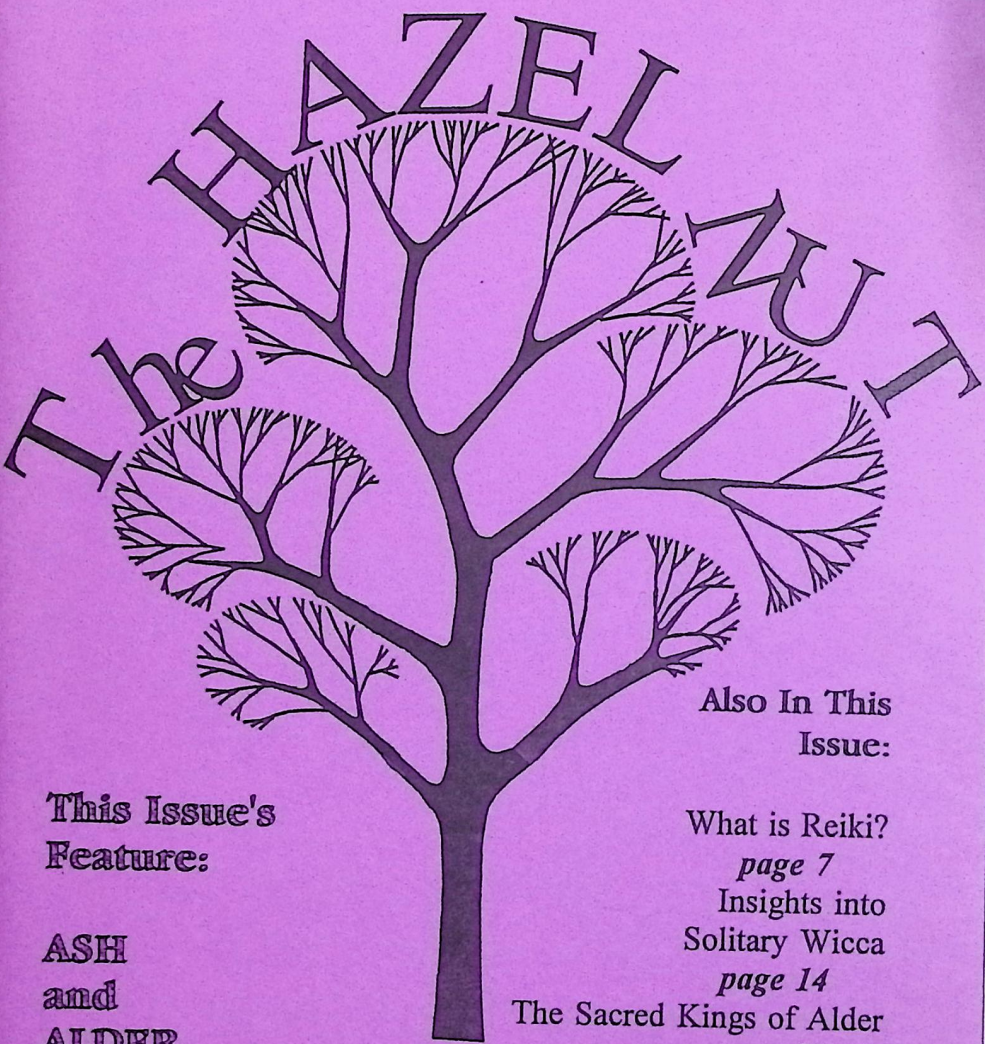


A Journal of Celtic Spirituality and Sacred Trees

Issue 7

February 1994



This Issue's Feature:

ASH
and
ALDER
MOONS

\$2.00

Also In This Issue:

What is Reiki?
page 7

Insights into
Solitary Wicca
page 14

The Sacred Kings of Alder
page 28

More Norse Runes
page 10

Poetry, Letters, and Reviews

THE HAZEL NUT, Issue 7,
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herein.

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.

Ash is the third tree in the
Celtic tree calendar. It usually
occurs in February or March,
and this year it runs from
February 9-March 11.

Alder is the fourth tree in
the Celtic tree calendar. It
usually occurs in March or April,
and this year it runs from March
12-April 9.

In This Issue:

| | |
|---|----|
| Out on a Limb | 4 |
| <i>Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa</i> | |
| From Brigid's Hearth: The Wonders of Cayenne | 5 |
| <i>Jeff McClelland</i> | |
| Reiki | 7 |
| <i>Imré K. Rainey</i> | |
| Human Psyche 101 | 9 |
| <i>Raven</i> | |
| Runes | 10 |
| <i>Stormy</i> | |
| All The Poor Pagans | 12 |
| <i>Raven</i> | |
| Solitary Wicca | 14 |
| <i>Stormy</i> | |
| Folklore & Practical Uses: Ash | 17 |
| <i>Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa</i> | |
| Lunar Energies & Esoterica: Ash | 21 |
| <i>Brigid MoonFire</i> | |
| The Lunar Calendar: Ash | 22 |
| The Lunar Calendar: Alder | 23 |
| Folklore & Practical Uses: Alder | 24 |
| <i>Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa</i> | |
| Lunar Energies & Esoterica: Alder | 27 |
| <i>Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa & Epona</i> | |
| Bran and Alder | 28 |
| <i>Imré K. Rainey</i> | |
| Circle Outlines Survey | 35 |
| <i>Brigid MoonFire</i> | |
| Letters to the Editor | 39 |
| Call for Submissions and Contributions Guidelines | 39 |
| Announcements | 40 |
| Classified Ads | 42 |
| Bubbles From the Cauldron | 43 |
| <i>book reviews, etc.</i> | |

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| Cover graphic by Muirghein | |

Out On a Limb...

From the desk of the editor

Whew—it was a relief to just cover two trees in this issue, instead of three! We've got some exceptional articles this time, including Imré's articles on Reiki and the Sacred Kings of Alder moon. Jeff brings us an in-depth look at cayenne, and as usual, we've got some great poetry. We still need artwork, though; see page 39 for contributor's guidelines (hint, hint!)

As we approach the Spring Equinox, we've been wondering around here: do folks further north and south of the south-eastern U.S. feel the lunar energies differently? Maybe the energies of a particular moon begin a couple of weeks before or after the actual lunation. Our mysteries apparently came from Scotland originally, which is about at the same latitude as Maine or Newfoundland, but then they migrated to Texas. So the question remains: which area is the norm? Pay attention to the energies you're experiencing, and if you notice any differences, let us know. We're curious.

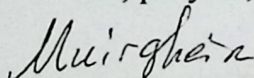
Along the same lines, those of you in arid or far northern regions may not have the same trees we do, while we may be missing some of yours—for instance, aspen, gorse, heather (solar trees) and rowan don't

grow well or at all this far south. How do we account for this with the energies? I feel like the lunar energies are not associated solely with the trees, but rather are represented by them, as well as by other natural objects. Again, let us know your feelings.

What about substitutions for the trees? Just because a tree is related to a mystery tree doesn't make it a good substitute. For example, birch and alder are in the same family, but they have (or represent) two different types of energies. Basswood or linden works for heather, and dogwood for alder; but these trees are not even vaguely related to each other. Also, mimosa, which is not considered a sacred tree, and is not even native to this continent, serves as a substitute for all the trees. These are just more parts of the tree mysteries, which are truly mysterious. By the way, birch is also a substitute for any of the trees, allowing you to speak to them (did you read the Birch esoterica? Why do you think this is the case?).

I'll leave you with all this as food for thought. Remember, a mystery is not easily understood, and certainly not logical!

Until next time, party on,
dudes!



From Brighid's Hearth: The Wonders of Cayenne

by Jeff McClelland

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the fiery nature of cayenne pepper. Most people think of the fruit as a condiment or as the main spice in Latin dishes; however, cayenne, or *Capsicum annuum*, is a wonderful herb for medicinal purposes.

Unfortunately, many people misunderstand this great plant. They may be intimidated by its heat, or feel that it is an irritant like black pepper or hot mustard. But while the Greeks called cayenne 'the biting plant,'¹ herbalists know it as soothing to the system. Jethro Kloss devotes several pages to quotes about cayenne; among them, "There is perhaps no other article which produces so powerful an impression on the animal frame that is so destitute of all injurious properties."² He loves the plant too!

Known as the 'first aid' herb, cayenne is a stimulant, astringent, carminative, and antispasmodic. It promotes stimulation of and normalizes the circulatory system, therefore helping to balance high or low blood pressure and stop bleeding (externally and internally). To increase the circulation, take 3-6 capsules a day; this will quicken the recovery

time from diseases. Cayenne also helps prevent heart attacks and strokes, and it works wonders for people suffering from low vitality and energy or depression.

