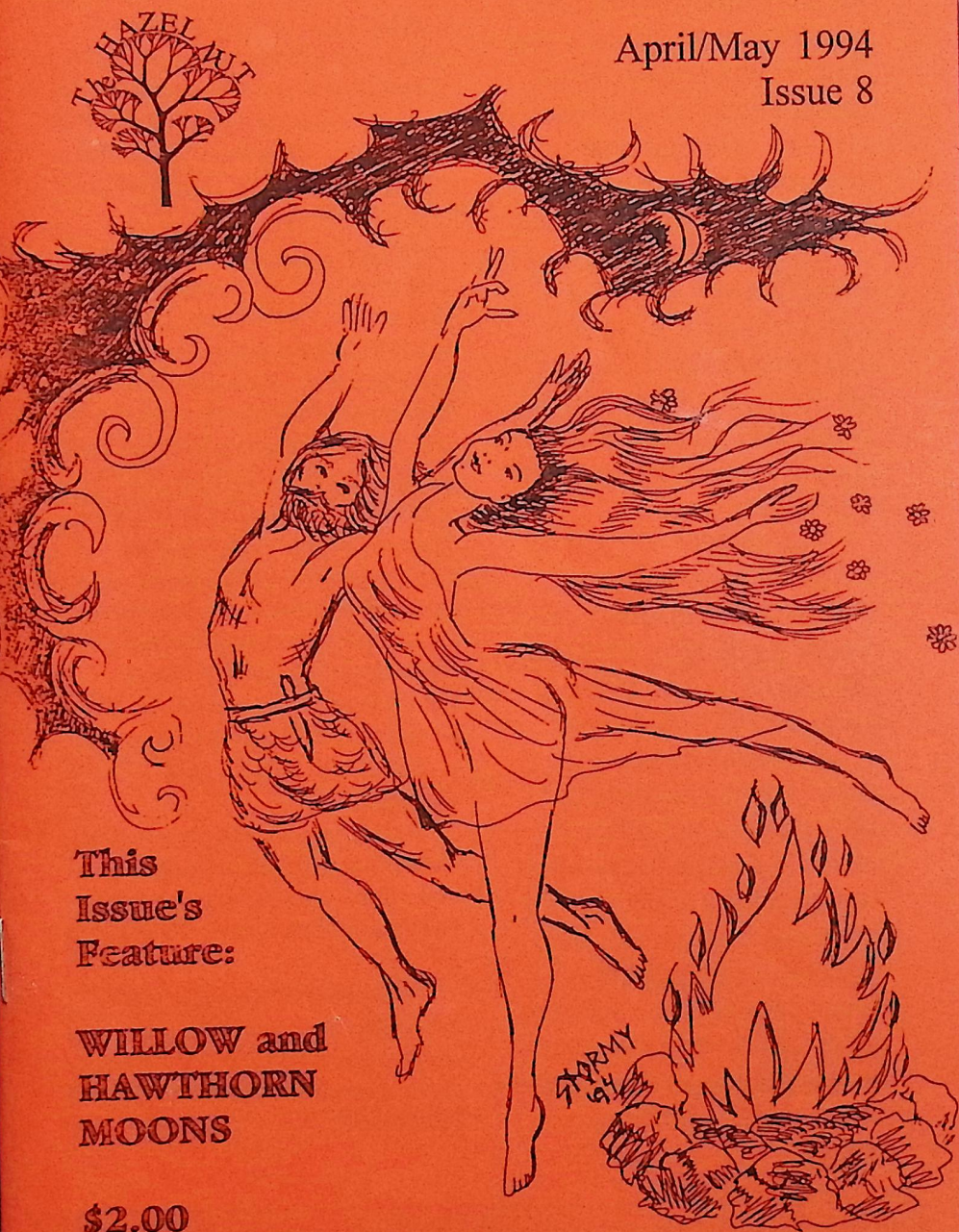


THE HAZEL NUT

A Journal of Celtic Spirituality and Sacred Trees

April/May 1994

Issue 8



This
Issue's
Feature:

WILLOW and
HAWTHORN
MOONS

\$2.00

THE HAZEL NUT, Issue 8,
Copyright © 1994. April/
May 1994, Willow/Hawthorn
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Single copy price is \$2.00;
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In Celtic legend, the hazel
tree drops its nuts into the well
below, where they are
consumed by the salmon. While
cooking one of these salmon,
Fionn accidentally tastes it, and
instantly gains all knowledge. As
such, the hazelnut has come to
symbolize wisdom in a nutshell.
THE HAZEL NUT attempts to
bring you this wisdom in a
small package every issue, with
historical research, herbal
information, viewpoints, poetry,
artwork, and reader
submissions. We also explore,
in depth, one or more trees of
the Celtic tree calendar/alphabet
(Beth-Luis-Nion system) as
researched and explained by
Robert Graves in The White
Goddess. This includes its
herbal uses, folklore, esoterica,
lunar energies, psychology,
mythology, symbolism, and
other aspects. In this we hope
to make the sacred trees a real,
and positive, part of your
everyday life.

Willow is the fifth tree in the
Celtic tree calendar. It usually
occurs in April or May, and this
year it runs from April 10-May
9.

Hawthorn is the sixth tree in
the Celtic tree calendar. It
usually occurs in May or June,
and this year it runs from May
10-June 8.

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From Brighid's Hearth:

Chickweed

by Imré K. Rainey

One of Nature's most interesting and helpful herbs is also one of Her most available weeds. Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), also known as tongue grass, satinflower, white bird's eye, and starweed—amongst an array of other names—grows mainly on cultivated lands of rich, moist soil. To locate her, look for small (about a thumbnail or smaller) leaves, growing in opposed pairs, that are smooth and uniformly green. The easiest way to identify chickweed is to look for the small five petaled flowers growing all over her—they look like little stars (*Stellaria* means star in latin).

Chickweed contains substances referred to as saponins. Saponins literally dissolve fatty tissue. Because of this, chickweed is wonderful when used against bacterial infections (she dissolves the bacterial cell walls which are made of layers of fat and protein), especially in the lungs. However, she not only helps your body fight the bacterium, but also helps nourish your

lungs. Try fresh chickweed to help with any chest irritations including smoker's cough, pleurisy, chest colds, asthma, allergies, etc.

Try fresh chickweed poultices on wounds. Like plantain, chickweed will draw out foreign debris from a wound. An added benefit here is that chickweed will also help fight infections. Either fresh or as an infusion, chickweed will help fight internal wounds/infections also.

One of chickweed's most impressive attributes is her ability to heal irritated and infected eyes. Use chickweed poultices on conjunctivitis, pinkeye, sties, eye ulcers, and inflamed eyes.

Most of all, use chickweed as basic salad material. She tastes great and is ultra nourishing. Chickweed contains a storehouse of vitamins, mainly A and C, and minerals which are easily digestible. Try to use her fresh when possible, otherwise tictures and capsules of dried herb will do. Happy foraging!

RUNES

By STORMY

Germanic:	THURISAZ - Giant (Thurs, Strong One)	Gateway
Gothic:	THUTH - The Good One	Decision
Old English:	THORN - Thorn	Protection
Old Norse:	THURSE - Giant	Thor's Hammer

Mythology:

Thor's hammer, Mjollnir, the Destroyer, was originally said to be made of stone and to have fallen from the heavens as a meteorite. Ancient alchemy recognized two kinds of meteorites; **Glass** and **The Irons**.

Moldavite, which is an extraterrestrial kind of peridot, is just one of many kinds of **Glass** meteorites that reach the earth's surface. The other kind of meteorite, **The Irons**, includes metals such as copper, nickel and iron. It was thought that Mjollnir was made of an iron and nickel alloy meteorite. Later, it was said to be the work of dwarf smiths who invented the secret of the iron and nickel alloy that made up the composition of Mjollnir. Through a miscalculation by the dwarf Sindri, the handle of Mjollnir was made too short.

Thor's hammer obeyed his every command. If it left his hand to do his bidding, it would return every time. It was so powerful that its ringing could be heard when it struck. Thor also

commanded the thunderbolts.

Known as a storm God, he was easily irritated. He would roar like thunder and sling thunderbolts when angered. At the same time, he was very benevolent and a strong friend to peasants and yeomen.

Thor, son of Odin, was first married to the giantess, Iarnsaxa. She bore him the sons Magni and Modi, who were to be gods in the future. His second wife, Sif, bore him a son, Lorde, and a daughter, the Earth Goddess Thrud. Thor's home in Asgard was called Thrudvangar, "Thrud's Field."

The Rune:

A thorn is small, but it can really be felt! Problems small may appear bigger than they really are. This rune may indicate a point of time when an important decision must be made. Seeking counsel of someone wise and experienced is definitely a good idea to put the situation in the correct perspective. Good advice can result in a successful out-

come. Problems and fears can then be encountered as creative challenges.

Thorn is a very powerful rune. When used for good, it calls upon the protection of mighty Thor. It is highly advisable to never use Thorn for any negative purpose. The Wiccan Rede says to never hurt or harm anyone; the only exception being self-defense. The runes are not toys! They are a very powerful tool psychologically, metaphysically, and psychically. Always use them wisely with love and a positive intent.

Upright Position:

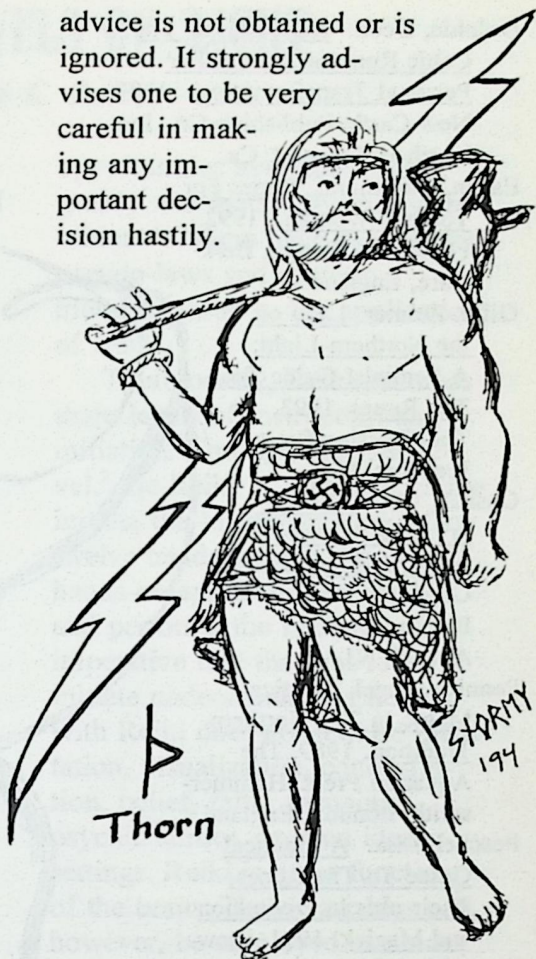
Know that you are strong and can overcome blockages. Although this is a rune of a Gateway, it advises that you wait! Get expert advice and follow through. Once the advice is followed, the true Gateway appears.

Sometimes this rune indicates that something is really bothering you or you are doing something to bother someone else. You'll know if this is true. Talk things over and get 'it' out of the way by communicating and resolving your differences.

Reversed Position:

The reversed position is much the same as above except through some hard-headed action or short-sightedness, the proper

advice is not obtained or is ignored. It strongly advises one to be very careful in making any important decision hastily.



