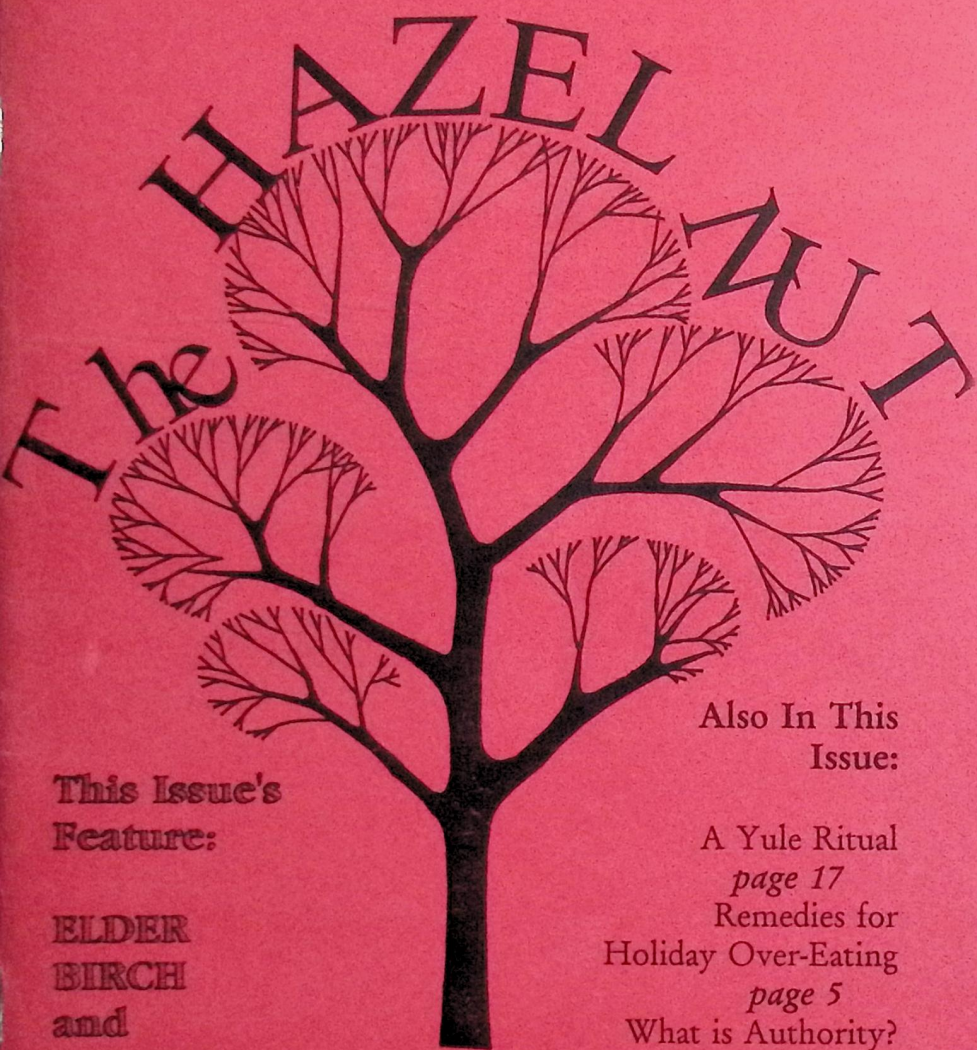


A Journal of Celtic Spirituality and Sacred Trees

Issue 6

December 1993



**This Issue's
Feature:**

**ELDER
BIRCH
and
ROWAN
MOONS**

\$2.00

**Also In This
Issue:**

A Yule Ritual
page 17

Remedies for
Holiday Over-Eating
page 5

What is Authority?
page 30

More Norse Runes
page 7

Poetry, Letters, and Reviews

THE HAZEL NUT, Volume 1, Issue 6, Copyright © 1993 **The Garden Club**. December 1993, Elder/Birch/Rowan Moons. **THE HAZEL NUT** is published six times a year by **The Garden Club**. Single copy price is \$2.00; subscriptions are \$10/year for 6 issues. Back issues are \$2.00 each.

Commercial advertisements (per issue): \$2.00/business cards; \$3.00/quarter page; \$5.00/half page; \$10.00/full page. 10% discount for 6 issues paid in advance. Enclose payment in full; make checks or MO payable to Linda Kerr.

All rights reserved. Copyright reverts to the individual artist or writer upon publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the editor and author.

Address all correspondence and subscription requests to the editor: Linda Kerr, 1831 Opelika Road, Auburn, Alabama, 36830, 205-821-4683.

We welcome your contributions and letters; deadline for next issue: February 1. Please provide your name and address; and a brief bio with your contribution. Addresses will be withheld on request. Submissions should be typed, black ink on white paper; provide a DOS ASCII disk if possible. We reserve the right to edit for length, and to refuse publication of any submission or letter. Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the

editor and **The Garden Club**. The publisher and editor make every effort to ensure the accuracy of all information published, but cannot be held liable for errors, changes, or omissions, or for any incurrences from the application or the practice of any matter contained herein.

THE HAZEL NUT is the official publication of **The Garden Club**. Its purpose is to provide a forum for networking, personal contacts, and research and information, as well as to spread understanding of the bedrock of our tradition, the Celtic tree calendar/alphabet (Beth-Luis-Nion system) as researched and explained by Robert Graves in The White Goddess. 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 help you make the most of the trees and the lunar energies in a positive way.

Elder and Birch are the thirteenth and first trees in the Celtic tree calendar. They occur on either side of the Winter Solstice, and this year they run from December 13-December 21, and December 23-January 10, respectively.

Rowan is the second tree in the Celtic tree calendar. It usually occurs in January or February, and this year (1994) it runs from January 11-February 9.

In This Issue:

Out on a Limb	4
<i>Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa</i>	
From Brighid's Hearth: Indigestion and Gas	5
<i>Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa</i>	
Runes	7
<i>Stormy</i>	
A Winter Solstice Season's Greetings - poetry	10
<i>Epona</i>	
Folklore & Practical Uses: Elder	12
<i>Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa</i>	
Lunar Energies & Esoterica: Elder	16
<i>Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa</i>	
A Ritual for the Yule Sabbat	17
<i>Mirhanda Spellesinger</i>	
Folklore & Practical Uses: Birch	23
<i>Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa</i>	
Lunar Energies & Esoterica: Birch	27
<i>Freya Laughing Bear</i>	
The Lunar Calendar: Elder/Birch	28
The Lunar Calendar: Rowan	29
Birch: A Question of Authority	30
<i>Arion of Methymna</i>	
Folklore & Practical Uses: Rowan	35
<i>Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa</i>	
Lunar Energies & Esoterica: Rowan	39
<i>Freya Laughing Bear</i>	
Calculating the Start of the First Moon	40
<i>Epona</i>	
The Day Apart	41
<i>Epona & Muirghein</i>	
User-Friendly Deities	44
<i>Brighid MoonFire</i>	
Announcements	53
Classified Ads	53
Letters to the Editor	54
Bubbles From the Cauldron	55
<i>book reviews, etc.</i>	

Staff:

Muirghein ó Dhún Aonghasa (Linda Kerr)	Editor & Layout
Brighid MoonFire	Staff Writer
Freya Laughing Bear	Staff Writer
Contributors: Arion of Methymna, Coll ap Rhiannon, Epona, Gerlinde von Spöck,	
Mirhanda Spellesinger, Rudy the Red, Stormy.	
Cover graphic by Muirghein	

Out On a Limb...

From the desk of the editor

We've had some changes on the staff of **The Hazel**

Nut—Imre has stepped down as editor, and I've taken that office. Please send your submissions, announcements, subscriptions, ads, etc. to me, and please make checks out to me (Linda Kerr). My address is listed on page 2.

We also welcome Freya Laughing Bear to our staff, whom you met last issue with her "Lunar Energies and Esoterica: Reed" article. Stormy's column on runes is also a regular feature now.

My usual plea: We need submissions! We especially need artwork of any and all types. Try, if you send in an article, to include some artwork with it. This makes it easier to fill in the inevitable blank spot at the end.

You'll probably notice this is a HUGE issue! We're covering three trees this time, but only two full lunations. Confused? See Epona's article, "Calculating the Start of the First Moon" on page 37.

Several of us went to an Indian Pow-Wow in Auburn on November 13. It was quite enjoyable for some, just okay for others, and for some, rather disturbing at times. Seems there

were some weird energies floating around—someone overheard some Indians expressing bitterness towards white folks. Can't really blame them...

I can't speak for everyone, but I had a great time, and we had some wonderful chats with several of the Indian vendors. Even ate buffalo and bear meat! At first I was rather dazed by the Indians in their bright outfits, but after awhile I realized that they were just people, like us. The official religion of the Cherokees is now Christianity, but it seems their beliefs are not that different from our own, as Pagans and Faerie Faith. And boy, can they dance!

If you've never been to a Pow-Wow, do go just once for the experience. Keep an open mind and an open heart, and look to these people for a fine example of tolerance in the face of persecution and adversity. And as one vendor said: "I've known some really bad Indians and some really good white people. It's not whether you have Indian blood or not, it's what's in your heart that counts."

Until next time, party on, dudes!

Muirghern

From Brigid's Hearth:

Indigestion and Gas

by Muirghin ó Dhúin Aonghasa

'Tis the season to overeat!
And while the only sure-fire way to avoid that overstuffed feeling is self-control, peppermint candy can help. In addition to freshening your breath, it also helps settle your stomach and aid in digestion. A better method is to make an infusion of peppermint leaves, 1 oz. to 1 pint water.

If you can plan ahead, here's a good remedy for indigestion. Mix 1 part of each of the following herbs: Dandelion root, calamus root, gentian, angelica, and valerian, and 1/2 part of ginger root. Put 2 oz. of this herbal mixture in 1 pint of white wine and let sit for 2 weeks. Strain, and take one teaspoon before and after meals.

Most kitchen spices are carminatives (prevents and relieves gas), stimulants, and aids to digestion. In fact, one reason people began adding spices to their foods, aside from covering up the smell and taste of rot, was as a medicine. So for gas and flatulence, take 1 oz. anise seeds, decocted in 1 pint of water, after your meal, or make an infusion of equal parts of chamomile, anise, lemon balm, caraway, and fennel seeds, and take about a

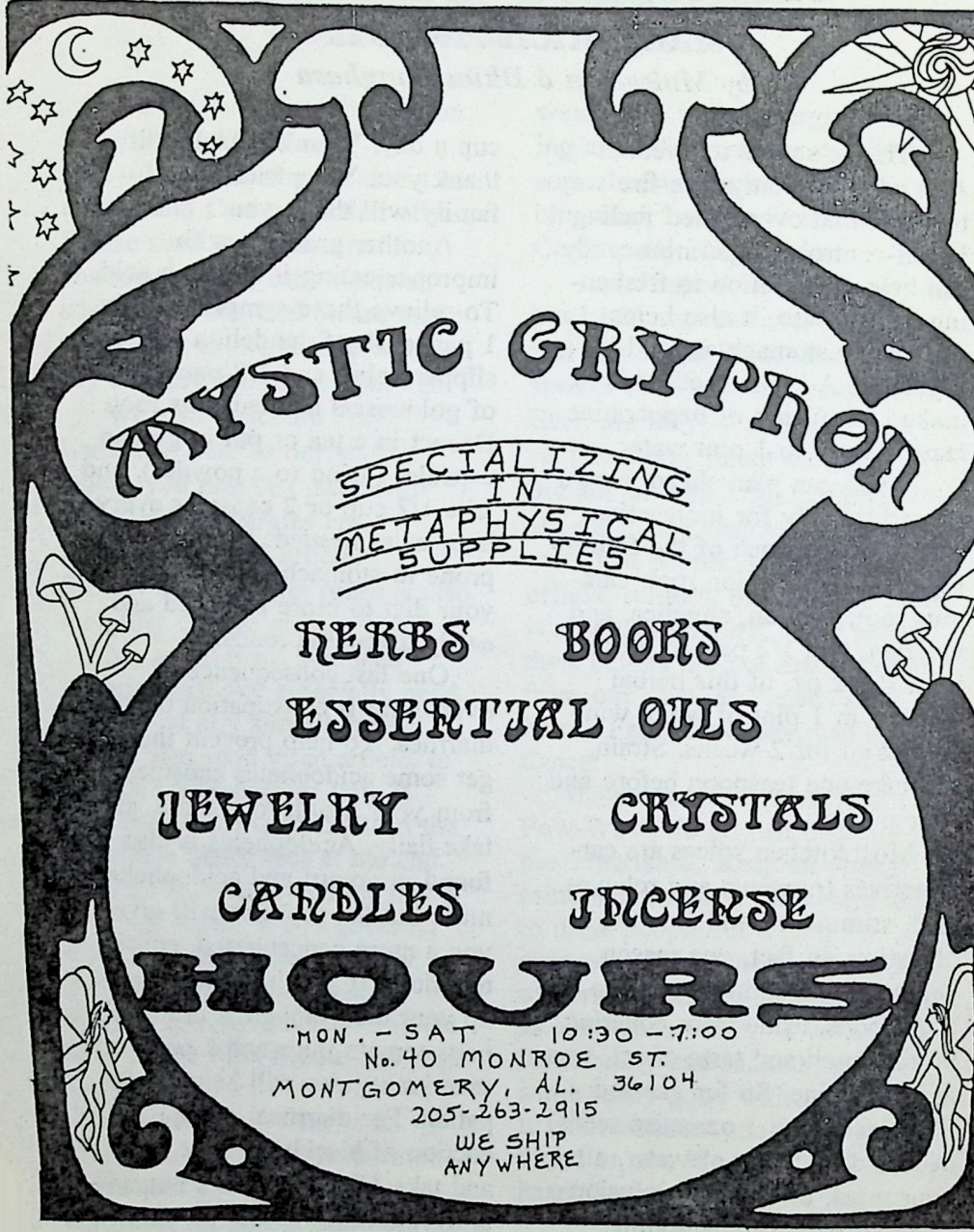
cup a day. Your stomach will thank you. Your friends and family will thank you.

Another problem with improper eating is stomach acid. To relieve these symptoms, mix 1 part each of dandelion root and slippery elm, and 1/8 part each of goldenseal and calamus root. Decoct in a tea or put in gelatin capsules (grind to a powder), and take 1/2 cup or 2 capsules every hour or as needed. If you are prone to stomach acid, change your diet to more balanced and easily digestible foods.

One last consequence of overeating is constipation or diarrhea. To help prevent this, get some acidophilus capsules from your health food store, and take daily. Acidophilus is also found in yogurt and acidophilus milk, but the capsules will give you a more concentrated, consistent dose. If you just really mess up your diet, though, a drink of 2 parts tomato juice and 1 part sauerkraut juice will help constipation. For diarrhea, make a decoction of blackberry root bark and take 1/2 cup every 2 hours until relieved.

May your holidays and stomach be happy!