Cayenne helps promotes hunger by stimulating the saliva and gastric juices. Rodale's is conservative about its use, claiming that persons with intestinal disorders such as ulcers should avoid cayenne,³ but Kloss and other herbalists swear by it, and say that such fears are unfounded.⁴

Cayenne also helps break up congestion in the lungs and respiratory system. For asthma, combine cayenne with lobelia: 1 lb. lobelia seed, 3/4 lb. ladies' slipper, and 1/4 lb cayenne. Tincture this in 1/2 gallon of 160 proof alcohol. Put 1 tsp. of the tincture in a cup of water, and give teaspoonful doses every minute. This is also good for profound shock. A little of this tincture, rubbed over an inflamed joint and covered with a flannel, helps rheumatism and arthritis.

To relieve the pain of a toothache, clean out the cavity in the tooth, and soak a cotton ball with oil of cayenne, and press into the cavity. Combined with plantain and applied as a poultice

tice, cayenne will draw out splinters and such in the skin. As a hangover remedy, put lots of cayenne in some hot soup, or simply make a tea of it. Cayenne mixed with slippery elm and honey is a good gargle for sore throats. Alone it is wonderful for the flu, and if taken with orange juice it can help break a fever.

The mature hot red cayenne is extremely high in vitamin C; 369 milligrams per 3.5 oz, more than anything else in the garden; and it has 21,600 I.U. of vitamin A. It is also rich in zinc, iron, calcium, potassium, PABA, and Rutin. It also has some B-complex along with vitamin G, magnesium, phosphorus, sulphur, and selenium. Sweet green peppers, even after turning red, don't measure up to the hot variety—along with the heat comes the healthful benefits. Kloss recommends the African Bird Pepper, one of the hottest varieties of the species *C. annum*. The other species (there are only two) of pepper is *C. frutescens*, which is the pepper from which the famous Tabasco sauce is made. Both species and all varieties contain the active ingredient capsaicin, which is a powerful stimulant, and also gives the pepper its heat.⁵

Overall, the cayenne pepper is a rich and powerful curative herb having many uses. It is the

first ingredient I reach for when I have a cold, flu or fever, and when cooking too! So when you see that red pepper on a bush or in a bottle, think again. There's a whole drug store in just one pepper. ☺

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Notes

- ¹ Kloss, pg. 217.
- ² Ibid, pg. 217, quoting from Standard Guide to Non-Poisonous Herbal Medicine, pg. 52-53.
- ³ Rodale, pg. 77.
- ⁴ Kloss, pg. 226.
- ⁵ Rodale, pg. 76.

REIKI

by *Imré K. Rainey*

The Bible documents 37 different incidences during Jesus' life in which he tells his disciples, "...all that I do, ye shall do and more." Two hundred years ago, in a Christian seminary in Kyoto, Japan, a number of graduating seniors confronted their head-master, Dr. Mikao Usui, and asked that he fulfill Jesus' promise by healing a sick person as Jesus did—with his touch. Unable to do so, Dr. Usui searched throughout the Bible, Christian schools, and churches, but could not fulfill the promise. Finally, after a decade of ceaseless studying, he found hints of what he was looking for in ancient Buddhist texts. He rediscovered the ancient art of Reiki—the implementation of the Universal Life Energy, through the touch of an initiated master, to bring about physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Dr. Usui taught and practiced Reiki for the remainder of his life. He established a system through which qualified students could study and, eventually, receive energy transfers and Mastership into the three levels of initiation. When the time came for Dr. Usui to pass on, he

appointed his most accomplished student, Dr. Chijuro Hyashi, as the next Grand Master. Dr. Hyashi continued the practice and teaching of Reiki. He founded the first Reiki clinic, which flourished until the start of World War II, at which time Reiki migrated, under the Grand Mastership of Hawayo Takata, to the United States.

Today there are many schools of Reiki, many Masters, and much commercialization. Grand Master Phylis Lei Furumoto recently expressed her unhappiness with the large scale marketing of Reiki by exposing the spiritual contradictions spewing throughout the many schools of Reiki. She went further to say that Hawayo Takata waited over 30 years before initiating another Reiki Master. Some Masters today, after having just received their own initiations, will immediately begin initiating anyone, for a mere \$75, into the three levels of Reiki. This is as much a warning about practitioners to those seeking help through Reiki as a reprimand to those exploiting the art. Apart from the misuse of Reiki by some practitioners, the art is still alive

and well in the hands of many of the traditional Masters.

Reiki is as much a science as it is an art. Treatment results are free from factors such as concentration, belief, and mysticism. Reiki does not require a change of religion, spiritual path, or lifestyle. Modern physics is finally expressing the validity of the laws that govern Reiki (laws of relativity and the relationship between matter and energy). Through the touch of the hands, energy can be sent into the matrix of the physical body. Blockages are released, the aura is charged and cleansed, and the

body's healing faculties are accelerated. Reiki is inestimable, either on its own or as an addition to other healing mediums. 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 writing more on Reiki in future issues.)

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.

Minerva

Hardpacked soil
'neath a sea of grass—
the wind, like Loki,
plays in your russett hair.
I see you.

In the cool moonlight
a bonfire rages with
demonic delight.
You dance with naked feet
and shameless abandon
to a gypsy's violin.
My muse.

Your partners—
nameless faces
in flickering light.
Every glance evoking
feeling,
Each movement, a story.

The whirling dirvish
of the dance closes,
leaving only smudged
footprints—
sparks of inspiration.

- Becky Haack

Human Psyche 101

by Raven

To reach an unconscious level and receive messages from one's 'low-self' has been a problem that many hours of study and meditation have been spent on. But a simple test has been devised to find that message.

The main point here is to be HONEST with yourself (if not others). No amount of preening and boasting can convince your 'low-self' of good intentions; only truthful introspection can.

Instructions: Follow the steps outlined below, than look at the results on page 41.

Step One: On a piece of paper, write down your favorite animal and three descriptive words to explain why you feel this way. (These are gut and heart feelings, not someone else's poetry, but YOUR truth.)

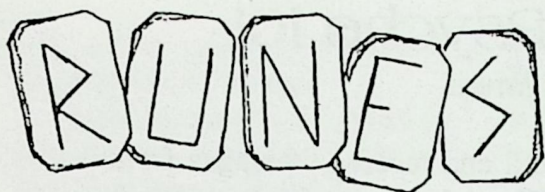
Step Two: Write down your favorite color, and three descriptive words about it.

Step Three: Write down your favorite body of water, and three descriptive words about it.

Step Four: Visualize waking up in a white room; no doors, no windows, just 4 walls, floor and ceiling all white, and surrounded by white light. Now write down your three descriptive words or feelings about it.

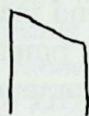
Now look on page 41 for your results.





By Stormy

Germanic: URUZ - Aurochs
Gothic: URUS - Aurochs (URUS)
Old English: UR - Ox, Bison
Old Norse: UR - Drizzle, Rain; Slag



KEY WORDS: Auroch (wild extinct European buffalo),
Wild Energy

The auroch, the now-extinct wild European buffalo, represented great strength, endurance, and speed, and was a symbol of man's prowess as a hunter. As a right of passage, a young man often proved himself by slaying an auroch and bringing back the prized horns. Auroch horns were tipped with silver and used as drinking vessels for festive occasions by Vikings and Anglo-Saxons alike.

Ur, the ox or bison, was believed to have been dedicated to the Norse god, Thor. Thor was the great protector of the common people, and could make it rain when needed or stop flooding when necessary. He was a soft-hearted big lumbering ax-wielding Norse superman.

The Uruz rune represents courage, boldness, good health, vitality, and lots of energy. It is a rune of challenge, indicating exciting events ahead, and

possible career opportunities. It can also represent a power that must be tamed, such as one's own ego, or another person you may have a conflict or disagreement with.

The Auroch became extinct after the last ice age when hunters exhausted their disappearing numbers. Drawing this rune could therefore be a warning to be more careful of our natural resources on this planet.

Upright Position:

In relationships, Uruz could indicate a wild wonderful interaction, but as things cool off, it is noted that perhaps this was just a fling. A lasting relationship always depends on compatibility, common interests and freedom.

When dealing with a conflict or disagreement with a person, use your energy in a positive

way and the situation could improve the relationship. In business dealings, Uruz may indicate the 'go' on taking a risk.

Generally, things are not as bad as they seem. Act with the confidence and courage that this rune encourages, and use conditions to improve yourself. It's okay to be aggressive, but use your energy positively with love and logic; never to hurt or harm anyone.