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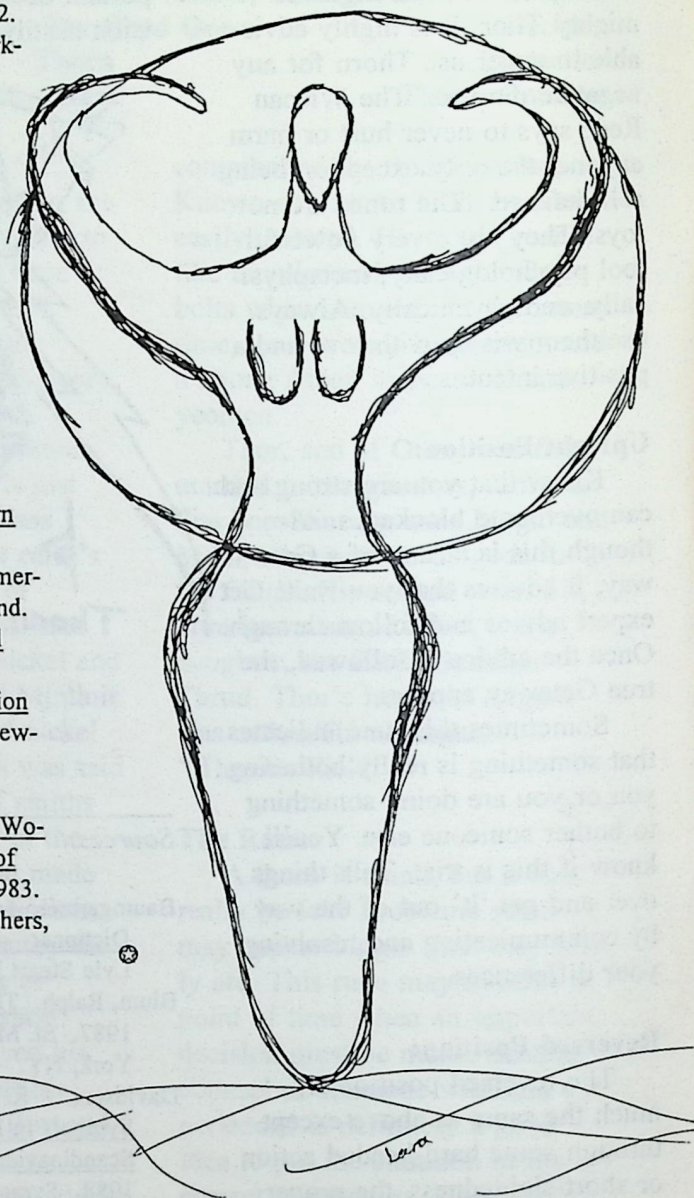
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REIKI: LEVELS OF LIGHT

by Imré K. Rainey

Two hundred years ago, Dr. Mikao Usui, a theologian and Buddhist monk, rediscovered the ancient healing art of Reiki. Through a vision, he was initiated into the various dimensions of Universal Life Energy (*rei* = universal, that which is of God; *ki* = energy, chi). He was given the four symbols of Reiki, through which he could transcend all dimensions, time, and space in order to send the healing force to anyone or anything. Finally, he received the three levels of initiation through which he could bestow the gift of Reiki to anyone he chose. (Please see Reiki, HAZEL NUT Issue 7, Ash/Alder, February 1994.)

Today, Reiki is practiced all over the world. Unfortunately, not all Reiki Masters are teaching Reiki with the same dedication and heart that Dr. Usui demanded. Many schools have factioned off from the original lineage that has been inherited by Phyllis Lei Furumoto (founder of the Reiki Alliance). Some of these schools have added up to six more initiations that have nothing to do with Reiki. Many schools and Masters have taken advantage of the financial

opportunities available to the greedy and materially motivated initiate.¹ Others have even added pseudo-laws and esoteric mumbo-jumbo to the application of Reiki.

Traditionally, Reiki involves three levels of instruction and initiation. Through the first level,² the Reiki Master teaches the initiate the history of Reiki, the twelve hand positions, the basic hands-on application of Reiki, and performs the initiation. It is imperative that the first level initiate understands that healing with Reiki does not require meditation, visualization, concentration, belief, faith, focusing, psychic ability, or even ideal settings. Reiki is not a function of the brain. These variables can, however, be employed as means of psychologically motivating health, as long as it is clear that Reiki has a mind of its own and requires nothing more than the touch of a hand. With this in mind, the initiate is ready to use first level Reiki.

The second level of instruction includes the *oral* teaching of three of the symbols³ of Reiki, the Reiki method of long distance healing, and the second initiation. First and

second levels are sufficient for most people. With first level, the initiate was given the ability to promote physical healing. With second level, the energy of first level is greatly increased⁴ and the vibration of Universal Life Energy that encourages psychological well-being is added.

Traditionally, the first and second levels of initiation should be at least three months apart. The body and mind require twenty-one days to fully integrate the increased amount of energy being channeled with each initiation; however, the brain needs quite a bit longer to fully comprehend the scope of the power of Reiki. It takes a strong, stable, and well prepared constitution to undergo first and second level initiations one right after the other. The initiations release many emotions and memories.⁵ Very few respectable Reiki Masters will encourage multiple initiations unless they are being guided in that direction (I do not mean by money or pleading, but by intuition, or their Higher Selves). Without question, the time between second and third level initiations is greater and will vary according to the initiate.

Third level initiation is the level of the Master. This level is only for those who will be teaching Reiki and performing

the initiations. Before third level initiation, the candidate's ethics, determination, motives, and spiritual path (this has nothing to do with the path itself, but the fruits of the path and its follower) will be deeply scrutinized. If the Reiki Master is confident of the candidate's qualifications, the third level initiate will be entrusted with the last sacred symbol, the three levels of initiation, and the last energy transfer will be completed.

Reiki is an ancient science/art of healing which has survived millennia. Great care must be taken in initiating new students. Reiki is not only a system of healing, but an aid to spiritual realization. If Reiki is on your path, allow your Higher Self to guide you to the appropriate Master. The essence of Reiki, like many other "supernatural" mysteries, is beyond the scope of human consciousness. Elaborate theatrics and esoteric gibberish do not and cannot validate the Reiki experience. Consequently, the initiations performed in living rooms, kitchens, and borrowed offices are just as legitimate (and probably more honest) as the initiations performed in special rooms and temples adorned with incense and expensive accoutrements. Ultimately, Reiki should be respected and enjoyed. Happy zapping!

(If you are interested in further information regarding Reiki, write to Imré K. Rainey, Reiki Master, C.H., c/o THE HAZEL NUT. Imré will also be presenting a class on Reiki at Moondance, May 12-15.)

¹ All Reiki Masters are instructed in the need for some form of exchange where Reiki treatments and initiations are concerned. Fees, as long as they are not outrageous, are not a breach of ethics and should be respected. Apart from the fact that the Reiki Master is giving of their own time and energy, the exchange of energy, either in the form of money or services, has a psychological effect on the initiate and is a required part of the instruction in Reiki.

² This is a *brief* overview of the three traditional levels of instruction and initiation. The classes are, of course, more detailed and each Reiki Master will enhance the students understanding with their own personal approach. However, whenever the Master includes additional information and instruction, it is important that the student understand that the Reiki Master is allowing the student insights into the Master's experiences and knowledge and that, although valid, are non-Reiki related practices and exercises.

³ *None of the four symbols of Reiki are ever to be published,*

much less remain in written form for an extended period of time.

The Master will show the student the way to use the symbols, at which time they are to be put to memory and never kept in written form. The symbols tap into an unblemished pool of energy which has remained pure for aeons. If the symbols are displayed, they are at risk of being tainted by the uninitiated who have not been sufficiently trained. The responsibility *and the karma* lie with the second and third level initiates who misrepresent Reiki and the symbols.

⁴ The second level initiation greatly expands the amount of energy that the initiate channels. As to exact values, I have heard and read anywhere between doubling the energy being channeled to increasing the intensity a hundred-fold. Either way, the range of healing is augmented and the amount of time required for Reiki to promote healing is significantly shortened.

⁵ I have watched two people go through mild nervous breakdowns after having received their first and second level initiations within an hour.

Imré K. Rainey is a certified hypno-therapist and past-life regressionist, a third-degree Reiki master, and an ordained minister. He is also active in the Craft. ☸

The Wise Man and the Fool

A Short Fable by Jean Buckhalter

Once there was a wise man who was greatly respected for his knowledge, and every word he spoke was cherished by his countrymen. Rather than enjoying his reputation and standing in his community, the wise man was worried, for his words were accepted without question.

One fine day the wise man stood in the place of the speakers and started speaking gibberish. All around him, people rapidly wrote down his words and others nodded their heads as if they understood what he was saying. Other scholars stroked their beards, saying, "Most profound," and "My thoughts exactly."

The following day a man dressed as a fool, wearing a cap covered with bells and a fool's mask, strode up to the place of the speakers and told the laughing crowd the secrets of the universe. A few in the crowd threw dirt, and some threw vegetables. The white bearded scholars demanded that the fool be removed and beaten for his presumption.

The fool tore his belled cap from his head and threw it at the jeering crowd. He followed the hat with the fool's mask and the crowd gasped, for standing there was the wise man.

He glared at them and asked, "Which is the greater fool—a wise man who speaks nonsense to fools who listen, or a fool who speaks the truth to fools who will not listen?" Saying this he strode off and has never been heard of since. ☼

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Widsom from trees
Comes not
From talking about them,
Nor, from wordy exchanges
to a plant.

Wisdom is gained
In living.
If it came with words,
Empty-headed fools
Spouting words would be
Founts of depth and
compassion.

- Epona

The Evolution of May Day

by Muirghein úí Dhún Aonghasa

Although not a popular holiday in America today, May Day was celebrated in Europe throughout the Middle Ages on May 1, continuing into the early part of this century in some places. May Day developed from a melding of two seemingly unlike Spring festivals: the Roman *Floralia*, and the Celtic fire festival, *Belteinne*. "There is also a theory that the May Day festivals find their origin in the phallic festivals of India and Egypt when the renewal of the fertility of nature in the spring was celebrated."¹

Are there really any pagan origins to May Day? Or are we just romanticizing an ancient holiday, dressing it up to suit ourselves? I have attempted, with a bit of research, to settle these questions, and I have found that some of our 'May Day' customs are a lot newer than we think, but some do have roots in antiquity. By necessity, not everything I found is in this article; if you are interested in pursuing the subject, see the notes at the end.

BELTINNE

May 1 was when the *Tuatha de Danaan*, a superhuman race

who evolved into the Irish pantheon, first arrived in Ireland, making this one of the most important Irish festivals—second only to *Samhain*, celebrated on November 1. *Belteinne*, or *Beltane*, was most probably a pastoral holiday, marking the beginning of the season when the cattle could be driven to open grazing. The name comes from the sun god, *Bel*, and the Celtic word for fire, *tinne*.

