

Springtime Rituals, Lore & Celebration

BELTANE



RAVEN GRIMASSI

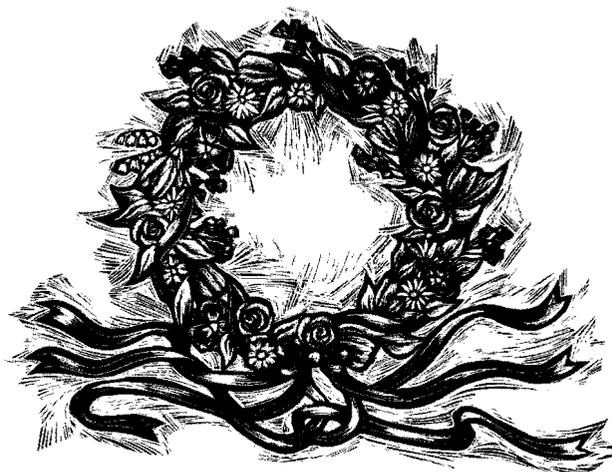
WELCOME THE SEASON OF FERTILITY, FLOWERS, AND FAIRIES WITH A MAYPOLE DANCE

The spring season has always been a time of celebration and merriment. The appearance of flowers after a cold winter is a promise of warm summer days to come. Many of the modern celebrations of May are rooted in ancient Pagan traditions that honor the earth and the forces that renew life.

The Maypole is the symbol of the spirit of vegetation returning and renewing its life with the approach of summer. Traditionally, the Maypole was topped with a wreath that symbolized the fertile power of nature. Ribbons, an ancient talisman of protection dating back to archaic Roman religion, were attached to the pole to ensure the safety of the newborn season. Celebrants encircled the Maypole and danced in a symbolic weaving of human life with the life of nature itself.

Springtime Rituals, Lore & Celebration

BELTANE



RAVEN GRIMASSI

2001

Llewellyn Publications

St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0383, U.S.A.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION, XIII

CHAPTER ONE THE CELEBRATION OF MAY, I

Old May Customs

May Garlands

The Maypole

The Maypole Dance

May Dolls

The Beltane Fire

CHAPTER TWO THE SPIRITS OF MAY, 19

The May Queen and King

The Green Man

Jack-in-the-Green

Dusio, the Trickster

John Barleycorn

The Hobbyhorse

Mummers, an Ancient Tradition



CHAPTER THREE FAIRY LORE, 35

Historical and Mythical Background

The Fairy Realm

The Fairy Godmother

Fairy Tales:

- The Maiden and the Fountain Fairy • The Smith and the Fairies
 - The Walnut Fairies • The Elves and the Shoemaker
 - The Legend of Knockgrafton
- The Red-Haired Tailor of Rannock and the Fairy • The Two Humpbacks
 - The Recovered Bride • The Fairies' Hill • The Stolen Lady
- Brewery of Eggshells • A Smith Rescues a Captured Woman from a Troll

CHAPTER FOUR FLOWER LORE, 77

Flower Meanings

The Language of Flowers

Trees Associated with Fairies

Sacred Plants Associated with Goddesses

Magical Correspondences of Trees

CHAPTER FIVE SPELLS AND RECIPES, 97

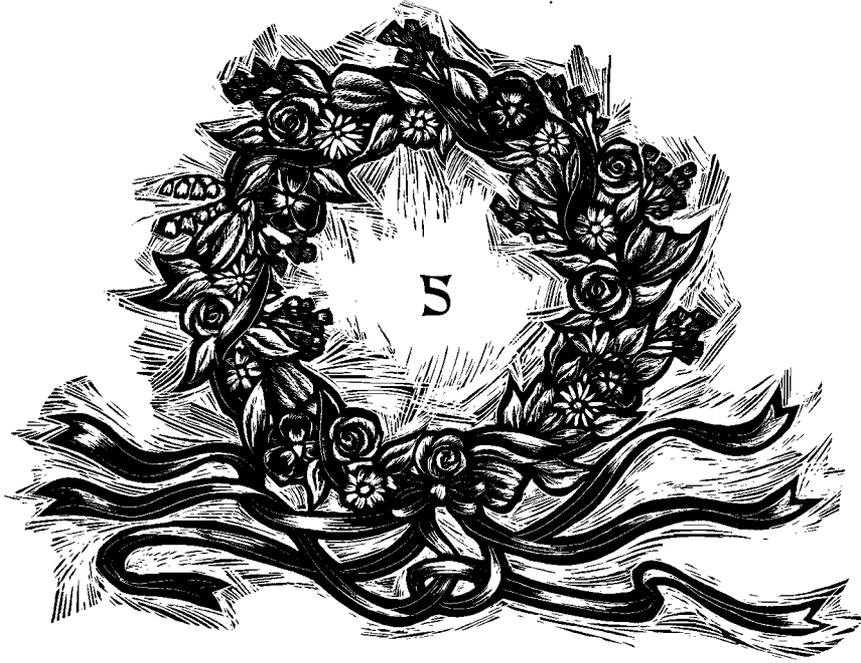
Spells:

- Money Drawing Spell • Success Spell
- Love Attracting Spell • Serenity Spell

Divination:

- The Scrying Glass

Goddess	Sacred Plant
Cypress	Past-life workings, protection
Elder	Healing, prosperity, protection
Elm	Protection
Eucalyptus	Healing
Fig	Fertility, healing, sensuality
Hawthorn	Cleansing, love, protection
Hazel	Divination, protection, reconciliation
Juniper	Protection
Lemon	Chastity, divination, friendship, healing, wishing
Maple	Divination, love
Mulberry	Divination, knowledge, will power, wisdom
Oak	Healing, finances, longevity, strength
Olive	Fidelity, fruitfulness, peace, security
Orange	Love, marriage
Palm:	Strength
Peach	Divination, love
Pine	Fortune, fertility, health, prosperity, purification
Rowan	Protection, strength
Walnut	Divination, healing, oracle, protection
Willow	Enchantment, healing, moon magick, protection
Yew	Altered states of consciousness



SPELLS AND RECIPES

*O do not tell the Priests of our Arts
For they would call it sin;
For we will be in the woods all night.
A-conjuring Summer in.*

—The Grimoire of Lady Sheba

Spring rituals have long been associated with fertility, gain, and prosperity. The endless cycle of renewal suggested to humankind that something unseen was in control of the forces behind such cycles. From a desire to tap into this hidden power, or to persuade it to assist humankind, arose the creation of rituals and spells. Early magical reasoning held that in order to attract something, one needed to display an object that was similar in nature. Therefore certain plants, stones, and other natural objects were valued in magic because something in their shape, color, or property was suggestive of things desired by our ancestors.

In modern folk magic a green candle is said to help attract money. Eggs are believed to possess the magical power of fertility. Such things are very common elements employed in folk magic. Special charms and talismans can be added to strengthen one's belief while performing a ritual or casting a spell. Folk magic itself is a blend of employing natural objects, personal faith, and the powers of the mind toward manifesting a goal or desire.

SPELLS

In the following section are four types of spells that are popular with the modern practitioner of magick. When working magick it is important to also do the work on the physical plane.

A spell is designed to give your mundane efforts a boost. Spells are not intended to replace self-responsibility. Once you have put out the physical effort, then you can employ the following spells. Unless otherwise stated, perform these spells on the first day of the new moon.

MONEY DRAWING SPELL

- 3 green candles
- 1 aventurine stone
- 1 lodestone
- Patchouli incense
- Patchouli oil
- A small pouch containing cinnamon,
peppermint, and comfrey

This spell should be worked when the waxing crescent of the moon can be seen in the night sky. Begin by anointing the candles with the patchouli oil. Then place them in holders, setting them to form a triangle surrounding the aventurine stone and the lodestone. Next anoint yourself on the solar plexus with patchouli oil. Light the candles and take three deep breaths through the closed herbal pouch. As you inhale, close your eyes and imagine a green sphere of energy pass into your solar plexus.

Now pick up the lodestone in your left hand and the aventurine stone in your right. Then speak this affirmation:

All obstacles are gone and I draw prosperity to myself. I attract gain and increase. I draw the abundance. To me comes now the money that is needed and to spare.

Sit quietly in front of the candles and visualize yourself looking into your purse or wallet and having lots of cash. Next, see yourself writing checks to cover your bills and having a nice balance left in your checkbook.

Extinguish the candles and incense. Repeat the spell for three days in a row.



The accoutrements of a Money Drawing Spell.

SUCCESS SPELL

- 2 gold candles
- 1 red jasper stone
- 1 coin (any kind)
- A small pouch containing frankincense, cedar,
and Solomon's seal
- Pennyroyal oil
- Sandalwood incense

When the moon is full, place the two gold candles in holders and set the red jasper stone and the coin in front of them. Center the incense behind the candles. Anoint the candles with pennyroyal oil and then light the candles and incense. Then take three deep breaths through the closed herbal pouch.