MYSTIC GRYPHON

SPECIALIZING
IN
METAPHYSICAL
SUPPLIES

HERBS BOOKS

ESSENTIAL OILS

JEWELRY

CRYSTALS

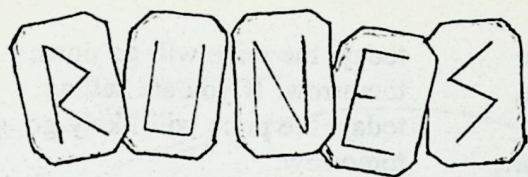
CANDLES

INCENSE

HOURS

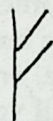
MON. - SAT 10:30 - 7:00
No. 40 MONROE ST.
MONTGOMERY, AL. 36104
205-263-2915

WE SHIP
ANYWHERE



By
STORMY

Germanic: FEHU - Cattle; Mobile Property
Gothic: FA - Cattle, Mobile Property
Old English: FEOH - Cattle; Money
Old Norse: FE - Livestock; Money, Gold



KEY WORDS: Domesticated Cattle, Acquired Wealth, Possessions

The primary meaning of **FEOH** is wealth. Feoh usually represents monetary values that are moveable, like grain, produce, livestock, gold, silver, stocks, bonds, and income from work performed. Feoh also represents expected or anticipated income: Money you earn through successful investments and/or hard work. The bartering systems existed before the use of money. Economy was born based on the addition of more produce, sheep, cattle, pigs or whatever in the spring to be used in bartering. The anticipated income then could be used as credit when bartering for something.

In the early Teutonic culture, a person's standing was based on the size of their herd. The bigger the herd, the more wealthy they were, and the higher their standing in the community. The Anglo-Saxons still retain the word 'fee' from Feoh, meaning

"a sum payable to an official." The Viking 'fe' meant paying debts with cattle.

Feoh also represents the feminine power. The horns of the cow represents the crescent-moon headdress of the Goddess. She is the primordial presence, having given life to all, and she nourishes all with her milk. When you need help from the Goddess, this a good rune to use to invoke her assistance. But be careful what you ask for—you may get it! Examples are: help with the bills, added income, wealth, more responsibility, etc.

Feoh is typically used for yes or no questions. If Feoh is up, the answer is yes; if reversed, the answer is no. In questions of love, romance, or partnership, a turned up Feoh indicates success, especially if paired with the runes Gifu, Tiw, or Ing. Reversed, it indicates a not-so-long-term success; but enjoy it

for the moment knowing the truth. In questions of finance, business deals and business partnerships, Feoh is favorable, especially if paired with Ansuz, Tiw, or Gifu. If reversed, it means the business is not such a good idea, or is a warning to put it off until you can check the situation out better.

Up Position:

In times of abundance we must remember not to be selfish, but to share. We also need to not be reckless in our dealings in business, life and our loves. We need to nourish and take care of what we have, not as a miser would horde his gold, but with the love of a good parent. When love is reciprocated, it is the best self-nourishment of all.

This is a positive rune of increased wealth, success, new financial opportunities, and overcoming a struggle. Something worked for is now within reach. It is okay to take advantage of opportunities in buying and selling.

Don't be greedy or miserly, but also be careful of what is yours acquired through diligence and hard work.

Reversed Position:

Be careful in all business dealings. Be diligent; hold off, if you must. If you are buying

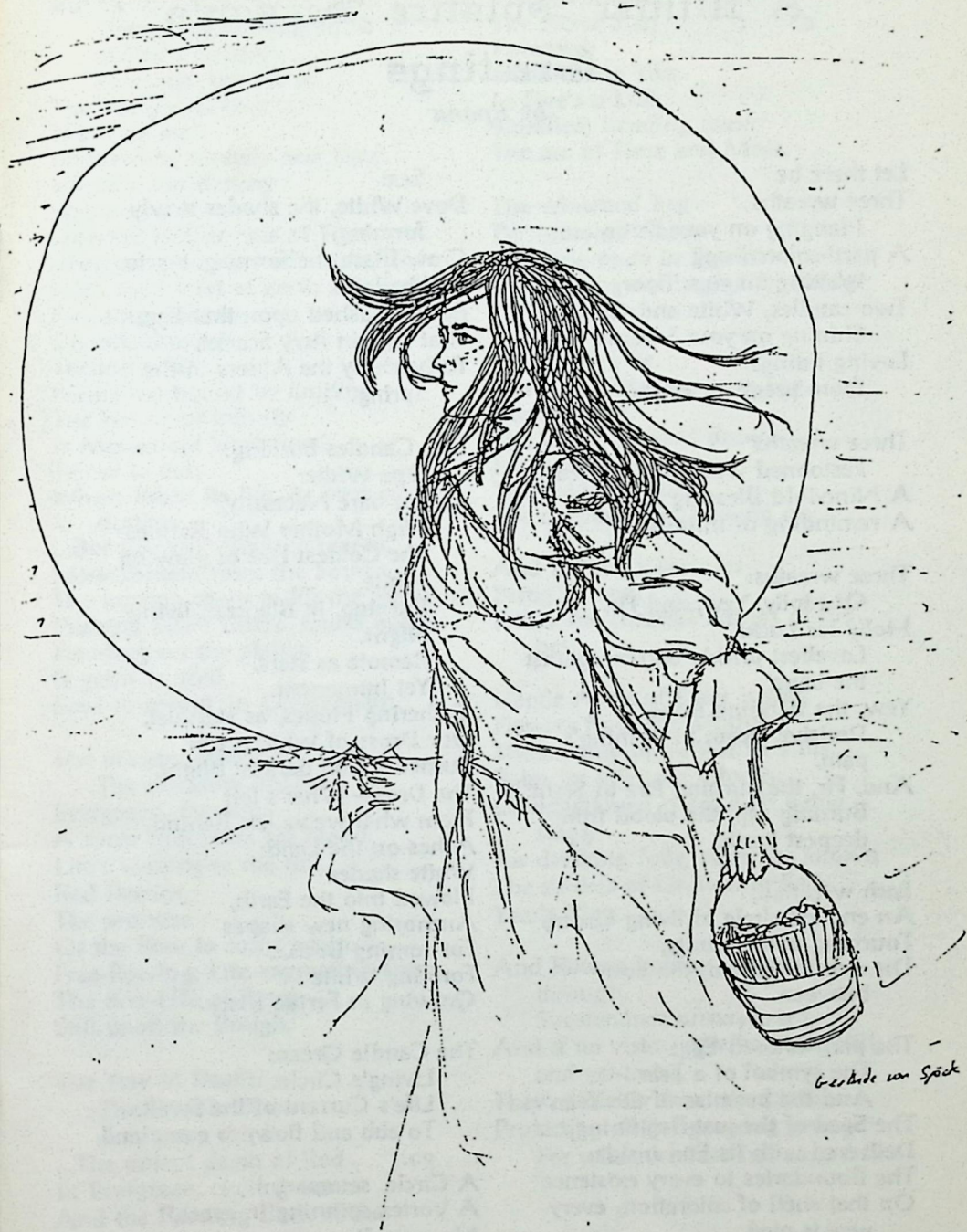
today, the price will go down tomorrow. If you are selling today, the price will likely go up tomorrow.

Be careful in your love life as well. You do not have a good relationship when there is no freedom or one party loves more than the other. A relationship in love is one in which you love enough to allow freedom. If that individual has your trust and the freedom to come and go they will always be there for you too.

Sources:

- Aswan, Freya. Leaves of Yggdrasil. 1990. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN.
- Dolphin, Deon, Rune Magic. 1987. Newcastle Publishing Co. Inc., North Hollywood, CA.
- Flowers, Stephen E., Ph. D. The Secrets of the Runes by Guido von List. 1988. Inner Tradition International, Ltd., Rochester, VT.
- Gillin-Emmer, Lady of the Northern Light: A Feminist Guide to the Runes. 1993. The Crossing Press, Freedom, CA.





A Winter Solstice Season's Greetings

by Epona

Let there be
Three wreaths
 Hanging on your Door,
A parti-colored egg
 Waiting on your floor,
Two candles, White and Green
 Shining on your Hearth,
Loving tidings
 From pregnant Earth.

Three wreaths
 Festooned with ribbons Red:
A Nine-fold Blessing Be.
A reminding of Infinity.

Three wreaths:
 Of Holly, Yew, and Fir.
Holly for Luck:
 Loveliest prickly barrier against
 the bane.
Yew, the Bending Bow:
 Decisive Death in birthing's
 pain.
And, Fir, the burning Fire of Sight:
 Burning sap, the blood from
 deepest Earth.

Each wreath...
An endless circle of living Green,
Touching with Infinity,
The streaming Red, the bow
 between.

The parti-colored Egg:
 The symbol of a Tear
 And the promise of the Year.
The Seed of the-just-Beginning,
Delivered with its End inside:
The Boundaries to every existence
On that shell of coloration, every
 way is pied.
Brooded by the Wind upon the

Sea:
Dove-White, the shades newly
 forming,
Crow-Black the forms going to
 shade,
Both, splashed upon that Egg.
That Egg, in fiery Scarlet,
To hatch by the Alders in the
 Spring.

Two Candles burning:
 One White:
 For bare Necessity,
 High Mother Who Refines
 The Coldest Fire of glowing
 White
 Burning, in Blackest, living
 Night.
 Remote as stars,
 Yet Immanent.
Gathering Hopes, as stardust,
Our Dross of Whitest ash
Burned up on darkest Night.
The Dross—What's left
From what we've left Behind.
Ashes on the Land:
White shades
Plowed into the Earth,
Anchoring new shapes
For coming Birth...
Forming White
Growing in Fertile Black.

The Candle Green:
 Living's Circle.
 Life's Current of the Swell.
 To ebb and flow, to come and
 go.
A Circle, set apart,
A Vortex spinning in space,
Never-ending—
Attached to Infinity—

But closed upon Itself.
Green, the flowing out
of Red's Infinity:
Potential into Form.
The straightest Line
Is but an arc
Imposed by Gravity and Time.
We ride our destiny
Upon an ark
Directed in Currents of Time:
Vessels in the stars of night
With the Heart of Earth entwined.
Flooding streams,
Chaotic flowing,
Tearing wide
Forms too bound by limiting—
The horror of Infinity
Is Movement Undefined,
Terror to that
Which limits its life, its form of
destiny.

...But Green is Replenishment,
Nourishment from the Source.
The waxing again to fill the form,
Pushing Life's Circle round again.
Flooding on the plains:
Is germ to seed,
Seed to sprout, in Green again.

The prickles of Holly,
The prickling of Life:
Evergreen, Everlife.
A spear that roars for blood:
Life's waning at the full,
Red Berries,
The promise
Of the flow to come again.
Free-flowing: Life expressing Form.
The ever-Life of Being
Still upon the Bough.

The Yew of Death:
The Double Door—
And yet a third:
...The potent death of Red...
In Evergreen, circling arm...
And the Bending Back of the
Bow...

The Silver Fir,
The Silver Star,
Potential:
Manifesting Year.
In Five's a Link,
Spiralled, bending back
The arc of Time and Mass.

The whitened Egg—
Parti-colored once—
Breaking open in Scarlet:
The coming out begins the going
in.

The Blazing fir,
Showing patterns on an Egg.
Burning Sap,
The Water upward drawn
From Earth,
The hold of Water,
The deepest level flowing on.

And if these Greetings
Bring no rest,
Know the cheerful tidings of the
best:

Gentle Arms of Elder leaves,
Flowers from the Moon,
The tending of all Winter's ills,
Balm for Winter's Gloom.
Compassioned notes each being
sings,
For drinking fully, each has known
The strokes of Growth in Each
Year's Ring.

And Rowan berries to see you
through,
Substance unsurpassed,
And if no vision of what was, still,
and yet-to-be,
They're shelter from the blast:
Protecting all the growing young
For whatever Fate has cast. ☼

Folklore & Practical Uses:

ELDER

by Muirghein ó Dhúin Aonghasa

Sambucus canadensis L. - American Elder. SE. Manitoba east to Nova Scotia, south to S. Florida, and west to S. Texas.

S. nigra L. - European Elder, Black Elder. Europe, in moist, shady places, and among underbrush.

S. racemosa - Red Elder. Mountain forests and clearings in Europe and western Asia, northern U.S. and Canada.

S. glauca Nutt. - Blueberry Elder. S. British Columbia south to Utah, Arizona and SW. New Mexico, and from Cascades to Sierra Nevada, to Baja California.

DESCRIPTION

The elder is a small tree or shrub which favors roadsides, ditches, and wet areas. It usually grows about 12' in height, but some more treelike species can reach 50'.¹ It is most easily distinguished by its tiny whitish flowers which bloom in early summer, in large, wheel-shaped clusters. The berries follow in late summer; they are small, and dark red to black in color. "It has been said, with some truth, that...summer is not here until the Elder is fully in flower, and that it ends when the berries are ripe."²

In the winter time, look for the light brown to gray-white bark, smooth on the central trunk, but rough, pitted and warty on the branching stems.³ Inside the branches you'll find the white pith, which can be

easily pushed out to form a hollow tube.

HISTORY & USES

Grievess tells us the word 'elder' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *aeld*, meaning 'fire.' With the pith pushed out of the branches, they could be used for blowing on a fire, or as a pipe; so the elder was also called Pipe-tree or Bour-tree, a name which is still used in Scotland.⁴

The elder's generic name *Sambucus* is derived from the Greek word *sambuca*, the Sack-but, which was an ancient Roman instrument supposedly made from the wood of the elder. However, as this was a stringed instrument, this is doubtful, since the elder would more easily make a wind instrument, such as the *sampogna*, a simple pipe made by Italian peasants from the branches of the

elder. The branches have also been used for making whistles and pop-guns by young boys.⁵ I have also been told a turkey call can be made from a small branch with one end cut at a sharp angle.

The wood of old trees has a fine, hard grain; in the past it was used for shoemakers' pegs, needles for weaving nets, combs, and mathematical instruments. It was also grown for hedges, and would grow close and compact if clipped two-three times a year.⁶

A specialty of the elder is its ability to keep away insects. Simply bruise the leaves, and rub on your face and skin or wear in your clothing to repel flies. For mosquitoes and biting flies, make an infusion of the fresh leaves by pouring boiling water over them, then let them sit for a few hours till the water is cold. Bottle the liquid, and dab on the skin as needed.⁷

Gardeners in England made a decoction of the leaves to sprinkle over delicate plants and flower buds to fend off aphids and caterpillars. A recipe from the 1920's tells how to make a concoction to prevent and cure blight in fruit trees: boil the young shoots of the elder, mixed with copper sulphate, iron sulphate, nicotine, soft soap, methylated spirit (mineral spirits?), and slaked lime.⁸

Perhaps the most popular part of the elder is its ripe berries, which make excellent wines, pies and jellies. The elderberries have also been used to adulterate wines, giving them a red color and richer flavor. "Elder is often the basis of spurious 'clarets' and 'Bordeaux'...Cheap port is often faked to resemble tawny port by the addition of Elderberry juice, which forms one of the least injurious ingredients of factitious port wines."⁹ This practice was so widespread that it was banned in Portugal in 1747, and even the cultivation of the elder was forbidden. This hardly stopped the practice, however, and its benefits were proven in 1899, when "a sailor remarked to a doctor that a drunken binge on (so-called) fine port was a great remedy for rheumatism. Instead of dismissing this as just another farfetched excuse, doctors investigated the claim and began prescribing elderberry juice in port. It may not have been necessary to drink as much as a sailor to achieve the benefits."¹⁰

MEDICINAL

The elder is said to be the 'medicine chest of the country people,'¹¹ and indeed, all parts of the European elder are useful medicinally. However, the roots, and possibly the leaves and stems, of the American elder are

toxic, containing substances that release cyanide and an unidentified cathartic (laxative).¹² Lust tells us that all parts of the fresh tree can cause poisoning.¹³ The fresh root especially is extremely poisonous, fatal to children, with symptoms very similar to those of hemlock poisoning.¹⁴ Use this plant with caution, and consider ordering a European elder from your nursery.