Fires were lighted at *Beltane* at the beginning of *Samhradh*, or summer. It was considered lucky for young folks to jump over the flames, or for cattle to be driven between two fires.² The gorse on the hills was set afire, and the smoke blew over the fields and purified them, and the people drove their cattle between them as a protection from disease. When these and other rites had been observed, "then the fields were ready to put the cattle on the grass."³

In some of the surviving customs of the Highlands, we still see hints of sacrifices. In Scotland till the 18th century, according to Bonwick, "The people lighted the fire by the old fashion [method] of friction with two pieces of wood, and then ate

the consecrated cake indulged in by pagan Syrians...This was broken up, and distributed among the assembly. Whoever got the black bit, hidden in the cake, was considered worthy of sacrifice to Baal, as the *cailteach bealtine*. He was pushed into the fire, though soon rescued, and afterwards had to leap three times through the flames. The term *Beltane carline* was ever a name of reproach."⁴

Ralph Whitlock says, "There seem here to be faint reminiscences of former human sacrifices, no doubt performed to help the fertility of the soil and so produce a good harvest. It is recorded that when Bishop Hugh Latimer was burnt at the stake in October 1555, a spectator was heard to remark that it was a pity that the event could not have been staged earlier in the season, when it could have saved the crops!"⁵

FLORALIA

The Roman flower festival of Floralia, or Floral Games, was instituted in Rome in 283 B.C., and was celebrated from April 28 through May 3.⁶ This festival was in honor of Flora, goddess of flowers and vegetation. The worship of a goddess of fertility, not surprisingly, led increasingly to much license and indecency; prostitutes claimed the Floralia as

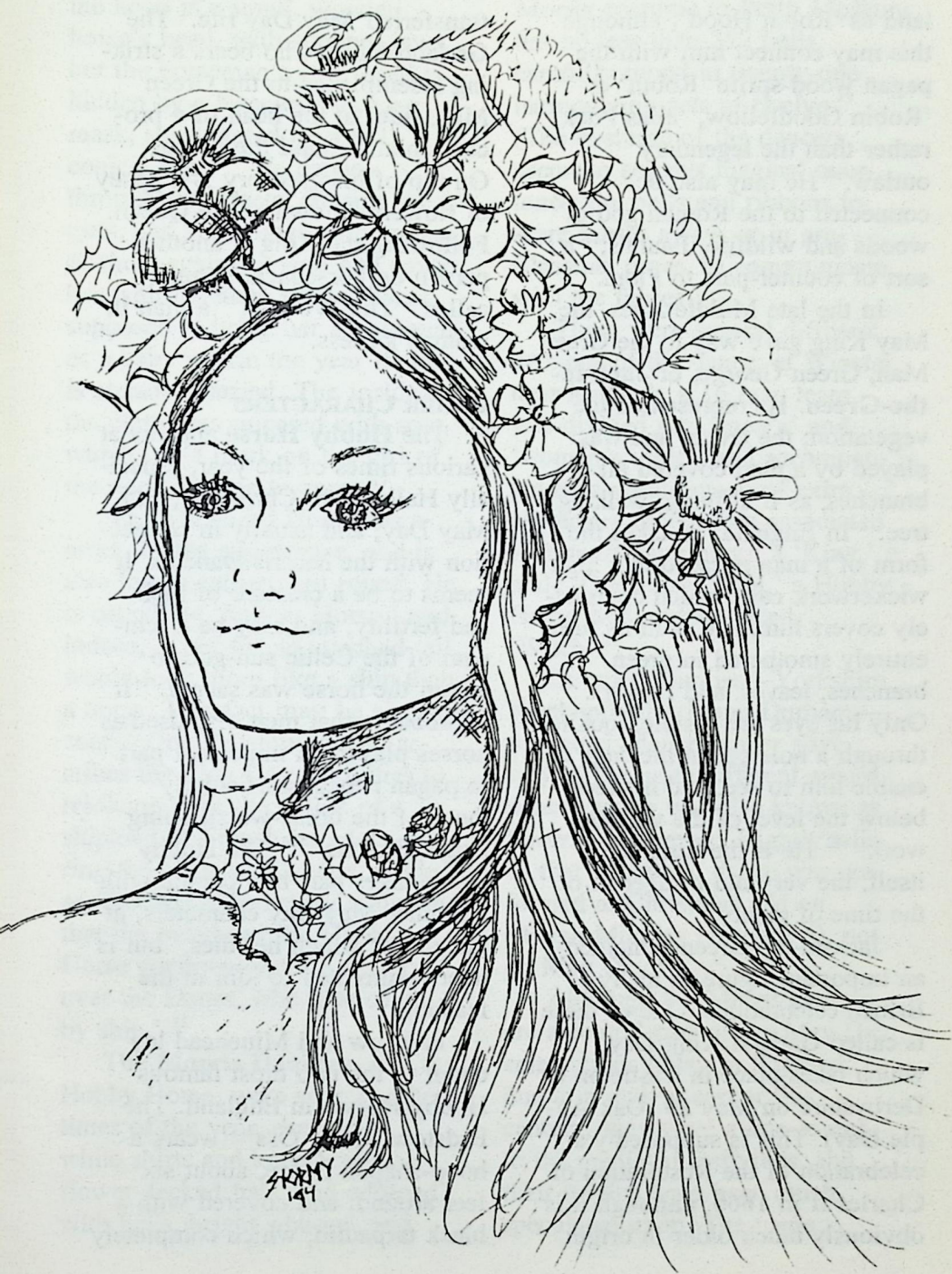
their feast.⁷

The Roman Spring festival was probably introduced in Great Britain during the four to five centuries of Roman occupation there,⁸ and juxtaposed over the old Celtic fire festival of Beltane. While in parts of the British Isles (Scotland and Ireland especially) the celebrations kept to their Celtic origins, England and most of Europe, particularly the countries nearer to the Mediterranean area, were influenced by the Floralia. Therefore, although Beltane seems to have been a sacred time of cleansing and protection, May Day became a festival of fertility and sexual license.

MAY DAY CHARACTERS

As the combined Spring festivals took form in the Middle Ages, a few prominent figures appeared. The most important was the **May Queen**. She was said to be the earthly representation of the Roman goddess Flora,⁹ although I don't know if the Floralia actually included such a figure. The May Queen was selected by the townspeople as the most beautiful among the young women, and she took her place in a throne of flowers to preside over the activities of the day.

In the early Middle Ages the May Queen had a consort, the **May King**, or the Lord of the May. He was known in parts



of England and Lowland Scotland as 'Robin Hood'; although this may connect him with the pagan wood-sprite 'Robin' or 'Robin Goodfellow,' alias Puck, rather than the legendary outlaw.¹⁰ He may also be connected to the Roman god of woods and wildlife, Faunus;¹¹ a sort of counter-part to Flora.

In the late Middle Ages, the May King gave way to the Green Man, Green George, or **Jack-in-the-Green**. He represented the vegetation; the crops, and was played by a man covered all in branches, as if a living, walking tree. "In England, he takes the form of a man encased in a high wickerwork cage which completely covers him, and is in its turn entirely smothered in green branches, leaves, and flowers. Only his eyes are visible, looking through a hole cut in the cage to enable him to see, and his feet below the level of the wickerwork."¹² He is the Summer itself, the very old bringer-in of the time of plenty.

Jack-in-the-Green remained an important figure in many British celebrations. One of these is called Garland King Day, which takes place in Castleton in Derbyshire on May 29 (Oak Apple Day). This is supposedly a celebration of the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, although it is obviously much older in origin

than this, and is probably a transferred May Day rite. The Garland King, who bears a striking resemblance to the Green Man, rides at the head of a procession all around the village. On top of his greenery is a posey of flowers, known as the Queen. Following the King is another person on horseback, simply called "The Woman;" a man in woman's dress.¹³

OTHER CHARACTERS

The **Hobby Horse** appears at various times of the year, especially Halloween, Christmas, and May Day; and usually in connection with the Morris Dancers. It seems to be a creature of luck and fertility, and may be a remnant of the Celtic sun-god to whom the horse was sacred. "It is probable that men disguised as horses played an important part in pagan rituals, particularly those of the horse-worshipping Anglo-Saxons."¹⁴ The Hobby Horse takes part in a parade with the other May Day characters, at the end of which he 'dies,' but is later resurrected to join in the feasting.¹⁵

Padstow and Minehead lay claim to the two most famous Hobby Horses in England. The Padstow 'Obby Oss' "wears a hoop-shaped frame, about six feet around, and covered with a black tarpaulin, which completely

hides his human form. In front of the hoop is a small, wooden horse's head, with snapper jaws, but the horseman's own head is hidden by a ferocious-looking mask, surmounted by a tall, conical cap."¹⁶ He dances through the streets, chasing the girls, and sometimes corners one of them against a wall and covers her with his huge skirt. This is supposed to bring her a husband, or a baby within the year if she is already married. The inside of the cloth was smeared with soot, which left a mark on the girl of the good fortune to come.¹⁷

The Minehead Horse has a more festive appearance, and is also longer rather than round. He is called the 'Sailors Horse,' and indeed, if not for an attached tail, would look more like a ship than a horse. This fact may be significant; "One Padstow legend ascribes the May Day festivities to rejoicing over the defeat of a shipload of French invaders during the Napoleonic wars, while another Minehead story maintains that the parade of the Hobby Horse commemorates a victory over the Danes, who also came by ship."¹⁸

The **Morris Dancers**, like the Hobby Horse, were seen at other times of the year, dressed in white shirts and knee-breeches, flower-decked hats, and adorned with bells, bright ribbons, and

handkerchiefs; a 17th century Morris costume in Perth Museum has no less than 252 bells, carefully tuned in twenty-one harmonizing sets of twelve.¹⁹ (The costume of the dancers seems to suggest magical overtones; the bells and ribbons to scare fairies away, or in pre-Christian times, to communicate with the fairies.)

There were several different versions of the dance; at Winstar near Matlock, a 16 man team was divided into 'men's' and 'women's' sides, and accompanied by a whole range of extra characters more often associated with mumming plays: a 'King,' a male 'Queen,' a 'Fool,' a Hobby Horse, and a black-faced 'Witch'.²⁰

In other counties—Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Durham—the morris dance proper gave way to the quite different sword dance, which was also known as 'morris.' However, Kightly tells us that the sword dance was performed at Christmas and on Plough Monday (January 6), not on May Day.²¹

Although the Morris Dances are a central part of the May Day celebrations today in England, due to a revival earlier this century, they were a late-comer to the medieval festivities, and their origins have been much speculated upon. The name

'morris' is almost certainly derived from 'Moorish,' and is thought to indicate that the dance originated either in North Africa or in Moorish medieval Spain, from where it was supposed to have been brought to Britain around the 12th century. This theory (allegedly corroborated by the blackening of performers' faces) is likely not true, as nothing like the English dance has ever been discovered in the Moorish lands. "Given the inherent improbability of an imported custom penetrating so deeply and widely into medieval folk culture, it therefore seems likely that the dance was really an ancient native ceremony, whose exponents disguised themselves by the cheap, easy and remarkably effective method of face-blackening: and that it subsequently acquired its title from this practice...In all probability...the dance originated as a pre-Christian fertility or luck-bringing ceremony, and it is even possible that the name 'moorish' once alluded to its pagan rather than its black-faced associations."²²

THE MAY POLE

According to Barbara Walker, the Maypole was not originally European, but finds its origins in the phallic festivals of India and Egypt, celebrating the fertility of the spring.²³ The May Pole was

an obvious sexual object, representing the planting of the god's phallus in the earth's womb,²⁴ and was sometimes painted in an upward clockwise spiral with red and white paint, similar to a barber's pole.²⁵

Whatever its origin, the Maypole became part of the European May Day/Flora activities. In the "British Apollo" it is said: "It was a custom among the ancient Britons, before converted to Christianity, to erect there Maypoles, adorned with flowers, in honour of the Goddess Flora."²⁶

Stuckely says, "There is a May Pole near Horn Castle, Lincolnshire, where probably stood an Hermes [*herm*, phallic pillar] in Roman times. The boys annually keep up the festival of the Floralia on May Day, making a procession to this hill with May gads (as they call them) in their hands. This is a white willow wand, the bark peel'd off, ty'd round with cowslips, a thyrsus of the Bacchanals. At night they have a bonfire, and other merriment, which is really a sacrifice, a religious festival."²⁷

In addition to the obvious phallic symbolism, the May Pole represents a tree, and indeed at one time it was a tree, brought in from the woods on May morning and set up on the village green.²⁸ This tree is said to have always been a birch,²⁹ or sometimes a

hawthorn. As the tree evolved into a permanent pole set up in the town square, a bit of hawthorn was placed on top to represent the original living tree.