Next, pick up the coin and place it on your left palm. Turn the coin over three times, reciting the following for each turn of the coin:

*Lady Moon, Queen of the Heavens
see how I turn the coin as in days of old.
Keep now the ancient promise
that all who keep the turning of the wheel
will prosper in all things.*

Pick up the stone in your right hand and relax for a few moments. Then visualize the successful outcome of your venture. See it clearly in your mind's eye exactly as you want it to occur.

Next anoint the stone and the coin with pennyroyal oil. Then pass each one through the incense smoke three times, and recite the following verse each time:

*Here beneath the moon I see,
blessed be the spell times three,
success in all I do shall be,
and as my will, so mote it be!*

Allow the candles and incense to burn out by themselves. Finish the spell by putting the stone and the coin in a small pouch. Keep it with you in your pocket or purse for seven days.



Triangular placement of candles for Success Spell.

LOVE ATTRACTING SPELL

- 2 green candle
- 1 red candle
- 1 rose quartz crystal
- 1 heart-shaped charm
- Wisteria or frangipani incense
- A bottle of your favorite perfume/cologne
- A small pouch containing a pinch of vervain
and 3 rose petals

The purpose of this spell is to attract a person to you with whom you can have a loving relationship. It is not designed to attract a specific person that you desire. Spells that manipulate or compel other people to do as you will them to do are not considered ethical. This spell is for general attraction, a call to the Universe to send someone to you that will result in a mutually loving relationship.

Arrange the candles so that they form a triangle. The triangle needs to be wide enough to place the crystal and the heart charm in the open center of the triangle.

Light the candles and incense. Pick up the sealed herbal pouch and inhale through it three times.

Pick up the rose quartz in your right hand and the heart charm in your left. Stretch out your arms so that your body forms a “T” posture. Then speak the following:

*I call out now to the four quarters,
bring to me upon the mist of magick
the one with whom my heart will sing.
Hear me, hear my cry:*

*I call upon the spirits of air to carry her/him to me.
I call upon the spirits of water to let love flow
within us.
I call upon the spirits of fire to ignite our passion
I call upon the spirits of earth to bind us together.*

Immediately after saying the last line, cross your arms over your chest, forming an “X” pattern, and take three slow, deep breaths. Then place the heart charm and quartz piece on the herbal bag.

Pick up the perfume/cologne bottle, pass it through the incense three times, and then spray some perfume/cologne on your heart area. Next, speak the following:

*By the spirits of earth, air, fire, and water,
may the emanation of this scent
fill my aura and draw to me
a loving partner of mind, spirit, and body.
with harm to none, so mote it be.*

Allow the candles and incense to burn out on their own. Put the charm and the quartz piece into the herbal bag and carry it with you in your purse or pocket for one full cycle of the moon. When you are out in social settings put on some of your perfume or cologne. Do not keep thinking on the spell, but instead let it work on its own.

SERENITY SPELL

- 1 sage smudge bundle
- 1 blue candle
- 1 pink candle
- Sandalwood oil
- Sandalwood incense
- 1 amethyst stone
- A small pouch containing a pinch each
of lilac, sage, and chamomile

Ideally this spell should be performed while taking a nice relaxing bath to enhance its effectiveness. Begin by lighting the smudge stick and pass the smoke around you from head to toe. Next fill the tub with water. Then take the blue and pink candles and anoint them with the sandalwood oil. Place the candles on the edge of the bathtub so that you will be looking directly at them. Set the amethyst stone on the side edge of the tub. Light the incense and set it away from the bathtub. When you are ready, turn out any lights so that only the candles glow.

Get into the tub and settle down into the water. After a few moments take the amethyst stone in your hand and close your eyes. Take three deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling slowly. Mentally identify the things that are causing you stress, one situation at a time. Do not dwell on each one, but simply identify them. Once identified, take a deep breath, inhaling through the closed herbal pouch, exhaling out upon the amethyst stone. As you do so, feel that you are literally blowing the negative emotional energy away, out of your body. Then dip the stone into the water and briskly pass the stone through the water as though you were rinsing something off it, which indeed you are.

When you have completed the process, immediately leave the bathtub, initiate draining the tub, and then dry yourself off with a towel. At this point take the candles and incense to a quiet place where you can either sit or lie down comfortably. Anoint yourself with the sandalwood oil. Gaze upon the burning candles a few moments, and then make this affirmation:

I claim this time of peace as my own and allow nothing else to enter into this moment. All is in harmony, my spirit embraces tranquility. Nothing but good shall come to me, nothing but good shall come from me.

If possible allow the candles to go out on their own. Spend a few moments reflecting upon the things that are good in your life, and the people whom you love and who love you. Put the stone into the herbal bag and carry in your purse or pocket for seven days.

DIVINATION

With the changing of seasons and the approach of summer, works of divination are useful to gain new perspectives. In ancient times dark pools of liquid were used to divine the future. This represented the look within, the assessment of the past, and its gift to the future. The old term for this type of divination is known as “scrying.” Scrying is a very ancient technique common among shamanistic traditions. Divination itself is the ability to discern patterns that are forming, moving toward manifestation. What you “see” is actually what is likely to occur if nothing changes the divinatory images one perceives.

The use of a scrying bowl is one of the traditional methods of fortune-telling. This very basic method employs a dark liquid formula. Pour some

bottled water into a medium-sized bowl such as a soup bowl. Add a few drops of blue or green food coloring to the water, enough to ensure that the liquid is dark and obscures the bottom of the bowl. At this point you should have a dark, reflective surface to gaze into. Place two candles as your source of light, making sure that the light does not reflect upon the liquid. Setting them a foot or two in front of you, one candle off to each side, should work.

Next, perform a series of hand passes over the liquid in the bowl, slowly and deliberately. In the magickal arts, the right hand generates an electrical charge and the left hand a magnetic charge. Left-handed passes attract and draw images, forming them in the dark liquid. Right-handed passes will strengthen the images appearing there, and focus them more clearly.



A dark, reflective surface is best for scrying.

Begin scrying by making left-handed passes over the bowl, in a clockwise circle, just a few inches above the water (palms open and facing down). Stop and gaze into the dark liquid, not at its surface but deep into the bowl. Usually several repeated passes of the hands are required during the scrying process. Alternate between the left hand and the right hand. This requires patience, and time. Use your intuition as you sit before the bowl. Make sure the area is quiet and there are no distractions.

With practice, images will begin to form within the liquid. Sometimes they will be symbolic or suggestive images. At other times they may form as faces, objects, or places you are already familiar with. It is important to simply allow the images to form. Do not rush them, or become anxious when they begin to appear. Try to remain calm and receptive. Watch the images until they fade away. At first, interpreting the meaning of what you see is like trying to find meaning within a dream, but, with time, you will begin to understand the symbols, their meaning, and the importance of their appearance.

THE SCRYING GLASS

The scrying glass is a dark concave surface of reflective material. One can easily be constructed by using the curved glass face of a clock and painting the convex side with glossy black paint. Once the paint has thoroughly dried, bath the mirror in an herbal brew of rosemary, fennel, rue, vervain, ivy, and walnut leaves (or bark). If you want to be truly traditional, pour some sea foam into the mixture.

To charge the glass, take a deep breath and then slowly exhale outward upon the potion. Repeat this three times. Remove the mirror from the potion and dry it off thoroughly. Prop the mirror up vertically, supported by two sturdy books or book ends to hold it in place. Hold your right hand out in front of you so that your palm is facing the convex side of the mirror. Then place the left palm facing the concave side, about three inches away from the glass surface. You are now ready to magnetize the mirror.

With the left hand begin making a circular clockwise motion across the surface of the mirror. Do this for a few minutes and then repeat this on the convex side of the mirror with the right hand. The opposite hand is always held still while the moving hand circulates. To use the scrying glass simply employ the same techniques as described for the divination bowl.

RECIPES FOR CELEBRATING MAY

Food is a magickal thing. The tools that harvest the raw materials and the items that cook the meal are all associated with ritual lore. Among the earliest tools were the cauldron and the hearth. The fire that burned in the hearth was a spirit, and the chimney connected the earth and the sky, drawing down the blessings of the divine and offering up the scent of food in a way of thanksgiving. Here in the hearth the fire could be evoked in order to initiate the process that would join the elements together to manifest a meal. Eating and sitting before the fire became a social event. It was a time to put aside the work of the day and join together as family and friends.

Most of the customary recipes associated with a season are steeped in cultural expression and ancient traditions. Planting and harvesting laid the foundation for many customs and traditions. Meals to celebrate the hard work of farming were made from what grew in season. For our ancestors, planting seeds involved breaking the soil and clearing the land with primitive tools by today's standards. In the past it took thirty people working for four days to bring in the harvest. The accomplishment of such a task was celebrated with a festive meal. Today a tractor can perform the same task in a single day, something that calls for a less spectacular celebration. Sadly the old traditions have all but disappeared now, but we can recapture them.