Reversed Position:

Drawing this rune could be a sure sign urging us to care for the planet and ourselves through recycling, planting trees, gardening, eating healthier, and active participation in or monetary support of wildlife conservation activities. Is your energy directed and used wisely? Are you doing too much?

Practice frugality in any business dealing that is important.

Oversee your activities and

finances with a careful eye. Do not take any risks, because you may be in a weak position. Is your check book balanced? ☺

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have you reverence and awe without ritual?

is there tenderness toward living?

reach without seeking.

Look without projecting.

Be, to reach a tree.

what you live no one else can do for you.

It is yours.

- By epona

ALL THE POOR PAGANS

by Raven

Sung to the tune of "Fare Thee Well"

Chorus:

Fare ye well ye banks of Auburn lake
Fare ye well ye valleys and shores
There's not one witch who'll mourn the loss of ya
All the poor pagans are weary.

We've met for a circle by the lakeside tonight
but we're having some trouble; the cauldron won't light
and the fundies are watching and hope for a fight
and all the poor pagans are weary.

CHORUS

The neo's are worried and fear for their lives
the Priest isn't speaking to the Priestess, his wife
tonight she's on midol and carries a knife.
and all the poor pagans are weary.

CHORUS

The faeries are coming and join in the throng
the apprentice still can't figure out what went wrong
all of the chants change to beer drinking songs
and all the poor pagans are weary.

CHORUS

A newbie's complaining and says he is bored
he says that he'll come to our circle no more
what he expected was an orgy outdoors
and all the poor pagans are weary.

CHORUS

The faeries are dancing and laughing with glee
it seems that the preacher has just wrenched his knee
but now all his deacons are coming for me!
and all the poor pagans are weary.

CHORUS

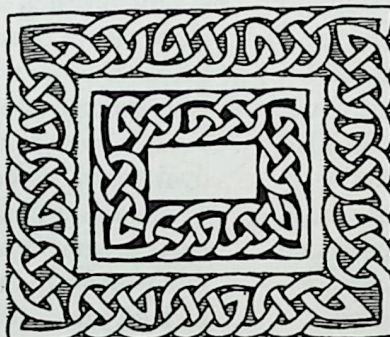
The kids from the town watch, hoping that soon
they'll see if witches can really ride brooms
and the fundies are wailing and foretelling doom
and all the poor pagans are weary.

CHORUS

The police when they showed up gave us the frights
they had us pinned down in the beam of their lights
but they pissed of their sergeant, for he wrote the new Rites
and all the poor pagans are weary.

Chorus:

Fare ye well ye banks of Auburn lake
Fare ye well ye valleys and shores
There's not one witch who'll mourn the loss of ya
All the poor pagans are weary.



Solitary Wicca

by Stormy

This article is for aspiring Wiccans and anyone practicing the Craft alone. From this stance, I would like to discuss the solitary side of the Craft. There are just as many reasons for practicing alone as there are for joining a coven. Some of the reasons for solitary practice are: there isn't a local group; the local group is of a different tradition; personality conflicts; just learning; or a strong preference for practicing alone. Some of the excellent reasons for joining a group are: learning from someone experienced; working within a structured group; practical experience in verbalizing; and ready answers and support when needed. One of the problems of solitaires is that they tend to internalize instead of verbalize.

My advice to the solitaire is to learn the Craft by reading and doing. The bibliographies for articles in **THE HAZEL NUT** are a perfect place to start. Also, several articles in **THE HAZEL NUT** have suggestions for honoring the God/Goddess, and also stress harm none, hurt none; one of the foundation codes of Wicca. More of the Wiccan 'Codes of Ethics,' are found in

many books,, such as The Spiral Dance, by Starhawk, and make good sense once read and practiced. I highly recommend reading the "Charge of the Goddess" as written in The '94 Lunar Calendar: Dedicated to the Goddess in Her Many Guises (Hazel moon), as well as purchasing a copy of the calendar for your personal use.

Keep a Book of Shadows, listing your own personal codes of ethics, moon observances, festivals, and meaningful esoteric events in your life. Use your own symbols and protect your book carefully; don't let it fall into the hands of someone not in the Craft.

Know that doing drugs isn't necessary; alternate states can be achieved through meditation, fasting, singing, chanting, and dancing. May I include here that getting arrested for drug use in a place where other Wiccans go, gives all of us a bad name. We have enough problems as it is!

It's important to create your own sacred space. This can be adapted in a place in your home such as your dresser, coffee table, spare room, kitchen, patio, or backyard. Just so long as the space is yours! In your sacred

space, arrange your favorite rocks, crystals, photos reminding you of God/Goddess/Nature, shells, a mirror for the moon's reflection, wands, figurines, pine cones, flowers, herbs, incense, candles, etc. Meditate, sing, dance, give thanks to and find joy in the God/Goddess within.

Lastly, the days are gone

when in every home the mother was a priestess and the father a priest, and the family openly worshipped the God/Goddess outdoors. As such, it's always advisable to be careful where you worship, but the situation is improving! ☸



Folklore & Practical Uses:

ASH

by Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa

Fraxinus excelsior L. - Common Ash. Native to Britain and most other parts of Europe.

F. pennsylvanica Marsh. var. *subintegerrima* (Vahl) Fernald. - Green Ash. Quebec to northern Florida, west to Texas, into the plains and almost to the Rocky Mountains.

F. pennsylvanica Marsh. - Red Ash. Nova Scotia west to Manitoba, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma, and south to Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, and the Carolinas.

F. americana L. - White Ash. Ontario east to Cape Breton Island, south to north Florida, west to east Texas, and north to Minnesota.

F. velutina Torrey - Velvet Ash. Utah to New Mexico, west to California, and east to Texas; common to all southwestern desert country.

DESCRIPTION & USES

The ash is a member of the olive family, *Oleaceae*, to which also belongs the common (and sometimes invasive) privet. The compound leaves of the ash make it easy to recognize, for, as Green tells us, only a few trees have opposite leaves, "and only three large trees—the ashes, the box elder, and the buckeyes—have *opposite, compound leaves*."¹

The most common of the American ashes, the green ash, found near stream-banks and in low areas, grows to about 60', with shiny green lance-shaped leaflets. Its bark is gray and ridged, with a red inner layer. However, the easiest way to find

the ash is to look for its fruit, which hangs in clusters on the tree. These ash keys are about 1-2" long, yellowish, with a narrow wing; they mature in late summer and fall, and are carried away by the wind in the following spring. The red ash is very similar to the green ash, and just as common, but has wooly hairs on its twigs, leafstalks, and underleaf surfaces.²

The light but strong wood of the white ash was used by American Indians for canoe paddles and for the rims of snow-shoes, and it is still used for furniture, athletic equipment, and even musical instruments.³ The wood of green ash, however, while heavier than that of white

ash, is less costly, and has the same toughness, straight grain, elasticity, and strength. As a result, green ash has almost supplanted white ash in the manufacture of oars and paddles; but Peattie says "rowing must have been easier in the days of White Ash oars!"⁴

The common ash of Britain is also a valuable timber tree; according to Grieve, its wood is better in quality than even the white or green ash. It was used in olden days for spears and bows. Ash wood is versatile, and can be used for more purposes than the wood of other tree. Ladders, carts, poles to hold hops grown for beer brewing, oars, walking-sticks, hoops, crates, and handles for various tools are all made from ash.⁵

An interesting note about ash: according to Brimble, the many leaflets of the tree drip a water "which renders the soil beneath untenable for smaller plants; and this effect is intensified by the roots of the same tree, which grow very near the horizontal and therefore at the soil surface, which they drain of nutriment."⁶

MEDICINAL

The British common ash is the favored species for medicinal use, but the bark of the American white ash has similar properties, as do the bark and leaves of the

black ash (*F. nigra* Marsh.).⁷

The bark of the ash is antiperiodic (counteracts periodic or intermittent diseases, such as malaria), astringent and a bitter tonic. It has been used as a decoction to treat fever, to remove liver and spleen blockages, and to help rheumatism.⁸

The leaves are diuretic, diaphoretic and purgative, and their laxative effects are used to treat rheumatic problems. A decoction of the leaves was thought to dissolve kidney stones and cure jaundice.⁹ The leaves, taken as a tea, once had a reputation for preventing snake bites, and the leaves were also applied to the bite.¹⁰

Ash keys were used in ancient days as a cure for flatulence. This could be an important remedy for some folks, so gather those keys when ripe to keep them all year round! The keys can also be preserved with salt and vinegar and served as a pickle.¹¹