These permanent poles were very tall, sometimes 80 or 90 feet; "The Church of St Andrew Undershaft, in Leadenhall Street, was so named because the great Maypole which annually stood before its south door was taller than the church itself."³⁰

Christina Hole reminds us: "The shorter poles, round which the children perform a plaited-ribbon dance, and which are often seen at school May Day celebrations today, do not belong to the English tradition. They come from southern Europe, and seem to have been introduced into this country (by Ruskin) in 1888."³¹

"The May Day customs offended the Puritans and the Parliament of 1644 forbade the erection of May poles. This prohibition was repealed after the Restoration [of Charles II in 1660]. In 1661, in celebration of the revival of the old customs a May pole 134 feet high was set up in London. It remained until 1717 when it was bought by Sir Isaac Newton and removed to Essex as a support for his great telescope."³²

OTHER MAY DAY CUSTOMS

We see some of the Roman

legacy of sexual freedom in the tradition of young people going a-Mayin': in the early hours of May Day, "they goe some to the woodes and groves, some to the hilles and mountaines...where they spende all the night in pastymes, and in the mornynge they returne, bringing with them birch, bowes, and braunches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall...I have heard it credibly reported...that of fourtie, three score, or a hundred maides goying to the woode ouer night, there have scarcely the thirde parte of them returned home againe undefiled."³³

In another popular custom throughout the Middle Ages, the common and noble women alike went to bathe their faces in the dew of the May morning, which was thought to be good for the complexion. Pepys wrote in his "Diary," under May 28, 1667: "My wife away down with Jane and W. Hewer to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre and to lie there to-morrow, and so to gather May-dew tomorrow morning, which Mrs. Turner hath taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with; and I am contented with it."³⁴ Although the dew of every morning in May was effective, that of May Day itself was the best. In 1515 Queen Catherine of Aragon went

Continued on page 37

Sacred Time

by Rebecca Haack

Twigs crack as the fire is lit.
Worshippers grow quiet.
The ceremony begins.

Slowly they approach,
those who keep the faith.
Isis, Astarte,

The chant rises, growing in rhythm.
Drummers join...
Bodies undulate with the
calling—
bells tinkle in the
moonlight.

The circle—pure energy
exploding into night.
Dancers weave the
story
of life and death
and life.
Diana, Hecate,

Fires dismissed—
energy flows.
All is silent.
Demeter, Kali, Inanna...



Folklore & Practical Uses:

WILLOW

by Muirghein uí Dhúin Aonghasa

- Salix alba* L. - White Willow, European Willow. Native to north Africa, central Asia, and Europe, naturalized in S.E. Canada and eastern U.S.
- S. nigra* Marsh. - Black Willow. New Brunswick to northern Florida, west to Texas, north to Minnesota; also scattered from western Texas to northern California.
- S. nigra* Linn., var. *vallicola* Dudley - Valley Willow. Northern California, south along Sierra Nevadas, throughout Arizona, and along Rio Grande in western Texas and southern New Mexico.
- S. discolor* Muhl. - Pussy Willow. Southern Canada and northern U.S., from Maine to Wyoming.
- S. babylonica* L. - Weeping Willow. Native of China, naturalized from Quebec and Ontario south to Georgia and west to Missouri, planted in western states.

DESCRIPTION AND USES

The willow is part of the family *Salicaceae*, which also includes poplars. Willows may be small shrubs only a few inches tall, or trees of 140 feet. Most will be found near an abundant water supply; in fact, the willow's scientific name, *Salix*, "comes from the Celtic words *sal*, meaning near, and *lis*, meaning water, and refers to the tree's fondness for the borders of streams, ponds, marshes, and other watercourses."¹

The willow has slender, flexible twigs which are tender and brittle, and are easily broken off by the wind. If the tree is growing near moving water, these twigs will drop into the stream and be swept along by the

current until they find a lodging on wet ground, where they will take root. "Thus the borders of many streams and marshes are actually self-planted."² If no stream is nearby, a twig lying flat on moist ground can push out rootlets from below, and start shoots from its buds. Even branches, large limbs, or firewood pieces, if driven into the ground, may take root and grow.³ "A willow once was propagated by tossing a willow basket into a pit in the yard of a house in Philadelphia. Eventually someone noticed that the basket was growing into a tree."⁴

A willow is easily enough distinguished from other types of trees by its location, lance-shaped leaves, and slender branches. But

it can be much more difficult to tell what species of willow you're looking at. There are about 160 species, and they vary and interbreed until they are quite confusing, even to well-trained botanists.⁵

The black willow is the only large native willow in North America. In the lower Mississippi valley, it can grow up to 140 feet high, although it is usually only 30-40' tall. The black willow takes its name from its bark, which is very dark, almost black. A high grade charcoal for making gunpowder is made from the wood; other uses include millwork, furniture, doors, cabinetwork, boxes, barrels, toys, and pulpwood.⁶

The white willow is native to Europe and England, but has been naturalized in America. Early colonists are said to have brought cuttings of it with them to America, and it is very widespread now. The white willow is rather large, growing 60 to 80 feet high, and sometimes reaching 100 feet. Like the black willow, the wood has been used for making charcoal, and is very elastic, so was used for lining barges and carts. The tree takes its name from its hairy leaves, which give it a white appearance.⁷

In the desert, willows, along with cottonwoods, are signs of

water, and "all the old accounts of early exploration, railway surveying, and Indian campaigning in the Southwest are full of grateful references to the Willow."⁸ This was a valuable tree in other ways: the valley willow is still used by the Papago Indians to weave baskets to hold water. As soon as the wood is wetted, it swells up and closes even the tiniest openings in the weave, so no caulking is needed.⁹

MEDICINAL

Willow has been used for at least 2,000 years to alleviate pain and reduce fever.¹⁰ It was prescribed by Dioscorides in the 1st century A.D. for pain and inflammation, used by the Hottentots for rheumatic fever,¹¹ and taken by the American Indians for fevers.¹² In England, because they grew in wet areas, willows were considered good for diseases common to such places, such as malaria and ague, a fever similar to malaria, with chills and sweating. Gerard wrote that "the greene boughes with the leaves may very well be brought into chambers, and set about the beds of those that be sicke of agues: for they do mightily coole the heate of the aire, which thing is a woonderfull refreshing to the sicke patients."¹³ The country people took this further by drinking willow tea to relieve

their symptoms.

Around the 18th century, Europeans were searching for an economical substitute for quinine to fight malaria, and willow was thought to be that substitute.¹⁴ According to Hutchens, in 1763 the Rev. Edward Stone, perhaps curious about the willow's reputation as a fever and pain reducing agent, applied "an old-fashioned theory" to it. Because it grew in low, marshy regions where rheumatism was common, he tried a decoction of willow bark on sufferers of rheumatic complaints and "thus rediscovered the effectiveness of salicylic acid."¹⁵

Salicin is one of willow's active ingredients; it is very similar in action to quinine, and is believed to be far more valuable for fevers.¹⁶ Willow shares this active principle with a number of other plants. It was from one of these—queen of the meadow—that salicin was first isolated in the 1820's. European chemists fiddled with salicin for about 30 years; and finally salicylic acid was synthesized from common coal tar and petroleum derivatives.¹⁷

"It was then put on the shelf and forgotten until the late 1890's, when Felix Hoffman, a chemist at Fredrich Bayer & Company in Germany, embarked on a search for a drug to

alleviate his father's rheumatoid arthritis."¹⁸ He prepared the acetylsalicylic acid, and his father loved it, but the executives at Bayer hated it. Later they relented and marketed the drug under the name aspirin, derived from *Spiraea*, the genus that the queen of the meadow, the original plant, was part of at the time (it is now *Filipendula ulmaria*).¹⁹

Willow bark tea is still used by herbalists today for the same reasons as aspirin: headaches, neuralgia, hay fever, fever, and pain and inflammation of the joints. To use, decoct a teaspoon of white willow bark slowly in 1½ pints of water, covered, for 30 minutes.²⁰

At one time, black willow bark was used for gonorrhoea and ovarian pain, and also for treating nocturnal emissions. A liquid extract was prepared and used in a mixture with other sedatives. White willow was used for stomach ailments and to get rid of worms. Grieves says black willow is an aphrodisiac, sedative, and tonic, and that white willow is tonic, antiperiodic and astringent.²¹

Willow bark tea can be taken for internal bleeding, because of its astringency, heartburn, and stomach ailments. For inflamed gums and tonsils, gargle with a decoction of the bark. As an antiseptic, the tea makes a good

wash for skin sores, burns, and wounds. Try a footbath of willow tea for tired, sore feet. An environmentally safe washing liquid can be made from a solution of willow bark mixed with borax—it's deodorizing and antiseptic.²²

FOLKLORE

The willow has been associated with gloom and sorrow for centuries, though just why is a mystery. In Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry, a willow garland used to be worn by those who had been jilted or disappointed in love. Grigson says that because of the bitter taste of willows, they symbolized the bitterness of grief; this bitter taste is ascribed to the willow being used to whip the child Jesus by his mother when he misbehaved.²³ Brimble tells us that in the Scriptures, the willow was usually an emblem of woe and sadness, and that these qualities have stuck ever since.²⁴

According to Grigson, the goat willow, *Salix caprea* L., is the tree which gives 'palm' for Palm Sunday, as the brilliant yellow catkins appear before any leaves. The branches cut down and strewed before Jesus in his procession into Jerusalem were taken to be palm, and the goat willow is a substitute for that tree.²⁵

While not the same as the palm, the willow was a part of Biblical festivals: "And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days."²⁶

In Ireland, the goat willow, also known as the Sally, was used against enchantment. It was lucky to carry a willow rod on a journey, and butter will churn better if a fod of willow is placed around the churn.²⁷

*Know ye the willow-tree
Whose grey leaves quiver,
Whispering gloomily
To yon pale river?
Lady, at even-tide
Wander not near it:
They say its branches hide
A sad lost spirit.*

The Willow-Tree: Thackeray²⁸ ☼

Notes:

¹ Green, Charlotte Hilton. Trees of the South. 1939. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, pg. 38.

² Ibid, pg. 39.

³ Ibid, pg. 39.

⁴ Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs. Edited by Claire Kowalchik and William H. Hyllton. 1987. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA, pg. 505.

⁵ Green, pg. 38.

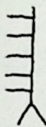
⁶ Little, Elbert L. The Audobon Society

Continued on page 36

Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

WILLOW

by Imré K. Rainey



At this point in the Wheel of the Year, we have experienced the rejuvenation and rebirth of Birch, the rise of energy and the sowing of seeds and goals in Rowan, the premature urgings for movement in Ash, and the burst of life in Alder. Now, we stand before our kindred, the Willow, which has long been associated with the Crone, or death, aspect of the Triple Goddess.

The time of protected learning ended in Alder. Willow symbolizes the virtues of learning through experience. In order to fully assimilate the experiences to come in the moons ahead, it is necessary to release burdens from the past which will hinder our growth in the future. The rules and opinions which governed the past may no longer hold for the future: past convictions often become obstacles impeding progress. In this way, the Willow represents the death, or release, of the past in order to wholly integrate experiences and lessons in the future. This does not mean, however, that the fruits of past achievements should be forgotten. Those achievements got you here and will provide the foundation for the experiences to come.