Few celebrations of May would be complete without the presence of May wine. May wine is made from the earliest harvest of grapes. It is very



popular among modern celebrants of Beltane and is also used as an offering of “first fruits” to the Goddess and God. It is easily purchased at most stores that carry even a fair selection of wine. However, there is a quick and easy way to create a suitable May wine if none can be found to purchase.

A QUICK MAY WINE

Obtain a bottle of white table wine (not a Chardonnay) and pour the contents into a larger glass container that has a lid. Next take a half-dozen to a dozen bruised fresh strawberries and slice them. Then add a few sweet woodruff leaves and the berries to the wine and chill for several hours to allow the flavors to develop.



BLESSING FOR MAY WINE

Place the wine in the center of a wreath of flowers. Hold your hands over the wine, palms down, and recite the blessing:

Blessings be upon this wine, which is the essence of the secret of transformation. The blood of life flows again back into Nature and summer approaches with the promise of fullness. May all who drink this wine be filled to the brim with all that is good in life.

MAKING A MAY CUP

The May cup is an English tradition in which one offers the cup to guests and travelers during the May Day celebrations. The May Cup is easily prepared (although it takes about two hours to settle) and tastes delicious.

- 4 glasses of white wine
- 8 glasses of cider
- 1 glass of brandy
- 1 orange, sliced
- ½ ounce ladies' bedstraw (*Galium verum*)

Mix the white wine, cider, and brandy together. Then add the orange slices and ladies' bedstraw. Leave the mixture in a cool place to settle for two hours, and then filter the liquid into a jug. Serve in glasses.

The traditional main dish of a May celebration is fish, lamb, or pork. For the vegetarian mushrooms with pasta (seasoned with onion, celery, pepperocini, and basil) is a good alternative.

As part of the May celebration you may wish to include some special treats for the celebrants. In addition to the main feast a dessert is always welcome. In keeping with the traditions of May, any of the following will do nicely.

BACCHUS PUDDING

- 4 eggs
- 1¼ cups confectioner's sugar
- 2½ cups sweet white wine (such as Riesling)
- ½ cinnamon stick
- 3 whole cloves

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Beat eggs well, then set aside until foam subsides. Boil the sugar and wine together with the cinnamon and cloves for about 5 minutes. Set the mixture aside to cool. Remove the cinnamon stick and cloves. Press the beaten eggs through a strainer to eliminate the rest of the foam and any impurities. Blend both mixtures together.

Pour the mixture into custard cups and set them in a baking pan. Fill the pan with boiling water to a level 1 inch up the sides of the cups. Bake for 55 minutes, until the puddings have set and a skewer comes out almost completely clean.

CUSTARD (MICROWAVE RECIPE)

- 1 cup milk
- 4 eggs
- 2 tablespoons honey or sugar

Beat together until thoroughly blended. Divide into 3 or 4 small microwave containers.

Cook at 30% power in 600–700 watt oven or at 50% power in 500–600 watt oven (1 custard 6–7 min., 2 custards 9–11 min., 3 custards 12–15 min., 4 custards 15–22 min.). Turn as necessary for even cooking. Custards are done when a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let custard stand 5 minutes before serving. Yield: 2 cups.

PORRIDGE

Porridge was one of the main ways of eating oats in days gone by. There is a lot of mystique about making porridge and lots of traditions associated with cooking and eating it. Stirring the porridge should always be clockwise (even though going in different directions probably mixes it more efficiently). Porridge used to be served with separate bowls of double cream. A spoonful of porridge (in a horn spoon) was dipped into a communal bowl of cream before eating. Tradition dictates that porridge is eaten standing up. Porridge used to be poured into a “porridge drawer.” Once it had cooled, it could be cut up into slices, which were easier to carry than brittle oatcakes. The important thing is to obtain good quality medium-ground oats (rather than rolled oats), and to keep stirring it to avoid solid lumps.

- 1 pint (half-liter) water, or use half water and half milk
- 2½ ounces (2½ rounded tablespoons) medium-ground oats
- Pinch of salt

Bring the water (or water and milk) to a good rolling boil, preferably in a nonstick pan. Slowly pour the oatmeal into the boiling liquid, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon all the time. Keep stirring until it has returned to the boil again, reduce the heat, cover the pan, and simmer very gently for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the salt at this point and simmer and stir for a further 5–10 minutes (time depends on the quality of the oats). It should have a thick but pourable consistency. Porridge is traditionally served hot in wooden bowls. Yield: 2 servings.

MAY WREATH CAKE

- ¾ cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 lemons
- 3 eggs
- 4 tablespoons rum
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1½ tablespoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon lemon extract

Preheat oven to 375°F.

In a large bowl mix the flour, salt, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, and baking soda. Add the oils and mix with a wooden spoon or with the paddle of an electric mixer until crumbly. Grate the zest of the lemons directly over the mixture. Beat the eggs, rum, milk, and vanilla and lemon extracts together. Add this to the dry ingredients and stir until completely incorporated.

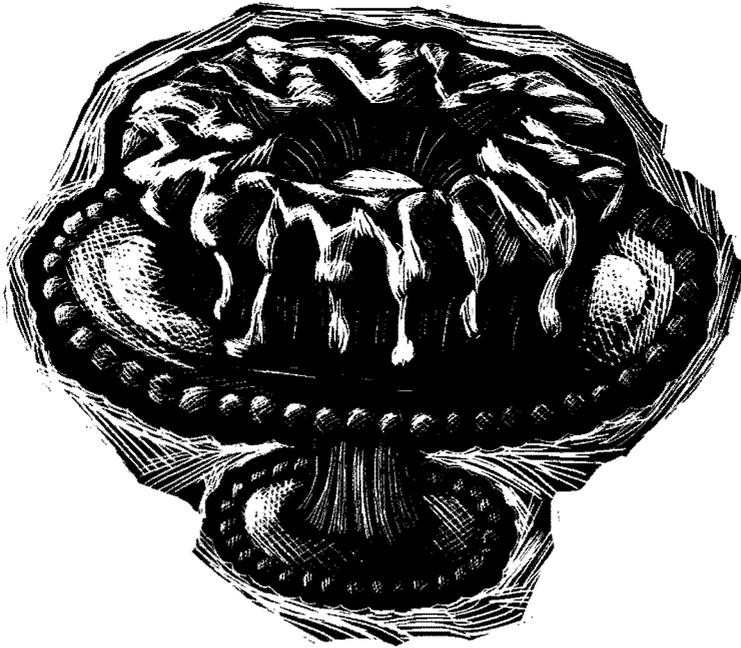
Shape the dough into a ball. Set it in a round baking pan (9½ to 10-inch round) lined with parchment paper, and using your hands, make a hole in the center. Gradually stretch the dough from the center, increasing the size of the hole to about 6 inches wide. The hole will close up somewhat during baking. Makes one round cake:

Bake at 375°F, until a tester comes out clean, about 45 minutes.

Icing for May Wreath Cake:

- 2 egg whites
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- Colored sprinkles

Just before the cake is finished baking, beat the egg whites briskly until they form soft peaks. Add the sugar and beat until glossy. Remove the cake from the oven, spread the icing over the top, then shower with colored sprinkles, and return to the oven for 5 minutes, or until icing is lightly browned.





MAY SERPENT CAKE

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of ground cloves
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ground nutmeg
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $4\frac{1}{2}$ cups plus 2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 3 tablespoons honey, boiling
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup strong-brewed espresso coffee
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup amaretto or rum
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup wild cherry or raspberry jam
- Coffee beans and candied orange peel for garnish

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Mix the sugar, spices, orange zest, baking soda, and salt into the flour. Cut in the butter with a pastry blender until it is the size of small pebbles. Pour in the boiling honey, coffee, and liqueur, and mix until smooth. Let cool and then turn out onto a floured surface.



Divide the dough in half. Roll the first half into an 18-inch long cylinder. Make a deep trough down the center and carefully spoon half the jam in it. Pull the edges of the dough out and over the jam and pinch firmly all along the length to seal the jam firmly inside. Roll the log over and carefully place it, seam side down, on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Be sure that the smooth side is up. Bend the dough carefully into a circle and fashion the snake's head at one end, making a triangle shape. Taper the other end to make the tail of the snake's body. Firmly set in two coffee beans for the snake's eyes. Repeat for second cake. Bake the cakes at 400°F for about 30 minutes. Makes two cakes.

OAT CAKES (BANNOCKS)

Oatcakes are an old tradition and were cooked on a griddle, over an open fire. Today a heavy frying pan is more commonly used.