FOLKLORE

The ash has had curative and protective powers for centuries. In Britain, it was believed that an ash sapling could cure a child with a rupture (hernia). The trunk was split and held open and the child passed through it, and then the ash was bandaged

up. As the ash healed, so the hernia was healed. Grigson tells us there are several ash saplings in the museum at Taunton (England), with long scars down the trunk where they had been split.¹²

Another strange belief was that of the shrew-ash. As paralysis was believed to be caused by a shrew running over cattle and people, this could be cured by entombing a live shrew in a hole in the ash, and then stroking the sick person or animal with this wood.¹³

The ash also magically cured warts. Each wart must be pricked with a new pin that had been thrust into the tree. Then the pins were withdrawn and left in the tree, and this charm repeated:

*"Ashen tree, Ashen tree,
Pray buy these warts of me."*¹⁴

The ash is intimately connected to Scandinavian mythology, and according to some, the ash was the *yggdrasil*—the World Tree. "Its roots ran in three directions: one to the Asagods in heaven, one to the Frost-giants, and the third to the underworld. Under each root was a fountain of wonderful virtues. In the tree, which dropped honey, sat an eagle, a squirrel and four stags. At the root lay the serpent Nithhöggr gnawing it, while the squirrel

Ratatöskr ran up and down to sow strife between the eagle at the top and the serpent at the root."¹⁵

Also in Scandinavian mythology, "The universe, the gods and the giants came into being first. After that, vegetation sprouted forth; then the gods created the first human couple out of two trees. The first man, who was called *Ask*, sprang from an Ash tree; the woman, *Embla*, was thought to have come from the elm or alder tree. The name ash is derived from *Ask*."¹⁶

Lightening is attracted to the ash, as it is to the oak, but not quite so frequently:

*"Avoid an Ash,
It courts the flash,"*¹⁷

There is a long history of antipathy between the ash and serpents; according to Pliny, "The leaves of this tree are of so great a virtue against serpents, as that the serpents dare not be so bolde as to touch the morning and evening shadowes of the tree, but shunneth them a farre off."¹⁸

Ash supplied wood not only for the deadly spears of the middle ages, but also for those of Homer's heroes.¹⁹ Grigson says that "as an element of the tree's power and sacredness existed in the ashen spear, so it probably existed in the ashen stick or staff."²⁰ Ash is also the proper

wood for a shepherd's crook, perhaps because a herding stick of ash would never injure the cattle.²¹

In Ireland, people burn ash wood to banish the Devil, and in Devonshire, ash wood is burnt at Christmas, probably for the same reason. In some parts of the Highlands, to protect a newborn from witches and goblins, and give him the strength of the ash, the first thing it was fed was a spoonful of sap boiled from the end of a green ash stick. Ash keys were carried to protect against witchcraft, and if you held a lucky even ash (a leaf with an even number of leaflets) in your hand, you would meet your lover before the day was out.²² In fact, the Greeks once believed Cupid's bows were made of ash.²³ ☼

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Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

ASH

by Brigid MoonFire



As Ash, the third moon, begins its journey across the sky, our lives are continuing their journey of returning to normal after the hectic holidays. Already in this young year we have laid our foundation and begun building upon it in the Birch and Rowan moons. Now with Ash comes our first test of the strength of our foundation.

As the Ash moon rises, it brings in the passion, motion, and the winds of impatience. From the quickening of Rowan comes an urge for release, but we must realize that it is not yet time for emergence from our watery womb. While the seed has been planted, it still must grow and mature.

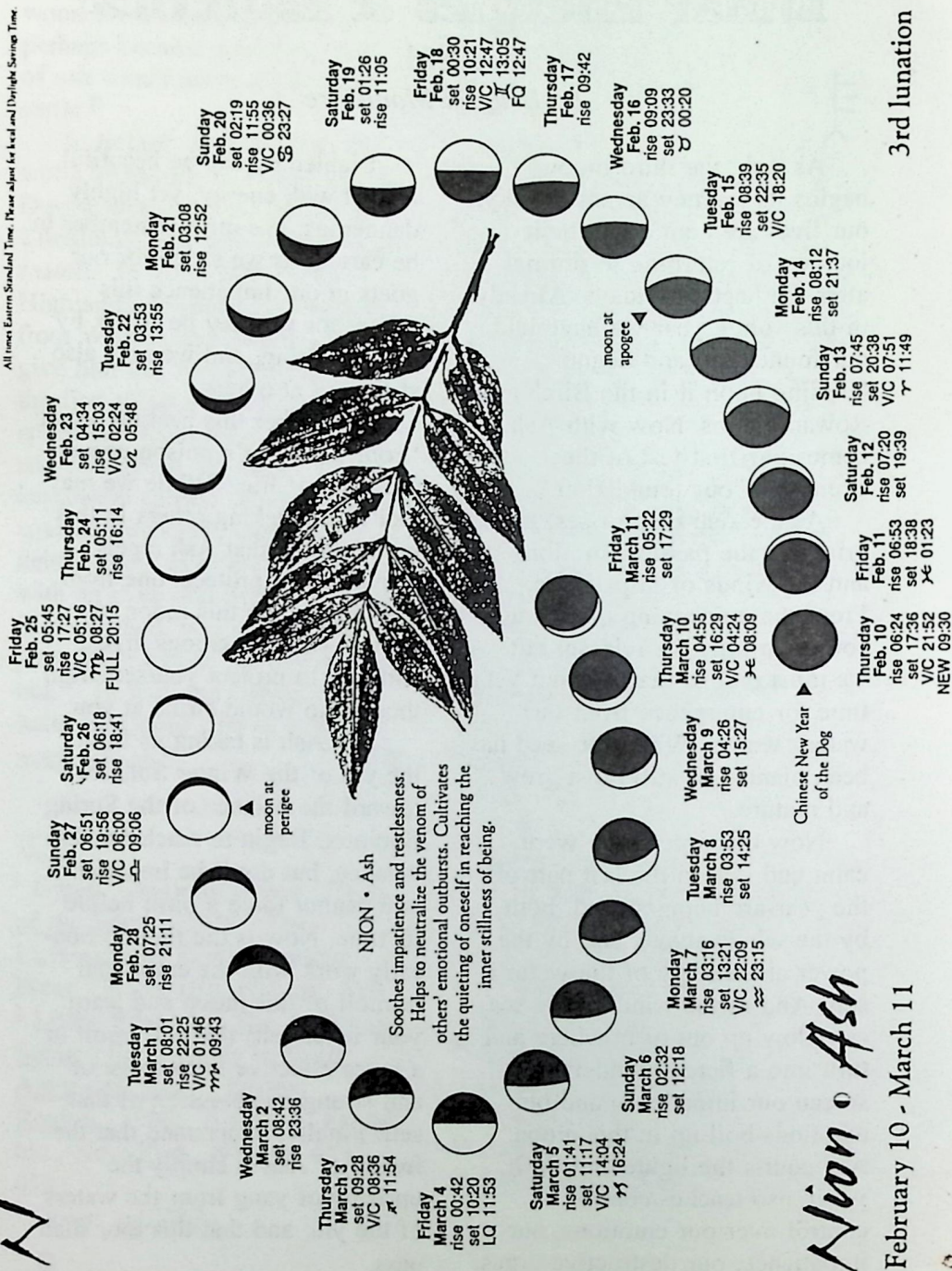
Now the waters that were calm and still in the last part of the year are being stirred, both by the winds above, and by the power and energy of the water itself. And as the wind on the sea can blow up out of nowhere and turn into a fierce thunderstorm, so can our impatience and our emotions boil up in this moon. Ash courts the lightening flash, yet it also teaches control; control over our emotions, our impatience, our destructive urges.

Lightening can be beautiful, loaded with energy, yet highly dangerous. We must remember to be careful as we strive for our goals in our impatience this moon, for we may be struck by the lightening, and we may also strike out at others.

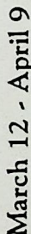
Remember this healing secret: 'from the viper's poison comes the tonic of life.' While we may feel like attacking others in this moon, know that Ash repels serpents, and protects one from their bites. Use this moon to control your venomous urges, and also to protect yourself from those who would strike at you.

The Ash is taking us from the yin of the Winter Solstice toward the balance of the Spring Equinox. Begin to reach for that balance, but don't be impatient; you cannot force a birth before its time. Now is the time to honestly work with the emotional turmoil of this moon and learn your inner self; this can result in a more effective knowledge of and stronger expression of that self. Finally, understand that the frenzy of Ash is simply the uprising of yang from the waters of the yin; and that this too, shall pass. ☉

N



4th lunation



Folklore & Practical Uses:

ALDER

by Muirghein uí Dhún Aonghasa

Alnus glutinosa L. - European Alder, Black Alder. Native of Europe, Asia, North Africa; naturalized in southeastern Canada and northeastern North America.