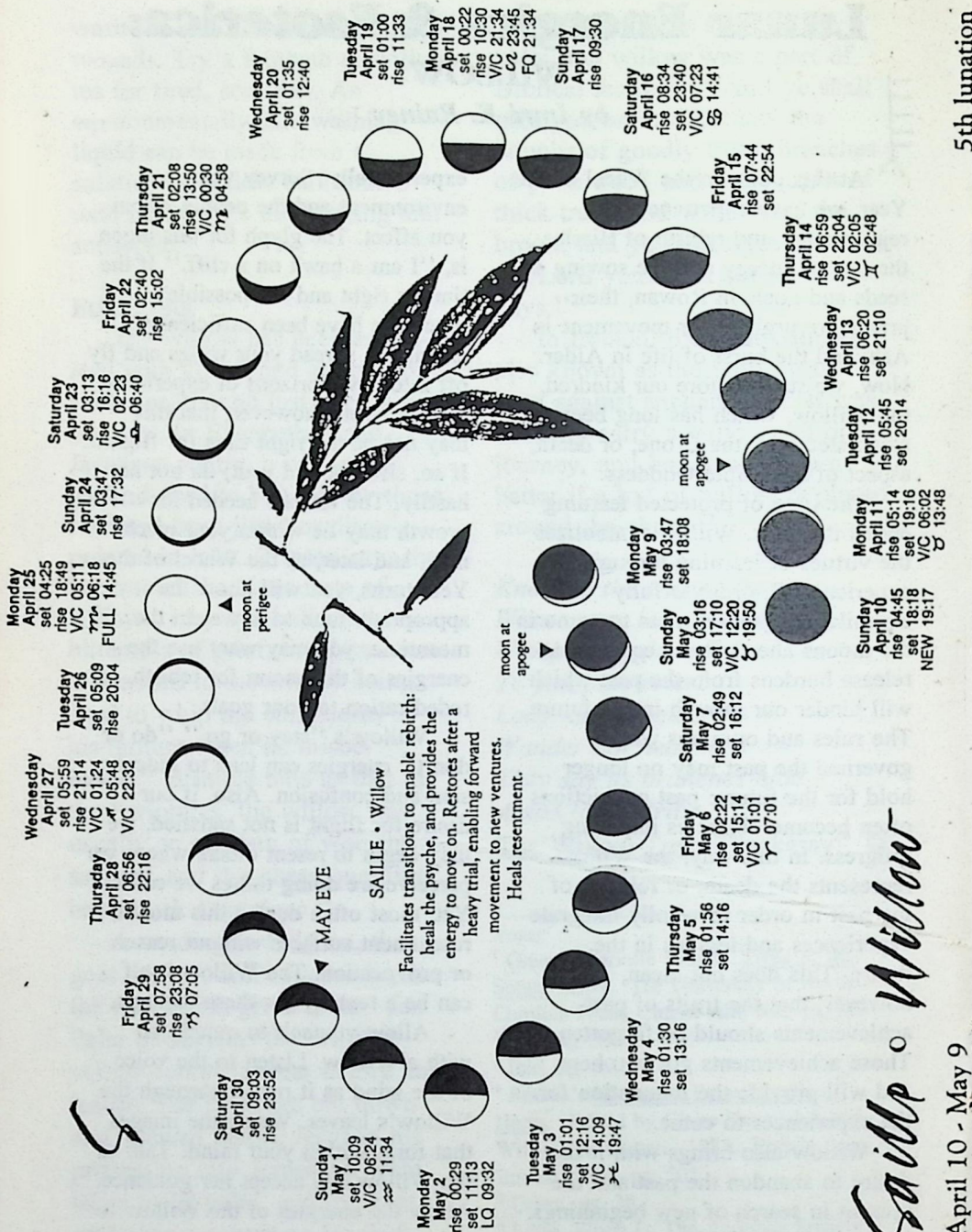
Willow also brings with it the desire to abandon the past and the present in search of new beginnings. Look carefully at where you are standing physically, emotionally, and

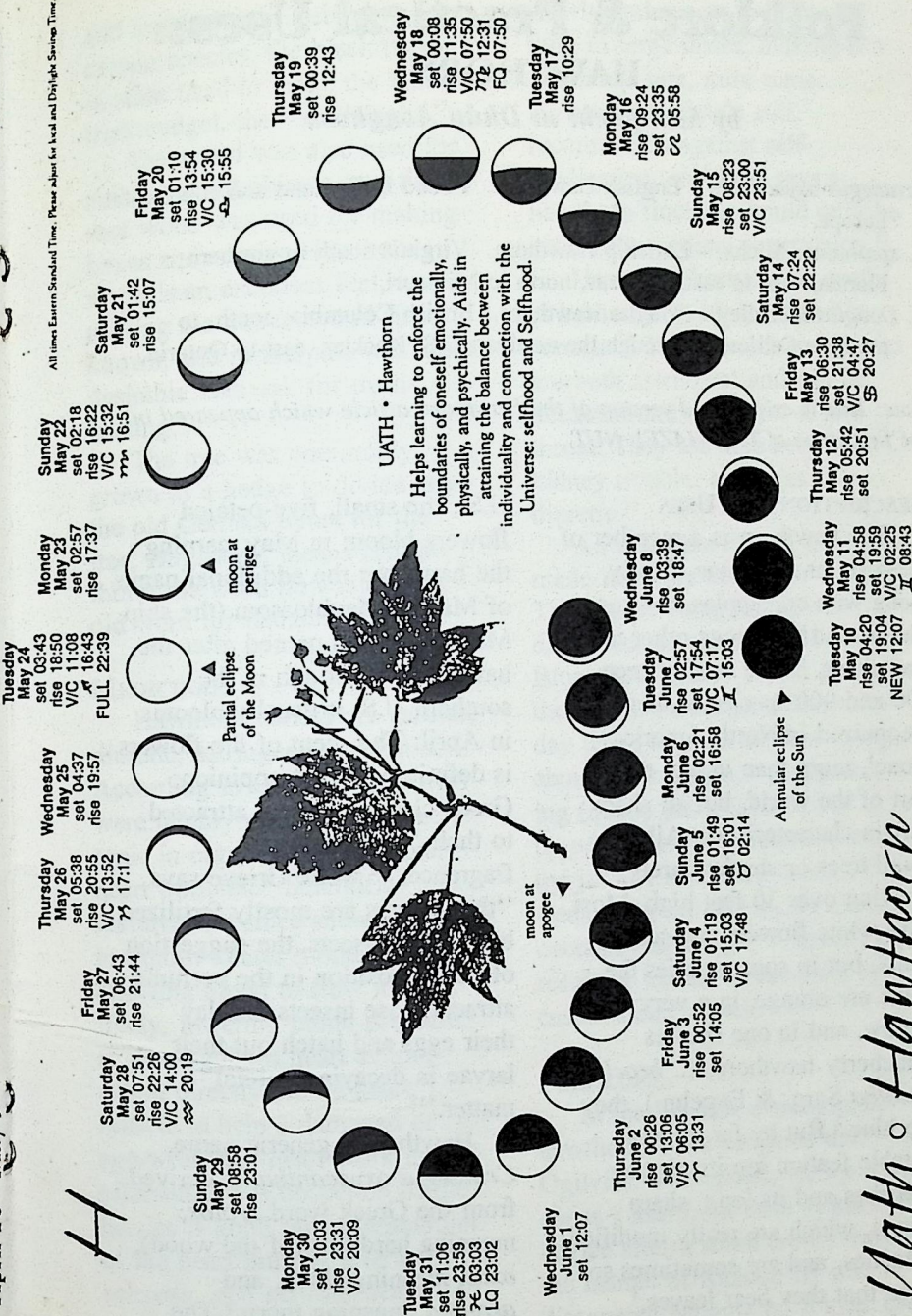
experientially. Survey your environment and the people whom you affect. The glyph for this moon is, "I am a hawk on a cliff." If the time is right and the possible outcomes have been sufficiently examined, spread your wings and fly off into new horizons of experience.

Be aware, however, that this may not be the right time for flight. If so, sit back and wait; do not act hastily. The lessons needed for growth may lie within your reach now, and later, as the Wheel of the Year turns, you will know the appropriate time to move. In the meantime, you may want use the energies of this moon for rebirth, or rededication to your goals.

Willow's "stay or go," "do or don't" energies can lead to indecision and confusion. Also, if our desire for flight is not satisfied, we may begin to resent others whom we perceive are doing things we can't. Yet, most often during this month, resentment surfaces without reason or provocation. The Willow itself can be a remedy for these feelings.

Allow yourself to quietly sit with a Willow. Listen to the voice of the wind as it rustles through the Willow's leaves. Watch the images that form within your mind. Talk to the Willow and accept her guidance. Allow the energies of the Willow to guide you through the movements of the moons to come. ☸





Uath • Hawthorn

May 10 - June 8

Folklore & Practical Uses:

HAWTHORN

by Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa

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

C. spathulata Michx. - Littlehip Hawthorn. Virginia south to northern Florida, west to eastern Texas, north to Missouri.

C. Douglasii Lindley - Douglas Hawthorn. British Columbia, south to northern California, through the northern U.S. Rockies, east to Ontario.

Note: This is an updated version of the Hawthorn article which appeared in the first issue of THE HAZEL NUT.

DESCRIPTION AND USES

The hawthorn is a member of the rose, or *Rosaceae*, family, along with crabapples, rowans, plums, and numerous other trees and plants. There are between 800 and 900 species of hawthorn recognized in North America alone¹, more than in any other part of the world, but all share certain characteristics. All are small trees or shrubs, rarely growing over 30 feet high. Most have white flowers and scarlet fruits; but in some species the fruits are orange, in a very few yellow, and in one species (blueberry hawthorn, *C. brachyacantha* Sarg. & Engelm.), they are blue.² But by far its most notable feature are its zig-zag branches and its long, sharp thorns, which are really modified branches, and are sometimes so large that they bear leaves.³

In England and the northern

U.S., the small, five-petaled flowers bloom in May, earning the hawthorn the additional name of May or Mayblossom (the ship Mayflower was named after the hawthorn), although in the southern U.S. it usually blooms in April. The scent of the flowers is definitely open to opinion: Green claims bees are attracted to their "almond-like fragrance,"⁴ while Grieve says "the flowers are mostly fertilized by carrion insects, the suggestion of decomposition in the perfume attracts those insects that lay their eggs and hatch out their larvae in decaying animal matter."⁵

Hawthorn's generic name, *Crataegus oxyacantha*, is derived from the Greek word *kratos*, meaning hardness (of the wood), *oxus*, meaning sharp, and *akantha*, meaning thorn.⁶ The wood of the hawthorn is so hard

and tough that in Ireland a certain species, the black thorn, is often used to make the famous Irish cudgel, the "shillelagh."⁷

The wood was also used for making small objects, and the root wood was used for making boxes and combs. Hawthorn wood is an excellent fuel, making the hottest wood fire known, and in the past was more desirable than oak for oven-heating.⁸

The tree was commonly grown as a hedge to divide land; the old German name for the tree, *Hagedorn*, means Hedge-thorn; the word *haw* is also an old word for hedge.⁹

MEDICINAL

Hawthorn berries are cardiac, diuretic, astringent, and tonic. According to Grieve, the berries were mainly used as a cardiac tonic in organic and functional heart troubles.¹⁰ Scientific research has since shown that hawthorn dilates blood vessels, allowing blood to flow more freely, lowering blood pressure. It also regulates heart action, acting directly on the heart muscle to help a damaged or age-weakened heart work more efficiently.¹¹ A decoction of the berries is good for inflammation of the heart muscle, arteriosclerosis, and nervous heart problems.¹² Hawthorn works

slowly and seems to be toxic only in large doses, making it a relatively safe, mild tonic. However, Rodale's still recommends against self-medication, and Lust says a hawthorn tincture should only be used with medical supervision.¹³

Hawthorn berry tea is useful at home for mild stress and insomnia.¹⁴ The flowers and berries are both astringent and can be decocted and drunk for a sore throat. They are also helpful in kidney trouble, acting as a diuretic.¹⁵

An excellent liqueur can be made from the berries or flowers. This recipe using the flowers dates back to about 1775. May Blossom Liqueur: Try to gather the may blossom on a dry, calm day when there is no dust flying about. Pick as much as a preserving (quart) jar will hold. Fill it up with brandy or vodka. Close the jar and shake it 3 times a week for 3 months. Filter and if necessary add sugar to taste. The resulting liqueur is excellent in custards and sauces.¹⁶

FOLKLORE

In the Scottish clan system, hawthorn is the badge of the Ogilvies. In England, Henry VII chose a hawthorn bush as his device after a small crown from the helmet of Richard III was discovered hanging on it after the

battle of Bosworth; hence the saying, 'Cleve to thy Crown though it hangs on a bush.'¹⁷

