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**THIS ISSUE'S FEATURE:
HAWTHORN**

Out On a Limb...

Welcome to the first edition of The Hazel Nut, a publication of the Garden Club. We are based out of Auburn, Alabama. I am Imré Rainey, the editor. Our staff writers are Michelle Bell and Muirghéin ó Dhún Aonghasa. We welcome your contributions, as well as letters to the editor.

Our tradition is Faerie Faith, and has its origins in Scotland. We use the Celtic tree calendar/alphabet (Beth-Luis-Nion system) as researched and explained by Robert Graves in The White Goddess. This system consists of 13 lunar trees and five solar trees. The calendar is based on a lunar year as opposed to a solar one, and begins after the Winter Solstice. Each lunar month is represented by a tree; in order, they are: Birch, Rowan, Ash, Alder, Willow, Hawthorn, Oak, Holly, Hazel, Vine, Ivy, Reed, and Elder. The five solar trees represent the 4 seasons of the year, plus the Winter Solstice. They are, in order: Silver Fir, Gorse, Heather, Aspen, and Yew.

The system is also used as an alphabet; the 13 lunar trees are the consonants, and the five solar trees are the vowels. This doesn't make a lot of sense unless you use the Gaelic words for the trees: Beth, Luis, Nion, Fearn, Saille, Huath, Duir, Tinne, Coll, Muir, Gort, Ngetal, and Ruis; and Ailim, Ohn, Ur, Eadha, and Ioho. To really confuse you, the Druids wrote this alphabet in a system of marks called *Ogham*, rather than strictly letters.

So why do we want to write about this? First and foremost, to help ourselves, and you, understand just what we're talking about when we say, for instance, "you're just feeling the effects of Holly—don't worry." Each lunation has its own special 'energies' that affect our moods and physical beings, and not always in a positive way. But just as nature put remedies for poisonous plants on the earth, so did she also give us remedies for the lunar energies: the trees themselves.

Each issue, in addition to our regular articles, we will feature one or more of the lunar trees; its herbal uses, folklore, esoterica, and other aspects. In this we hope to teach you and ourselves how to cope with the feelings we inevitably experience, and to make the most of the energies in a positive way. Hawthorn is the sixth tree in the Celtic tree calendar. It usually occurs around May or June, and this year it runs from May 21-June 18.

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COMPOST

by Michelle Bell

Approximately 2000 years ago, the Roman Marcus Cato gave us compost, a totally organic supplement for the soil. We now know that compost comprises practically all the elements needed to fully feed and condition the soil and the vegetation that is grown in the treated soil. Better yet, it is made by Nature Herself.

How does this affect you? Well, composting is just another way of recycling. Yard clippings and kitchen scraps constitute about 30% of a household's garbage. That is 30% of the total garbage that does not need to go into the ever-shrinking landfills. You will be amazed at how just a few eggshells and banana peels can add up.

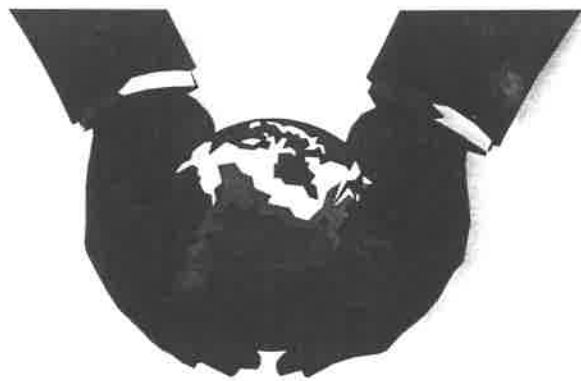
Start your composting area by designating a small part of your yard and building some kind of enclosure for the items to be composted (wooden box, a cylinder made of wire, or even a bucket—be creative) What can go into a compost pile? Tons of stuff—literally. Grass clippings, leaves, weeds, tree branches (chopped or shredded), flowers, food items such as egg shells, fruit peels, coffee grounds, teabags; actually anything, as long as its not meat or fat. Other things that are commonly left out are paper products (unwaxed), hair, and ashes. If you want to quicken the breaking-down process, try shredding things before you put them into your compost. Make sure you never dump food items on top of your pile and run because you will end up with a farm of flies. Appropriate composting behavior dictates that you bury your food items in the pile, and thus avoid looking like an amateur composter, because you will not have flies.