Regardless of its toxicity, some American Indians made root-bark tea for headaches, mucous congestion, and to promote labor in childbirth.¹⁵ An American medical doctor of 1875 gives a recipe against epilepsy: Decoct 2 ounces of the inner bark in 5 ounces of water for 48 hours, strain, and give cupfuls when the fit is threatening. Repeat every 6-8 days.¹⁶ If tempted, you might try the European elder for this, as the properties are similar.

The inner bark and root of the European elder are diuretic and purgative (strong laxative) in small doses. In large doses they are emetic and strongly purgative, causing vomiting, and can cause inflammation in the gastrointestinal tract. They must both be used fresh. The leaves and shoots of the European elder are diuretic, and help eliminate excess water from the body. In proper doses, can be used for

urinary and kidney problems, rheumatic ailments, and constipation.¹⁷

Externally, the leaves can be used for an ointment for bruises, sprains and wounds: Take 3 parts of fresh elder leaves, 4 parts of lard, and 2 parts of prepared suet (remember, this is an old recipe!); heat together until colored, strain and cool. The leaves boiled with some linseed oil were used on hemorrhoids. A cooling ointment for swellings and skin problems is made from 1/2 lb. elder leaves, 1/4 lb. plantain leaves, 2 oz. ground ivy, 4 oz. wormwood (all green); chop leaves and boil in 4 lb. lard, stirring until leaves become crisp, strain and press out for use.¹⁸

Warm elder flower tea stimulates and induces sweating, and is used for colds, rheumatism, and headaches. The cold tea is a diuretic. The flowers are also good for twitching and inflamed eyes; taken internally or applied externally with cotton ball.¹⁹ Elder-flower water at one time was used cosmetically to remove spots, freckles, and skin irritations, to preserve and soften the skin, and soothe the nerves. Pick flowers when in full bloom. Use them fresh, 'pickle' them with about 10% common salt, or dry them by stirring in a heated copper pan or placing in a cool

oven with the door open.²⁰

The berries of both elders should not be eaten raw, as they are unsafe, causing diarrhea and vomiting. Externally, however, they make a good ointment for burns when mixed with lard or a creamy base. The dried berries, made into a tea, are good for diarrhea.²¹ When slightly cooked, the berries are harmless, and are rich in organic iron. For anemia, combine elderberry and blackberry juice, and take 1 oz. three times a day.²²

Jam made from the European berries is a mild laxative and is good for irritated or inflamed intestines. For neuralgia (intense pain along a nerve), sciatica (hip nerve pain), or lumbago (lower back rheumatism), take about 2 Tbsp. of warm or cold juice two times a day.²³

One more note of caution: if you run across a red elder or dwarf elder, their medicinal properties are similar, but their berries are poisonous.²⁴

RECIPES

Elderberry chutney: 2 lbs. elderberries, washed, 1 large onion, chopped, 1 pint vinegar, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. ground ginger, 2 Tbsp. sugar, 1 tsp. cayenne and mixed spices (maybe some mace), and 1 tsp. mustard seed. Put the berries in a pan and bruise with a wooden spoon. Add

other ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer till thick, stirring well. Put into jars and seal.²⁵

The berries can also be used in jams, jellies, chutneys, preserves, and wine; recipes for these are fairly common. For extra pie flavor, add one cup of elderberries to your pear or apple pie filling.²⁶

Grigson suggests elder-flower pancakes if you don't like the taste of other elder recipes. Dip the fresh blossoms, still attached to their stems and whorl, into batter, fry in a skillet, and serve with sugar. These are also called elder-flower fritters.²⁷

Try this Elder Blossom Liqueur: Very early in the morning add 14 oz. of sugar to 1 pint water and bring to a boil. As soon as the syrup starts boiling add 7 oz. of fresh elder flowers, preferably with the morning dew still on them, and immediately remove from the heat. Leave to soak, well-covered, for another 15 minutes. When the elder flower syrup is completely cool pour it into a preserving bottle and add 2 pints of vodka. Close tightly and leave to mature for 6 weeks. Then filter and keep in a cool, dark place. Note: The fresh flowers have a better flavor than dried flowers, but are only available in early summer. If using dried flowers, you'll have to

Continued on page 45

Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

ELDER

by Muirghoin & Epona



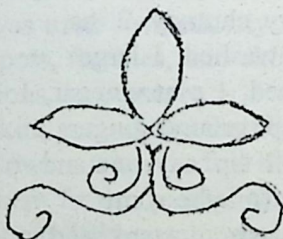
Elder, or Ruis, is the 13th and last lunar month, ending on the Winter Solstice. Elder marks the death of the year, and fills us with fears and uncertainties. The number 13 is also very fitting for this moon, being the 'unlucky' number. In the tarot, the 13th card is the death card, but as anyone who reads tarot knows, this does not necessarily mean a physical death, but rather a death of old ways of thinking or acting: a change in oneself. The Elder brings new growth out of the old shell, and a time of transition.

The glyph of this moon is "I am set adrift on a boundless sea." We feel a sense of abandonment, isolation; of the tide going out without us. Many people feel depressed due to the solar tide; the nights are getting longer, and we are usually at work during the daylight hours. Business people get frenetic at this time, as you can plainly see while out shopping. Men also get a little venomous, in reaction to the strong yin energies of this moon.

These feelings can be alleviated by traditional Christmas customs; namely, celebrations, music, humor, and

gatherings of family and friends. Through this you may gain a sense of where you belong, and begin to feel more grounded. As you surround yourself with people you know you can trust, you will feel more able to make the necessary changes in yourself, and their company will help you through the transitional period.

Just remember, it's normal to feel fear when faced with change, but you must deal with the fear, rather than deny it. Once you pass through that fear, you can look back and understand your feelings. This will bring you safely through the changing waters of the Winter Solstice and into the harbor of Birch, where you will use this understanding to gain the sensitivity of Birch.



Bella

A Ritual for the Yule Sabbat

by Mirhanda Spellesinger

This year Yule falls on Tuesday, December 21; however, it may be celebrated on the closest Saturday, which in this case is December 18. The Saturday after the Sabbat is Christmas day, which could be a problem for those with non-Pagan parents or other relatives.

For those of us who have to get up early on weekday mornings anyway, it might be nice to set the clock a bit earlier in order to greet the rising sun on the morning after the Solstice, and say a few private words to honor the moment of the Sun's rebirth. Check local newspapers or the Weather Channel for the sunrise time in your area.

For simplicity, I have put together this ritual for solitary practitioners. I feel it is easier to adapt a solitary ritual for a group than to adapt a group ritual for a solitary. Just assign different parts to different members and change "I/me" etc. to "we/us" etc.

SUPPLIES: Have a yellow candle in the Eastern quarter of the

circle, red in the South, blue in the West, and green in the North. On the altar: incense and burner, water, salt, athame, cauldron, chalice of wine or (even better) wassail, bell, a green candle in the cauldron, and a red, a white and a black candle arranged around the cauldron. Appropriate cakes for the altar are fruit cakes, sun-shaped cakes, or star-shaped cakes.

In the fireplace (or fire pit if you are lucky enough to be able to celebrate out-of-doors!), place an oak log that has been carved with symbols of the sun such as a rayed disc (☼) and symbols of the Horned God (♄). Have a fire laid and ready to light, or light it and have the log ready to place on the fire at the appropriate point in the ritual. If you do not have the facilities for a fire, you may substitute for it by flattening one side of the carved oak log and affixing green and red candles to it and lighting them at the point in the ritual that calls for the lighting of the Yule Log.

The Ritual

Take your athame and, beginning in the East quarter of the circle, send power through the athame and walk deosil around the circle 3 times. Visualize a bluish flame shooting from the tip of the athame and FEEL the energy creating a

sphere surrounding your sacred space. As you do this, say:

"Here is the boundary of the circle.

*Naught but love shall enter in,
Naught but love shall emerge from within.¹*

By the power of the Mother of all
Life,
And Her lover the Horned God,
So mote it be.”²

*Return to the altar. Mix some salt
into the water and purify the circle
by sprinkling the salt-water around
the perimeter of the circle and
saying:*

“By Earth and Water I purify this
circle.”

*Take the smoking censer around
similarly and say:*

“By Air and Fire I purify this
circle.”

*Light the East quarter candle and
ring the bell once. With your
wand, athame, or index finger,
draw an invoking pentagram, then
say:*

“All hail to thee, skies of wind
and of storm.

Blow ye clear, cold, and sharp
over the sleepig land.

Cast thy spell, O Great Ones,
And remain.

Blessed Be!”³

*Go to the South quarter and repeat
the procedure, saying:*

“All hail to thee, far desert lands
and places warm,

Return ye soon, and with bounty,
To bring back the warm seasons.

Cast thy spell, O Great Ones,
and remain.

Blessed Be!”⁴

*Go to the West quarter, saying this
time:*

“All hail to thee, crystalline lakes
and rimed streams.

Frozen in glittering beauty.

Be ye places of mystery, and

portals elvish.

Cast thy spell, O Great Ones,
And remain.

Blessed Be!”⁵

Go to the North quarter, say:

“All hail to thee, endless realms
of snow,

Frozen tundra, forests in white,
and mountains sheathed in ice.

Rest deeply in glistening silence
and mystery.

Cast thy spell, O Great Ones,
And remain.

Blessed Be!”⁶

*Return to the altar and ring bell
twice. Invoke the God by saying:*

“O hearty God of Frost
Whose beard is of shining ice
And whose staff turns all to
crystal,

Thou whose art is not of these
worlds,

Be with [me, I] do ask.

Give [me] of thy sharp joy.

Let [me] hear the crackling of thy
laughter,

And may [I] know better
Of thy wisdom and thy magic.
Blessed Be!”⁷

*Pause, then ring the bell three
times. Invoke the Goddess by
saying:*

“O most regal Queen of Snow
Whose glistening jewels glitter
about [me],

And whose sorceries turn all to
sparkling white.

Shining empress whose crown is
of the artic stars

And whose mantle is the icy fire
of the borealis,

Be with [me, I] do ask.

May [I] know thy cold and distant
beauty,

And may [I] know better
Of thy wisdom and thy magic.
Blessed Be!"⁸

Pause, then declare:

"This is a time that is not a time,
In a place that is not a place,
On a day that is not a day.

[I] stand at the threshold between
the worlds,

Before the veil of the Mysteries.

May the Ancient Ones help and
protect [me]

On [my] magical journey."⁹

*Ring the bell three times and
declare:*

"This is the Winter Solstice, Yule,
The longest night of the year."¹⁰

The season of life is past, and all
is cold.

Emptiness and bleakness are all
about."¹¹

Darkness reigns triumphant,

Yet gives way and changes into
light.

The Sun King has gone.

Yet within the sacred cauldron of
rebirth

He is once more transformed into
the

Newborn Divine Child of
Light."¹²

*Add incense to the censer (unless
you're using stick or cone incense
instead of granular incense burned
on charcoal), then say:*

"All is cold, and [I] await the
coming of dawn.

As the Sun rises, the Triple
Goddess once more

gives birth to the Divine Child.

In silence and wonder [I] stand
before the sacred cauldron
of rebirth, knowing that one day
[I] too must pass through the
cauldron and be reborn.

For this [I] now give honor to the
Triple Goddess."¹³

*Light the white candle near the
cauldron and say:*

"White is for the Maiden"¹⁴
Thou divine and joyous child.

Fresh and new as the driven
snow."¹⁵

May you plant your seeds of joy
and new beginnings within [my]
life."¹⁶

[I] give greetings to the Blessed
One."¹⁷

Light the red candle and say:

"Red is for the Mother"¹⁸
Thou warm embracing Queen of

Creation

Scarlet as the beauty of the winter
sunset."¹⁹

May you grant [me] gifts of
creative ideas
and the strength to bring them to
completion."²⁰

[I] give greetings to the Regal
One."²¹

Light the black candle and say:

"Black is for the Crone"²²

Thou keeper of the magical
mysteries,

Ebon as the night of sleet."²³

May you give [me] wisdom to
understand

the magical mysteries."²⁴

[I] give greetings to the Wise
One."²⁵

*Light the green candle inside the
cauldron and say:*

"Green is for the newborn Lord of
the Forests,
The Divine Sun Child who comes
once more
into the world.

[I] welcome you
Child and Consort of the
Goddess."²⁶

*Now light the Yule Log or put it
into the fire. (Or light the candle
affixed to it.) As it (or the candles)
burns, chant:*

"The sacred Yule Log fire burns
The Wheel of the Year
Once again turns.
So mote it be!"²⁷

*Take the bell and go to the East.
Ring the bell once and say:*

"Rejoice, O Powers of Air!
Welcome the Divine Child!"
*Go to the South and ring the bell
once, saying:*

"Rejoice, O Powers of Fire!
Welcome the Divine Child!"
*Go to the West and ring the bell
once, saying:*

"Rejoice, O Powers of Water!
Welcome the Divine Child!"
*Go to the North and ring the bell
once, saying:*

"Rejoice, O Powers of Earth!
Welcome the Divine Child!"
*Go back to the altar. Ring the
bell three times and say:*

"Hail, O God of the woodland and
new life!

[I] give you honor and ask your
blessing."

*Stand in silence to receive the
blessing. Ring the bell again three
times, and say:*

"Hail, Triple Goddess, bringer of

life

out of darkness and new life out of
the cauldron of rebirth.

[I] give you honor and ask your
blessing."²⁸

*Again stand in silence to receive
the blessing.*

*At this point, meditation or
trancework may be done.*

*After meditation, celebrate
Cakes and Wine.*

*Take the chalice in your left hand
and the athame in your right (vice-
versa if left handed) and plunge
the athame into the chalice while
saying:*

"Blessings be upon this fruit of
the vine,

But before the cup was filled
the seed was planted,
And so [I] remember and bless
thee both."²⁹

*Set down the chalice and take the
plate of cakes in your receptive
hand. Touch the cakes with the tip
of your athame and say:*

"Bless this food which comes
from the bountiful womb of the
Goddess.

May [I] partake of thy wisdom and
strength."³⁰

*Set the cakes and athame on the
altar and drink a toast to the God:*

"This wine [I] drink to honor
Thee

O God of all things wild and free.
[I] thank Thee for the light of the
Sun.

Hail to Thee, O Great Horned
One!"³¹

*Put some wine and cake into the
libation bowl to be placed outside*

after the ritual. If you are holding your ritual outside (lucky you!) then just pour some wine on the ground and leave a cake.

Celebrate and feast as long as you like or until the Yule Log (or the candles) burns away.

Dismiss the elementals and thank the deities, then release the circle.

The next day when the fire is cold, the ashes of the Yule Log should be gathered up and scattered on the fields or garden—or, if you live in town and have not even a window-box (or potted plant), on the nearest park or cultivated ground.³²

This ritual may be changed or adapted in any way you wish. It is not to be taken as 'holy writ.' As you can see from the endnotes, I have used several sources to put this together, so by all means, make any and all changes to make this ritual workable for you and/or your group!