A. rubra - Oregon Alder, Red Alder. Evergreen and redwood forests from Northern California to Alaska.

A. serrulata - Hazel Alder, Common Alder. From Nova Scotia south to north Florida, west to east Texas and north to Kansas.

A. rugosa - Speckled Alder, Tag Alder. Across Canada and Great Lakes region.

DESCRIPTION & USES

Alders are small, shrubby trees found in swamps or on the banks of ponds and slow-moving streams, where they help prevent soil erosion with their closely interlaced roots. The alder is easily recognized, even in winter, by its catkins, which look like a tiny fir-cone, and by its broad oval, ridged leaves. It flowers in the spring before the leaves appear, and has ripe berries in the fall.

The wood of the European alder, which grows to 30-40',¹ is very durable and lasting in water—most of Venice is built on piles of alder, and has lasted for centuries.² The wood is known in the Highlands as Scottish mahogany, and is used for making chairs, as well as water pipes, pumps, troughs, and sluices.³ It was also used heavily in boat construction.⁴

The Hazel alder is too small to be of commercial value as timber, but the Oregon alder grows to a good size—up to 120 ft in the Puget Sound region⁵—and is one of the principal hardwoods of that area. The American Indians made canoes and dugouts from the trunk of the tree, and also made cooking vessels, troughs, and food containers from the wood.⁶ Its only fault is that it decays so quickly in contact with the weather and the soil.⁷

The alder doesn't make good firewood (again, the Oregon alder is an exception⁸), but it does make better charcoal than any other wood. Even after its other uses as a timber had declined, alder charcoal was still considered the best type for making gunpowder.⁹

All parts of the alder are an excellent source of natural dyes.

The bark makes a reddish color, called Aldine Red, when used alone, or as a foundation for other materials, yields a black dye. The bark and young shoots together give a yellow dye, and with a little copper added to make a yellowish-grey, is used in some of the flesh colors in embroidering tapestries. The fresh shoots dye cinnamon; when dried and powdered they give a tawny shade. The fresh wood makes a pinkish-fawn dye; the catkins make a green dye.¹⁰

The bark and young shoots contain tannic acid, but also have so much natural dye matter that they aren't very useful for tanning. The leaves have been used for this, however. The leaves are also clammy and slightly sticky, hence the specific name of the alder, *glutinosa*, and will catch flies on their surface when spread in a room.¹¹

MEDICINAL

The American and European alders have similar medicinal properties; the parts used are the bark and leaves of the European alder, and the bark and cones of the American alders. The medicinal parts are tonic and astringent, according to Grieve,¹² and astringent, bitter (acts on the mucous membranes of the mouth and stomach to increase appetite and promote digestion), emetic

(causes vomiting), and hemostatic (stops bleeding), according to Lust.¹³ On any species, the fresh inner bark and root bark are emetic; dry and age these before use, or let the decoction stand and settle for 2-3 days, until its yellow color has turned black. Hutchens says this will strengthen the stomach and increase the appetite.¹⁴

Use a decoction of the bark externally to bathe swellings and inflammations, and as a gargle for an inflamed or sore throat and laryngitis. The decoction is good as an external application in gangrene, ulcers and other skin problems. Boiling the bark in vinegar produces a liquid with several uses: it's an approved (according to Hutchens) remedy to kill head lice, relieve the itch and dry up the scabs. This vinegar is also good for other skin problems and scabs, and to tighten the gums (as a mouthwash), clean the teeth and soothe a toothache.¹⁵

The cones, being astringent, are useful in heavy bleeding, both internally and externally. They are also used as a stomach tonic in diarrhea and indigestion, and are good for fevers. Grieve says peasants in the Alps were frequently cured of rheumatism by being covered with bags full of the heated leaves.¹⁶ The berries, combined with apple

cider, make a good worm medicine for children. The treatment is supposed to be most effective when given on the full moon, and must be repeated in four weeks to clear out the remaining larvae.¹⁷

FOLKLORE

The Irish consider the alder to be an unlucky tree. They feel its a bad thing to pass by one on a journey, and they also don't like to fell an alder, as the timber cuts white and then turns a startling, brilliant reddish-orange, rather like blood.¹⁸

Other superstition or emotion attached to the alder seems to be almost nonexistent; "perhaps because it was a tree of swamp and marsh and impenetrable valley floors, which needed the exorcism of natural history. Yet once enjoyed, an alder swamp along a Cornish stream, for example, remains perennially and primevally enchanting—the trees alive and dead, moss-bearded and lichen-bearded, the soil and the water like coal slack and blacksmith's water, in between the tussocks of sedge."¹⁹ ☼

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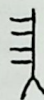
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Lunar Energies & Esoterica:

ALDER

by Muirghin uí Dhún Aonghasa & Epona



Alder is the time of birthing, after the inception in Birch, the quickening in Rowan, and the premature urgings of Ash. Alder is the beginning of a new cycle, just as the Spring Equinox brings forth new life on the earth. Also at the Equinox, the days and nights are of equal length, and an egg can be balanced on its end. Try it!

This balance is an important part of Alder, in more than physical terms. We also have the balance of yin and yang, male and female, fire and water. A symbol of this balance is the Alder King of Celtic legend, a man whose rule is based not on fear, but on sensitivity, understanding, and reverence. He works in harmony with his queen and the natural order of life to make sure he, and his people, are connected to, and in balance with, the earth (for more on the Alder King, see "Bran and the Sacred Kings of the Alder Moon," pg. 28).

The glyph of this moon is "I am a shining tear of the sun," from the 'Song of Amergin,' in The White Goddess. Take a moment to think on this, before you continue reading.

One meaning of this glyph is the dual nature of Alder: it is a tree of both water and fire. Alder grows in and around water, yet is known for its ability to make charcoal and gunpowder. Alder pilings lift buildings out of the water, and in the same way, Alder acts to lift our spirits out of the waters of the first three moons, and onto the dry land of the spring and summer months ahead. Alder also acts as a bridge between the two halves of the year, connecting and balancing the fire and water aspects, and the male and female sides of ourselves.

You can use the energies of this moon to reconnect with the earth, and bring your inner natures into balance. Now that the storms of Ash have passed, we can quit trying to attack each other, and learn to work together in harmony, especially with the opposite sex. A left-over effect of Ash is that the men are pretty fed up with the women. Be sensitive to each other now, act responsibly, and understand how your actions can affect others. This must be done now, when the balanced energies of nature

Continued on page 41

Bran and the Sacred Kings of the Alder Moon

by *Imré K. Rainey*

Sacred Kings are just one part of the mystery of the Alder moon, but a very important one, and one that is easily misunderstood. What exactly is a Sacred King? Who is Bran? How are the Sacred Kings and Bran connected? Through an analysis of the following legend of Bran, and a comparison of this story with the Christian legend of the Grail, we will begin to see the connections.

The Story of Bran the Blessed, King of Britain

Bran, king of Britain, son of Llyr, was standing at Harlech looking out to sea from the cliffs. "There is that in Ireland that I must have, for without it the land will fail," exclaimed the king. He chose an entourage of his men to sail unto Ireland with him. They would leave Bran's son Caradwc and seven wise men to watch over Britain, and offer Matholwch, the Irish king, Britain's friendship.

Upon arrival, Bran and his men were greeted and escorted to Matholwch's house. Matholwch accepted Bran and his men as friends, and invited them to a feast in honor of their new alliance.

When the feast had been proceeding for a time, Bran asked Matholwch, "Tell me, O King, whence had you that cauldron which is in the centre of the hall, but from which no one is seen to eat?" "Well that you may ask," answered Matholwch, who proceeded to tell of a strange couple that he encountered one morning while hunting by the Lake of the Cauldron.

When asked their purpose in his land, they responded that they were searching for a place to stay, as the woman, who was very ugly and carrying the very cauldron in question on her back, was great with child and would soon give birth.

Now Matholwch, being an honorable king, would not have it said that any went unhoused in his land, so at his home they were to stay. After a year, his court demanded that they be sent away because of their disturbing appearance and conduct, and so the King had a house of iron built within which they would reside. However, the plan was not only to move them out of the castle, but also to rid Ireland of the terrible family.

And so, once the frightening brood was in the house, Matholwch's men heated its iron walls. The court stood back and watched as the walls grew hotter and hotter. And when the walls were at their hottest, glowing white as death, the family dashed against the walls, broke them, and

escaped. When the house had cooled and the King's men searched the remains, they found the cauldron that Bran saw before him. Its properties were described as that of resurrection.