Ingredients:

- 4 ounces (125 grams) medium oatmeal
- Pinch of salt
- 2 pinches of baking soda
- 2 teaspoons melted fat (bacon fat is traditional)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tablespoon hot water
- Additional oatmeal for kneading

Mix the oatmeal, salt, and soda in a bowl, then pour the melted fat into the center of the mixture. Stir well, using a porridge stick if you have one, and add enough water to make a stiff paste. Cover the work surface with oatmeal and turn the mixture onto this. Work quickly as the paste is difficult to work if it cools. Divide dough into two parts, roll one half into a ball and knead, with hands covered in oatmeal to keep from sticking. Roll out to about one-quarter inch thick. Put a plate that is slightly smaller than the size of your pan over the flattened mixture and cut around it

to make a circular oatcake. Cut into quarters and place in a heated pan that has been lightly greased. Cook for about 3 minutes, until the edges curl slightly, turn, and cook the other side. Prepare another oatcake while the first is cooking.

An alternative method of cooking is to bake the cakes in an oven at 375°F/190°C for about 30 minutes, or until brown at the edges. The quantities above will be enough for two bannocks about the size of a dessert plate. If you want more, do them in batches rather than making larger quantities of mixture. Store in a tin and reheat in a moderate oven before serving.

THE FERTILE MONTH OF MAY

May, as the herald of the coming season of summer, when crops grow to fullness, is often associated with fertility. In this section various herbs traditionally believed efficacious for pregnancy and the female reproductive system are discussed. The herbs and remedies listed here are traditional folk remedies, included here for their historical interest. *Do not use any of the following remedies without first consulting a doctor to ensure that these herbs are safe for you as an individual.*

TO INCREASE CHANCES OF PREGNANCY

- To increase fertility, add small amounts of powdered cayenne to food or herbal tea.
- Chicory leaves or flowers will also increase a woman's fertility.
- Red clover will restore alkaline balance to the body and thereby possibly boost fertility.
- Licorice stimulates production of female hormones.

- Raspberry leaf is excellent while trying to get pregnant, but should be discontinued once conception occurs, until the last two months of pregnancy when it is safe to drink raspberry tea again. The tea also helps ease labor. Use one teaspoon of dried herb to one cup of boiling water.

FOR MORNING SICKNESS

- Chamomile flower heads are excellent brewed as a tea for morning sickness.
- Ginger root is also good for relieving nausea. Use one teaspoon to two cups of water.
- Marjoram is good for morning sickness and nausea. Use one heaping teaspoon to two cups of water.
- Peppermint will also help with nausea and an upset stomach.
- A tea made of two parts meadowsweet, one part black horehound, and one part chamomile may be taken three times a day.

TO CALM A THREATENED MISCARRIAGE

- Black currant berries can be eaten to prevent a threatened miscarriage.
- Several hollyhock leaves added to a heated wine is also good.
- Another excellent herb is rosemary. Add a tablespoon of fresh leaves (dried, half a tablespoon) to boiling water, steep for five minutes, and then strain before drinking.
- Drink a tea (three times a day) made of two parts blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), two parts false unicorn root (*Chamaelirium luteum*), and one part cramp bark (*Viburnum opulus*).

- Drink hollyhock tea (use a handful of leaves to one pint of boiling water, simmer ten minutes, strain, and add a pinch each of ginger and cinnamon).
- Drink rosemary tea, using one tablespoon of fresh leaves (half-tablespoon dried) to a cup of boiling water; steep ten minutes and strain.

NURSING

- To promote milk flow: Avoid parsley and sage because they can slow down early production of milk. Drink several cups a day of the following tea:

Bruise half a teaspoon of caraway seeds, one teaspoon of dill seeds and two tablespoons of fennel leaves. Add to boiling water. Let steep for five minutes and then strain the liquid.
- These herbal teas are also useful in producing breast milk:

Borage	Vervain
Fenugreek	Watercress
Rosemary	Woodruff
- To decrease the flow of milk: Add large amounts of parsley to your diet and drink parsley tea and/or parsley soup to gradually decrease milk flow. Sage tea (especially red sage) is good for drying up the milk supply during the weaning process.
- For nipple leaking: Wet a cloth (or cotton ball) with witch hazel extract and apply to nipples.
- For sore nipples: Apply raw, scraped carrots directly to raw nipples. A poultice of comfrey root or leaf will heal sore or chapped nipples. Yarrow as a tea or a poultice is also good.

HERBAL TREATMENT RELATED TO A WOMAN'S BODY

- Uterine tonics have a specifically toning and strengthening action upon the whole system, both on the tissue of the organs and on their functioning. Remedies such as black cohosh, blue cohosh, chaste tree, false unicorn root, life root, motherwort, raspberry, and squaw vine are used as healers in a holistic sense.

TO STIMULATE AND BALANCE MENSTRUAL FLOW

- Tea made from any of the following:

Angelica	Life Root
Basil	Marigold (calendula)
Blue Cohosh	Motherwort
Dill	Parsley
Elecampane	Pennyroyal
False Unicorn Root	Rue
Fennel	Southernwood
Ginger	Squaw Vine
Lemon balm	Yarrow
Licorice	

TO EASE A HEAVY MENSTRUAL FLOW

- Add a few grains of cayenne pepper to an herbal tea, three times a day.
- Drink red raspberry tea three times a day.
- Eat lentil soup.
- Drink shepherd's purse tea, two cups three times a day (one handful of dried leaves to a pint of boiling water).

- Drink thyme tea, one cup in the morning and one cup at night.

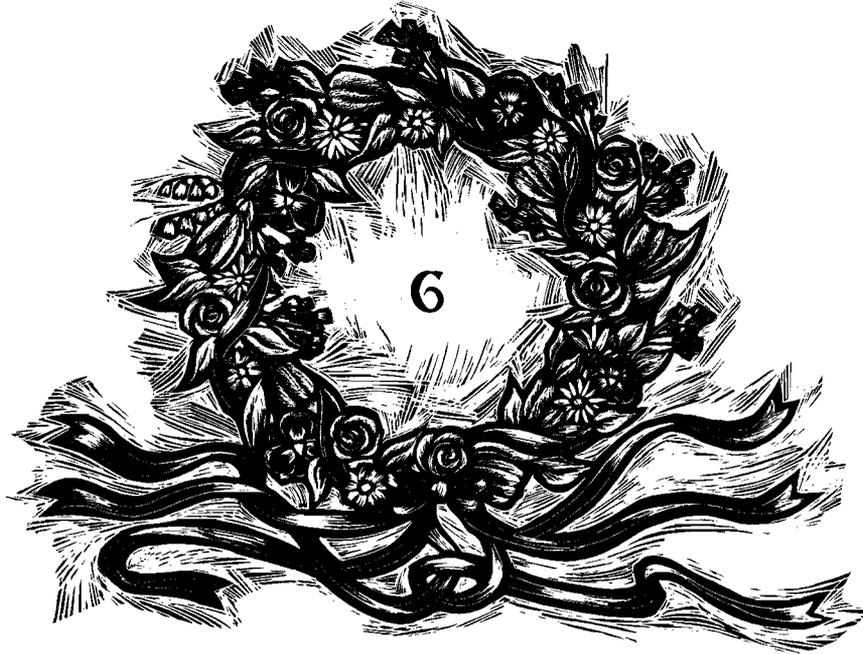
FOR PAINFUL PERIODS

- Drink peppermint tea to relieve cramps and menstrual headaches.
- Drink catnip tea (one teaspoon of flowers to a cup of boiling water).
- Drink a cup of ginger tea (one teaspoon of grated root to one cup of boiling water).

HORMONAL NORMALIZERS

- The following group of herbs are indicated for endocrine treatment:

Burdock	Rue
Cleavers	Sarsaparilla
Dandelion	Violet Leaves
Echinacea	Wormwood
Golden Seal	Yarrow
Mugwort	Yellow Dock
Red Clover	



A MAY RITUAL

*May, clad in cloth of gold,
Cometh this way;
The fluting of the blackbirds
Heralds the day.*

—Attributed to Finn himself
Translated by Dal Riadh Celtic Trust

For most modern celebrants the rites of May, known as Beltane, mark the transition from winter to summer. In ancient Celtic religion winter and summer were the two halves of the Celtic year. Bonfires were lighted to encourage the return of warmth to the land. The name for May comes from the Latin root *mag*, which means to grow. This is also the root for the goddess name Maia, after whom the month is named. In ancient Rome, on May 1, a pregnant sow was sacrificed to Maia. This was the same sacrifice made to *Terra Mater* (Mother Earth), thereby closely identifying the two goddesses.

Deities are generally connected to May through myths that are associated with the May rite of Beltane. This serves to help us relate to the energies of the season as personification; in other words the forces of May become gods and goddesses in story form. In modern Wicca many traditions associate May with myths of the return of the Goddess from the Underworld. This, of course, is the classic tale of Persephone and Hades.