Never, ever, put meat or fatty products into your compost pile. Not only will this attract every animal in the area but the stench will make you quite unpopular. If animals visit your pile anyway, try repellants made of cayenne pepper, chili peppers, and/or mustard.

Compost piles work with minimum effort on your part. Just dump your stuff and turn the pile over every now and then (water if your pile starts looking too dry); after all, compost

happens naturally. You should, however, attempt to provide a balance between green products and brown ones. Brown refers to high carbon (dried leaves, twigs, grass, etc.). Greens are nitrogen rich materials such as fresh grass, food, and just about any kind of manure (except from meat-eating animals). Nitrogen products provide heat that is essential in the breaking down process (try 1 green to 2-4 browns).

Additives that are optional include blood meal, fire place ashes, and compost starter. Lime helps stop any potential stench.



Happy Composting!

FROM BRIDGIT'S HEARTH

by Michelle Bell

I was once told that herbs are nothing more than weeds, and I couldn't agree more now. Except for one thing—herbs are useful weeds.

And very useful they are, for this time of year in particular. Not only can we be outdoors and grow the herbs that we love so much, but herbs can now be our protectors as well. For herbs are wonderful insect repellants, sting and bite treatments, and sunburn preparations.

Sunburn

If you're out and about this spring and summer, as we usually are, then don't forget about good sunburn protection. I'm not going to assault your ears with a lecture on the effects of UV rays and the dangers of skin cancer. If you do get sunburned, there are some things that you can do to ease your pain. For those people who plan well in advance (and aren't they annoying to those of us who don't?), there are some tinctures that you can make. Use borage, beech leaves, comfrey, or marigold, mixed with vodka and let sit for 6 weeks in a dark place. Shake every day, and after 6 weeks strain and bottle the liquid. Keep it in the refrigerator so that it will be cool to your skin when you need it. You can also make marigold infusions and keep in the fridge, but throw out any leftovers at the end of summer. For those of use who love to plan ahead, but seldom actually do, try putting aloe vera gel on your burn. I often keep a bottle of it in the fridge so that it will be cool and soothing. Also try chilled witch hazel, rubbing alcohol, or plain unsweetened yogurt. Fresh cucumber juice compresses can also be good.

Insects

Herbs can repel those nasty, creepy crawlers that we know are beneficial to the Earth; it's just that we don't want them crawling on or biting us.

Outside your home you can be attacked by a variety of creatures. I personally despise mosquitoes. A good way to deter them is with an infusion of elder, chamomile, and lavender.

Dab the infusion on your skin before you go outside. Stone root oil, pennyroyal oil, or citronella oil mixed with vegetable oil is also another good repellent. Unfortunately, both need to be re-applied quite frequently. But for those unbearable hot days of summer, try putting your infusion in a spray bottle and putting it in the refrigerator. When you go outside you can squirt yourself to keep cool and insect-free. If you don't want to make the infusions yourself, try getting Skin-So-Soft® bath oil from Avon. Rub it into your skin before you go outside. It works great if you don't mind feeling a little oily.

To keep those pesky flies from flying into your home, try hanging a bundle of tansy, or a cluster of cloves above your door. Also hang an orange with the skin scratched—flies don't like citrus oil. If you want to capture them, spread honey on yellow paper. Flies are attracted to yellow and the honey will make them stick. When it's covered you can always take it down and throw it in your compost pile.

Ants can be hazards both inside and outside your home. Mints are great ant repellents. Plant mints around the areas that are infested with ants. Or make peppermint or spearmint tea. After you've had your tea, pour the tea leaves on the ants, or use them to make a barrier. An infusion of walnut leaves can also help with the ants. For a quick kill, I've had good luck with natural soaps mixed with water in a spray bottle, squirted on the ants in my house. And above all, one of the best ways to avoid ants in the home is, of course, to make sure crumbs and food are always cleaned up.

Clean areas will also help to disappoint those hardy survivors—cockroaches. If you have trouble with these guys, I don't have many answers. Try putting out bay leaves or cucumber rinds to dispel them. If you're at the point of trying just about anything, put some boric acid (you can get it in the drugstore or your local discount store) on a saucer with a cookie or some other type of bait, and place it in a dark corner of one of your cabinets—under

the sink is always good. The roaches are attracted to the bait and drag the boric acid back to their homes, and will eventually ingest and die from it. **DON'T TRY THIS IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN OR PETS THAT WILL GET INTO THE AREA OF BORIC ACID. BORIC ACID IS POISONOUS TO BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMALS.**

Another kitchen pest are those darn weevils. You know, those little bugs that make their homes in your flour or baking mixes. Try putting a whole nutmeg in the canisters.

