozen treat is a crowd-pleaser. Careful though, it can be a bit tough on the teeth. Pick a design and see what you can create!



Ingredients

- *Yoghurt (the thick Greek yoghurt works best but pick your favourite)
- *Food colouring, natural or artificial
- *Cake pan
- *Baking paper

Optional

- *Piping bags
- *Toppings such as choc chips, sprinkles, fruit pieces (chopped small)
- *Flavouring such as honey or spices

Method

1. Decide how many colours you want for your bark (we went with 3) separate the yoghurt into bowls and colour with a few drops of food colouring until you get the colour you want, add flavouring to the yoghurt now too if you want additional flavouring.
2. Cut baking paper to fit the bottom of your cake pan and either spoon the yoghurt onto the baking paper and spread, or place yoghurt into a piping bag if you prefer and create your design. Don't spread the yoghurt too thin.
3. Sprinkle on any toppings and place in the freezer for at least 4 hours or until frozen.
4. Before eating, take out of the cake pan and allow to defrost for a couple of minutes then break into pieces.

Enjoy!

Fire Cooked Fresh Vegetables, Fruit and Meat

The classic summer cooking is done on a BBQ and the naked flame of a fire symbolic of the fiery sun at its full strength. If you haven't tried these then change up your skills a little and have something new to put on the feasting table. The fruit and vegetables grilled are a hit with the kids as well as bringing out the sweetness and flavours they don't taste when cooked with other methods. Either cook on a BBQ or directly over a pit fire (always be careful when using fire as to not harm yourself or start a destructive fire).

What Grills Well?

This is a basic list of summer foods that grill well as-is, or with basic seasoning such as salt, pepper, herbs, honey and citrus juice, but really the sky is the limit.

Vegetables	Fruits	Meats
Capsicum	Pineapple	Fish
Zucchini	Mango	Shellfish
Asparagus	Bananas	Beef
Mushrooms (large best)	Peach	Venison
Onion	Nectarine	Kangaroo
Eggplant	Watermelon	Lamb
Carrots	Tomato	Pork
Artichokes	Figs	Chicken
Corn	Citrus	Goat

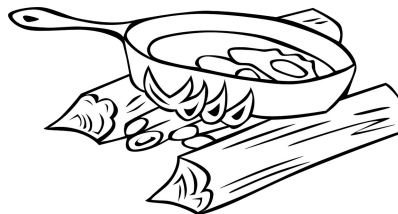
Some Grilling Tips:

Cut the food into big pieces/thick slices as small/thin stuff will be too flimsy.

You want a hot grill so the food is less likely to stick.

You can use oil but avoid it on fruit if its being served in a sweet dish or in a drink

Leave for a few minutes before checking the food as it will cook better this way and your food will be less likely to stick to the grill.



Enjoy!

The Session Room

Here you'll find song, story and poem

Summer Solstice Prayer

Unknown author



The Sun god reaches the height of his power,
As all of the plants are now in flower,
The longest day brings us strength and vigour,
As we pursue our aims and goals with rigour,
Love is fulfilled in the warmest days,
Blessed by the fertilising Sun god's rays,
Summer fruits ripen and fill us with pleasure,
In carefree moments we will always treasure,
All of nature is filled with sweet bliss,
Fruitfulness blesses each honey-soaked kiss,
Now is the time of abundance and light,
We rejoice in days so happy and bright,
Knowing that we grown in wisdom and might.

Colloquy of the Oak and Holly King

By Damh the Bard, this is the summer solstice version.

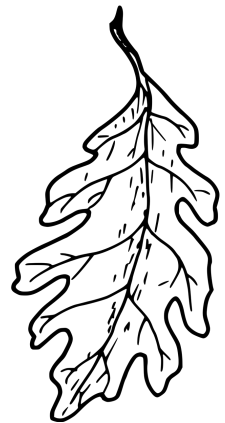
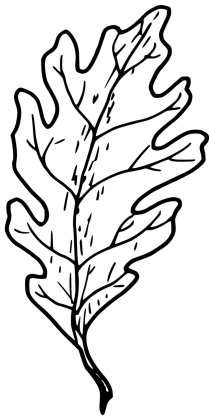
Cold and bright the solstice dawn breaks through the heol-stone gate,
Time out of mind the stones have stood marking the zenith and the nadir
of the sun's journey across the sky.
Cut by our ancient hands, with stone on stone they were shaped and pulled
from the earth's embrace,
Mile on mile moved and with magic raised upon this sacred land.
And at this time of the Solstice,
The Holly King waits within the Stones.
He waits in darkness, and stillness,
For the coming of the dawn,
The rising of the Sun,
And the footsteps of his Oaken-leaved brother.
Whilst the Awen.....is sung.

