

Wild Things!

Boil, boil, toil and trouble.....it's that time of year again when magic and mystery fill the air and candy fills the kids!

October 31 is the day that Halloween or Samhain, as it is known to the Celts, is celebrated. Other names associated with this day are Third Harvest, Root Harvest, All Hallows Eve and according to the Grimoire for the Green Witch it is at this most holy (hallowed) time that the Dark God and Dark Goddess, united in the Underworld, allow the spirit communication. It was not that long ago that the metaphysical world of herbs was regarded as part of everyday life, used for everything from love potions and magic spells to deterrents to the 'dark forces'. One cannot help but be intrigued by this even 'wilder side' of our favourite plants!

Garlic: Famous for repelling evil with a history that is likely older than recorded history...know any vampires! There is also a common Western American belief that claims a girl can discourage an unwelcome suitor by sticking two crossed pins into a clove of garlic and leaving it at a crossroads and enticing the would-be suitor to walk over the garlic....perhaps garlic breath would be quicker! According to folklore, Garlic also provides protection and power and has the ability to ward off negativity, it was commonly incorporated in magic spells and exorcisms.

Thyme: Long time association with fairy folk. Believed to be the playground for fairies and patches of thyme were often set aside for their use only. It is also thought to enhance psychic powers and provide courage. Eager girls to bring romance wore sprigs of thyme, mint and lavender. On the dark side of things, thyme is used as an herb to assist in connecting the 'Other world'.

Rosemary: So many magical associations that it is difficult to choose. A common ingredient in spells and potions for everything from courage, purification and strength, to enhancing dreams and intelligence. Greek scholars wore rosemary to improve their memories and a sprig placed under ones pillow was believed to ward off demons and nightmares.

St. John's Wort: Well known today to dispel the inner demons of anxiety and tension, it has long been believed to work on removing external demons too. The Welsh used sprigs of St. John's wort to foretell illness and death by hanging from the rafters a sprig up for every family member, the next morning depending on the degree of shriveling that occurred, they could determine who was closest to death. One the 'good' side it was used in spells and charms for good health, willpower and to enhance creativity. On the 'dark' side it was a common herb used for contacting the 'Other world' and banishing.

Mugwort: A mainstay in witchcraft, this herb has a reputation for inducing prophetic dreams when stuffed in pillows. It also increases psychic powers and is closely associated with the 'Dark Moon'-new moon. Apparently it can also aid in astral projections! Mugwort is commonly used in smudges for cleansing rituals.

Juniper: Often associated with spirit contact and protection, this herb was once used by parents during childbirth in order to keep fairies from substituting a changeling for the human newborn....a form of mid-witchery I'm sure! Juniper was also believed to help enhance visions of the spiritual kind.

Here are some other herbal associations:

Agrimony: returns spells to their sender...back at ya!

Basil: wealth, love, creativity, courage

Bay: physic power, wishes, wisdom

Cardamom: love, romance

Catnip: cat magic's???

Chamomile: meditation, rest, calmness

Clover: money, luck

Elder: Fairies, blessings, magic power-never burn the wood

Eyebright: aids mental powers

Fennel: protection, purification, healing

Feverfew: ward sickness, ward accidents in travel

Frankincense: protection, blessing, spirituality, power

Ginger: love, success, money, power

Hawthorne: Fairies, Witchcraft

Hyssop: protection, purification, remove negativity

Jasmine: balance, dreams, insight, astral projections

Lemon Balm: justice, love, success, health

Linden: immortality, protection

Mint: protection, prosperity, offering to helpful spirits

Motherwort: protection, confidence, wards negative energies and imagination (Are we surprised it is 'mother')

Mustard: good luck, health, fertility

Orris Root: companionship, spirit communication

Patchouli: money, fertility, earth (explains the 60's)

Rose: love, physic power

Rue: protection, ward negative energy, enhance magic

Sage: protection, purification, artistic ability, wisdom

Tansy: happiness and health, immortality

Vervain: love, purification, riches, creativity, visions

Willow: death, passage, spirit contact

Woodruff: clear away barriers, changes

Yarrow: happy marriage, love, defense, protection

Yew: death and rebirth

This newsletter was inspired by close friends of mine, who's home of 27 years and all their belongings were pretty much destroyed in a fire in May. Fortunately, my friends and their four children were unharmed. After the house was rebuilt and the possessions that could be replaced or repaired were, they asked me if there were some herbs that might help remove the negativity of the event and offer protection and happiness in their forever changed home. I put together a pouch containing herbs, essential oils, stones and a piece of iron, all with selected metaphysical traits and it now hangs near their front door with the follow verse attached:

“Herbs, oil and iron strong protect this home that no harm can come by day or night! In a quiet place is where you'll lay, keeping negativity far away!”

We can all use a little help from time to time and perhaps by using the metaphysical powers of herbs and other earthly elements we can send messages of courage, love, hope and protection from the world we know and from the one beyond!