If you're interested in just keeping bugs away from you personally, add garlic or brewer's yeast to your diet. It will give your body a smell and taste that is yucky to the bug world, but not to the human one (unless, of course, you breathe on someone after eating lots of garlic). And you won't have to worry about those pesky vampires, either.

For those painful stings of summer, try putting vinegar or the herb 'hens & chicks' on a wasp wound. Wasp stings are alkaline, so the vinegar helps. If you get stung by an ant or bee, which are acid in nature, try putting a mixture of baking soda and enough water to form a paste on the wound. **REMEMBER: THESE REMEDIES ARE NOT TO BE USED IN PLACE OF MEDICAL TREATMENT IF YOU HAVE AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO STINGS. IF THIS HAPPENS SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION AT ONCE AS SOME ALLERGIES CAN BE FATAL.**

Moths

And with the passage of winter and the chore of spring cleaning comes the battle of the dreaded clothing moth. Moth balls are toxic to humans and animals and give off nasty fumes that linger in your clothing, so that you have to wash all your clothes to get the smell off. If you hate that smell as much as I do, try putting potpourri of southerwood, rosemary, and lavender in little sachets and place among your winter clothing. Not only does it help to dissuade moths, but it also has a pleasant smell.

Fleas

To me the most horrid bug creatures are not those ugly, flying, enormous cockroaches, but the FLEA. These vile, disgusting insects attack

you, your home, and your beloved familiars. And just try to get rid of them. They breed faster than rabbits, and trying to wipe them out can make World War II look like child's play. Unfortunately, to add to my problems, my dog is also allergic to fleas. This means that all of his fur from his tail forward starts to fall out if he even gets one flea. So what are the battle plans? Try giving your dog or cat brewer's yeast and/or garlic with their food. A good dosage is 25 mg of brewer's yeast for every 10 lbs of body weight. As for garlic, a little here and there; after all, how can a dog's breath smell any worse? Pennyroyal oil and lavender oil are generally used in the herbal flea collars. You can try mixing the oil in vegetable oil and rubbing it into the animal's skin. Don't put the concentrated oil directly on the skin. Try growing pennyroyal and lavender around your yard. Make infusions of them and soak your pet's bedding in them. For your home, mix lavender oil and rock salt together and sprinkle it around the house. One thing that does seem to kill fleas is heat. Take your family and pets and go out for the day. Turn up the heat in your home and cook the fleas. Sprinkle Borax on your carpets and leave it for two weeks, then vacuum your rugs well and get rid of that vacuum cleaner bag immediately—fleas can live a happy and procreative life in there. Then sprinkle the floors again and repeat the process. A flea's life cycle is about two weeks, so if any of the first fleas laid eggs, they'll hatch soon and you'll have to start all over. I've also heard that zeolite dirt can help to rid your home and yard.

If you reach your wit's end, try going out into your yard and asking the fleas to move. Trust me, by the time you get to this point you won't care if the Channel 9 News is filming you; much less if the neighbors are watching. Tell them they can have one small section of your yard that won't be attacked if they leave the rest of the yard alone. After all, it can't hurt, can it?

If you have any questions, comments or tips about herbs, or non-toxic home care, write in and let us know. We'll try to answer any, or point you in the right direction.

FOLKLORE & PRACTICAL USES: HAWTHORN

by Muirghin ó Dhún Aonghasa

Crataegus oxyacantha - English Hawthorn. Found in England and continental Europe.

The hawthorn is easily recognized by its branches, covered with long, sharp thorns. Its small, usually white flowers bloom in May, earning it the additional name of May or Mayblossom, although in the southern U.S. it usually blooms in April (the ship Mayflower was named after the hawthorn). Its generic name, *Crataegus oxyacantha*, is derived from the Greek word *kratos*, meaning hardness (of the wood), *oxus*, meaning sharp, and *akantha*, meaning thorn. The old German name for the tree, *Hagedorn*, means Hedgethorn; the word *haw* is also an old word for hedge¹.