In ancient Rome, offerings were made on May Day to Lare spirits, who the Roman writer Ovid calls the “night watchmen.” Lare are protectors of home, hearth, and lineage in archaic Roman religion. Altars were placed before small towers that were erected at the crossroads to honor the Lare.

Setting an altar to acknowledge and honor the May season is effective. The altar is a sign of your devotion and is a focal point for the mind and spirit during a ritual. Creating a sacred space to encompass the altar supports and amplifies the energy you bring to your ritual. Decorating the altar with flowers, statuary, and other items helps to create an atmosphere of celebration and devotion.

THE ALTAR

The use of an altar dates back to times of antiquity. Altars have been used in almost every culture in the world. Essentially the altar is a focal point, a point within the sacred space of a ritual circle where one can approach his or her own understanding of deity. By custom, an altar is oriented to the viewer so that he or she faces a particular quarter when attending the altar. In some traditions the altar is oriented to the East. At this quarter both the sun and moon rise, and many cultures have honored this direction as the source of enlightenment. In other traditions the altar faces North, the customary quarter of divine power among the ancient Etruscan and Celtic peoples.

Altars are constructed from various materials such as wood or stone. In ancient times large flat rocks were used as altars, as were tree stumps. Some rocks were large enough for a woman to recline upon, serving symbolically as the living altar of the Goddess Herself. Modern altars appear in many different shapes and sizes. Some are round, symbolizing the cycles of Nature. Other altars are rectangular and symbolize the Underworld and Overworld supported by the columns of light and darkness. In some Traditions the altar is cubical, representing the four elements of creation united in harmony.

Whatever your choice in an altar design, it should be pleasing to your personal taste in design and imagery. Carefully select any deity images you wish to place upon your altar to reflect the theme of May or spring. Other ritual decorations used upon the altar should also be reflective of the season. The altar is the meeting place between the mundane and the divine; it is sacred space and should reflect your devotion and veneration.

PREPARATION OF AN ALTAR

Setting up the altar is an important part of any ritual. It should be performed with focus and concentration upon the inner meanings as each item is placed on the altar, because you are creating your own universe as

you lay out the altar within the sacred space you design. Everything you create here establishes your own separate reality. In a magickal sense your altar also serves as the “battery” for the ritual work. A well-established altar will serve as a catalyst to the magickal states of consciousness necessary for effective ritual work.



The May altar will feature Goddess and God statues as well as candles, and will be decorated with flowers of the season.

Since the altar is an important part of sacred space, before dedicating it to your ritual work, sprinkle it with purified water containing three pinches of salt. Pass the smoke of some burning incense, such as sandalwood or frangipani, over the altar. As you do so, speak your intent, declaring why you have erected the altar, and dedicate it to the May season and to the deity forms you call upon. For a general alignment you can simply use the terms “May Queen” and “May King,” instead of the specific names of a goddess or god.

When you are ready to work with the altar, spread a black cloth over it to symbolize the darkness of “procreation” from which all things manifest. Over this place a colored altar cloth to symbolize May or spring. A green altar cloth is ideal. Then set a candle representing the Goddess at the upper left section of the altar, and another at the upper right section to symbolize the God. Statues of the Goddess and God may be placed next to the assigned candle accordingly. This symbolizes the presence of divinity overseeing the process of creation reflected in your altar setup as you continue to lay out the altar items. A full altar setup typically includes an incense burner, candle snuffer, container of purified water, ritual bell, and decorations associated with the season of the year. These are all arranged as is pleasing to your eye. May/spring altars are best adorned with flowers.

PREPARATION OF THE RITUAL CIRCLE

To create a sacred space in which to celebrate May, mark out a work area by forming a ritual circle on the ground. You can physically mark the circle by laying a ring of individual flowers on the ground. If this is not practical, then you can use a rope, stones, or even a chalk line. Once the circle is marked, place a small candle inside the circle at each of the North, East, South, and West quarters. Next perform the following steps:

1. Purify the ritual area by sprinkling salted water around the outline of the circle.

2. Set up the altar as previously described, using two green candles for the god and goddess position. Include another green candle and set it directly center on the altar. When you are ready to begin the ritual, light the center candle, then take a wand or blade and trace a triangle in the air over the altar and recite:

I acknowledge and align with the forces of this May season. I am in Nature and Nature is within me. As the season grows to fullness from this day forward, so too do all my endeavors grow into a rich harvest to come.

3. Light the altar candles. Trace another triangle in the air over the altar and recite:

Beautiful goddess of this May season, majestic God of this May season, I ask for your blessings upon this sacred space that I establish in your honor.

4. Conjure the elementals to assist in the construction of the ritual circle: face each of the four quarters (beginning North, then East, etc.) one at a time as you ring the bell three times. Recite the following to each quarter after ringing the bell:

I call out into the mist of Hidden Realms, and conjure you spirits of Earth and Air and Fire and Water. Gather now at this sacred circle, and grant me union with your powers.

5. Pick up your ritual blade and, beginning at the North, tread the circle clockwise. Point your blade down at the ground and imagine energy flowing out through your arm (like a hose) and down through the

blade. You are laying out a circle of light along the edge of the circle as you walk. Visualize a blue liquid flame pouring out through the blade into the circle's rim as you tread the circle, and recite as you go:

*In the names of the God and Goddess,
and by the spirits of Old,
I conjure this circle of power:
become a sphere of protection,
a vessel to contain the power
that shall be raised within,
wherefore do I charge you,
and empower you.*

6. Return to the altar and pick up the center green candle. Beginning North and moving clockwise, light each quarter candle with this candle flame. As you light each candle ask that the elemental watch over and protect the circle. For example, at the North say "Spirits of Earth, watch and protect this sacred circle" (North = Earth, East = Air, South = Fire, and West = Water).
7. Rap your wand three times on the altar and declare out loud that the circle is cast.

SOLITARY MAY CELEBRATION RITUAL

A small crown of flowers

A small candle

A fresh flower

A Goddess statue

Ritual sword

1. Create a sacred space/cast a circle as previously prescribed.
2. Recite from the altar:

At this joyous time I welcome the return of the Goddess, the Queen of May. With her coming, flowers bloom and life is renewed upon the earth.

3. Turn to the South quarter, and recite:

Season unto season, year unto year, all cycles pass one into the other. The Goddesses has returned to Her Hidden Children of Time. The Queen of May ever bestows love and peace, fullness and the promise of renewal.

Place the crown of flowers in front of the Goddess statue.

4. Hold the sword up in front of the Goddess statue and say:

My lady, all power is given to You, for this is so ordained. And with love there is submission to Your ways, and reign is given over into Your hands.

5. Recite the Charge of Aradia:

Whenever there is need of anything, once in the month when the moon is full, then shall due worship be given to She who is Queen of all.

Here inside a circle, secrets that are as yet unknown shall be revealed. And the mind must be free and also the spirit. For this is the essence of spirit, and the knowledge of joy.

Truth to one's beliefs is the keeper of the Ways, holding true despite all obstacles. For the Ways are the key to the mysteries and to the cycle of rebirth, which opens the way to the Womb of Enlightenment.

In life does the Queen reveal the knowledge of spirit. And from death does the Queen deliver one to peace.

It is right to give offerings to She who is our mother. For She is the beauty of the Green Wood, and the light of the moon among the stars, and the mystery which gives life, and draws one to Her name.

Her worship is within the heart, and all acts of love and pleasure are rituals to the Goddess. But to seek her, desire is not enough until the secret is realized. Because if what one seeks is not found within, one will never find it from without. For she has been within the path you first entered, and she is that which awaits at the journey's end.

6. Turn to the East quarter and recite:

*Hail and adoration to the Lady of May.
You who are the Great Moon Goddess,
Queen of Heaven, Lady of the Earth,
I welcome You, and rejoice in Your presence.*



A simple altar setting for a Solitary May Celebration Ritual.

Place a fresh flower at the East quarter and say:

Blessed be all in the name of the Goddess.

7. Then take a chalice of wine, whisper the name (or title) of the Goddess upon the surface of the wine, and then drink. By this act She passes into your inner self.
8. Ritual celebration continues with a small celebratory meal of cakes and wine.

After completing any ritual you will need to dissolve/banish the circle.

BANISHING A CAST CIRCLE (The circle must be dissolved when the ritual is completed):

1. Beginning at the North quarter, ring the bell three times, salute, and recite:

*Hear me Old Ones,
I honor You for Your attendance
and bid You now depart to your secret Realms.
With love I say now; Peace and farewell!*

2. Repeat the above action at each of the quarters (moving West, South, East, and North again).
3. Beginning at the North, point your ritual blade down toward the circle and walk counterclockwise, mentally drawing the blue light back up from the circle perimeter, into the blade.