"And who is this wretched woman of whom you speak?" asked Bran. "Cerridwen!" exclaimed Matholwch.

The feasting continued until finally all of Matholwch's men, including himself, passed out. Bran rose to his feet and collected his men. He threw the cauldron onto his back and they sailed back to Britain.

The time was not long until Bran could see the King of Ireland approaching Britain on the sea. Quickly, Bran sent his men to meet Matholwch. In return for renewed friendship, Bran offered his sister, Branwen, to the Irish king. Matholwch accepted and Bran arranged a feast to honor the joining of the King of Ireland and his sister. However, Bran's brother grew angry at the arrangement and mutilated the Irish horses. Deeply insulted, the Irish sovereign departed without taking leave. Upon hearing of this, Bran sent the King new horses and many treasures, in return for peace.

Years passed and Branwen bore a child to the Irish king, yet the Irish people could not forgive the insult that had been directed towards their King long ago. They demanded that Matholwch reject Branwen. In order to keep his people happy, the King did so. In hopes of maintaining her child's safety, Branwen attempted to accept her husband's rejection. After much heartache

and humiliation, Branwen finally broke down and sent one of Rhiannon's [British Goddess of the Underworld] birds with a message to Bran. Enraged, Bran sailed to Ireland with his ships. Matholwch realized what had happened and fled across the river Linon, breaking the bridge away behind him. Upon Bran's arrival, Branwen left the Irish court and joined her brother.

Bran laid himself across the river and his men ran over him towards the Irish. Seeing Bran's great display of strength and size, Matholwch quickly offered to give Branwen's son the throne in return for his own safety. Branwen urged Bran to accept and a great feast followed in the Irish castle.

Matholwch met Bran at the feast and handed his throne over to Bran, who, in turn, crowned Branwen's son. The new king went to his family seeking blessings, but was thrown into the fire by Bran's jealous brother. Great fighting broke out and the cauldron was destroyed. Bran received a wound in his thigh, which would soon take his life, from a poisoned spear. The Brits fled with Branwen, who soon died of grief; the mortally wounded Bran; and the remains of the cauldron.

When at a safe distance, Bran gave instructions to his men. On their route to their destination they were to stop twice and feast as gods with food and ale. During these times they would forget all their troubles and woes while listening to Rhiannon's birds, who had the power of enchantment. These feasts were to last many years. Finally, upon

completion of their travels, they were to cut off their King's head and bury it in the White Hills of London, their final destination.

This version of the myth was extrapolated from The Song of Taliesin.¹

The story of Bran the King of Britain originates in The Mabinogion. The story is told by different authors, and so has different translations and slightly different variations. For example, the cauldron appears both as Cerridwen's and also Branwen's (this will be looked into later). Its property is resurrection, yet some versions say that the resurrected could not speak of what they had experienced in death, while other versions say that the resurrected could not speak at all. The context of the story also changes slightly; however, for our purpose, John Matthews' version will suffice.²

The story of Bran is centered around a cauldron which originally belonged to Cerridwen or, in other versions, to Branwen. Cerridwen, as defined by Barbara Walker,³ is the Triple Goddess, or the three aspects of the Goddess—maid, mother, and crone—in one (she is especially recognized as the crone aspect). In this view, Cerridwen can be associated with Morrigan, the “threefold goddess of the Celts

of Gaul and Britain.” Further, “the second aspect of her trinity [was] Babd.” Babd, according to Walker, is the Welsh Branwen, the other keeper of the cauldron. Once it becomes clear that Cerridwen and Branwen are simply different aspects of the same entity, the dual ownership of the cauldron is understood (keep this in mind).

The Holy Grail

In Christian legend, one comes across the story of the Holy Grail. According to Chretien de Troyes⁴ the legend of the Holy Grail originates with Jesus and the Last Supper. The grail is the chalice in which the mystery of Jesus' blood during the Holy Eucharist took place, and/or the container in which Jesus' blood was collected when he was removed from the cross. Either way, the chalice, or grail, held within it the blood of the Christ through which one could be healed or receive eternal life.

Once empowered, the grail was to be protected so that it would not land in evil hands. Arthurian legend, originally made popular by de Troyes, tells of the battles that took place over the possession of the holy relic. While protecting the grail, the Fisher King (the guardian of the Grail) was mortally wounded—castrated—by a spear, but man-

aged to keep the grail from falling into evil hands. He was then given eternal life by God and set to stand by the Holy Grail as its guardian until the chosen knight appears, who will ask the question that will give the Fisher king back his virility, thus returning the land to fruitfulness.

The legend of the Holy Grail asserts that the Grail is of Christian origin; however, the previous discussion of Bran and the Cauldron of Inspiration makes it clear that not only is the Holy Grail not originally Christian, but that it is an alteration of the Celtic legend. The Holy Grail is most definitely Cerridwen's cauldron (or Branwen's). Both the Grail and the Cauldron possess the power to restore life. The Fisher King is Bran. In Perceval, or The Story of the Grail, de Troyes⁵ tells of the great feast and generosity shown Perceval by the Fisher King who housed him for a night. In the story of Bran, we learned of the great feasts and generosity of Bran, the King of Britain (Britain is also known as the Isle of the Mighty, which is complementary to the Grail Castle where the Fisher King's mighty knights dwell). The Fisher King was mortally wounded by a spear, while protecting the Holy Grail, as was Bran mortally wounded by a poisoned spear, while

protecting the remainder of the cauldron.

When Perceval first saw the Holy Grail during his stay in the Grail Castle, it was being carried by a beautiful young woman; however, later, he was again in the company of the woman and she was old and wretched to his eyes. The association between the young, beautiful bearer of the grail who later appeared as an old, wretched hag and the multiple identities of Cerridwen and Branwen as young maidens and frightening crones is uncanny and cannot be ignored. Also, Robert Graves⁶ illustrates the belief that Mary, Jesus' mother, was the first owner of the Holy Grail. Mary was a maiden who, as a virgin, gave birth to the Christian son of God. She later witnessed the killing of her son. She can easily be identified with the Triple Goddess who, as the Maiden, or virgin, is pregnant with the god, becomes the Mother at his birth, and, after witnessing his death with the turning of the wheel of the year, evolves into the Crone. It is, therefore, obvious that the Holy Grail legend is derived from the story of Bran and his quest for the Cauldron of Inspiration.

Sacred Kings

The Celtic society greatly depended on farming and the

fruitfulness of yearly harvests. In relation, the Celtic king was much more than a mundane tyrant. In Celtic legend, the kingship of the land was dependent upon the queen, who was considered the earthly incarnation of the Goddess, and personified the land. The king, as well as being the ruler, actually personified the people. Upon the king's marriage to the queen, he was in effect marrying the Goddess, and wedding the people to the land. It was, therefore, believed that whatever fruit he sowed as king (fair rulership, strong children, etc.), was reflected by the fertility and well-being of the land and people. Caitlin Matthews⁷ describes this concept with the example of King Conaire mac Mess Buachalla:

Good is his reign. Since he assumed the kingship, no cloud has veiled the sun for the space of a day from the middle of spring to the middle of autumn. And no dew-drop has fallen from grass till midday, and wind would not touch a cow's tail until noon ...In his reign, each man deems the other's voice melodious as the strings of harps, because of the excellence of the law and the peace and the good-will prevailing throughout...

In contrast:

...the land under Conn, who has married Becuma, an Otherworldly woman outcast from the Blessed Islands:

"Conn and Becuma were a year together...and there was neither corn nor milk in Ireland..."

The king, again, accepted responsibility for his actions at the beginning of his rule. If the land and people suffered because of him, then he would have to make amends, and sometimes the only acceptable offering was his life. (*Notice the elements of the legends of Beltane and associated celebrations, when the Celtic people celebrated the fertility of the land. In legend, if not necessarily in historical fact, the people offered the Goddess of the land the May King as a sacrifice to ensure fruitful harvests. The king was also symbolized in the character of the Fool, who voluntarily chose to be the king for a day and then be sacrificed in the Wicker Man, because the king had failed his people. The May Queen, who sentences him, is the character who represented the Goddess.*) Finally, to complete the sacrifice of the sacred king, his head must be taken.

Bran was a sacred king, as will be illustrated by the following elements. His land prospered and his people adored him because of his kindness, yet

when his people were killed in great numbers and he, himself, was fatally wounded during the last battle with Matholwch, he could no longer successfully serve. His remaining countrymen had to be protected, so he offered himself as a sacrifice and ordered that his head be cut off and buried in the White Hills in London as protection for his people.