Brother, what is your name?

To which the Oak King replies,
Not hard to answer!
I am Hafgan, Lord of the Waxing Year,
I am the King of Oak,
I bring bud to leaf,
Bring life to the Earth,
I banish the cold of Winter,
And welcome the warmth of Spring,
And you my brother, what is your name?

To which the Holly King replies,
Not hard to answer!
I am Arawn, Lord of the Waning Year,
I am the King of Holly,
I strip bare your leaf-ridden trees,
I bring darkness to this land,
.....and peace,
I banish the warmth of Summer
And welcome the iciness of Winter.
Brother, where do you come from?

To which the Oak King replies,
Not hard to answer!
I come from Annwn, the Otherworld.
And at the time of your greatest power I am born into this world of Abred,
Called by the singing of the Birds of Rhiannon,
The warmth of my breath, and my seed, awakens the life within my Queen,
And the land is bathed in the beauty of our love,
Whilst Annwn is ruled by Winter and Ice,
So Abred blossoms, caressed by the heat of my gazing eye.
And you my brother, where do you come from?

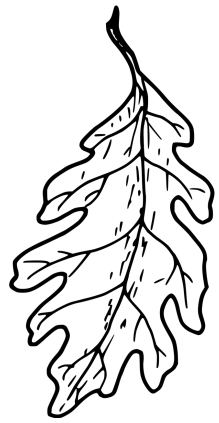
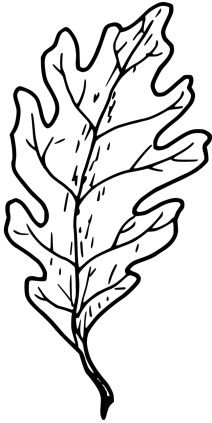


To which the Holly King replies,
Not hard to answer!
I come from Annwn, the Otherworld,
And at the time of your greatest power I am born into this world of Abred,
I ride on Rhiannon's horse to claim my throne,
Laughing with the Wild Hunt I ride through the night sky,
My cold breath will make way for the coming of the Cailleach,
And the land will be bathed in the beauty of ice and darkness,
Whilst Annwn blossoms, in your heat,
So Abred will have peace, reflection, and renewal,
Guarded by Orion of the Silver Belt.
Brother, what art do you perform?

To which the Oak King replies,
Not hard to answer!
I lift the saddened heart,
Bring life to death,
Shape the hidden green,
Give flight to birds and insects,
My Bards sing upon their wing,
My orchestra plays music within the wind
Life returns, and in that space where thought becomes dream,
Lovers walk upon the warm earth,
And lay under the stars, and the Sun, together.
And you my Brother, what art do you perform?

To which the Holly King replies,
Not hard to answer!
I give space to thought,
Bring renewal from death,
Bring rest to life, transformation to your crown of green,
I light the inner fire, and the hearth,
And quicken the heart of the beast,
My Bards are the stillness of the winter sky,
The reflection on the water,
The tears of the ice,
Life returns to that place where dreams are for gathered,
Lovers lie before the flickering fires in their homes,
And new life is nourished as my Lady strips bare the branches,
And lays her cloak across the land.
And I am here my Brother, to take my crown.

Then take this crown, but know this –
Even though you begin your rule,
My heat will grow,
My fire will ripen the fruit,
Turn the fields from green to gold,
And warm the oceans.
For although you take the power of light.
I retain the power of heat,
Until your Lady joins you,
At Samhain.



The Table

Seasonal craft activities for the family

Recycled Floating Candles

These are a great addition to an indoor party or an outdoor summer party where hanging real candles under trees is a recipe for disaster. They are also a great gift for kids that parents approve of.

What you'll need:

- *Old cardboard toilet paper rolls, save them for a couple of weeks.
- *Hot glue gun and the glue sticks for it.
- *Craft paint (we used acrylic) and brushes
- *Fishing line or other string to hang
- *An awl or needle for making holes
- *Flame-less candles

To make:



1. Using the hot glue make wax drips all round the rim of your toilet rolls at one end. We found that the most realistic effect was to do this 2-3 times allowing the glue to harden in between. Building the layers of wax drips gave them the depth that a candle develops.
2. Once you've done all the wax drips and they are hard you can start painting, we made a pale golden yellow to imitate beeswax. The first coat make sure to get into all the nooks and crannies made by the glue. Once dry repeat the painting tho less care is needed to get everything the second time around. Further coats can be applied if you need to.