Notes:

- ¹ Cunningham, Scott. Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner. 1988. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN, pg. 118.
- ² Starhawk. The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess—10th Anniversary Edition. 1989. Harper, San Francisco, CA, pg. 225.
- ³ Fitch, Ed and Renee, Janine. Magical Rites From the Crystal Well. 1984. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN, pg. 47.
- ⁴ Ibid, pg. 48.
- ⁵ Ibid, pg. 48.
- ⁶ Ibid, pg. 48.

- ⁷ Ibid, pg. 48. I have taken this passage from a ritual written for a group and adapted it for a solitary. For a group working, change 'me/I' back to 'us/we.'
- ⁸ Ibid, pg. 49. See note above.
- ⁹ Conway, D.J. Celtic Magic. 1990. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN, pg. 27.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 58.
- ¹¹ Fitch and Renee, pg. 46.
- ¹² Conway, pg. 58.
- ¹³ Ibid, pg. 59.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 59.
- ¹⁵ Fitch and Renee, pg. 46.
- ¹⁶ Conway, pg. 59.
- ¹⁷ Fitch and Renee, pg. 47. (See note #7.)
- ¹⁸ Conway, pg. 59.
- ¹⁹ Fitch and Renee, pg. 47.
- ²⁰ Conway, pg. 59.
- ²¹ Fitch and Renee, pg. 47. (See note #7.)
- ²² Conway, pg. 59.
- ²³ Fitch and Renee, pg. 47.
- ²⁴ Conway, pg. 59.
- ²⁵ Fitch and Renee, pg. 47.
- ²⁶ Conway, pg. 59.
- ²⁷ Dunwich, Gerina. Wicca Craft: The Book of Herbs, Magick, and Dreams. 1991. Citadel Press, New York, NY, pg. 85. The original chant used the words "the Great Solar Wheel" instead of "the Wheel of the Year." Feel free to change it back if you prefer.
- ²⁸ Conway, pg. 59-60.
- ²⁹ Ryall, Rhiannon. West Country Widda: A Journal of the Old Religion. 1989. Phoenix Publishing Inc., Custer, WA, pg. 16. If done by a mixed-gender group, a male would hold the chalice and a female the athame.
- ³⁰ Ibid, pg. 17. The original just said "bountiful womb." I added "of the Goddess" because I thought it sounded better. As in the above note, if this is performed by a mixed-gender group, a woman would hold the athame and a man the plate.
- ³¹ Dunwich, pg. 85.
- ³² Farrar, Janet and Stewart. A Witch's Bible Compleat. 1981. Magickal Child Publishing, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 150.



The Crone

Darkness falls
and the creatures of the night
begin to take their place.

The owl and raven
take their flight.

Death oracles upon
the wingspan of eternity

The Elder tree sways in the chilling wind
under the light of the waning moon.

Its gnarled branches
touches the minds of humans,
spreading bizarre images of Persephone's kingdom
throughout their dreams.

The wisdom of the Earth
rests within the womb
of the one robed by the night.
Her name whispered throughout the centuries.

Upon the wind—
riding across the waves

Veil, scythe, and scissors
are by Her side.
To reign supreme upon Her throne
Hecate, Lilith, and Cerridwen.

The Crone

- by Brigid MoonFire

Folklore & Practical Uses:

BIRCH

by Muirghein ó Dhúin Aonghasa

Betula alba L. or *B. pendula* Roth - European White Birch. Native of Europe and Asia Minor, from Sicily to Iceland. Planted across United States.

B. papyrifera Marsh. - Paper or Canoe Birch. Across North America near northern limit of trees from NW. Alaska east to Labrador, south to New York, and west to Oregon; N. Colorado and W. North Carolina; to 4000' or higher in southern mountains.

B. lenta L. - Black or Sweet Birch. S. Maine southwest to N. Alabama and north to Ohio; S. Quebec and SE. Ontario.

B. nigra L. - River, Red or Black Birch. SW. Connecticut south to N. Florida, west to E. Texas, and north to Minnesota; Massachusetts and S. New Hampshire.

B. occidentalis Hook. - Water Birch. NE. British Columbia, east to S. Manitoba, and south to N. New Mexico and California.

DESCRIPTION & USES

Called the 'Lady of the Woods' by the English poet Coleridge, the birch is an elegant tree with a slender trunk, light branches, and delicate leaves which flutter in the slightest wind. But the most notable feature of the birch is its bark, the color of which gives each species its name. The river birch is easily distinguished even in winter because of its rather tattered and fluffy look; its bark peels off in small pieces.

The smooth outer bark of the northern paper birch was used by the American Indians for making canoes and wigwams. This bark, although thin, is quite strong and

resistant to water. After selecting the largest and smoothest trunks in the spring, the Indians cut sections of the bark and pried them off with a wooden wedge; these would measure about 10-12' long and 2-9" wide. These sheets were stuck together with the fibrous roots of the white spruce, which had been soaked in water to make it supple. The seams were then waterproofed by coating them with the resin of the balsam fir. The resulting canoes were lightweight—a 4-passenger size weighed only 40-50 pounds.¹ John Burroughs said of this canoe, "The design of a savage, it yet looks like the thought of a poet and its grace and fitness

haunt the imagination."²

The Indians also used the wood of the paper birch for snowshoe frames, and rolled the bark into a taper to burn to keep away mosquitoes. The paper-like bark was useful for kindling a fire, and also for a moose-calling horn, a straight tube about 15" long and 3 or 4" wide at the mouth, tied about with strips of more birch bark. The bark makes a unique natural paper, but Peattie suggests looking for a fallen tree, as the tree does not replace its outer living layers. Instead, bands of an ugly black scar tissue are formed.³

The paper birch only occurs in the northern states and Europe; however, a similar species known as the southern paper birch is found solely in the high mountains of North Carolina and eastern Tennessee.⁴

The black birch is unusual in that its bark and twigs have a distinct wintergreen flavor. "So closely does a distillation of the bark and twigs resemble the true oil of wintergreen, that commercially at one time it had almost taken its place. Now, however, most of this oil is prepared artificially by chemical means."⁵

The bark of the white birch has been used for centuries for various purposes; rolls of birch bark have even been found when excavating Mesolithic sites. The

bark was used by the Scottish Highlanders to make candles, and Northumbrian fishermen went spearing at night with birchbark candles or torches.⁶ Its twigs were also used for thatching, wattles, and broom making, and in the manufacture of cloth. The bark contains tannic acid, and is used for tanning, giving a pale color to the skin. Birch Tar oil, manufactured in Russia, is useful for keeping away insects and preventing gnat-bites.⁷ The leaves make a good humus if composted. In Russia, the wood was used for making charcoal, shoes were made from the bark, and an alcoholic drink was distilled from the unopened leaf buds.⁸

MEDICINAL & FOOD

The young shoots and leaves of the European birch are astringent, diuretic, and diaphoretic. The shoots and leaves can be used to make a laxative, and the leaves are good for gout and rheumatism. To eliminate gravel and dissolve kidney stones, take 1 to 1 1/2 cups of the leaf tea a day. Supposedly a decoction of the leaves is good for baldness, but I wouldn't place too much faith in this remedy! It may work better for insomnia; take the tea before going to bed as a mild sedative.⁹ Birch is quite useful for skin problems, and can be used in a

sitz bath. Boil 2-5 lbs. birch leaves with enough water to cover for 1-2 hours in a cotton bag or pillow case. Put this in enough hot water to reach the waist in a bathtub, and drench your shoulders, neck, back, arms, and face with the bag for as long as you feel comfortable. If you feel weak or too relaxed, go ahead and get out. Do this once or twice a week 30 times consecutively for internal and external complaints.¹⁰

A lesser known species of birch, *B. pumila*, was used by some American Indian tribes, who gathered the conelike fruiting structures and boiled them to ease menstrual cramps. They also roasted these cones over a campfire and inhaled the smoke to cure nasal infections.¹¹

The black birch has similar medicinal properties to the European birch, with the added benefit of being an anthelmintic, meaning it expels worms. Birch tea, made from an infusion of the leaves, was used by the American Indians for headaches and rheumatism, and a decoction of the bark and leaves was brewed for fevers, kidney stones, and abdominal cramps due to gas. A tea decocted from the inner bark helps diarrhea and boils, and for external use on burns, wounds, and bruises, apply the tea as a poultice.¹²

Birch contains methyl salicylate, which has counter-irritant and analgesic properties, so the old remedy for rheumatism is justified. As the skin absorbs this chemical, a poultice is quite useful for skin irritations and minor wounds. Modern pharmacists combine synthetic methyl salicylate with menthol in creams and liniments to relieve the pain of musculoskeletal conditions such as rheumatism, osteo-arthritis, and low back pain.¹³

Due to its wintergreen flavor, birch bark tea was used by the settlers as a gargle and mouthwash to freshen their breath, and in the Appalachians and the Ozarks today, people chew twigs of the black birch to clean their teeth. Rodale's even suggests that people who want to quit smoking consider chewing on a birch twig to relieve the oral fixation.¹⁴ The inner bark can be chewed like chewing gum, and, being rich in starch and sugar, is a good emergency food if you're out walking in the woods.

The European and black birches are valued for their sap; beer, wine, and vinegar are made from it in some parts of Europe.¹⁵ Here is a simple recipe made from the black birch. To tap the tree, make a cut in the stem when the sap is rising, around March. The sap will flow

freely, and 16 to 18 gallons may be drawn from one large tree. To prevent harm to the birch, though, pull only what you need, and stop up the incision afterwards.

Birch Beer: Place 4 quarts of finely cut twigs or inner bark into a 5-gallon crock. Add 4 gallons of water or birch sap (better) and bring to a boil. Stir in 1 gallon of honey (add some cloves and lemon peel, if you like), and remove from heat. When cool, strain to remove the bark and twigs. Keep the liquid in the crock, and place 1 yeast cake on a piece of toast and float it on the liquid. Cover the pot, and let the mixture ferment for about 1 week, until it begins to settle. Bottle the Birch Beer, and store in a cool, dry place. It can be kept for several months, up to a year, depending on storage conditions.¹⁶

FOLKLORE

The birch is a tree of magical powers; witches were said to have ridden on broomsticks made of birch on Walpurgis (Beltane) Night,¹⁷ and birch was also a common May Pole. To protect against enchantment and fairies, the Irish and Welsh hung crosses of birch over their doors. Artillery arrows, bolts and shafts were made of birch; the 'mana,' or magic, of the birch may have

been thought to give them extra power.¹⁸

One of birch's more traditional uses has been for brooms and switching rods: Grigson proposes that the magic of the birch, and its companion, the broom plant, helped sweep evil as well as dirt out of the house. Likewise, in disciplining children, maybe the birch also literally thrashed the Devil out of them!¹⁹

The birch's name may have originated from the Latin word *batuere*, to strike. The birch certainly has a long history as an instrument of discipline; children know birch switches all too well, and supposedly Christ was beaten with birch rods. We get our word 'fascist' from the *fascies*, a bundle of birch sticks tied to an axe with the blade projecting. These were carried by Roman soldiers, and symbolized the state's authority to punish by flogging (the sticks) or putting to death (the axe).²⁰ These fascies were also carried by the lictors, who swept the way for the Roman magistrates with birch twigs.²¹

But from this discipline comes new beginnings: "As though Birch were a passport back to life, the dead sons who return in the ballad of the Wife of Ussher's Well, are wearing

Continued on pg. 49

Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

BIRCH

by Freya Laughing Bear



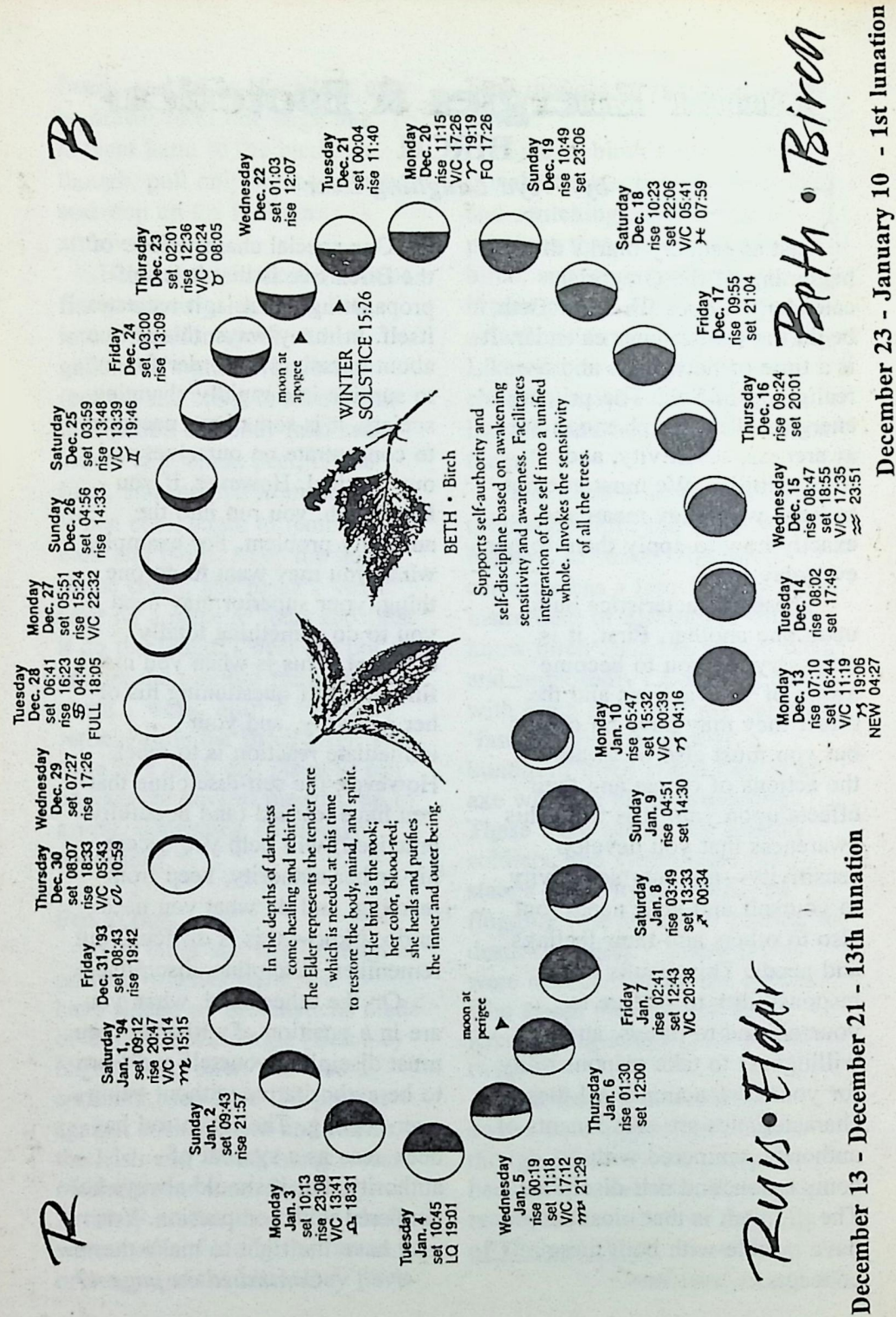
Just as January marks the beginning of the Gregorian calendar, so does Birch, or Beth, begin the Celtic lunar calendar. It is a time of new starts and a realigning of Self. The primary energies of the Birch moon are awareness, sensitivity, and responsibility. We must attempt to learn what they mean and exactly how to apply them to our everyday lives.