The Celtic Lunar Calendar

The Celtic people divided their year into thirteen lunations, each beginning with the new moon, and an extra day known as the Day Apart. This made the "year and a day" so often seen in myths and fairy tales. Each lunation was then said to have certain physical and esoteric properties which affected all life on the planet. As we now know, the moon dictates the activities of all the bodies of water on the planet through gravity. Understanding that the building blocks of all living organisms are cells (which are over 70% water), it is quite acceptable that living organisms are just as sensitive as the oceans, lakes, rivers, etc. to the moon's emanations and energy fields.

Each lunation, in turn, is associated with one of 13 sacred trees. The energy of each of the trees corresponds to the effects of the moon's energy during that

particular time of the year. The first four trees/lunations in the Beth-Luis-Nion calendar are Birch, Rowan, Ash, and Alder. Bran is associated with the Alder, which was used by the Celts to build bridges, boats, and the bases for houses. In the tale of Bran, he was said to have stretched across the river Linon so that his men could traverse the bridge-less river over him; in another story he swam from his ship to the Irish shore with all his men on his back so that they would not have to anchor the ship. Finally, it was said that he was never contained within a house (this differs from John Matthews' rendition of the story, in which Bran attends feasts within houses and castles).

"What can no house ever contain? The piles upon which it is built."⁸ Piles were built of alder, and the Celtic word for alder is 'fearn,' which also means Bran.

The word alder comes from 'elder.' An elder is an older, experienced individual who is often looked at for leadership (the Aldermen in local government today). Elders, in religious terminology, are respected spiritual leaders who are considered *sacred*. Sacred Kings were, again, not only of mundane value, but also of religious and spiritual importance. We can now equate Sacred King and Alder King—

keep in mind that Bran was a Sacred King, e.g., an Alder King.

Going back to the first of the year, we discover that Birch, the first lunation, teaches compassion, understanding, initiation, and most importantly, responsibility for oneself. The next moon—Rowan—describes the quickening of one's life, the release of energy in order to bring about that which one envisioned during Birch. The third moon—Ash—is a time of erratic and uncontrolled emotions which often lead to misunderstandings and the defeat of Birch's goals. Finally, the fourth moon—Alder—represents the time of new birth and the reconciliation with the old.

When looking at the life cycle of the Sacred King/Alder King, Bran, we can easily insert his experiences into the wheel of the year. At his initiation he accepts his marriage to the land and his responsibility regarding his actions (Birch—initiation into the kingship and the Goddess, compassion and understanding as a king, acceptance of responsibility for oneself, etc.). He then begins his reign with overflowing zeal (Rowan—the quickening of life). This zeal will become erratic and lead him into danger—Bran's last battle with Matholwch (Ash—uncontrolled emotions, outrage) and, after his escape, he must compensate his

people for the destruction he caused by being sentenced to death as a willing sacrifice (Alder—the responsibility to others outside of one's self, beginning of a new reign, the rebirth, beginning of new life).

Through this study of Bran, we can more clearly see how the Sacred Kings are relevant to the Alder moon, with their strong sense of responsibility, sensitivity to natural forces, understanding, and compassion (a complete balance of yin and yang). As priests of the Craft, we are descendants of the Sacred Kings. Are you worthy of the title 'Alder King,' as you should be? ☸

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⁵ de Troyes, Chretien. Perceval, or The Story of the Grail. 12th C. 1983. Pergamon Press, New York, NY.

⁶ Graves, Robert. The White Goddess. 1948. The Noonday Press, New York, NY.

⁷ Matthews, Caitlin. The Elements of the Celtic Tradition. 1989. Element Books, Shaftesbury, Dorset, England.

⁸ Graves, pg. 170.

CIRCLE OUTLINES SURVEY

by Brighid MoonFire

This is a survey on materials that you use or have seen used to mark out circles. Just fill out the survey and send it back in to **THE HAZEL NUT**, c/o the Ribarics, 6048 White Oak Valley Circle, McDonald, TN, 37353 by April 1, 1994. We will print the results in one of the next two issues.

Most unique

Most boring

Most permanent

Most moveable

Most earth-friendly

Easiest to clean up

Most fitting to time and/or occasion

Most obnoxious

Silliest

Absolute best

Other



Sap Rising...

Fingers,
Dactyls,
Dwarves of the Earth,
Hungry.

Feeding from the Waters
Of the Deep.

Shaped like
Branches of the Air
These tendrils
Called Roots
Sink down;
Seeking Water
Which sought
The deepest levels
In the Ground.

In the Cauldron of Annwn,
Deep within the Earth,
Fingers fashion Blood
From Water...

...The Sap Rises...

Transformation,
In fact, not theory.

Bridget's Bridge,
The tree trunk tall.
From Underworld to Tree,
Flowing Water,
Grabbed by hungry hands,
Thrust deep into the Mound.
Transformed;
In the Cauldron of the Deep,
From Lightning in the Ground.

...The Fiery Sap Rises...

Fiery forging underground:
Creation.
Metal tempered with the fire

and Rainfall from the Stars.
High Mother,
Who refines us all,
Necessity, Who molds us all
By burning need,
Quenched only by
Water from seeing far:
Flowing blood of birch,
Growing by rapid falls,
Bespeaks of nourishment
From beneath
Come by the falling from
above.

...The Drawing Sap...

A cauldron
Over blazing fire
Consuming fiery fir,
The first moon born.
The Cauldron in the Earth,
Transforming:
What was lost,
From the Stars' outpouring is
Brought up—again—
by Dactyls in the Earth.

...Burning Blood...

Fiery fluid
Burning in the Fir:
A hundred torches in the
night,
Bright as eyes,
Standing livid in the Birch:
The Stars in Heaven
Pouring rain.
Water over the falls.
The outflowing of Hebe:
The giving Vessel
Holding all
Outpouring in abundance,
Coldness like a star.
Mystery still.
So profound,

So cold,
Without sound,
In the Ground.

Hearken.
To the transformation in the
Earth,
The bringing up of Blood.
The swelling at the Omphalos,
The Underground's returning.

What is lost returning soon.
Returning soon,
But never twice the same.
Those Watery Daughters of
ourselves,
Those died of living—
The bending of the bow.
What's lost to Earth
Again to return—
But the nidus has been
changed:
The Pomegranate Seeds.
The Matrix of a Daughter—
White mantle over Black:

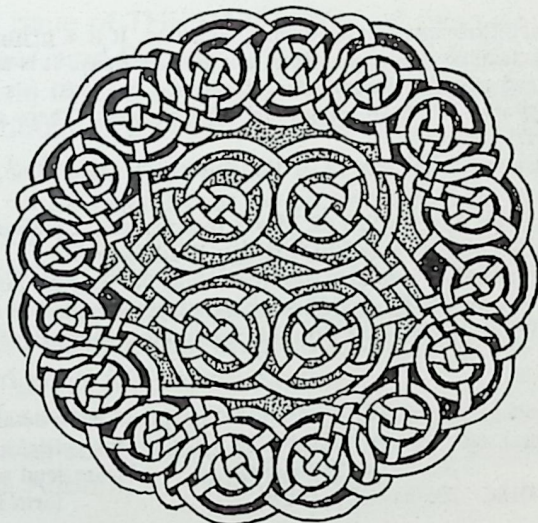
Mystery Not To Be Seen.

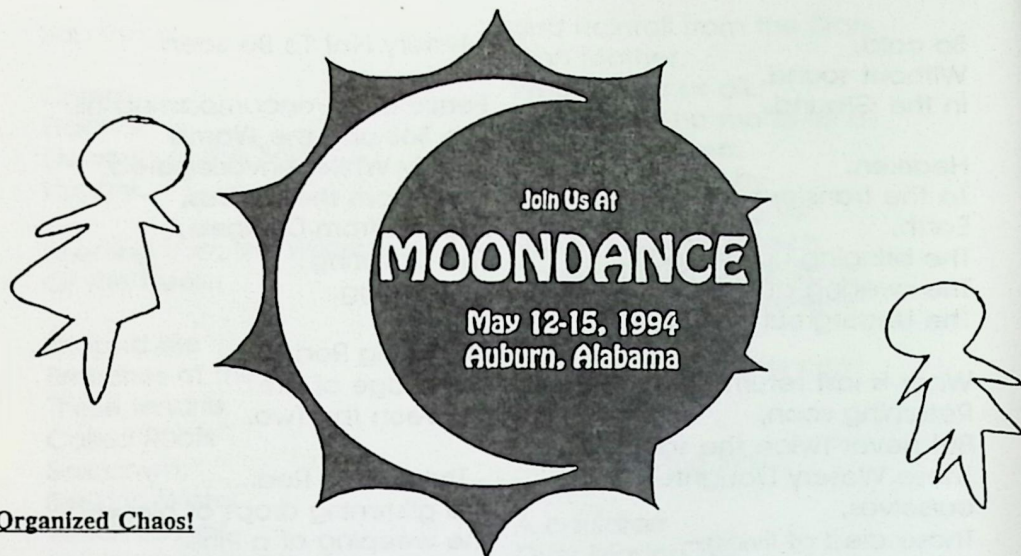
Fertile Black encompassing all.
The Soil and the Womb.
Wholly White, unvariegated,
Fresh from the Shades,
Aspired from Darkness,
The Covering
Of the Egg.
Hatched
In Burning Red,
the Bridge of Life
Between the Two.