After returning to the North quarter, go before the altar and point the tip of the ritual blade at the center of the altar. Visualize the power flowing back into the center candle. Recite the following invocation as you watch the candle flame:

*I release and return the elements and powers back
to their source for the good of all and harm to none.
So mote it be!*

Once you feel the energy has departed, dissolve the elements by extinguishing the quarter candles, giving thanks to the elemental spirits for their attendance, and then “snap” your fingers over the candle three times each. Begin this at the North and move counterclockwise.

4. Extinguish all the candles, giving thanks to the God and Goddess for their blessings. Declare that the circle is dissolved.

GROUP MAY CELEBRATION RITUAL

1. Create a sacred space as prescribed in this chapter.
2. Ritual begins with the High Priest addressing the attendants:

*We gather at this joyous time and welcome the
return of our Lady, and with her we rejoice as the
season brings the blossom and the promise of much
to come.*

3. At the North quarter, the High Priest invokes the Goddess upon the High Priestess, kneeling before her and touching her with the wand upon each breast and just below the navel, reciting:

*Great Goddess of this May season,
Thee I invoke,
by stem, and leaf and bud.*

The Maiden then addresses the Grove:

By and by all things pass, season unto season, year unto year. Our Lady has come again to Her Hidden Children of Time. And our Goddess ever inclines to love and mirth, and guards and cherishes Her Hidden Children in Life. In Death She teaches the way to Her Communion, and even in this world She teaches them the mystery of the magic circle, which is placed between the worlds of men and of the gods. And our Lady descended, in times of old, into the Realm of Shadows. And the Lord of the Shadows was bewitched by Her Beauty. And He taught Her the mysteries of Death and Rebirth. And in love He bowed before Her and gave Her all of His Power.

Attendants touch their chests at the heart, then touch fingertips to their lips, and then extend them toward the High Priestess. This is done much in the manner of “blowing a kiss.”

4. High Priest kneels before the High Priestess and lays down his sword, saying:

My lady, I give all my power to You, for this is so ordained. And with love I submit to You, and I give my reign over to Your hands.

5. High Priestess takes up the sword and gives the Charge of the Goddess:



Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month when the moon is full, then shall you come together at some deserted place, or where there are woods, and give worship to She who is Queen of All.

Come all together inside a circle, and secrets that are as yet unknown shall be revealed. And your mind must be free and also your spirit, and as a sign that you are truly free, you shall rejoice, and sing with music and love. For this is the essence of spirit, and a knowledge of joy.

Be true to your own beliefs, and keep to the Ways, beyond all obstacles. For ours is the key to the mysteries and the cycle of rebirth, which opens the way to the Womb of Enlightenment.

In life does the Queen of All reveal the knowledge of spirit. And from death does the Queen deliver you to peace. Give offerings all to She who is our mother. For She is the beauty of the green earth, and the white moon among the stars, and the mystery which gives life, and always calls us to come together in Her name. Let Her worship be the ways within your heart, for all acts of love and pleasure are like rituals to the Goddess. But to all who seek her, know that your seeking and yearning will reward

you not, until you realize the secret. Because if that which you seek is not found within you, you will never find it from without. For she has been with you since you entered into the ways, and she is that which awaits at your journey's end.

6. High Priestess moves to the East quarter, setting the sword before the altar as she goes, and stands as the Goddess. High Priest gives address:

Hail and adoration unto the Great Queen of the May. You who are the Great Star Goddess, Queen of Heaven, Lady of the earth, we welcome You, and rejoice in Your presence.

All males and females will come forward and lay flowers before her.

7. The High Priest then takes a chalice of wine to the High Priestess. The High Priest then leads the attendants to the east quarter to receive the wine (essence of the Goddess) which they all drink of.
8. The High Priest will take a crown (of flowers) and place it upon the head of the High Priestess. They then embrace. All attendants next come forward and embrace the High Priestess also (one at a time). Each person will receive a candle (a token of the Life Force), which is lit from the Goddess candle, as High Priestess says:

Bear now the light of my season and walk always in balance. May the power of the forces of light be with you.

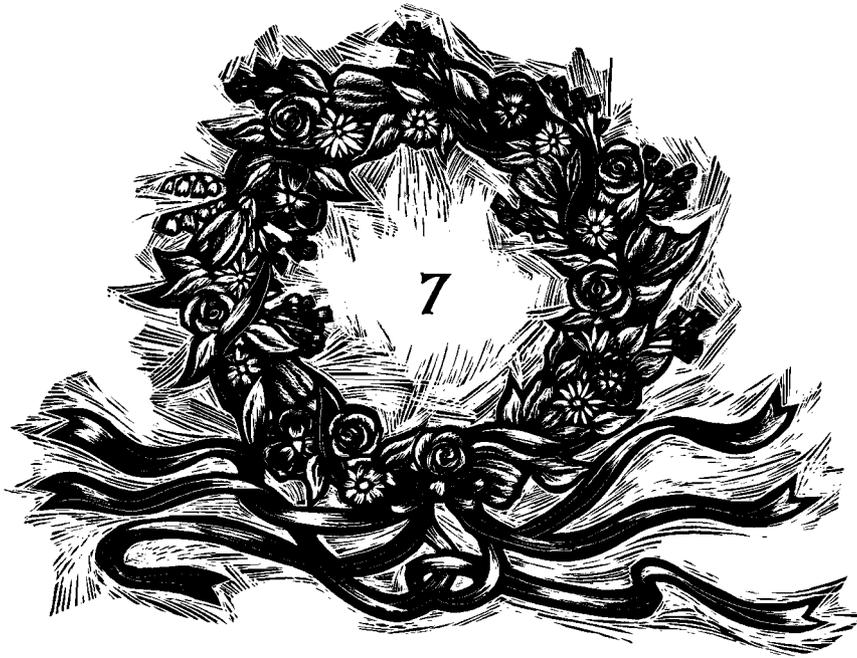
Candles may be set aside for continuation of rite.

9. The attendants then form a circle along the ritual circle's perimeter

line, facing inward. Each person will then go around the circle, one at a time, embracing each member of the opposite gender, saying:

Blessed season, blessed be.

10. The ritual celebration continues with cakes and wine. Banish the circle as described for the solitary rite.



ARTS AND CRAFTS

*I knot this garland
That love may bloom.
Love from the Earth!
Love from the Air!
Love from the Fire!
Love from the Water!
Garland of flowers,
Make love bloom.*

—Scott Cunningham, *Spell Crafts*

The Beltane season is one of the most festive of the year. You can create both new and time-honored arts and crafts to celebrate Beltane. Perhaps you might even want to bring back some of the old May Day traditions such as leaving a small May basket of flowers on a neighbor's door or porch. The flowers can be selected according to their meanings in folklore, as noted in chapter 4.

The craft projects described in this chapter include a May Day wreath, a May garland, a Maypole table centerpiece, a May basket, and pentacle braids to enhance one's appearance at a May festival. Read over the instructions and note the supplies needed before trying to make any of the items.

MAY WREATH

Grapevine wreath

Variety of flowers

Greenery (ivy, rosemary, myrtle, etc.)

Decorative items (ribbons, figurine to set in
wreath opening, raffi, etc.)

Scissors

Glue or hot glue gun

1. Assemble supplies: grapevine wreath, greenery, various flowers, moss, glue gun and glue sticks, scissors, and raffi.
2. The greenery goes on first. Weave, wrap, or tuck it into the grapevine. Glue it in strategic places if necessary. Ivy, myrtle, rosemary, and moss are just a few of the choices. Use fresh or dried. The moss tucks nicely into the grapevine weave.

3. Place a variety of flowers loosely around the greenery on the wreath before gluing them in place. If the flower has a stem, again it can be tucked into the grapevine and then glued at the base of the flower head. If the stems are brittle and break easily, just glue the flower head directly in place.
4. After all the flowers are in place you can add the little extra items that will make it unique. Use your imagination—ribbons, a fairy figure, beads, crystals, etc.



Materials needed for a May wreath.



*A completed May Day wreath, such as might decorate
the top of a Maypole (see pp. 10–11).*

MAY GARLAND

Sprigs of greenery (myrtle, rosemary, bay leaves, etc.)