To the ancient Greeks and Romans, the hawthorn was a symbol of hope and happiness, and was linked with marriage and babies. Hawthorn was dedicated to Hymen, god of marriages. The torches carried in the wedding procession were made of hawthorn. People would put a sprig of hawthorn in their corsages, while the bride carried an entire bough.¹⁸ In England, May was considered a lucky month for engagements, though not for marriages.¹⁹

Later, in Medieval Europe, it was thought to be an evil and unlucky tree, and foretold a death in the house if brought inside.²⁰

The hawthorn was considered one of the witches' favorite trees, and on Walpurgis (Beltane) night, witches turned themselves into hawthorns. Lust says "With a little superstitious imagination, the hawthorn's writhing, thorny branches at night probably do look enough like a witch to have instilled fear in medieval folk,"²¹ and according to Brimble, "when very old its trunk becomes gnarled and, if in an exposed position, the branches are twisted, giving the whole tree a sinister appearance."²²

In Ireland lone hawthorns belong to the fairies, who meet at

and live inside them. Many dire things are predicted if such a thorn were disturbed in any way, among them illness and death. The Irish believed the fairies spread their washing across the thorn to dry. Ireland also has sacred hawthorns at holy wells, on which rag offerings are left.²³

Although many plants were associated with May Day, the hawthorn had more significance than others, as the May-tree, and it symbolized the change from spring into summer. On most May Days the hawthorn was already in full bloom, before the British at last changed the calendar in 1752 and adopted the New Style. May 1 now comes thirteen days earlier than before.²⁴

On May Day, fairies and witches were abroad, and just as excited as humans by the beginning of summer. Milk and butter were likely to be stolen or bewitched. From such antics, a powerfully magical tree was needed as protection. In England and France, hawthorn was the surest of protectors on May Day, while in Ireland, the favored plant was the rowan. The Irish also collectively called the plants they gathered 'Summer,' or *an Samhradh*, as opposed to the British custom of calling them 'May,' i.e., 'bringing in the May.' "In fact, reverence for

the Hawthorn is part of our French, not of our Teutonic, inheritance."²⁵

Hawthorn was gathered on May Day morning, interwoven, and placed on doors or windows. This interweaving was important, since the power of magical plants was always increased by weaving them into various shapes. The magic of the hawthorn had already been increased during the night by the dew, which the country people considered a magic fluid, especially on May Day morn.²⁶

Sex and fertility, "which needed protection so much at this critical time,"²⁷ were very much a part of the old May Day celebrations, and were symbolized by the hawthorn. The stale, sweet scent of the flowers makes them suggestive of sex. This same smell led to the belief that hawthorn flowers had preserved the stench of the plague. The flowers contain trimethylamine, which is an ingredient of the smell of putrefaction.²⁸

The most famous hawthorn of all is the Glastonbury Thorn, which puts out leaves and flowers in winter and again in May. There seems to be some confusion about the species: Grigson says it is *Crataegus monogyna* var. *praecox*,²⁹ while Brimble claims it is *C. oxyacantha* var. *praecox*.

Whatever the species, it is not the only one; there are similar twice-blooming trees in Europe.³⁰

According to the Glastonbury legend, the famous Thorn blooms on Christmas Day because the Crown of Thorns was made of hawthorn. Later, it was added that Joseph of Arimathea stuck his dry hawthorn stick into Weary-All Hill, where it at once grew, and ever after bloomed on Christmas Day.³¹

Towards the end of the 16th century, one of the two trunks of the Glastonbury Thorn was cut down, and the other was later felled during the English Civil Wars. Fortunately, however, the tree had been widely propagated by cuttings. Brimble tells us that these cuttings still bloom twice a year, although plants grown from the seeds revert to the ordinary type and bloom only once a year—in early summer.³²

*Thre hawthornes also, that
groweth in Werale,
Do burge and bere grene leaves
at Christmas
As freshe as other in May.*³³ ☉

Notes:

¹ Rodale's *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs*. Edited by Claire Kowalchik and William H. Hylton. 1987. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA, pg. 275.

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Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

HAWTHORN

by Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa & Brigid MoonFire

Hawthorn, the 6th lunar month, presents a seeming paradox: While strongly connected with May Day, a festival of fertility and sexual license, Hawthorn is a moon of abstinence and physical cleansing.

Hawthorn has been called the tree of enforced chastity. It is known as a time of restraint, a time to clear away both the spiritual and physical deadwood and old habits. A time of clarity in which you can strengthen your dedication and focus. This was the time for the Romans and Greeks to clean out and purify their temples in preparation for the mid-summer celebrations. The British also kept to this time of cleaning. Part of their tradition was the cleaning of the chimney, and the chimney sweeps held a special place in their May Day festivities.

May is considered an unlucky month for marriages, but fine for engagements. It is possible that this lovely month was reserved for the gods, leaving the next month, June, the traditional month for ordinary mortals to marry in.

Children conceived in May

are usually born in February. Statistics reveal that there are more children born at that time who have disabilities or mental difficulties; that is, more deviance from the norm of the bell curve. So unless you want a defective child or a genius, it might be best to avoid this possibility.

With all of the evidence and folklore, one might think it obvious that abstinence is required during Hawthorn. But there are still other things to consider.

May Day is a time of sexual freedom, when marriage bonds were considered dissolved for the day, and temporary marriages were made and ended. The goddess Maia is associated with the Hawthorn, yet she is a goddess of fertility, and is connected to the May Day festival. The Hawthorn itself is called the May tree, partly because of its role in May Day. The Hawthorn's flowers have a unique odor, which at one time was thought to be the sweet smell of female sexuality. A wreath of flowering Hawthorn was placed over the top of the

Continued on page 46

Plant Identification: Leaves

by Sherlock

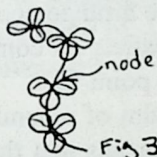
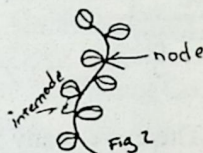
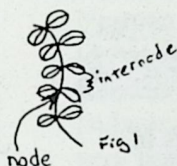
Have you ever tried to identify a plant using a book only to find that about ten of the pictures look just like the plant that you want to identify? Then you have to read about the characteristics of the ten different plants to see if one of them is more like your plant than the other nine. You do this only to find that you can't understand what half the terms mean. Finally after staring at the ten seemingly identical pictures for an hour, you decide that maybe you don't need to know what this plant is after all.

This article is meant to clear up some of the confusion by defining some basic terms for plant parts and leaf characteristics. I will continue in the next issue with an article on flower terms.

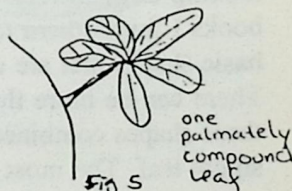
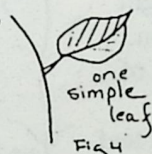
One of the plant characteristics that is often referred to, and which is sometimes the only distinguishing characteristic between two plants, is the way that the leaves are arranged on the stem. For the purpose of explaining this, you need to know that a node is the place on the stem where a leaf is attached, and an internode is the part of a stem in between the nodes.

There are three basic leaf arrangements: Opposite (Fig 1),

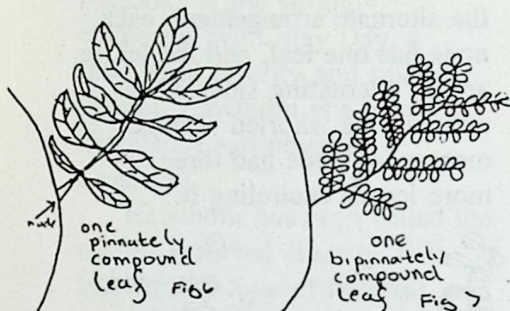
alternate (Fig 2), and whorled (Fig 3). In the opposite arrangement, each node has two leaves, one on each side of the stem. In the alternate arrangement, each node has one leaf, and the leaves are on alternating sides of the stem. In the whorled arrangement, each node had three or more leaves encircling it.



There are two basic types of leaves in the plant kingdom: Simple (Fig 4), and compound (Figs 5-7). Simple leaves are leaves which have only one part, whereas one compound leaf has many small leaflets. It is common to mistake one compound leaf for many simple leaves, even



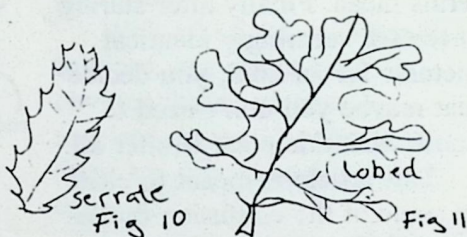
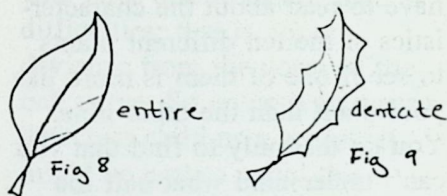
when you know there is a difference. To compensate for this, some identification books group plants according to whether the leaves are simple or compound. Once you have seen several compound leaves, the distinction should be clear.



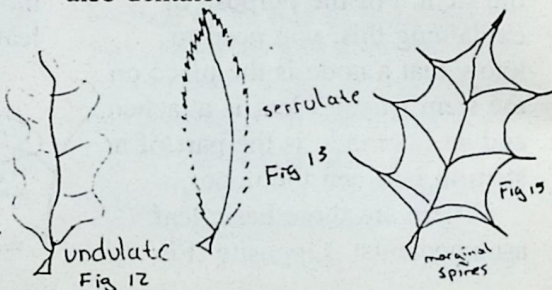
There are many ways in which compound leaves can be arranged. Palmate arrangement means that the leaflets all come from one central point like fingers from a palm of a hand (Fig 5). Pinnate means that the leaflets are arranged from a long central axis (Fig 6). If you look at Figure seven, you will notice that a leaf can be pinnate more than once. This is called bipinnately compound.

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of a plant is the shape of its leaves. In looking through identification books I found there to be eight basic shapes that are common. There can be more than one of these shapes combined in a single leaf. The most simple leaf

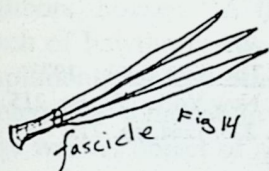
shape is called entire (Fig 8). This is a leaf with a smooth edge. Dentate (Fig 9) refers to a leaf whose edges have bite shaped dents all the way around. Serrate (Fig 10) is often confused with serrulate (Fig 13). The only difference is the size of the serration. A lobed leaf (Fig 11) is



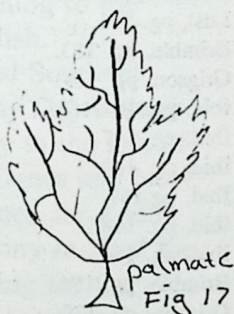
one with big dents in it. Some plant species have a particular number of lobes. An undulate leaf (Fig 12) has a wavy edge to it but the waves do not wave deep enough for lobes to form. Some leaves have marginal spines (Fig 15) such as holly. You will notice that Figure 15 is also dentate.



If you look at Figure 14 you will see a bundle of pine needles. Each needle is actually a leaf. The main thing that you need to know about this is that the bundle itself is called a fascicle. Pine trees have a certain number of leaves in each fascicle. This is very important in identifying pine trees (something which is near impossible even if you know all the structures and terms involved).



Another plant characteristic that is handy to know is venation. There are two basic types. Pinnate (Fig 16) has veins which extend from a central axis. Palmate (Fig 17) has veins which branch out from one point at the base of a leaf.