These characteristics build upon one another. First, it is necessary for you to become aware of your actions and the effect they may have on others; but you must also be aware of the actions of others and their effects upon you. It is from this awareness that you develop sensitivity—not only sensitivity to yourself and your needs, but also to others and their feelings and needs. This results in a responsibility to be true to yourself and to others, and a willingness to take responsibility for your own actions. All these characteristics are components of authority, tempered with compassion, and self-discipline. The problem is that most people have trouble with both these concepts.

One special characteristic of the Birch tree is that it is self-propagating—that is, it recreates itself. In many ways, this is true about ourselves. In order for us to survive in a rapidly changing society, it is sometimes necessary to concentrate on ourselves and our survival. However, if you have a job, you run into the authority problem. For example, while you may want to do one thing, your superior may need you to do something totally different. This is when you may find yourself questioning his or her authority, and your immediate reaction is to rebel. However, the self-discipline that you have learned (and hopefully practiced) will help you accept his or her authority, keep from reacting, and do what you need to do. I know this is difficult, but remember; discipline, discipline!

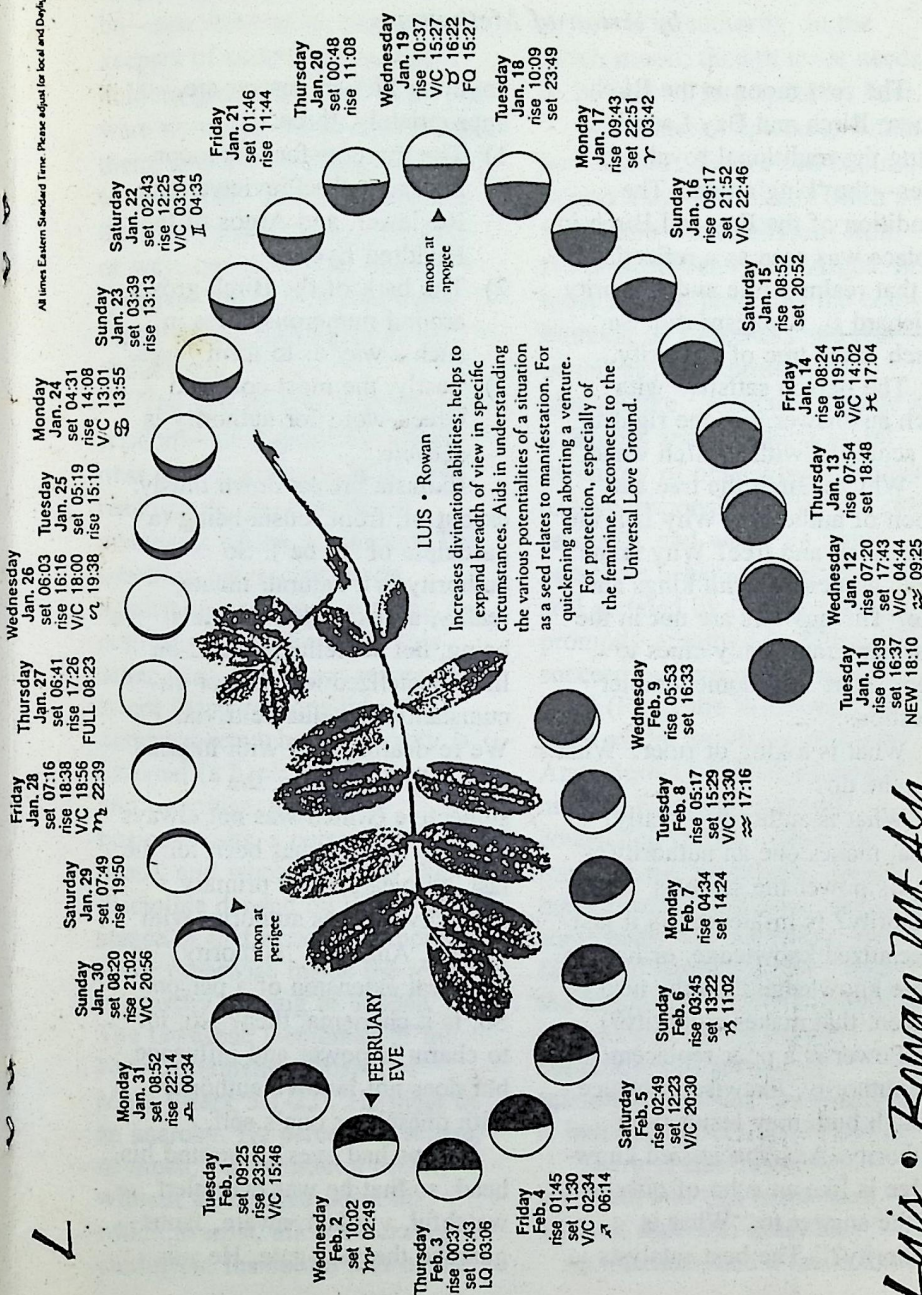
On the other hand, when you are in a position of authority, you must discipline yourself and learn to be authoritative without being over-bearing. The Birch rod has been seen as a symbol of authority, but it should always be tempered with compassion. You may have the right to make the

Continued on page 47



From THE '93 & '94 LUNAR CALENDAR: DEDICATED TO THE GODDESS IN
HER MANY GUISES. Copyright © 1992 by Nancy F.W. Passmore.

2nd lunation



Luis • Rowan Mt. Ash

January 11 - February 9

Birch: A Question of Authority

by Arion of Methymna

The first moon is the Birch moon; Birch and Bay Laurel being the traditional royal life-trees—the 'king's tree.' The condition of the Bay and Birch in a place was seen as a reflection of that realm's rule and authority (Richard II, Shakespeare). So Birch is the tree of authority.

The person satisfied with such an answer gets the right to be scourged with a Birch wand.

Why is Birch the tree and moon of authority? Why is it the first moon and tree? Why is the Birch associated with kings and rule? The answers are not in the first paragraph, only clues to them. Start with some simpler questions:

What is a king or ruler? What does he do?

What is authority—really? What makes one an authority?

(Is power the same as authority? Is influence? Is it just specialized knowledge, or having more knowledge than the next person, that makes authority?)

Power is a poor replacement for authority, likewise influence, though both may result from authority. Any specialized knowledge is like an echo of only part of the answer to "What is authority?" The best catalysts to

anything like an answer are, appropriately, three:

- 1) The mascots for this moon are Janus the Previewer and Reviewer, and Argos of the Hundred Eyes.
- 2) The bark of the Birch grows around numerous boles in such a way as to form 'eyes.'
- 3) Lastly, the most common Greek word for authority is *εξουσια*.

Exousia breaks down thusly: ek-out of, from; ousia-being (a participle of 'to be'). So authority is a natural, innate, reality, an extension of one's being, not something added-on like specialized learning or circumstantially valuable trivia. We're dealing then with internal realities, intangibles, the subjective (which was not always the dirty word it has been for the last 200 years). The primary authority then, is authority with oneself. And this "authority" is a natural extension of a person. So, is it charisma, then? No, for to charm is power and influence but does not involve authority with oneself or one's self.

Argos had eyes all around his head, so that he was ever alert, watchful, vigilant, aware. Janus guarded the year-gate. He was

aware of what had been and looked upon what was yet to be—simultaneously. Both were keepers of something precious, holding great responsibility. Both were watchful, aware of all about them, and not by means artificial to them; they could not confine their awareness to just one path or way, one direction, one perspective. They were aware and sensitive and responsive to all about them.

The eye is often a symbol of wisdom—of responsible awareness over against the knee-jerk, reactionary, uni-directional awareness of the adolescent. The rebelling adolescent reacts against another and, in doing so, confirms the authority of this other. Reacting is not responding, is not being respons-ible. A person reacts whose authority is external (a book, a man in gilt and trappings, a group in business suits, a person long dead), and whose strength and discipline depend on the circumstance of that external authority—for otherwise inside the reactor is anarchy waiting to happen: The Gerasene Demoniac of the New Testament's Gospel of Mark (Mark 5:1-23). He must be an anarchy. He perceives, senses, so much, but without a center, without an internal point in which to trust, all is a buzzing confusion. Inside, no part of the

reactor will take responsibility.

Responsibility, then, is involved in authority, in the Birch moon; though more needs to be said of responsibility later.

Awareness, vigilance, within and without, before and behind, is also a syllable of the Birch's true name—as is obvious from the mascots Janus and Argos. In most 12-step programs the combination of awareness and responsibility is expressed in phrases like "regularly engage in a fearless and searching moral inventory of ourselves...continued to take responsibility for our own recovery, and when we found ourselves behaving in patterns still dictated by (our condition), promptly admitted it. When we succeed, we promptly enjoyed it..." (From the Welcome Pamphlet of the Survivors of Incest Anonymous.) Failure of awareness, in psychological and counseling jargon, comes out as transference, projection, denial, inappropriate emotional reactions, some histrionic behaviors. But failure of awareness, no matter the form, is a matter of intention—some part of the person chooses not to receive or acknowledge input. So awareness is indivisible from responsibility.

There is also sensitivity involved, and this is the most difficult aspect to describe.

Awareness, and a facile form

of responsibility, without sensitivity, is incarnated in the facade of Mr. Spock of the old Star Trek series. While he was aware of practically everything that occurred around him, he labored at insensitivity—at being unaffected. Events and crises had no impact on his manner or behavior. Pity, or compassion in its popular sense, is not the sensitivity of Birch. A sensitive person is teachable, willing to be vulnerable, open, willing to be as aware as organismically possible and open to being affected by what he or she becomes aware of. Even to the point of ‘com-passion,’ the point of ‘feeling-with’ others (though this point, and all it entails, is the lesson of another moon). Even to the point of ‘feeling-with’ an-other, not just sadness, but all four basic emotions: mad, sad, glad, and afraid.

A Birch disciple is aware of all he or she can do, and senses, is sensitive to, all he or she can be. Without sensitivity, understanding is impossible; a person becomes merely a chronicler, a data collector. Sensitivity is vital, else the Medusa of simple self-awareness will turn one to stone without the mirrors that others provide.

This awareness and sensitivity is not sufficient. People with dazzling awareness and alertness, as well as incredible sensitivity,

end up in mental institutions, in co-dependent or caretaking relationships, or as stunted adolescents with no self of their own. Neither sensitivity nor awareness alone can calm the anarchy inside nor govern or prioritize the demands and anarchy outside. They just make both realms into more acute sources of pain.

What turns such anarchies into communities is responsibility—the ability to respond.

A king is a ruler, a regulator, the one with the regulae or rules. He or she takes the sensitivity that a life of awareness provides and he or she chooses what response is appropriate to him or her. And in the calm, not dispassionate but non-judgmental, inner stillness is the achievement of self-authority, the fulcrum of right action and creativity. A king must be his own regulator first, else he can be no one’s ruler: To accept, with a severe scrutiny. To reclaim the qualities once considered foul, scary, obscene; not acting from them necessarily but not making fear of them your master, and not making them monsters. To reconsider those qualities once considered angelic, noble, fine, with a steady and consistent awareness that pierces to the core of things, to the ambiguity in motives. Just like this moon’s mascots, who see clearly; aware, open, and

responsive, not condemning or disowning any input...so also does a Birch-king or Birch-queen not close their eyes—any of them—out of fear or laziness: To do so leads to reacting again and to the diminishing of sensitivity.

Being responsible with as full an awareness as possible is a discipline, it is being a disciple, being teachable. If you react to the demands or coercions without, or the demands and emotion-gales within, you are a slave. If you can actually choose how you will respond to the clamor, and you know who is making the choice—whose is the responsibility—then you have become the Birch's disciple.

How can a person learn to be responsible? Well, how do you learn to breathe? There is no simple, or complex, how-to. By making choices and being aware of the choices you make. By you yourself making yourself accountable for those choices. By you yourself becoming the one to judge the appropriateness of your actions. If this all sounds like a result or end rather than a method or means, well...that is because again—heresy of heresies—there is no “how-to,” no technique. How authority is achieved is an individual thing, and this is only appropriate since we deal with Birch—the loner.

One or two other concerns.

Birch is the rune of living authority, self-mastery, the solitary, the aloof one. Yet Birch is also the gatekeeper for communion and true compassion. How?

Well, remember Hamlet and King Lear? Oedipus? In each instance, Claudius, Lear, or Oedipus, the status of the king or malfeasance in the kingship was echoed in the land and the vassalage. A king was his universe, his realm, in microcosm. Likewise, an honestly aware and sensitive person contains or claims the objects and people about him or her, instinctively—the acquisitive mode to human perception. More to the point, an honestly aware and sensitive person acknowledges their capacity to resonate at some level with everything that exists—the empathic mode of human perception that Terrence touched on in the claim “I am a man, nothing human is alien to me.”

Perhaps a simpler way to express this is to say that the king does not have to go disguised among his people to understand them—he need only go wandering through the land of his own psyche to see he is capable of everything any human being has ever done—he has a deep and real commonality with all creation. A reciprocal Heisenberg Principle, and one not confined to a human-to-

human realm, but an undeniable co-respondence of human to created entity. So Birch is the tree of the One, the individual and the totality, distinct from everything else and indivisible from everything else. Also, in order to appreciate community, communion, one must be a Self, be their own person. One must have learned the initial lessons of the Birch moon.

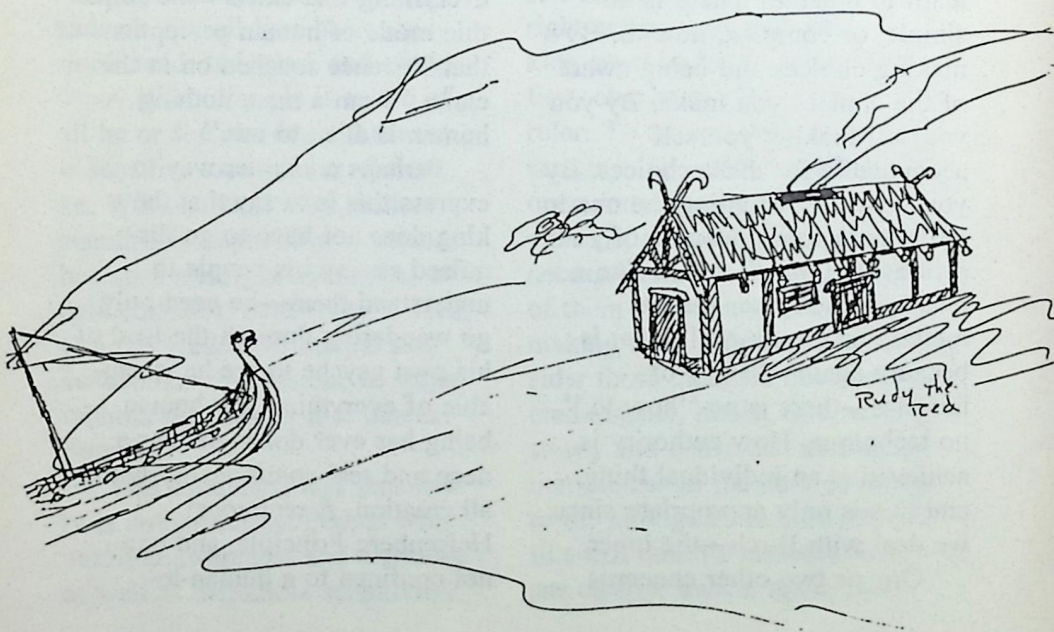
Two more points need to be mentioned.