The red fruit, or haw, which appears in late summer, resembles a miniature stony apple. The wood makes an excellent fuel, making the hottest wood fire known, and in the past was more desirable than oak for oven-heating².

To the ancient Greeks and Romans, the hawthorn was a symbol of hope and happiness, and was linked with marriage and babies. Hawthorn was dedicated to Hymen, god of marriages. The torches carried in the wedding procession were made of hawthorn. People would put a sprig of hawthorn in their corsages, while the bride carried an entire bough³. This also helped to appease the goddess Cardea, who did not like weddings, especially in May. In England, May was considered a lucky month for engagements, though not for marriages.

Later, in Medieval Europe, it was thought to be an evil and unlucky tree, and foretold a death in the house if brought inside. The hawthorn was considered one of the witches' favorite trees, and on Walpurgis (Beltane) night, witches turned themselves into hawthorns. "With a little superstitious imagination, the hawthorn's writhing, thorny branches at night probably do look enough like a witch to have instilled fear in medieval folk⁴."

In Ireland lone hawthorns belong to fairies, who meet at and live inside them. Many dire things are predicted if a lone thorn were disturbed in any way, among them illness and

death. The Irish believed the fairies spread their washing across the thorn to dry. Ireland also has sacred hawthorns at holy wells, on which rag offerings are left⁵. According to Geoffrey Grigson, the haws are also called 'hags,'⁶ and might be a connection with the old Irish Hag-Mother, whom it was said that the rags and clothes were meant for.

The most famous hawthorn of all is the Glastonbury Thorn. It is *Crataegus monogyna* var. *praecox*, putting out leaves and flowers in winter and again in May. According to the Glastonbury legend, the Crown of Thorns was made of hawthorn. Later, it was added that Joseph of Arimathea stuck his dry hawthorn stick into the hill, where it at once grew, and ever after bloomed on Christmas Day⁷.

The hawthorn is associated with May Day more than any other plant. On most May Days the hawthorn was already in full bloom, before the British at last changed the calendar in 1752 and adopted the New Style. May Day now comes thirteen days earlier⁸.

Hawthorn was gathered on May Day morning, interwoven, and placed on doors or windows. The interweaving was important, since the power of magical plants was always increased by weaving them into various shapes. The magic of the hawthorn had already been increased during the night by the dew, which the country people always considered a magic fluid, especially on May Day morn⁹.

On May Day, fairies and witches were abroad, and just as excited as humans by the beginning of summer. Milk and butter were likely to be stolen or bewitched. In Ireland, the rowan was the surest protector against this, while in England and France, the protective plant was the hawthorn¹⁰.

Sex and fertility were very much a part of the old May Day celebrations, and were symbolized by the hawthorn. The stale, sweet scent of the flowers makes them suggestive of sex. This same smell led to the belief that hawthorn

flowers had preserved the stench of the plague. The flowers contain trimethylamine, which is an ingredient of the smell of putrefaction¹¹.

Today hawthorn may be the source of an important cardiac medicine. Scientific research has shown that hawthorn dilates blood vessels, allowing blood to flow more freely, lowering blood pressure. It also regulates heart action, acting directly on the heart muscle to help a damaged heart work more efficiently. It works slowly and seems to be toxic only in large doses, making it a relatively safe, mild tonic¹². When administered properly, hawthorn is good for a heart muscle weakened by age, for inflammation of the heart muscle, for arteriosclerosis, and nervous heart problems.

At home, the hawthorn flowers and berries can be decocted (boiled) and drunk for a sore throat. They are also helpful in kidney trouble, acting as a diuretic. The berries can be made into a tea, which is good for nervous conditions and insomnia¹³.

An excellent liqueur can be made from the berries or flowers. This recipe using the flowers dates back to about 1775. May Blossom Liqueur: Try to gather the may blossom on a dry, calm day when there is no dust flying about. Pick as much as a preserving (quart) jar will hold. Fill it up with brandy or vodka. Close the jar and shake it 3 times a week for 3 months. Filter and if necessary add sugar to taste. The resulting liqueur is excellent in custards and sauces¹⁴.

¹ Grieve, Mrs. M. A Modern Herbal (2 volumes). 1931. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 385

² Ibid, pg. 385.

³ Lust, John. The Herb Book. 1973. Bantam Books, New York, NY.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Grigson, Geoffrey. The Englishman's Flora. 1955. Phoenix House LTD, London, England, pg. 169.