3. Next make holes for the fishing line to pass through, you'll need to make 4 so the fishing line makes a cross in the middle of the toilet roll as this is what will hold up the flame-less candle. This also looks best if you make the holes far enough down the toilet roll that just the flame pokes above the top of the toilet roll.

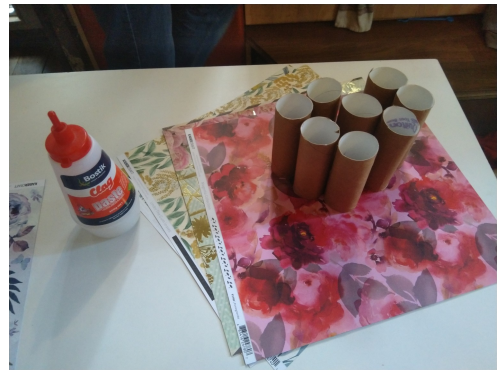
4. Pass two lengths of fishing line through the holes to make a cross and tie all four ends together. If you tie all of the candles at different lengths they will give a nice floating effect when all hanging. Pop a flame-less candle in the top and hang from the ceiling, branches or windows.

Handmade Crackers

Another activity recycling toilet rolls it is a hit at parties. We found it was a great way to combine the “Christmas cracker” tradition with the summer solstice as we used decorated paper that was indicative of summer. An added bonus with handmade crackers is that you can tailor the gifts inside and make them more meaningful, much better than the stuff potentially ending up in the bin the next day.

What you’ll need:

- * Cardboard toilet rolls, 1 for each cracker.
- * Nice paper for the outside, using thinner paper is more effective and will be easier to tie.
- * Craft glue, and either string or elastic bands.
- * Cracker strips (the paper bit that goes through the centre and makes the bang).
- * Small things for the inside that will fit inside.
- * Nice string or ribbon to tie the ends



To make:

1. First cut all your paper, You’ll need it to be wide enough to go around the roll and about 2-3 times the length. Approx 15cm by 30cm for each cracker.
2. Place the roll in the middle of the paper and mark its edges and then score a line on each side of the roll 2.5cm from it. You don’t want to cut through but make it easier to gather the paper, if your using tissue paper you could skip this.
3. Glue the paper around the toilet paper roll and tie it closed until its dry.
4. Once dry gather one end round the score line and close with your chosen twine. Thread a cracker strip through the middle and secure, we stapled the strip in place which also kept the ends of the paper together. Fill the middle of the cracker and gather the other end to close the cracker and secure the strip on this end too. Done!



Coffee Filter Butterflies

These are a beautiful and colourful symbol of summer, and can be used to decorate inside and out (rain dependant). You probably have the stuff for this low mess activity at home already.

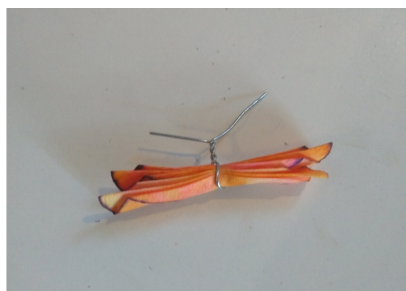
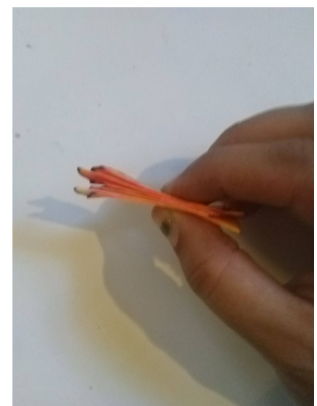
What you'll need:

- * Coffee filters.
- * Washable makers.
- * A dropper or syringe for dispensing water.
- * Pipe cleaners or wire.



To make:

1. Take two coffee filters and put them on top of each other, colour the top coffee filter in as desired, the less white space the better.
2. Leaving the coffee filters stacked, use a dropper or a syringe to put one drop at a time on the top filter and watch the colours spread. Doing it one drop at a time gives some measure of control over the way the colour spreads rather than just throwing water on it. Leave to dry in the sun or overnight.
3. Once dry, separate the coffee filters (the colour should have transferred to both) and fold each one into a zig zag. Place these on top of each other as shown and tie a pipe cleaner or piece of wire around them.
4. Spread the wings of your butterflies and decorate your house for summer.



Colour in these images of summer bounty!



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