First: The lessons of the Birch moon are one lesson; awareness, sensitivity, and responsibility are reference points for one capacity and range of behaviors. Listing three aspects for the Birch-moon lesson is a concession, a compromise in the face

of the limits of the English and Romantic language and thought patterns.

Second: What is given here is an exposition of an initial level in the mystery that is the first moon. There is more, involving a deepening into what is called intuition and what is blithely labelled "divine-human dialogue" and the healing of the thought (or wish)/action split that so plagues westerners' behavior (the 'what I think to do I never get around to' and 'I had meant to do that, but...' syndrome). All these fall under Birch's lesson of authority. ☼

Arion of Methymna is a former student of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and has also been active in the Craft for 10 years.



Folklore & Practical Uses:

ROWAN

by Muirghein ó Dhúin Aonghasa

- Sorbus aucuparia* L. - European Mountain Ash. Native of Eurasia, grows wild in the deciduous forests of Europe and Asia; naturalized in SE. Alaska and across S. Canada to Newfoundland, and from Maine to Minnesota and California.
- S. americana* Marsh. - American Mountain Ash. W. Ontario to Newfoundland, south to N. Georgia, and northwest to N. Illinois and Michigan; to 5000-6000' in southern Appalachians.
- S. sitchensis* Roem. - Pacific Mountain Ash. Coastal southwestern Alaska, through Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and northwestern California.

DESCRIPTION & HISTORY

The rowan is a member of the *Rosaceae*, or rose, family, and like the rose, is valued for its beauty. The rowan is commonly grown in gardens, but is just as lovely in its natural setting. "So attractive is it that the mighty conifers seem as if they had as their first business the setting-off by contrast, with their unmoving darkness, the lively charms of this little tree...filling in all the sunny spaces between their crowding shadows."¹

A small tree, the rowan rarely grows past 30 feet. Its compound leaves of 9-17 leaflets each are similar to a sumach, and also to an ash; thence its common name, mountain ash. The rowan produces small white flowers in flat-topped clusters, giving way to its characteristic bright orange-red

berries in the fall, which remain throughout the winter. The name 'rowan' refers to these berries, being derived from an old Scandinavian word meaning red.²

These berries are an important winter food for birds, especially cedar waxwings, who eat them when other foods are scarce.³ In Europe, fowlers (bird catchers) used the rowan's fruit as bait for their traps. The berries were also made into birdlime, a sticky substance smeared on branches to capture the birds.⁴ This practice gave the European rowan its specific name, *aucuparia*, which is derived from the word *auceps*, meaning a fowler, or 'to catch birds.'⁵

The rowan's wood is tough and elastic, but the tree is usually too small for the wood to be of much commercial importance. In

the past, the European species was used for poles and hoops for barrels, due to its flexibility.⁶ John Evelyn wrote that fletchers (arrow-makers) recommended rowan wood for bows, next to yew.⁷ Later, the wood was used in turnery because of its fine grain and ability to take a high polish.⁸ The bark and berries can also be used in tanning, and to make a black dye.⁹

FOLKLORE

The rowan has many country names, the most common being quickbeam or quicken. These names derive from the Old English 'beam' meaning 'tree,' and 'quick' as an adjective in the sense of 'lively'. The quickbeam was a tree endowed with life. 'Quicken' also means to come or return to life, and as such, the tree used in an ancient ritual to restore fertility to barren or bewitched land, was arguably the rowan.¹⁰

The rowan's other names are equally magical: wicken, wigger, wicker, witchen, witch-wicken, witch-tree, and witchwood. According to Grigson, the 'witch' names come from the Old English 'wice' or 'wic,' meaning a tree with flexible branches or timber. Grigson believes, however, that "the sense of 'witch' was undoubtedly felt in the *wic* names for the

tree."¹¹ And according to Edward Step, the name 'rowan' may be derived from the old Norse *runa* meaning 'a charm.'¹²

The rowan was considered a powerful tree for protection in the old world. The Irish nailed pieces of rowan over their doors on May Day to keep out fairies and witches, and placed it around the butter churns and in the milk pails to prevent theft of the milk and butter. Rowan was commonly used in Yorkshire, the Isle of Man, and the Highlands and Islands, for similar protection on May Day. In various parts of England, butter and cream were stirred with a rowan-stick, and special cakes were made over a rowan fire.¹³

Rowan kept the dead from rising, and was planted in graveyards and built into coffins and biers. Rowans were also planted around houses, probably to keep witches and fairies out. "In Wales, if you were foolish enough to step into a fairy circle, only a stick of rowan laid across the circle prevented you from staying there a year and a day."¹⁴

Witch-wands, or divining rods, were made of rowan for metal divining, although the hazel works best for finding water. A piece of wood carried in the pocket protected one from ill-wishing and elf-shot afflictions

of rheumatism. The wood was also used for walking sticks because of its power against 'fascinations.'¹⁵

Finally, rowan figures in the story of Diarmuid and Grania, from the Irish Finn Cycle. "On their flight from Finn, Grania's husband, they stay in the wood of Dubhros by permission of the fairy guardian of the Quicken-tree, who is thick-boned, large-nosed, crooked in the teeth, with one red eye in a black face. By day he sits at the foot of the tree, by night he sleeps in the branches. The tree had sprung from a berry dropped by the Tuatha de Danaan. Grania asks for some of the wonderful berries, and to get them Diarmuid has to kill the fairy guardian."¹⁶

MEDICINAL & FOOD

The berries of the rowan are the most useful medicinally. The ripe berries make a good gargle for sore throats, inflamed tonsils, and hoarseness, being soothing to the mucous membranes.¹⁷ An infusion of the berries is also useful for hemorrhoids,¹⁸ and the fresh berry juice is mildly laxative.¹⁹ The ripe berries contain citric and malic acids, and was at one time used for scurvy.²⁰

The berries become astringent when cooked into a jam, and will

help mild cases of diarrhea. One of the sugars in the fruit is sometimes given intravenously to reduce the pressure to the eyeball in glaucoma.²¹

The bark, which is also astringent, is good for diarrhea and vaginal problems. The bark of the American rowan has similar properties, and was once used as a tonic in fevers "of supposed malarial type," where it was often substituted for cinchona bark,²² a Peruvian tree which itself contains quinine.²³

The Welsh used the berries to brew ale, and they can also be made into beer, perry and cider. If you have rowans in your area, try making jelly from the berries; it's said to be excellent with cold game or wild fowl.²⁴ When roasted, the berries can be used for a coffee substitute and are better than chicory and poor quality coffees.²⁵

Pick the berries in the late summer, when they ripen into a bright red. The bark can be gathered in the spring or fall. Try the berries in this liqueur recipe:

Rowan Berry Ratafia:

Thoroughly clean 1 lb. of rowan berries, put them in a bowl and mash them with a fork. Sprinkle 1/2 lb. of sugar on top and stir into the mash. Put a cloth over the bowl and leave it for a few days. Then add 2 pints of vodka and transfer to a preserving bottle

or jar. Add a few herbs to taste (the berries are bitter; try orange or lemon peel, mace, and cinnamon), make sure the bottle is securely closed and leave for a month. Filter and add sugar to taste. Bottle and age for 4-6 months.²⁶

Note: The fresh berries are only available in the last half of the year, and then only if you live up north or in the mountains. If using dried berries, you'll have to adjust the sugar and vodka accordingly, since some of the weight of fresh berries is water. Make a small amount first and adjust to taste.

Notes:

- ¹ Peattie, Donald Culross. A Natural History of Western Trees. 1950. Bonanza Books, New York, NY, pg. 509.
- ² Little, Elbert L. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees - Eastern Region. 1980. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 511-512.
- ³ Green, Charlotte Hilton. Trees of the South. 1939. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, pg. 296.
- ⁴ Brimble, L.J.F. Trees in Britain. 1946. MacMillan and Co. Ltd., London, England, pg. 178.
- ⁵ Ibid, pg. 175-176, Little, pg. 511.
- ⁶ Grieve, Mrs. M. A Modern Herbal (2 volumes). 1931. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 69.
- ⁷ John Evelyn. Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees. 1664.
- ⁸ Brimble, pg. 178.
- ⁹ Grieve, pg. 69.
- ¹⁰ Grigson, Geoffrey. The Englishman's Flora. 1955. Phoenix House LTD, London, England, pg. 176.

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 176.

¹² Brimble, pg. 176. This may also be the Scandinavian word mentioned by Little, pg. 511-512, meaning 'red.' You decide which is most correct.

¹³ Grigson, pg. 174.

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 174.

¹⁵ Ibid, pg. 175.

¹⁶ Ibid, pg. 174.

¹⁷ Lust, John. The Herb Book. 1974. Bantam Books, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 339.

¹⁸ Grieve, pg. 70.

¹⁹ Lust, pg. 339.

²⁰ Grieve, pg. 70.

²¹ Lust, pg. 339.

²² Grieve, pg. 70.

²³ Ibid, pg. 631.

²⁴ Ibid, pg. 70.

²⁵ van Doorn, Joyce. Making Your Own Liqueurs. 1980. Prism Press, San Leandro, CA, pg. 64.

²⁶ Ibid, pg. 64.



MISTLETOE TRIVIA

In Scandinavian mythology, Balder, the god of Peace, was killed with an arrow of mistletoe. The other gods and goddesses were quite saddened by this and asked that he be restored to life. On his return, mistletoe was given to the goddess of love, who decreed that anyone who passed under it receive a kiss to show that mistletoe was a symbol of love. This custom apparently became associated with Christmas due to the Druids, who welcomed the new year with branches of mistletoe.



Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

ROWAN

by Freya Laughing Bear

F

It is within the first few moons that we begin building a foundation that will see us through the coming year. We begin collecting the building blocks and attempt to learn each lesson as it is shown to us. In Birch moon, we learned of authority tempered with compassion, awareness, sensitivity, and responsibility. In the Rowan moon, we build upon that which we have learned in Birch. For example, the compassion that we learned in Birch now becomes deeper and generates out toward others—it becomes more mature.

Along with compassion comes the need to learn communication. It is important to be able to communicate clearly with ourselves and our low self, in order to bring our prayers and wishes to fruition. (If you aren't familiar with the low self, read "The Huna System of Magic & Prayer" in Issue 5 of **THE HAZEL NUT**.) Rowan also teaches us the importance of communicating clearly with those around us. As a baby (usually) learns to talk before it learns to walk, we must learn to communicate (and listen) now, or we won't be able to understand fully

the lessons of future moons.

Rowan is similar to Birch, in that it is a time of conceptions, beginnings, and initiations. However, the Rowan carries this further, being the "Quickbeam," or "lively tree." Things which were begun in Birch are either 'quickened' or aborted; that is, either they are hurried along and strengthened, or they are just ended, since there appears to be no reason to continue on with them. This choice, however, lies with you.

This brings us to the Mystery of the Seed: "in the beginning lies the ending." The idea is that one tiny seed that falls to the ground, experiencing a kind of death, roots itself, and begins to grow. As the plant begins to flourish it produces its own seeds, and, once again, a seed falls off and starts the cycle over again.

What we see, and hopefully understand, is that this seed represents us in many ways. We are the 'seed' and what we plant now will grow with us throughout the year. The seed is also a thought form—the beginning of a prayer or wish. What is placed

Continued on page 49

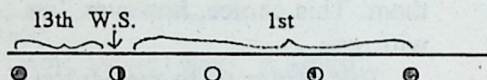
Calculating the Start of the First Moon

by Epona

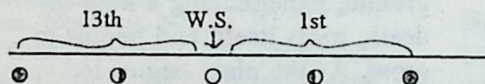
If you do a little math, you'll notice that 13 lunations of 28.5-29 days each cannot possibly fit into a 364-day solar year, not to mention the fact that the new moon doesn't conveniently occur when the Solstice does. If the lunars kept rotating through without regard to the normal year, we'd eventually wind up with the Birch moon beginning in April, and be no better off than the Romans in 63 B.C. To keep from accumulating such an error, the 13th lunar (Elder) ends at the Winter Solstice, and the 1st lunar (Birch) begins after the Winter Solstice. Simple enough, right? Sort of. Read on...

Possibilities:

Waxing of moon in 13th lunar, then more waxing, full moon, and waning moon in 1st lunar.

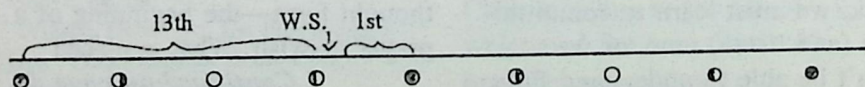


Waxing moon in 13th lunar, full moon on Winter Solstice, then waning moon in 1st lunar.

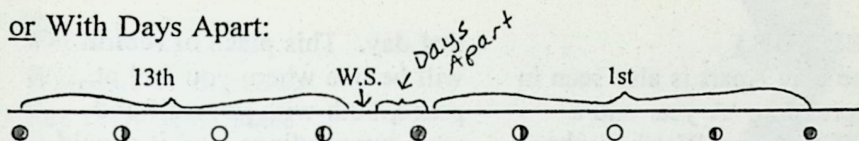


Things get tricky when the Winter Solstice intercepts the 13th lunar between the last quarter and the new moon. The last few days of the lunation after the Winter Solstice may be part of the 1st moon, or 'days apart' (left over days). If the Birch moon starts at the proper time, the new year's Imbolc should be in Rowan (Luis), the autumnal equinox should land in Vine (Muin), and the 13th lunar should begin before the Winter Solstice.

Without Days Apart:



or With Days Apart:



Things to remember:

- ☼ The lunar year ends with the Winter Solstice.
- ☼ The 13th lunar precedes the Winter Solstice, and the 1st lunar follows it.
- ☼ The 13th lunar and/or the 1st lunar may or may not have the full number of days in a lunation, and one of them may miss having a full moon.
- ☼ The Winter Solstice is not counted as part of either moon, but is a day by itself, and sometimes the Day Apart.
- ☼ The variables which determine the start of the new lunar year (first lunar) depend on how many days are 'left over' from the thirteenth lunar after the Winter Solstice intercepts it.
- ☼ If one of the moons doesn't have a full moon in it, you may celebrate the lunar on the day closest to the Winter Solstice. ☼

The Day Apart

by Muirghein & Epona

The Day Apart is the left-over day or days which occur between the Winter Solstice and the beginning of the Birch moon; sometimes it's on the day of the Winter Solstice. This left-over day is the equivalent of a leap-day, and serves as a way of lining up the lunar calendar with the solar year.

The extra day or days are also connected with our modern weekday-names. The Egyptian year was divided into 12 months of 30 days each, with 5 days left

over at the year's end. These days were not considered part of the normal year, and were named for important deities: Osiris, Horus, Set, Isis, and Nephthys. The Anglo-Saxons had a similar calendar, and their extra days were named Tiw, Woden, Thor, Frig, and Seterne. From these last names, plus two other later ones added by Christian missionaries, come the names of our seven weekdays. (See "The Origins of Our Modern Calendar," Issue #4 of **THE**

HAZEL NUT.)