⁶ Ibid, pg. 166.

⁷ Ibid, pg. 170.

⁸ Ibid, pg. 168.

⁹ Ibid, pg. 168.

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 167.

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 168.

¹² Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs. Edited by Claire Kowalchik and William H. Hylton. 1987. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA, pg. 275.

¹³ J. Lust.

¹⁴ van Doorn, Joyce. Making Your Own Liqueurs. 1980. Prism Press, San Leandro, CA, pg. 72.

LUNAR ENERGIES & ESOTERICA: HAWTHORN

As Dictated by Epona to Imré

Huath—Hawthorn—is the sixth lunar tree/month of the year. The Yin or female energies have subsided and the Yang or male energies are on the up- swing. This is the perfect time of the year for people to begin to utilize and collect the Yang that is needed, because the energy is not yet strong enough to blow us out of the water, but is just strong enough to begin using. Women will find that the men around them have become irritable and testosterone-ridden—be warned, ladies, that this is the last chance that you are going to get, before the cycle of Yin returns, to establish the balance in the home.

This is also a good time to practice abstinence; for Hawthorn is the moon of purification and creative (as opposed to fertility-oriented) uses of sexual energies. We have found that women who indulge in the increase in their sexual appetites will feel the repercussions of their actions during the summer (around the Summer Solstice in particular) as “female problems.” Use this increased sexual energy to form a stronger bond with Nature. You will find it easier to contact spiritual guides, or ‘the Masters.’ Just as your energies are easily released at this time, so are Nature’s.

Folklore tells us that at this time of the year priests would go out into their church- yards and beat the surrounding stones in order to form a boundry and to keep evil spirits away. However, according to myths that originated in times when standing stones commonly created the physical boundries around magickal circles, that the stones were struck so as to “wake them” or charge them (see Needles of Stone Revisted, Tom Graves). This would create the astral boundries. What does this mean? Well, it is now the time to begin understanding who you are and how you are developing. This will begin to happen as you go to Nature, yet, along with your pilgrimage comes the need to realize your basic physical limitations brought about by this incarnation. You must transcend them by

imploding, or going within your being and discovering how unlimited you are within. Discover the mysteries of You. This is that time of year.

For further research, look up these points:

Vestal Virgins
Cardea (goddess)
Lady Godiva

(This is what we have come to know and understand. We would like to hear from those who have experienced it differently or would like to add to what we have. You never stop learning! - Epona, High Priestess of Faerie Faith)

BUBBLES FROM THE CAULDRON

Book Reviews, Etc.

VII Sermones as Mortuos (Seven Sermons For The Dead) By Carl Jung

The seven sermons were written by Doctor Basilides in Alexandria (a pen-name used by Jung). I am convinced that reading them in full and having some understanding of them should qualify one as one of the Wonders of the World. This is not "lite" reading folks. Yet if you manage it, it will give you a fantastic sense of accomplishment.

In the "Seven Sermons" the dead ask seven questions of the being that they encounter. No, no, they are not the simple questions one would hope for. They ask about God. Is he dead? Who is the highest god? What about the church and the community? Finally, why and what is the human race?

In answer to these questions Jung begins with the definition of the Pleroma. It is nothing and fullness. For nothing is both empty and full. And in this nothing, thinking and being cease, because the eternal

is without quality. But then it is not profitable to think about the Pleroma, for to do that would mean one's dissolution. Isn't that cheerful?

"Seven Sermons for the Dead" is a great book for those nights of long discussions with your peers for one idea can lead to a whole new understanding or analogy. It is a book that opens your mind to new challenges and a new and different understanding of your universe. It is definitely not a book to read all in one sitting. It was fascinating - enjoy.

- Michelle Bell

Natural Magic By Marion Green

Marion Green approached this project with the realization that the wisdom within natural realms of magic may seem simple to the ignorant, yet, in reality, secure vast floods of energy and understanding. Those who have experienced the smallest dose of this magick have much respect for Nature and her mysteries. Marion Green is one of those individuals.

The reader is carefully given preliminary lessons about this genre of magick. The guided meditations are safe and fun. The author does, however, add a more tool-craft oriented perspective towards the end so don't take everything you read here as gospel. Regardless, I do highly recommended this book if you are just now learning about this flavor of the craft.

- Imré Rainey



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