Variety of fresh or dried flowers

Ribbons

Floral wire

Wire cutters

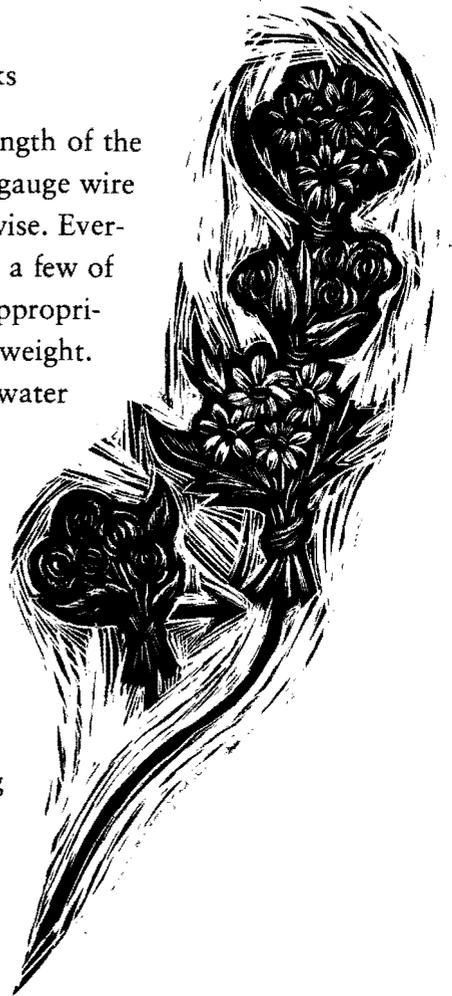
Scissors

Glue or hot glue gun and sticks

A single “backbone” that runs the full length of the garland is the secret to its structure. Heavy gauge wire for heavier materials such as evergreens is wise. Evergreens, herbs, fresh or dried flowers are just a few of the choices. Myrtle for May would be very appropriate as it is sacred to the fairies and is lightweight. Fresh flowers can be kept alive with floral water tubes.

The basic rule of construction is to start at one end and move toward the other, allowing each bundle of greenery to cover the means of attachment over the next one. Deciding how long you want the garland to be will determine how much material will be needed.

1. Assemble clumps of flowers, wrapping the stems together tightly with floral wire. Make as many as desired for every sprig or to be scattered throughout.



2. Wire flower clumps to sprigs of greenery, either on main stem area or to other stem parts (see illustration, p. 143).
4. Now use a continuous wire, unwinding the spool as you work (this is the spine). Start by overlapping one sprig onto another and wire together on the thickest stem parts. Try to obscure the wire wrap with greenery. Continue to wire together until the desired length is accomplished.
5. Here is the fun and finishing part—add ribbons (with bells or beads). Glue on buttons, beads, crystals, and seasonal decor. String the garland over the doorway, along the door jam, on the mantle, or wherever you desire (see below). Enjoy the vision.



Flower garlands such as this are one of summer's emblems.

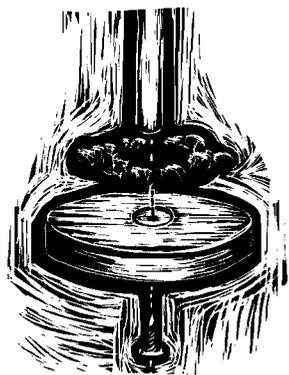
MAYPOLE CENTERPIECE

- 18" wood dowel or thin branch
- 6–9" diameter flat round wooden plaque
- Small grapevine wreath, approximately 6–8" diameter, decorated on both sides.
- 1 yard each of red and white ribbon
- Scissors
- Drill and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " drill bit (not pictured)
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " length flathead wood screw (adjust length to thickness of wood plaque as screw will need to extend through the plaque to secure the dowel on the other side)
- Hot glue gun and glue stick (or carpenter's glue)

1. Assemble your supplies: the dowel, round plaque, ribbons, glue gun and sticks, and the small grapevine wreath.
2. Drill pilot holes completely through the center of plaque and $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep into the bottom end of the dowel.
3. Cross the ribbons and glue on top end of the dowel.
4. Attach the dowel to the stand by screwing the screw through the plaque, and then into the bottom end of the dowel (figure A, p. 146).
5. Glue wreath on top of the dowel by melting a medium dab of glue on top of the crossed ribbons and on the bottom of the wreath, then join the wreath to the top of the dowel (figure B, p. 146). To make it more secure wait a few minutes and then glue around the edge of the wreath where it meets the dowel, filling in gaps.
6. Braid the ribbons—one color going left and under the other color, which is moving right. Braid about 2 inches down the dowel and tack



Materials needed for Centerpiece



Centerpiece, Figure A



Centerpiece, Figure B

to the dowel with hot glue to keep in place. When set, tack the ends of the ribbons to the edge of the wood plaque with hot glue.

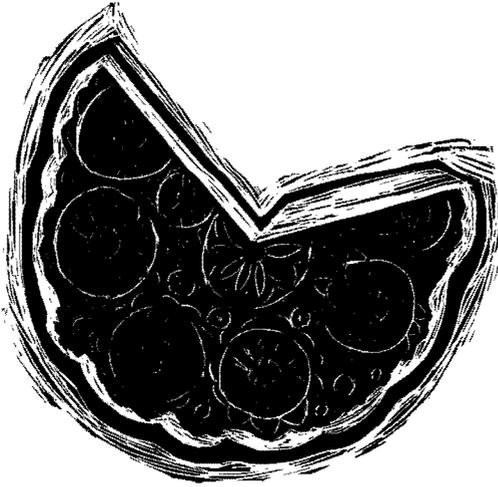
7. You can also add a small figurine, a bird figure, or other symbolic items in the opening of the wreath.

MAY DAY CONE BASKET

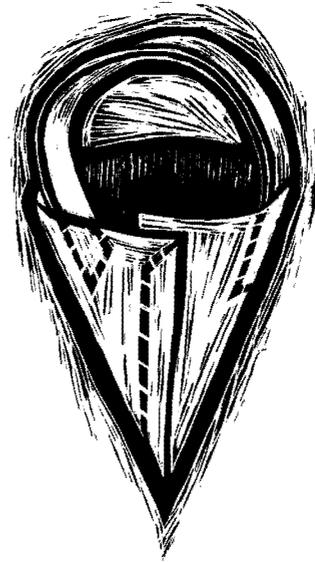
Construction paper

Glue or tape

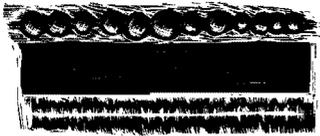
1. Out of bright colored construction paper cut a circle that is about 12 inches in diameter, then cut a triangle or wedge out of the circle, allowing for 1/2-inch overlap, as shown in figure A, p. 148. Roll the paper into a cone and glue or tape the two sides together (see figure C, p. 148).
2. Cut a strip of construction paper that is approximately 12 inches by 2 inches. Glue or tape it onto the top of your cone to make a handle (figure B, p. 148). Fill your cone basket with real or home-made flowers (p. 149) and hang it on a neighbor's or friend's doorknob in the early morning while everyone is asleep.



Basket, Figure A



Basket, Figure C



Basket, Figure B



A May basket filled with flowers carries a message to its recipient.

PENTACLE HAIR BRAIDS

1. Section off equal amounts of hair at the five points where the pentacle tips will be (see completed hairdo, figure C, for locations). Don't use all of the hair, just enough for the desired thickness of the pentacle.
2. Braid each section and then band ends of braid together with tiny rubber bands (figure A, below).
3. Form the braids into a pentacle design, and pin hair in place (figure B, p. 151). The remaining length of the braid should form the circle around the star pattern.

For remaining loose hair:

1. Braid hair (French braid) from top of head, around sides of pentacle, and band together at base of pentacle (figure C, p. 151). Then decorate with feathers, beads, ribbons, etc.
2. Or braid remaining hair (French braid) into crescent moons on either side of pentacle, then tuck tails back into braid.



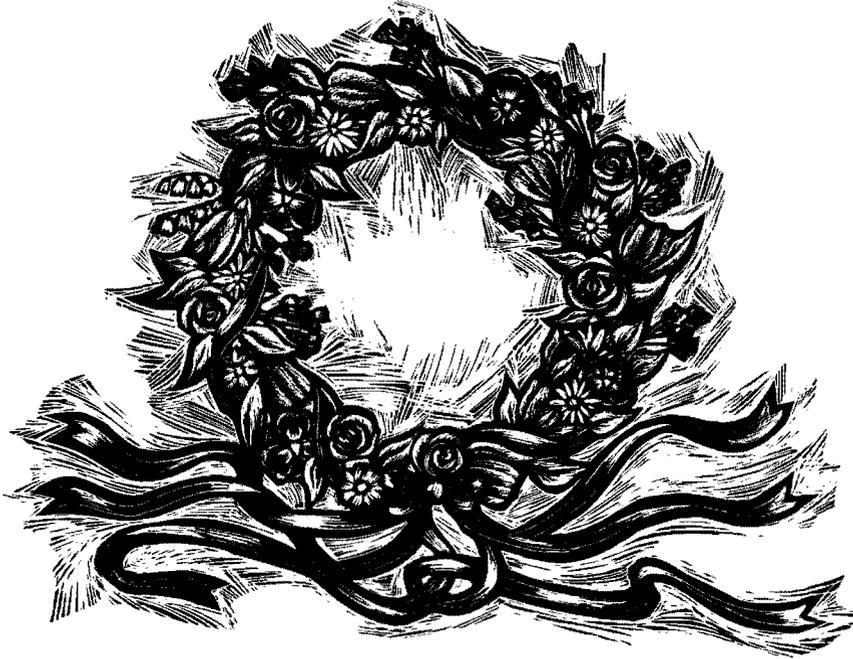
Braids, Figure A



Braids, Figure B



Braids, Figure C



APPENDIX A: MAY CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

*Oak and May, / On This Day,
Will both Heed / Those in Need.
Goddess Bright, / God of Sun,
Bless your Children / 'Till our days are done.*

—A general Beltane blessing chant

ENGLAND

The festivities now associated with the celebration of May reached their height in England during the Middle Ages. They were heavily influenced by Italian forms of celebration dating back to the time of ancient Rome. On the first day of May, English villagers a rose at daybreak to wander the countryside gathering blossoming flowers and branches.