The Day Apart is also seen in the expression, 'A year and a day,' of Irish and Welsh myths. This stems from the calendar of the British Isles, and denotes a lunar year of 13 lunations of 28 days each (364 days), plus the extra day to make 365. This extra day is the Day of (the birth of) the Divine Child. This 'son of a virgin mother' is always born at the Winter Solstice (Robert Graves, The White Goddess, 1948, The Noonday Press, New York, NY, pg. 95), and refers to the Sun King, or the Oak King; the young sun who defeats the darkness of winter, and will grow in strength until the Summer Solstice. Physically, of course, this symbolises the lengthening of the days, which occurs after the Winter Solstice.

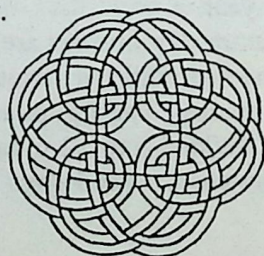
The Day Apart is thus a day out of time, apart from the normal year, and on such days, magical things can occur.

The Day Apart, also called the Earth-Mystery Day, is still a magical day, and quite relevant to us. Those of the Faerie Faith use this day in a ritual sense, to go to their own special place of rebirth (best if it is outdoors), and communicate and reconnect with the Earth Mother. To truly benefit from this, you should first seek out your own spot before

that day. This place of rebirth will be one where you feel at peace, both with yourself and your surroundings, and it should be near enough your home so you won't have any excuse not to go. This spot will feel totally right to you, and may imbue you with a certain feeling of power and energy.

On the Day Apart, go to your spot, and sit in a still, receptive state. Reach out and communicate with the Earth Mother, and give her a chance to speak to you. Remember your impressions, but don't attempt to analyze them right now. Stay as long as you feel you need to—usually a half hour or so. Then thank the elements and the Earth Mother, and return home. Be sure to write down your feelings and memories at this time.

The Day Apart is the day we choose for this Earth-Mystery primarily because of the heavy yin energy, with just the beginning of yang coming in right after the Winter Solstice. However, this ritual is not intended to be enacted only once a year, but at any time you feel is right. ✨



Birch Moon

Welcome to the circle.
For there is no place
To just begin
Without meeting the ending.
Yet no lesson ends
For it is always present.

(The Mystery of Eternity)

The moon of beginning
Has lessons of ending.
The moon of ending
Has lessons of beginning.

(The Mystery of Being Alive)

One cannot tell of the Birch alone
Without telling of all the others,
As one moon is found in another;
Yet, each is different;
As we, as humans, are alike and different.

(The Mystery of Relatedness)

Yet, one tree leads to the other
And is found in the other
Yet is different:
The energy is found differently in each moon
Yet is present in each moon.

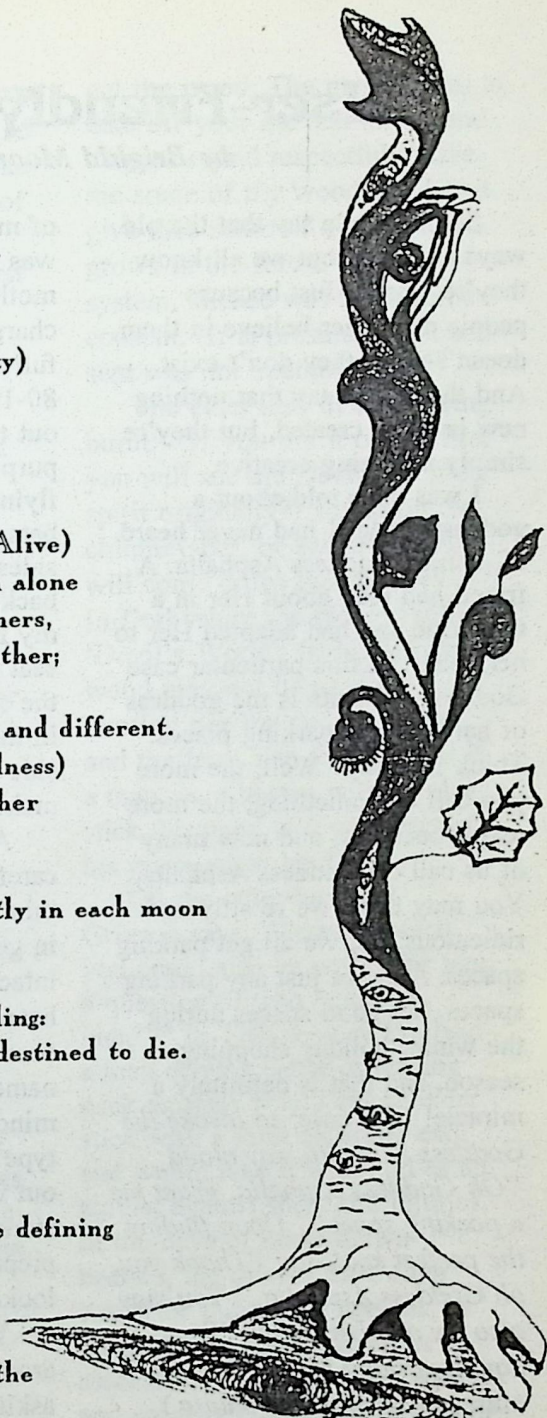
(The Mystery of Time)

In your beginning is your ending:
As you are born, so you are destined to die.

(The Mystery of Seeds)

What is said about one
Can be said about another
But is different
The difference lies not in the defining
But in the experiencing.
For defining is monotonously
the same,
But experiencing **ENDS** at the
concept of sameness.

- by Epona



Kf

User-Friendly Deities

by Brigid MoonFire

Some people say that the old ways are dead, but we all know they're wrong. Just because people no longer believe in them, doesn't mean they don't exist. And then some say that nothing new is being created, but they're simply not being creative.

I was once told about a goddess whom I had never heard of, named Goddess Asphalta. A friend had read about Her in a magazine and had adapted Her to her needs. In this particular case Goddess Asphalta is the goddess of hard-to-find parking places. Think it's silly? Well, the more you call on something, the more real it becomes, and now many of us call on Goddess Asphalta. You may think we're silly and ridiculous, but we all get parking spaces. And not just any parking spaces, but good spaces during the winter holiday shopping season, and that is definitely a miracle! (*Ed. note: to invoke the Goddess Asphalta, say aloud "Oh Goddess Asphalta, grant me a parking space!" Upon finding the perfect spot, say "Thank you, oh Goddess Asphalta." You may also try another deity: "Squat, Squat, parking spot!", but you must always thank Asphalta.*)

So now I bring you someone

of my own creation. Last year I was invited to my best friend's mother's Croning. We were in charge of picking up an entire full sheet cake which would feed 80-100 people, and bringing it out to the site. We put this huge purple-iced cake with a witch flying in front of a full moon and bats and elaborate decorated sides into my car. It fit in the back seat, but close enough to my friend's 7-month-old's car seat that he could put his hand in the cake. Not good. So we put it in the trunk, secured it on every side and angle, and prepared to make the 2-hour journey.

As we closed the trunk (very carefully, of course), we tried to think of Someone to ask for help in getting there with the cake intact. But neither one of us had heard of a cake goddess. After some racking of our brains, the name Goddess Pastrius came to mind. (If any of you get these type of ideas, don't shout them out in the middle of a grocery store parking lot unless you're prepared for some very strange looks.)

We made the 2-hour trip around lovely hairpin curves, asking for Goddess Pastrius's

Continued on page 47

Folklore: Elder, cont. from
pg. 15

adjust the water, sugar and vodka accordingly, since at least half of the weight of fresh flowers is water. Make a small amount first and adjust to taste.²⁸

FOLKLORE

"The Elder grows like a weed, it does not live to a great age, its young stems are not strong, it stinks, yet produces sweet-smelling flowers, and sweet, if cloying elderberries. It makes effective medicine and poor timber, it is neither bush nor tree, neither bad entirely nor entirely good."²⁹

These conflicting properties reflect the centuries-old history of the elder, a powerful plant which had many inherent protections, including an elder-spirit or Elder-tree Mother, who is the tree and who protects it from those who would cut or harm it. If one were foolish enough to build a cradle out of the elder's wood, the Elder-tree Mother would torment the baby, causing it to sicken, or the fairies would steal it.³⁰ In Denmark, the Elder-Tree Mother was called the *Hylde-Moer*, and in the 14th century the elder was called the *Hyldor* and *Hyllantree*.³¹

However, if one were willing to bargain with the Elder-Tree Mother, one could safely

cut the wood. The method was to take off your hat and kneel, and "try to sound respectful: 'Give me some of thy wood and I will give thee some of mine when it grows in the forest.' In this system, silence was taken to be consent. (It is presumed that consent was not uncommon)."³²

The elder also disliked being burnt: "If you put it on the fire, you will see the Devil (the Elder spirit originally?) sitting on the chimney-pot, or else the Devil will come down the chimney."³³ In Derbyshire the elder is called 'Devil's Wood.' In Ireland the wood may not be used for burning nor for making boats; and the Irish also thought that if a man were beaten with an elder stick, his hand will grow out of his grave when he dies.³⁴

On the other hand, as Grigson says, "Power against you could also be power for you: a question of who held the gun."³⁵ In 17th century England a man driving cattle or leading pack animals would cut an elder stick with a joint on either end, and would take it with him as an amulet against sores and injuries. In the days of horse-drawn hearses, the drivers used elder wood for their whip handles, as protection in their dangerous association with the dead. Warts and sorrows can be transferred to an elder stick, which is then

buried, and clay from beneath an elder helps a toothache.³⁶

In northern European beliefs, the goddess Freya chose the elder as her home because of its many medicinal qualities.³⁷ The Russians believe the elder drives away evil spirits, and the Bohemians use it in a spell to relieve fever. The Serbs carry a stick of elder in wedding ceremonies to ensure good luck, and the English thought the elder was never struck by lightning.³⁸ If gathered on May Day eve and hung on windows and doors, it would ward off witches. However, it seems elder was also attractive to witches, who would transform themselves into the tree, and thus should be avoided after dark.³⁹

In the middle ages it was commonly believed that Judas hanged himself on the elder tree, which as a result grew the fungus called 'Jew's Ears' on its bark.⁴⁰ Another tradition says that the Cross of Calvary, on which Jesus was nailed, was made from the elder, and due to its great shame, it shrunk from a tall, straight strong tree to a shrubby plant. Possibly due to these beliefs, the elder became a symbol of sorrow and death.⁴¹ It was considered dangerous to sleep in the shade of an elder because of its evil, narcotic effects. Lust says that one reason for the elder's bad

reputation is the poisonous properties of most of the plant when eaten raw; apparently poisonous plants in the middle ages belonged to demons and witches.⁴²

Notes:

¹ Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs. Edited by Claire Kowalchik and William H. Hylton. 1987. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA, pg. 178.

² Grieve, Mrs. M. A Modern Herbal (2 volumes). 1931. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 265.

³ Hutchens, Alma R. Indian Herbology of North America. 1973. Merco, Ontario, Canada. Published in London, England, pg. 115.

⁴ Grieve, pg. 265.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 265.

⁶ Ibid, pg. 267.

⁷ Ibid, pg. 268.

⁸ Ibid, pg. 268.

⁹ Ibid, pg. 268.

¹⁰ Rodale's, pg. 180.

¹¹ Grieve, pg. 269.

¹² Rodale's, pg. 178.

¹³ Lust, John. The Herb Book. 1974.

Bantam Books, New York, NY, pg. 178.

¹⁴ Grieve, pg. 270.

¹⁵ Lust, pg. 178.

¹⁶ Brown, Phelps O., Dr. 1875. The Complete Herbalist. Published by author, Jersey City, NY.

¹⁷ Lust, pg. 179.

¹⁸ Grieve, pg. 270.

¹⁹ Hutchens, pg. 115.

²⁰ Rodale, pg. 180.

²¹ Lust, pg. 178-179.

²² Hutchens, pg. 115.

²³ Lust, pg. 179.

²⁴ Ibid, pg. 180-181.

²⁵ Grieve, pg. 276.

- ²⁶ Rodale's, pg. 179.
²⁷ Grigson, Geoffrey. The Englishman's Flora. 1955. Phoenix House LTD, London, England, pg. 354.
²⁸ van Doorn, Joyce. Making Your Own Liqueurs. 1980. Prism Press, San Leandro, CA, pg. 74, 72.
²⁹ Grigson, pg. 352.
³⁰ Ibid, pg. 352.
³¹ Grieve, pg. 265-266.
³² Rodale's, pg. 181.
³³ Grigson, pg. 352.
³⁴ Ibid, pg. 352, quoting from Irish Naturalist, March 1914.
³⁵ Ibid, pg. 352.
³⁶ Ibid, pg. 352.
³⁷ Lust, pg. 586.
³⁸ Grieve, pg. 266.
³⁹ Rodale's, pg. 178.
⁴⁰ Grigson, pg. 353.
⁴¹ Grieve, pg. 266.
⁴² Lust, pg. 586.



User-Friendly, cont. from pg. 44
 help on each and every one of them. Then we got to the dirt road filled with washed out gullies, and my friend held the cake in her lap as we jostled the rest of the way there. At this point we decided to call upon Goddess Pastrius's helpers—Her icing fairies. Much to our relief, Goddess Pastrius and Her icing fairies allowed the cake to remain unscathed, and was the hit of the celebration. So if you are ever in need of a guardian of cakes and pastries, don't forget Goddess Pastrius. And don't be afraid to create your own deity in times of need.



Esoterica: Birch, cont. from pg. 27

rules, but be careful not to become a tyrant to those under you.

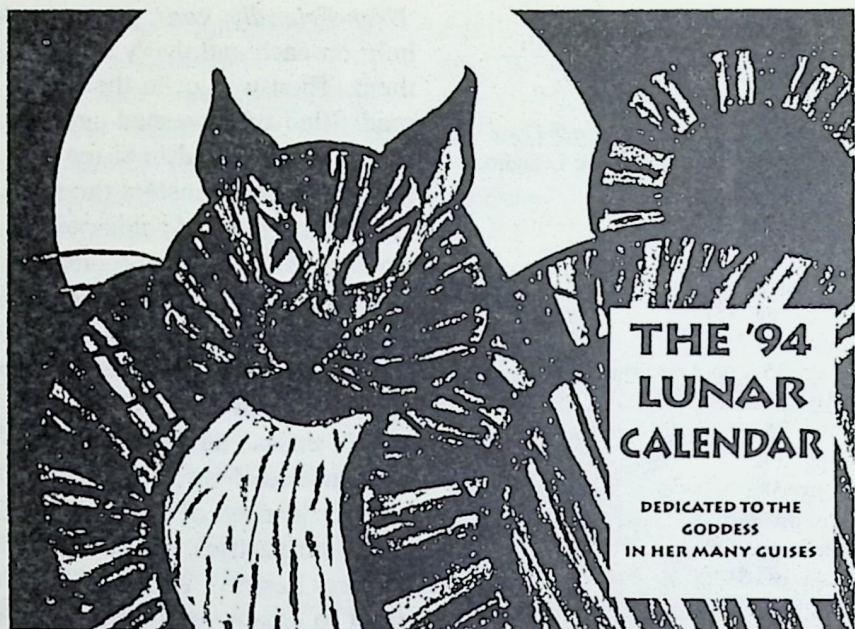
The glyph for this moon is "I am a stag of seven tines." This mythological stag has lived 14 years, and has acquired somewhat of a royal status. As a result, he also acquires a certain amount of authority. This symbolic ruler does not and cannot rule with a steel thumb and expect results; he must feel compassion for his followers and be aware of and sensitive to their needs and desires.