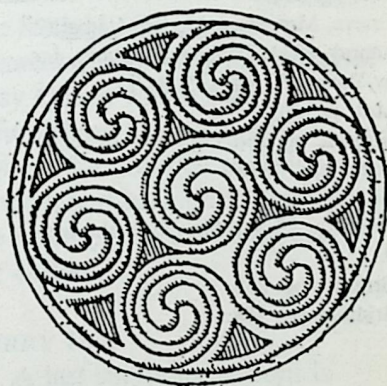
Well, that's about it for this article—I hope I was able to help. As I said before, more articles will follow. If you have

any specific questions, please write me care of **THE HAZEL NUT** and I will attempt to answer them in my next article. ☺

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- ²¹ Grieve, Mrs. M. A Modern Herbal (2 volumes). 1931. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 845, 847.
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- ² Green, Charlotte Hilton. Trees of the South. 1939. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, pg. 289.
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- ⁴ Green, pg. 289.
- ⁵ Grieve, Mrs. M. A Modern Herbal (2 volumes). 1931. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, pg. 385.
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May Day: cont. from pg. 19

out with 25 of her ladies to gather dew on May 1st.³⁵ Even the great Oliver Cromwell himself was not above making use of May dew on medical advice.

Another custom, necessarily confined to small, tightly-knit villages, was the May Birching. These 'May Birchers' used to go on their secret rounds at dawn on May Day, affixing branches of trees on the doors of their neighbors' houses. "A flowering branch of hawthorn was always a compliment, but any other thorn denoted that someone in the house was an object of scorn."³⁶ Rowan, or wicken, was a sign of affection. Briar, holly, plum, and alder, stood for liar, folly, glum, and scowler, respectively. "This distribution of 'birches' represented the honest opinions of the villagers, and when it was uncomplimentary, it was intended to serve as a warning to the erring or the foolish."³⁷

The Goths and Southern Swedes had a May Day custom that found its way to the Isle of Man, where the Danes and Norwegians had reigned for a long time. This ceremony marked the beginning of Spring for the Manx people, up until the late 18th century. In this custom, the Queen of the May, played by a young woman, is approached by the Queen of Winter, played by a

man dressed in women's clothes; who challenges the right of the May Queen to rule. The companies of the two engage in a mock battle, and if the May Queen is defeated, she is held for ransom and rescued by her people. The followers of the Queen of Winter then depart to hold their celebration in some dark, secluded place.³⁸

By the 18th century, most of the medieval May Day festivities had died out. Only the southern English urban milkmaids, who appeared on May Day bearing May Garlands hung about with borrowed silverware, and chimney sweeps, whose specialty was 'Jack-in-the-Green', kept them from dying out completely. By the mid-19th century, the festivities were revived, thanks to the romantic Victorians. They purged the festival of its 'grosser elements,' replacing the beautiful May Queen with a schoolgirl, refurbishing Maypoles with ribbons for children to dance around, and essentially turning the holiday into a "pretty affair for children."³⁹

FURRY DAY

A last surviving custom is Furry Day in Helston, Cornwall, which falls on May 8, and which, according to Kightly, is "one of the most famous of all traditional British festivals."⁴⁰

Furry Day has been called through the centuries, variously, Flora, Faddy, or Furry Day, and seems to be a vaguely remembered form of the original Roman Floralia. The word 'furry' is probably derived from the Cornish *feur*, or *fer*, a fair, rejoicing, or 'holy-day,' and 'Faddy' from an old English word, *fade*, meaning to go, and especially to go forward in a dance.⁴¹

Although it claims separate origins, Furry Day at some point became mingled with the May Day festivities. One of its main elements is the old maying processional called the 'Hal-an-Tow,' in which people go out to the woods early in the morning to gather greenery to decorate homes and buildings and carry through the streets.⁴²

Furry Day's other main theme, Furry Dancing, was well-established by 1602, and is probably related to the Hal-an-Tow processional.⁴³ The townspeople, dressed in their finest clothes, gather about mid-day and dance hand-in-hand through the town, accompanied by young men dressed as St. Michael and St. George, Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Little John. They dance down the main streets, into gardens, shops, and houses; in one door and out another, to bring the luck of Summer to the owners and tenants, and drive out

the darkness of Winter.⁴⁴

"The ancient origins of the festival show clearly in the green boughs gathered so early and carried about...and in the never-omitted luck-bringing visits. If any pre-Christian ancestor of today's dancers could return on Furry Day now, he would probably have little difficulty in recognizing the descendants of those rites by which he, too, once brought the Summer home, and carried luck and fertility to every homestead."⁴⁵

*"It was my hap of late, by chance,
To meet a Country Morris Dance,
When, cheefest of them all, the
Foole
Plaied with a ladle and a toole;
When every younger shak't his bells
Till sweating feet gave fothing
smells;
And fine Maide Marian with her
smoile,
Shew'd how a rascall plaid the
roile:
But, when the Hobby-horse did wihy,
Then all the wenches gave a tihy:
But when they gan to shake their
boxe,
And not a goose could catch a foxe,
The piper then put up his pipes,
And all the woodcocks look't like
snipes,
And therewith fell a show'ry
streame..."⁴⁶*

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⁶ Douglas, pg. 252.

⁷ Scullard, H.H. Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic. 1981. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, pg. 110.

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¹³ Ibid, pg. 79.

¹⁴ Kightly, pg. 139.

¹⁵ Whitlock, pg. 65.

¹⁶ Hole, pg. 133.

¹⁷ Ibid, pg. 134.

¹⁸ Whitlock, pg. 66.

¹⁹ Kightly, pg. 168.

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²¹ Ibid, pg. 170, 215.

²² Ibid, pg. 168.

²³ Douglas, pg. 252; Walker, Barbara G. The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets. 1983. Harper & Row, San Francisco, CA, pg. 625.

²⁴ Walker, pg. 625.

²⁵ Hole, pg. 137. In Hazlitt, pg. 402, a black and yellow painted May-pole is described.

²⁶ Hazlitt, pg. 402.

²⁷ Ibid, pg. 402, quoting Stuckely, "Itinerarium," 1724, pg. 29.

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³⁵ Ibid, pg. 400.

³⁶ Hole, pg. 128.

³⁷ Ibid, pg. 128.

³⁸ Hole, pg. 135; Hazlitt, pg. 397.

³⁹ Kightly, pg. 160.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pg. 121.

⁴¹ Hole, pg. 75.

⁴² Ibid, pg. 75.

⁴³ Kightly, pg. 122-123.

⁴⁴ Hole, pg. 75.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pg. 76.

⁴⁶ From Cobbe's Prophecies, his Signes and Tokens, his Madrigall, Questions, and Answers (1614).

Also see: Frazer, James. The Golden Bough, and McNeill, Marian. The Silver Bough, Vol. 2.



Path-Working Wheel and Power Stones

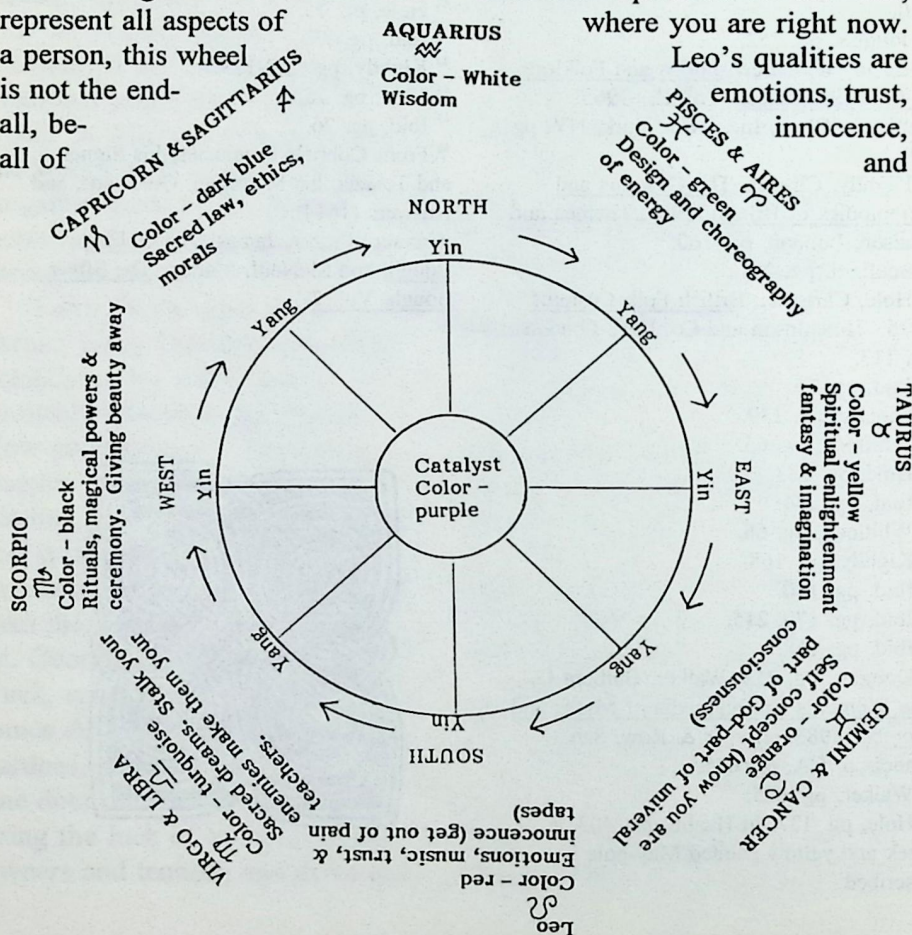
by Stormy

This path-working wheel is based on the Native American medicine wheel, with astrological signs replacing the more traditional animals. It offers a fun and simple way to discover what obstacles lie in your path to enlightenment. However, as no one sun sign out of twelve can represent all aspects of a person, this wheel is not the end-all, be-all of

spiritual discovery, and should not be taken as such. It can shed some light on your path, though, and suggest ways to overcome certain obstacles.

The wheel is very easy to use. First, find your astrological sun sign on the wheel; for example, Leo. This represents the low self;

where you are right now. Leo's qualities are emotions, trust, innocence, and



love of music. When in the low self position, these qualities translate to one who is childishy trusting and innocent, overly emotional, and who has a tendency to feel guilty and play "pain tapes" over and over. Leo can break out of this pattern by becoming aware of the problems and overcoming them.

Now go directly across from your sun sign to its opposite on the wheel; in this case, Aquarius. This position represents the high self; what you can ultimately achieve. Aquarius's quality is that of wisdom. After dealing with the emotions of the low self position, and the other obstacles still to come, Leo will obtain this wisdom and deeper understanding.

To find your main obstacle to reaching this higher self, go one sign to the left of the high self position. Leo's obstacle to overcome will thus be the Capricorn and Sagittarius combination, sacred law. When in the obstacle position, this means Leo will have problems with ethics, morals, and personal responsibility, stemming originally from his overly emotional nature. Wisdom is not gained all at once, but rather through overcoming a series of obstacles; this last is just the hardest.

Finally, understand that you still have to go completely

around the wheel to complete your spiritual quest. From the low self position, you will move clockwise, through increasingly difficult positions, until you reach and become your high self. You do not simply hop across the wheel; you have to experience and learn from everything in between. There are no shortcuts.

Power Stones:

The colors listed for each position can be used to overcome that particular problem, and help you achieve your goal, the high self, in this life-time. One way to do this is by finding stones of that color. These 'power stones' can also help you deal with your past karma and gain knowledge by learning what is needed in this incarnation before going onto the next incarnation.

Going by our example, the first color stone Leo should obtain is a red stone, such as a garnet, ruby, etc. For the high self position, Leo should get a white stone, like a diamond, white quartz, clear crystal quartz, herkimer diamond, calcite, fluo-rite, etc. Next, Leo will need a dark blue stone, like a blue sapphire, lapis lazuli, blue tiger's eye, etc.

In addition, a purple stone must always be used in combination with the other three stones in spiritual path-workings. The

purple stone will work as a catalyst, a 'jump-starter,' for the other three. Suggestions for purple stones are amethyst, sugalite, purple fluorite, etc.