A towering tall Maypole was set up on the village green, which was typically the center of the village. The Maypole was made of the trunk of a tall tree, such as birch, and was decorated with bright flowers of the field. In celebration of the season, the villagers danced and sang around the Maypole, accompanied by the music of a piper. Often the morris dance was performed by dancers wearing colorful costumes upon which hung several small bells. The fairest maiden of the village was chosen to be the Queen of the May. In some regions of England a May King was also chosen. The Queen and King of May led the village dancers and ruled over the May Day festivities. During the Elizabethan period the king and queen were called Robin Hood and Maid Marian.

Maypoles were usually set up for the day in small towns and villages. In larger places, such as London, a permanent Maypole was erected. Eventually the Puritans spoke out against the Maypole and the revels of May as heathen practices. For a time they succeeded in eliminating the celebration of May, but the festivities returned within a few decades and continue in many English villages today.

An old English custom, still observed in some areas, involves a house-to-house visit by children, who bring flowers in exchange for pennies. Once the pennies are collected, the children toss them into a wishing well.

SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland a small May pine tree is often placed under a girl's window to encourage health, development, and fertility.

GERMANY

Here it is the custom for boys to secretly plant May trees in front of the windows of their sweethearts. This is said to ensure fidelity and the return of love.

GREECE

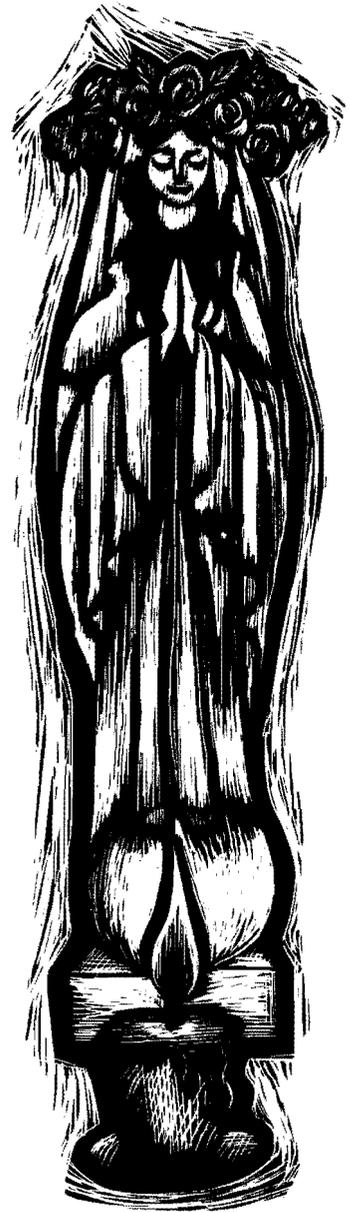
The acknowledgment of the May season begins with a custom linked to ancient omens. Greek children set out early in the morning to search for the first swallow of spring. When the bird is located, the children go from door to door, singing songs of spring. The neighbors in turn offer special treats to the children such as fruits, nuts, and cakes.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Like the German custom, at night boys place Maypoles by their sweethearts' windows.

FRANCE

Here the month of May is sacred to the Virgin Mary. Virginal young girls serve as May queens and lead processions in honor of the Virgin Mary, carrying a statue of the virgin crowned



*Virgin crowned as
May queen.*

with flowers. Cows appear in French May Day festivals, possibly as the remnant of a forgotten mother image or symbol of fertility and nurturing. Bundles of flowers are tied and draped around the cow's tail as they are led along in street parades. To touch one of the cows is believed to bring good luck, and everyone makes the attempt. An old custom that remains is to drink warm milk directly from the cow on May Day morning. This is said to bring good fortune throughout the coming year.



UNITED STATES

Although May Day celebrations waned with the passing of the nineteenth century, a resurgence has been building. This seems to have been reborn on college campuses and at Renaissance fairs. Dancing and singing around a Maypole tied with colorful streamers or ribbons is no longer as uncommon as it was even twenty years. For May Day celebrations, a May Queen is chosen, but the King of May is not commonly chosen. An old custom also returning involves children constructing paper May baskets to hang on the

doorknobs of relatives and friends. The children ring doorbells and run away, leaving their flowers as a surprise.

In Hawaii, May Day is called Lei Day. On this day a lei is given, with the giver putting it around the receiver's neck and accompanying it with the traditional kiss. Lei Day began in 1928 and is mixed with traditional Hawaiian celebrations complete with pageants, a Lei Queen, and her court.

ITALY

Although modern May festivals in Italy are associated with Mary and other saints, their history dates back to ancient Roman paganism. The people of ancient Rome honored Maia and Flora, the goddesses of flowers and springtime. Their statues were wreathed in garlands and carried in a procession of singers and dancers past a sacred, blossom-bedecked tree, the forerunner of the modern Maypole. Later, festivals of this kind spread to other lands conquered by the Romans. In many regions of modern Italy, boys often serenade their sweethearts on May Day.

INDEX

Ash, 3–5, 81, 90–92, 95

Barleycorn, 25, 28–31

Britain, 8, 159, 161

British, 2–3, 8, 15, 22, 27, 43, 78, 159–160

Cailleach, 14, 94

Cake, 13–15, 114–117

Cardea, 92, 94

Celts, 5, 16, 18, 36, 41, 71, 160

Chimney sweep, 25, 27

Dew, 8

England, 7, 10, 20, 33, 38, 56, 80, 82, 154, 159

Etruscan, 27–28, 37–39, 125, 160

Fate, 43–44, 53, 91

Fire, 4–5, 7, 13–16, 18, 28, 46, 51, 65, 75, 104, 109, 117,
128–129, 139

Flora, 2, 4, 8, 12, 21, 78, 92, 157

Fool, 33

- Garland, 2, 4, 8, 12, 21, 83, 139–140, 143–144
 Green Man, xiv, xv, 23–25
- Hawthorn, 4, 7, 16, 81–82, 91–92, 94–95
 Hearth, 18, 28, 43–44, 65, 109, 124
 Herms, 3, 9
 Hobbyhorse, 31–33
- Ireland, 7, 16, 37, 58, 68, 81–82, 85, 91
 Italy, 6, 10, 21, 28, 38–39, 43–44, 53, 65, 92, 157
- Jack-in-the-Green, xiv, 4, 20, 25–28
- King, 4, 21–22, 27, 33, 43, 47, 49, 53–55, 73, 127, 154,
 156
- Lasa, 37–39
- Maia, 2, 10, 78, 124, 157
 Maypole, xv, 2–4, 9–11, 21, 140, 142, 145, 154, 156–157
 Morris Dancers, 27, 31
- Nature, 2, 4, 9, 20–23, 27–28, 31, 36–38, 40, 79, 98,
 111, 125, 128
- Oak, 4, 13, 15, 75, 81, 90–92, 94–96, 153
 Odin, 90
 Offerings, 2–3, 37, 40, 43–44, 124, 132, 136
 Otherworld, 37, 42–43
- Queen, 4, 12, 21–22, 27–28, 40, 43, 47, 53, 82–83, 92,
 101, 127, 130, 132, 135–137, 154, 156–157

- Revels, 25, 36, 154
Ribbons, 3, 6, 8–11, 16, 27, 140–141, 143–145, 147,
150, 156
Robin Hood, 27, 154
Roman, 2–4, 8–9, 12, 21, 25, 27–28, 33–34, 37–38, 41,
92, 124, 157, 159–161
- Saturnalia, 33–34
Scotland, 13, 45, 71–72
Sicily, 39–40, 43
Snakes, 6–7, 23
Spring, 3–4, 11, 22–23, 31, 79, 81, 98, 125, 127, 155
Sun, 5, 42, 47, 53, 60, 91, 125, 153
- Trees, 4, 6–7, 13, 15, 19–20, 23, 37, 40, 42, 78, 81, 90,
92–93, 95, 155, 160
- Wales, 10, 15, 37
Wells, 2, 36, 42
Welsh, 5, 15–16, 41, 81, 84
Wicca, 5, 90, 124
Wicker, 20, 27
Willow, 3, 8, 94–96
Wine, 109–112, 119, 132–133, 137
Wreath, 9–10, 83, 111, 114–115, 140–142, 145, 147