So after battling the fears and

uncertainties of Elder and having to deal with the headaches of Christmas, that breath you've been holding through the last part of the year is now released, and things will 'break loose.' It is now time to sit down and begin to integrate and recreate yourself.

Use the discipline of this moon to stick to your resolutions, and begin that long-awaited exercise program. Let the Birch teach you compassion, sensitivity, and understanding, and the true meaning of authority. And remember, the Birch tree itself can help you through the difficulties of this moon.





We are delighted to announce publication
of the 18th annual edition of

THE LUNAR CALENDAR:

DEDICATED TO THE GODDESS IN HER MANY GUISES

Nancy FW Passmore, editor

Cover: Augusta Agustsson

32 pages with fresh works from 25 artists & writers

How to order: call or write with your complete name and (UPS) address.

Please include check, money order, VISA, or Master Card in the appropriate amount.

As the calendar remains a labor of love, your tithes/donations are appreciated.

We ship gifts everywhere!

US \$14.95

ISBN 1-877920-04-5

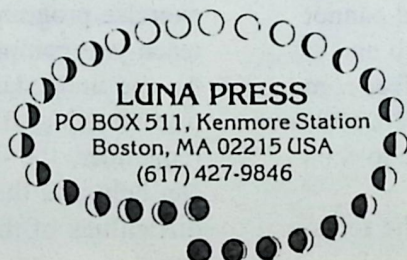
Discounts: 2 copies/\$27; 3/\$40; 5/\$65; 10/\$120; 13/\$140.

(Massachusetts residents only please add 5% sales tax.)

Please include domestic shipping & handling as follows for a single address:

1 to 3 copies \$3.75; 5/\$6; 10/\$7; 13/Luna pays shipping!

THANKS & LUMINOUS BLESSINGS!



Folklore: Birch, cont. from pg.

26

birchen hats from a tree which
...neither grew in syke or
ditch

Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair
eneugh.^{17,22}

Notes:

¹ Rodale's *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs*. Edited by Claire Kowalchik and William H. Hylton. 1987. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA, pg. 44.

² Green, Charlotte Hilton. 1939. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, pg. 87-88.

³ Peattie, Donald Culross. 1950. *A Natural History of Western Trees*. Bonanza Books, New York, NY, pg. 385.

⁴ Green, pg. 88.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 95.

⁶ Grigson, Geoffrey. *The Englishman's Flora*. 1955. Phoenix House LTD, London, England, pg. 244.

⁷ Grieve, Mrs. M. *A Modern Herbal* (2 volumes). 1931. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 103.

⁸ Brimble, L.J.F. 1946. *Trees in Britain*. MacMillan and Co. Ltd., London, pg. 236-238.

⁹ Lust, John. *The Herb Book*. 1974. Bantam Books, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 118.

¹⁰ Hutchens, Alma R. *Indian Herbology of North America*. 1973. Merco, Ontario, Canada. Published in London, England, pg. 38-39.

¹¹ Rodale's, pg. 44.

¹² Ibid, pg. 44.

¹³ Ibid, pg. 44-45.

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 44, 46.

¹⁵ Grieve, pg. 103.

¹⁶ Weiss, Gaea and Shandor Weiss. 1985. *Growing and Using the Healing Herbs*. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA.

¹⁷ Lust, pg. 581.

¹⁸ Grigson, pg. 244.

¹⁹ Ibid, pg. 244.

²⁰ Lust, pg. 581.

²¹ Brimble, pg. 236.

²² Grigson, pg. 244.

R

*Esoterica: Rowan, cont. from
pg. 39*

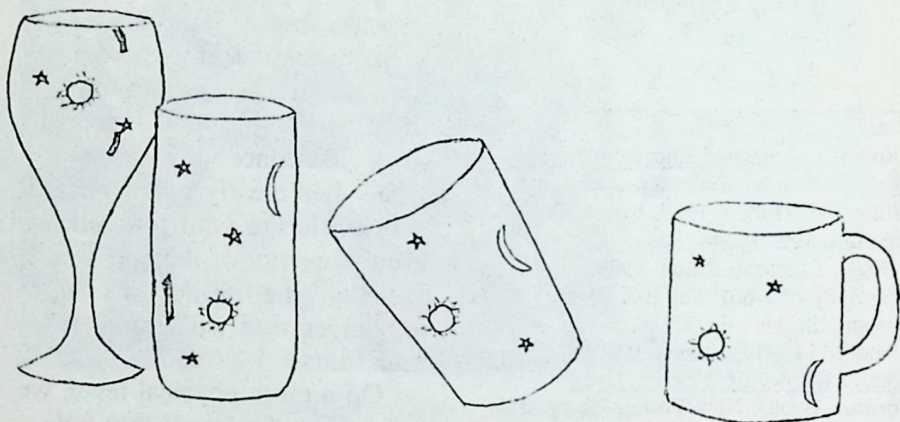
into the seed is your choice—your ideas, your hopes, your desires. This brings into effect the other lessons of Rowan: you must first conceive your thought form, then clearly communicate your wishes to your low self, and use the energy of this moon to 'quicken' the life in that seed, so the prayer seed will grow and bear fruit.

On a more physical level, we are seen as the 'seed' that falls off the 'tree' of our parents. We fall to the ground and develop our own roots. We then begin to grow and flourish and make lives for ourselves. We produce our own seeds—our children—and then we grow old and die. However, we are not dead—we are carried on with our children. There is life and death in the Mystery of the Seed. In order for the seed to become, there has to be a death of sorts, but there is also life in the seed; and this continues the cycle. This Mystery touches all facets of life, since there can be no life without death; just as there can be no death without life. It is an ever-spinning circle that touches everyone.



Libbey® Glass

Introducing the Celestial Collection
Suns, Moons, & Stars on Cobalt Blue Glassware



12 oz. goblet:	\$3.09
16 oz. cooler:	\$1.59
14 oz. all-purpose cooler:	\$1.59
13 oz. mug:	\$2.89
13" platter (Large Sun on Clear Glass):	\$13.69

Also available: Clear glass star-shaped candle holders
Conveniently cupped — keeps the wax in the holder, not
on the table. Approx. 4" diameter, 2" high: \$0.89

UPS Shipping available anywhere
205-749-2701, or FAX 205-749-2702
Visa, MC, Discover

Libbey Glass
120 Fox Run Parkway, Suite B-2B
Opelika, AL 36801
Located in USA Factory Stores; Exit 62 off I-85

*Moonlit path before me winds
between the darkness of the trees.
When soon before the cold track finds,
the waif that seeks to please.*

*The moons have passed from Imbolc time
'till round with child is She.
And when the Solstice bells do chime,
the fruit is born to thee.*

*Before the dark of Winter falls,
the Mother withers to the bone.
And on the night when the Oak King calls,
to rest She goes, the Crone.*

*Weary will the Oak King grow,
until death draws too near.
The Sun returns the Holly foe
to kill the Oak King's fear.*

*The Sun along his upward track,
the Holly Stag, the Greenman's quest.
Upon the Moonlit path I'm back,
to stir the waif from rest.*

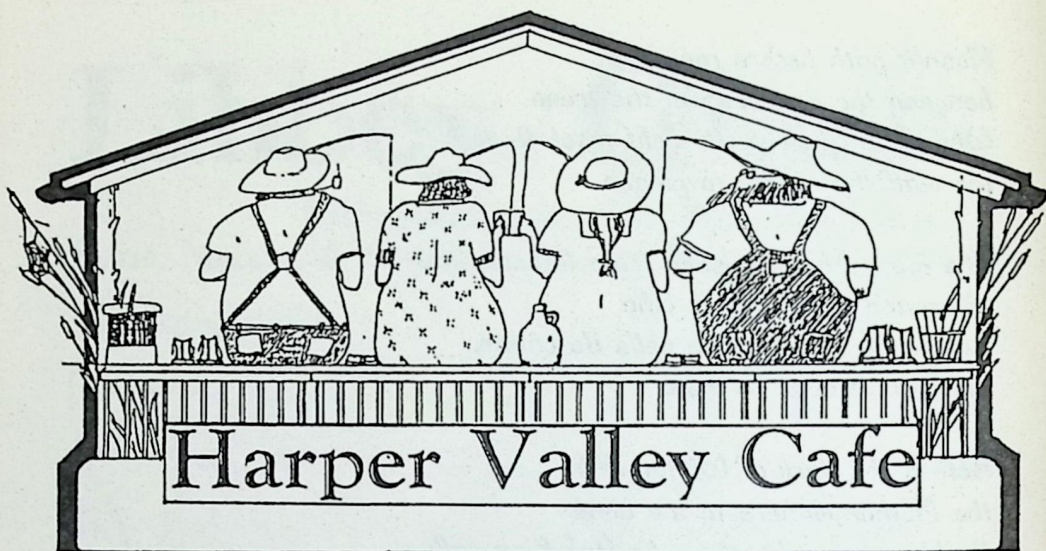
- by Coll ap Rhiannon



ROWAN

*To Begin
Is to See.
In the Beginning
Is the Ending
In the Seeing
Is the Door*

- by Epona

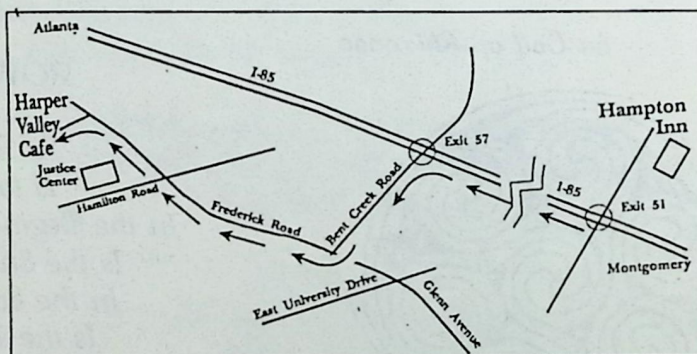


(205) 745-5476

Catfish • Ribs • Barbeque

Steaks • Vegetables

OPEN 11-2 for lunch Monday-Friday and Sunday
5-9 for dinner Monday-Thursday
5-10 for dinner Friday and Saturday



The Harper Valley Cafe

is located at 1702 Frederick Road, just east of the Justice Center
on Frederick Road between Auburn and Opelika.

Please join us soon!

Announcements:

Announcements are published as a community service; there is no charge for this listing. Publish your classes, concerts, festivals, parties, etc.

Aroma Stimulation Seminar: Recapture the lost art of creating scent. Learn to use scent to bring happiness to your home and success to your career; use aromas to bring love to the lonely. Learn the secrets of scent and perfume from an established, experienced aromacist. Taught by Michelle Griffon.

Saturday, January TBA, 3:30 p.m. Fee \$15.00.

At Mystic Gryphon, #40 Monroe St., Montgomery, AL, 36104.

Contact Shane Earnest at Mystic Gryphon for info and reservations: 205-263-2915.

Classified Ads:

Classifieds are 20¢/word per issue; P.O. box and number count as one word; city, state and zip as two words. 10% discount for 6 issues paid in advance. Deadline for next issue: February 1. Enclose payment with ad; make checks payable to Linda Kerr.

MISCELLANEOUS

FOR SALE: Women's size 5 black leather pants, motorcycle style, fully lined, \$150; size 8 black leather, thigh-high, spike-heeled boots, \$40; size 5 black leather mini skirt, \$15. Linda, 821-4683.

Complete your knowledge of the Celtic Sacred Trees! Back Issues of **THE HAZEL NUT** are now available in limited quantities, each covering one or more of the lunar trees.

**Number
of each:**

		Price:
[]	Hawthorn June 1993	1.50
[]	Oak July 1993	1.50
[]	Holly August 1993	1.50
[]	Hazel/Vine September 1993	2.50
[]	Ivy/Reed October 1993	2.50

Prices include postage.

Make check or MO payable to Linda Kerr, and mail to: 1831 Opelika Road, Auburn, AL 36830.

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Editor:

Heartfelt congratulations on your wonderful publication. We at Luna Press are educated, informed, and amused! Who could ask for anything more? Well, yes, money! Please enter the following gift subscriptions to **THE HAZEL NUT** beginning with the current issue!

Luminous Blessings!

Nancy F.W. Passmore, LUNA PRESS

Publishers of The Lunar Calendar: Dedicated to the Goddess in Her Many Guises.

Need some last-minute Christmas or Yule gifts? Send a gift subscription to THE HAZEL NUT! Just \$10.00 gets them a year of informative and original Pagan writing, including the lunar trees, the Lunar Calendar, herbs, reviews, and more! We'll even include a card with your name on it. And don't forget one for yourself!

Please enter a gift subscription
to THE HAZEL NUT.

() 1 year @ \$10.00 or

() 2 years @ \$18.00

Please enter my subscription
to THE HAZEL NUT.

() 1 year @ \$10.00 or

() 2 years @ \$18.00

Name

Name

Address

Address

City, State, Zip

City, State, Zip

Phone Number

Phone Number

From: (Your Name)

Cut out and return to THE HAZEL NUT, c/o Linda Kerr, T83T Opelika Rd., Auburn, AL 36830. Make checks payable to Linda Kerr.

Bubbles From the Cauldron

Book Reviews, Etc.

Ariadne's Thread: A Workbook of Goddess Magic, by Shekhinah Mountainwater. 1991. The Crossing Press, Freedom, CA. Softcover, \$14.95.

This is a book about women's spirituality, and as such, most men would probably not enjoy it. I was put off by her seeming dislike of men, but overall, I enjoyed this book. I did not agree with everything the author put forward (for instance, I feel her statement that menstrual cramps and PMS are caused by patriarchal oppression is a step backward. Gone are the days when we are told that our discomforts are "all in our

head" and "if we'd accept our femininity, we'd not experience menstrual pain!"). Still, this book does make one think about the divine feminine. Ms.

Mountainwater's more militant or bizarre ideas (such as women can become pregnant by exposing themselves to moonlight!) can be overlooked to gain the wisdom that this book also contains. I have mixed feelings about this book—it has good points and bad. Overall, however, I think women have much to gain by reading it. Be forewarned, though, if you like men (as I do) you may be offended by parts of Ariadne's Thread.
Reviewed by Mirhanda Spellesinger

Samhain Celebration, November 6, 1993, Roxanna, Alabama.

People began arriving at Roxanna on Friday night, but most folks came in Saturday afternoon, as the festivities didn't actually begin until 3:00. We began by loading up some hay bales in the back of Russell's pickup truck; he took several of us on a pretty scary hay ride through Roxanna! Jeff and Stacey were in charge of the candle-leap game, in which a circle of 12 candles is laid out, each representing one month of the year. As a person jumped over each candle, Stacey checked to see if the

flame sputtered (it would be a bad month) or if it went out (really bad!). We didn't have many folks brave enough to try this game!

Evening saw a wonderful pot-luck feast, and two contest winners; Coll for best costume, and Scott for best jack-o-lantern. The night had turned cold, so after a brief procession around the top of the hill to thank the elements, everyone huddled around the bonfire. Several of us warmed up quite nicely, dancing to Celtic music. In spite of the extreme cold (about 25°), the festival turned out to be quite fun.

Reviewed by Muirghoin

THE HAZEL NUT

Linda C. Kerr

1831 Opelika Road

Auburn, AL 36830

Linda C. Kerr