Using Your Power Stones:

Your four stones will be effective if you simply charge them with energy and carry them around with you; but they can also be used while meditating, singing, chanting, or dancing, preferably in a power spot or sacred site of your choosing. A power spot is a place you find that makes you feel better and stronger in your spiritual quest, enabling you to connect with nature.¹ A sacred site is a spiritual place of intense power like Niagara Falls, New York or Etowah Mounds State Historic Site in Georgia.²

While beyond the scope of this article, know that grounding and balancing are important while working with power stones, wherever you are. Before you can reach what most think is heaven (sky), you must be firmly rooted (grounded) in order to commune with the earth's energies. You should also be balanced in yourself, as symbolized by the Yin/Yang sign. These energies, which are present in each of us, represent dark/light, female/male, night/ day, moon/sun, anima/animus, etc.³

Small power stones can be kept in a medicine bag or pouch made of natural material of your choice and then carried around the neck or waist. Beautiful well-shaped stones can be wrapped and strung on either a cord of velvet, leather or ribbon. Stones can also be purchased as beads, amulets, fetishes, earrings, bracelets and rings. The scope of one's imagination and creativity will allow you to discover ways to use the stones in path-workings and to obtain the ultimate goal of higher self. ☯

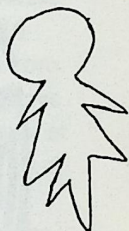
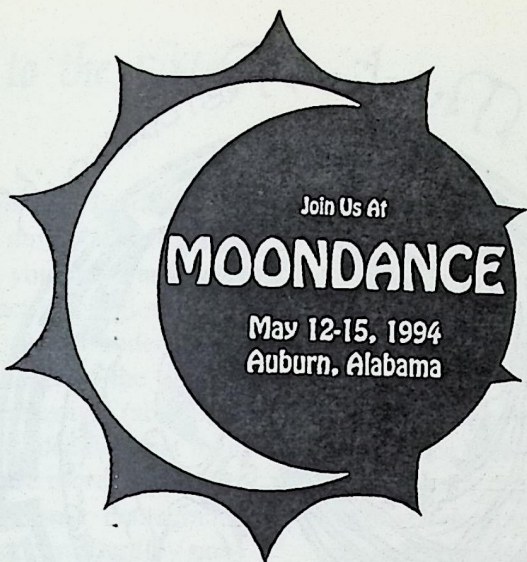
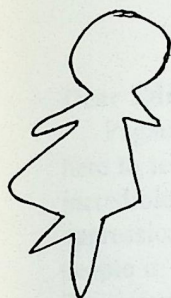
Sources & Notes:

Material for the Path-Working Wheel section of this article was based on information from Imré Rainey and indirectly from Cynthia Rose Young of Atlanta, Georgia. Imré is a past editor and current contributor to the HAZEL NUT, while Cynthia is a Reiki Master, Spiritual Teacher, Medicine Woman, and Kahuna, and is trained in Psychic Surgery.

¹ Recommended: Finding Your Personal Power Spots by Jose Alberta Rosa, M.D. with Nathaniel Altman, or the first 3 books written by Carlos Castaneda on Don Juan.

² To discover other sacred sites in your area and throughout the U.S., read Sacred Sites, A Traveler's Guide to North America's Most Powerful, Mystical Landmarks by Natasha Petersen. Not all known sacred sites are listed in this book; she simply lists about 3 sites for each of the northeastern, southeastern, southwestern, and northwestern sections of the U.S.

³ For more detailed information on working with stones, see Love is in the Earth: A Kaleidoscope of Crystals, by Melody.



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For the pot-luck feast, bring food that can be served cold, or cooked or heated on a grill (suggestions on what to bring will follow later). You'll also need your own food and cookware for other meals; fire pits and a grill are available.

About the site:

The festival will be at "Roxanna," near Auburn, Alabama. It is a primitive camping site. This means no cabins, no kitchen, no indoor plumbing, and no electricity. It is a piece of land with clearings, woods, a pond, and magnificent expanses of exposed bedrock. It's also very private: alcohol allowed, clothing optional. We have privies and solar showers. There are also reasonably priced hotels within 20 miles.

The site will open Thursday night, May 12, at 5:00 Central Standard Time, and close Sunday, May 15, at 5:00 CST.

The cost: cheap!! \$15 till April 1; \$20 till May 8 (per person). Children under 14 are 1/2 price; babes in arms are free. **Pre-payment is REQUIRED; deadline is May 8, 1994.** Refunds will be given in full until May 8, at a 50% rate until the weekend of the festival, and none afterwards. If you send someone else in your place, please let us know beforehand. **NO UNREGISTERED GUESTS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE GATE!!** This is to protect your privacy; please help with your cooperation.

Send reservations and direct questions to:

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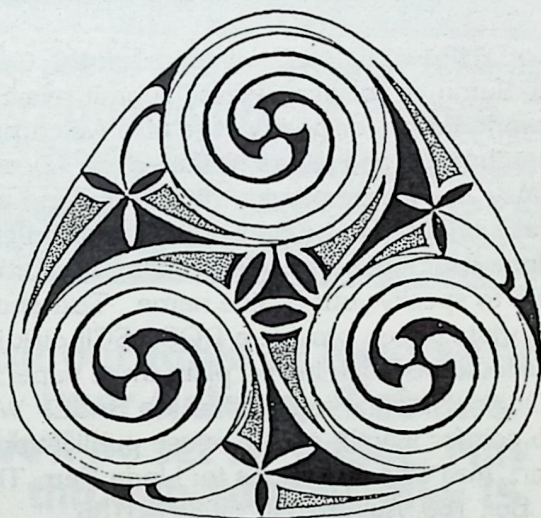
Letters to the Editor:

Dear Editor and Readers:

Pagans unite! This reader is here to tell you about an incredible act of religious oppression. The wonderful people in charge of the Renaissance Festival (at least in Atlanta) have decided that their advertisers are more important than their patrons. Pentagrams and anything considered by non-Pagans to be "Satanic" will not be allowed to be sold. It should be known that this is not written down per se, but if you do sell

these items, your booth may not be 'safe' or 'clean' or whatever it takes to shut you down. Rumor has it that to date at least 16 vendors have pulled out—more power to them! So if you have enjoyed buying 'Pagan' items at Renaissance Festival in the past, don't look for them this year. Better yet, don't go. Show the people at Renaissance Festival our strength in numbers, or even better, write a letter to let them know how you feel.

Lara Goode




Esoterica: Hawthorn, cont. from
pg. 32

Maypole, as a representation of the female and male energies combined. And on a more personal level, few of us can say they haven't felt stirrings of lust at a wild May Day festival!

So yes, there certainly seems to be a paradox in this moon. How can we resolve this? The symbols of May Day, the wreath and the pole, might give us a clue. The male and female energies, or the yin and the yang, should be combined and balanced. You cannot have one without the other. Just as procreation requires both sexes, so does a harmonious inner self. In Jungian psychology, when the male and female energies are in balance, the two 'halves' can come together and

create a 'psychic child,' the fruit of both; a higher, more evolved consciousness.

Perhaps these clues also tell us that we should not forgoe the spiritual in favor of the purely physical, or vice versa, for that in itself is a form of imbalance. We do know from experience that if women indulge in too much sex in May, it can lead to 'clogged plumbing' by late June; maybe this is seen in the cleaning of the temples in preparation for the mid-summer festivities.

There is no straight and true answer; you must interpret this yourself and do what you think is best. And if you're still confused or in doubt, remember to ask the Hawthorn tree—that's why it's there. 

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS and

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The next issue of **THE HAZEL NUT** will focus on the Oak and Holly trees, and the Summer Solstice. Please submit relevant articles, rituals, artwork, fiction, or poetry. We also welcome your general-interest contributions and letters to the editor. Deadline for all submissions is May 23. Please provide your name and address for our records, and a brief bio to be printed with your article or ritual; this can include your legal or magickal name and/or address, if you wish. Be sure to specify your by-line name. Text should be typed, black ink on white paper; provide a DOS ASCII disk if possible. Artwork should be black ink on plain white paper; no pencil drawings! Originals will be returned with a SASE. We reserve the right to edit for length, and to refuse publication of any submission or letter. Mail all submissions to: Linda Kerr, **THE HAZEL NUT**, P.O. Box 186, Auburn, AL 36831-0186.

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The site opens at 4:00 p.m. Friday; closes at 12:00 noon Sunday. There are beds and crash space for about 100-150 people, with camping available nearby. All meals will be BYOF, but there is a fully equipped kitchen for your use. If a volunteer lifeguard can be found (hint, hint!), a lake is available for swimming.

Cost: \$20.00/person until May 1st, \$35.00 until August 7th. NO UNREGISTERED GUESTS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE GATE! Cut-off date for reservations is August 7th (and beds will go fast), so RESERVE NOW!! For reservations, info, or to VOLUNTEER, contact ShadowCat, 129 Napier Ave., Warner Robins, GA, 31093; 912-929-5588.



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CONTACTS

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Creative Peace Meditation: A simple and active relaxation breathing technique, charged with goodwill and holy sounds of your faith. Taught by Dr. N.S. Malladi.

Classes are Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m., in Foy Union, Room 204, Auburn University, AL. Classes are FREE. For more info, call Imré K. Rainey, 205-887-6484, or Dr. N.S. Malladi, 205-821-6633.

Meditation and Yoga Posture: Classes are every Monday. Although there are mats, please bring something to sit on. Advanced Yoga Meditation Group meets from 6:30-7:30 p.m.; Introduction to Yoga Postures and Meditation Class meets from 7:45-8:45 p.m. Classes are FREE.

Frank Brown Recreation Center, Rooms C and D, 235 Opelika Rd., Auburn, AL. For more info, call 205-821-4731.

Facets: Auburn's metaphysical discussion group. For more info and current meeting place, call Imré K. Rainey at 205-844-4748 or Etc. at 205-821-0080.

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Bubbles From the Cauldron

Book Reviews, Etc.

Empowerment through Reiki: The Path to Personal and Global Transformation, by Paula Horan. 1989. Lotus Light Publications, Federal Republic of Germany. Softcover, \$14.95.

Paula Horan, Ph.D., is a psychologist, lecturer, and Reiki Master. Having healed herself of a breast tumor and grand mal epileptic seizures, Dr. Horan teaches healing and health with an approach of personal responsibility.

Empowerment Through Reiki offers an overview of the Reiki initiations, the history of Reiki, the combination of healing practices, and much more. I recommend this book for those considering Reiki treatments, initiations, and even Reiki Masters who are looking for a good first and second degree text book.

Reviewed by Imré K. Rainey

New Product Review

Moldavite Power Collection

This wonderful display showed up in Etc. about a month ago and is already sparking interest. Even if you are not into stones you may want to check this one out.

Moldavites are the only tektites (meteorites) suitable for faceting as a gem. Raw moldavite, however, can be very beautiful in its natural state. Virtually all moldavite in the world is found in Czechoslovakia near the Moldan river; thus the name moldavite.

Moldavite did not exist on this planet before 14.8 million years ago, when it is estimated that it showered to the ground in Czechoslovakia. It has been used by man as tools and talismans for at least 25,000 years. In legends, moldavite is believed to be the green stone in the Holy Grail.

Many people not attracted to stones can sense the energies of moldavite, usually as a hot tingling sensation, or as a rush of energy through the body. It is a wonderful chakra opener, especially when used at the 3rd eye, throat, and crown chakras.

If you have even the slightest interest in the metaphysical properties of stones, or if you want to experiment with a different path in chakra work, I urge you to try moldavite.

Rough B grade moldavite (still very beautiful) can be purchased from \$5 and up; the museum quality or faceted stones run a little higher. Also available from "The Moldavite Power Collection" is an oil, complete with a small piece of moldavite in the vial, moldavite incense in stick and cone, moldavite bath salts, and moldavite guided meditation tapes. Warning: moldavite can be addictive in nature. Go ahead—get hooked!

*Reviewed by Lara Goode,
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