...The Amber Red...
The glistening drops of blood:
The weeping of a Pine.
A Scarlet Egg.

White mantle over Black.
Fingers in the Earth.
Water pouring from the skies.
Dripping tears from growing
Birch.

- by Epona





Organized Chaos!

We're back! Join us at Moondance 94; a festival celebrating the harmony of our community, in the tradition of the civilized savage at the mercy of the woods. Bullshit, bullshit, ad nauseam.

We will offer classes on various topics, including dowsing, runes, the lunar trees, color therapy, ecstatic postures, sweatlodges, and homeopathy. Feel free to lead a workshop of your own, or provide entertainment such as dancing, drumming, singing, plays, etc. Other activities include a POT-LUCK feast and a ritual to celebrate the dance of the seasons, and possibly some Beltane festivities. Both nights will feature bonfires, music, dancing, and general revelry.

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:

Muirghin (Linda Kerr), c/o **THE HAZEL NUT**
P.O. Box 186 205-821-4683 (nights)
Auburn, AL 36831-0186 205-844-1010 (days)

A map and more details will follow soon

Make checks out to: Linda Kerr
Please send separate registration
form for each participant

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Editor and Readers:

Not too long ago one of my poems, "Pride Before the Fall" (Issue 4, September 1993), was met with mixed results. That's fine—in fact, it's great!

BUT!! It seems that one person found the facilities to try and put words in my mouth. That's not great. In no way was I trying to push a wedge in the different Pagan branches. In fact, what I was doing was attempting to point out an alarming trend I had been seeing over the past few years.

More and more young people, new to the faith, are

relying on maybe two or three books, ignoring all other teachings, and saying their way is the only way. I grew up in the Southern Baptist church, so I know the kind of people who can get caught in that form of mind-set.

Your opinions are important to me. But at the same time, if you don't understand my warped sense of humor, please contact the editor for my number so we can speak person-to-person.

Love and peace to all by
my hand,
Raven—a solitaire

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS and

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The next issue of **THE HAZEL NUT** will focus on the Willow and Hawthorn trees, and Beltane. 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 April 1. 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.

Announcements:

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

Past Life Regression Seminar: Experience five different forms of past life regression, using hypnosis. Learn how past life trauma and relationships affect this life, and how to get rid of these traumas. Taught by Imré Rainey, C.H.

March 5, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Fee is \$35.00, if pre-registered by February 25, \$45.00 door. Limited to 20 people. At the Unitarian Universalist Church, E. Thach Ave, Auburn, AL. For more info and registration, call Imré Rainey, 220 Gentilly Tr. Pk., Auburn, AL 36830, 205-826-3771.

Meditation and Yoga Posture Classes: Looking for a good time on a Monday? Try this class. Classes are every Monday. Advanced Meditation Group meets at 6:30 p.m.; Newcomers' Meditation and Yoga Posture Class meets at 7:30 p.m. Classes are FREE.

In the Eagles Nest on top of Haley Center, Auburn University, AL. For more info, call Carol Thompson at 205-844-4748.

Creative Peace Meditation: A simple and active relaxation breathing technique, charged with goodwill and holy sounds of your faith. CPM can be practiced during rest and most activities. CPM improves: self-knowledge and peace, intelligence and creativity, concentration, memory and intuition, health, vitality and pleasant feelings, and relief from stress, aches and addictions. Taught by Dr. Malladi.

Classes are Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m., in the Eagles Nest North on top of Haley Center, Auburn University, AL. Classes are FREE. For more info, call Etc. at 205-821-0080, 125 N. College St., Auburn, AL.

Tai-Chi: A non-religious Chinese art of unification of mind and movement. This is a beginners class, taught by Dan LaRocque, a Tai-Chi instructor with several years experience.

Classes are Tuesdays and Fridays, 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m., and run February 15-March 4, in the dance studio, room 228, Telfair Peet Theatre, Auburn University, AL. Classes are FREE, but limited to 15 at a time. For more info call Carol Thompson, 205-844-4748.

Alternatives: Auburn's metaphysical discussion group. Meets first

Tuesday of every month at Etc. first, then Haley Center.

For more info and current meeting place, call Carol Thompson at 205-844-4748 or Etc. at 205-821-0080.

Lunar Energies: Alder, cont. from pg. 27

are all around us, or things will get really out of skelter by Holly moon.

The hardest thing to overcome in this moon is self-doubt and doubts about other, but these are a natural consequence of new beginnings and birthings, when

we look toward the year ahead.

This is a good time to honestly examine these doubts, so you will know what you have to deal with in the future moons. The Alder can help you through this, and give you joy and hope for the future. ☺

Results of Human Psyche 101, from pg. 9

The animal is how you see yourself;
the color is how others see you;
the water is your feelings on sex;
the room is your feelings on death. ☺

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

**Number
of each:**

| | | | Price: |
|-----|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| [] | Hawthorn | June 1993 | 1.50 |
| [] | Oak | July 1993 | 1.50 |
| [] | Holly | August 1993 | 1.50 |
| [] | Hazel/Vine | September 1993 | 2.50 |
| [] | Ivy/Reed | October 1993 | 2.50 |
| [] | Elder/Birch | | |
| | /Rowan | December 1993 | 2.50 |

Prices include postage.

Make check or MO payable to Linda Kerr, and mail to: P.O. Box 186, Auburn, AL 36831-0186.

Classified Ads:

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

MISCELLANEOUS

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

Order your subscription to **THE HAZEL NUT**, and get a year of informative and original Pagan writing, including the lunar trees, the Lunar Calendar, herbs, reviews, and more delivered right to your door. And remember someone special with a gift subscription!

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Cut out and return to **THE HAZEL NUT**, c/o Linda Kerr, P.O. Box 186, Auburn, AL 36831-0186. Make checks payable to Linda Kerr.

Bubbles From the Cauldron

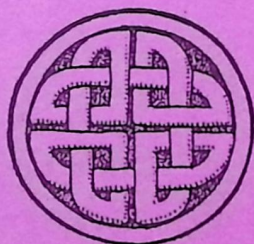
Book Reviews, Etc.

**The Celtic Shaman Handbook,
by John Matthews. 1991.
Element Inc., Rockport,
ME. Softcover, \$14.95.**

Matthews has been studying Celtic tradition for over 20 years and has shown how shamanic principles can be applied in the journey of self-discovery for meaning and purpose in life. Needless to say, this is not a very light-reading book. It explains how to awaken the shaman within yourself and the eight-step path between the worlds. Yet he also briefly explains the wheel of the year, the ogham alphabet and many totem animals. Along with good solid information, Matthews gives you many excersics, from meeting your power animals, to talking with your inner shaman guide.

This is a wonderful book for someone who has been in the craft for a while, but not necessarily for newbies. (Some of this hurts my brain!)

Reviewed by Brigid MoonFire



**Astarte, a magazine of poetry
published in Birmingham,
AL. Subscriptions,
\$10.00/year.**

If you like poetry and art, you'll like Astarte. The magazine features works by both women and men local to the Birmingham area, and also sponsors readings, performances, etc. "in the hope of nurturing a spirit of community among local artists, writers, and scholars."

The poetry and artwork inside is of the highest quality; some are of a Pagan nature, others are not. However, Astarte is dedicated to the goddess, so the majority of its works are by and centered around women.

For subscription info, or to contribute, write Astarte, c/o Birmingham Art Association, P.O. Box 425, Birmingham, AL, 35201-0425, or Astarte, c/o UAB, Dept. of English, University Station, Birmingham, AL, 35294. Astarte is published biannually. By the way, one of our contributors (Minerva, pg. 8) is on their staff as an associate editor.

Reviewed by Muirghoin

Linda Kerr
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