



Welcome to the February 2007 Whitewicca Newsletter. This month we're back with crafts that will keep you entertained for hours and give you lots of exciting things to make, the Witch and Student Diaries, full of laughter, insight and interest and lots of fascinating facts about natural healthcare, so without further ado, happy reading!

A Witches Diary by LavenderBlue

I had finished my contribution for this month's Newsletter. Quite proud of it, I was. I read it through, so as to correct anything glaringly wrong, and a thought struck me. It was yet another outdoorsy mud up to eyeballs, and muffled up like an Eskimo tale. Is my life so very outdoorsy? Not really.... Then why do I keep writing about it? True, we do a fair amount of outdoors activities, but this is winter. What do we do indoors? There has to be something of interest that would amuse you. The truth is that our leaders have fled off to Egypt for a winter holiday, and we have been left very much to ourselves for a while. Being the dark months, a lot of our focus has been on introspection, and working with the dark side of our character in a bid to understand it. By understanding it, we can try to make it work in a more positive way, and gain something from it. For example, I tend to be a very negative person; a closet pessimist to be exact. My focus is on trying to train myself to be more optimistic and less prone to seeing the bad side of everything. Its hard work, but I think it is working. Just the other day, when I was walking to work in the pouring rain, I was working on the affirmation that 'I am blessed'. I do this by repeating those words 40 times, keeping count on a string of 40 large beads that I keep in my pocket. I had just managed to sort of convince myself, when a large smelly lorry whooshed past me, and sprayed the contents of a muddy puddle all over me!!!! Oh yes!!! I felt really blessed that morning. In fact, I roared with laughter, because it all seemed so darned funny. Just like something out of a film, in fact.

The trouble is, the really funny things always seem to happen outside. If you compare the vision of SilverThorn tumbling head first into the duck pond with his repeated toe stubbing (which happens with monotonous regularity), the duck pond wins every time. He is the only man I know that can stub his toe when there is nothing there to stub it on!!! Spooky, I call it. Of course there was the time we were making a BOS from scratch (leather bound, hand made, totally original and beautiful). He managed to glue himself to the cardboard covers of the book and it took two of us to free him. He had glue all over BOTH hands and couldn't touch anything for fear of making matters worse. Trouble is, he also had an attack of the giggles and he just wouldn't hold still. I won't even touch on the mask-making workshop. Book binding glue was one thing... papier mache was another. I can't remember whose idea it was to take a mould from someone's face. The





A Witches Diary by LavenderBlue Cont...

mask was supposed to be a wolf, and nobody there looked anything like a wolf. I don't know what they were thinking about, but it took hours to get the flour paste out of his hair. Trouble is, the resulting mask actually looked quite good... once it was painted up and given ears.

Incense making was another indoor workshop. That was OK, until someone lit it! Oh, and the smoke bombs. I forgot about the smoke bombs. The chemistry class rejects were banished to the wood shed, while the more sedate souls drank coffee and talked crystals. Suddenly there was a shout from outside, and we all rushed to the window. The chemistry class was standing round outside the woodshed peering in the closed window. Suddenly, smoke poured from every hole, crack and chink. Green smoke!! It was leaking from every tiny crack. Out through the guttering, the spaces between the roofing, and under the bottom of the door. Suddenly it was very foggy. It was even the colour of pea soup!! We all thought it was very pretty, but no-one could think of a use for it, somehow. That didn't deter our lads! Far from it. Once the smoke had cleared, they all piled back into the wood shed to see if they could make the smoke a different colour.

Oh, we have had some interesting projects over the last year. Fire labyrinth, sweat lodge, maze, mask making, book making, drum playing, chaplet making, healing workshops, crystal workshop, and away days. Yes, I guess we have been busy. This little period has been restful, but I am looking forward to the return of our fellows. We have so much planned for this year, and I can't wait to get started. So much to learn, and so little time.

The Healing Space

The Healing Ritual that we scheduled for 25th January has been postponed for a while - between traffic hold ups, people tucked up in bed with coughs and colds and all sorts of other reasons it couldn't happen, we will be rescheduling the ritual and dates will be announced in the Health & Healing forum. If you would like to include yourself or someone you know who needs healing, then just add a post to the forum and we will include that person in the ritual. This month we're particularly thinking of:

Alexandra - sick again

The friends and families of the storm victims in Europe

LavenderBlue - for her thumb

James for the loss of his niece

Solaire for her right arm and elbow

Vicky and her family for the loss of baby James

Duco the Bouvier Des Flandres





Crystal Insights by Heatherlace

Merry Meet everyone.

For this month, I have chosen hematite. This silvery-gray stone can be polished to such a high sheen that long ago they were used as mirrors. Its content is iron oxide, and because iron was traditionally associated with Mars, warriors used to rub their bodies with it in the belief that it would protect them.

Hematite is a protective stone, though perhaps not in the way the ancient Romans imagined it to be. We particularly recommend this stone for people who have difficulty in preventing themselves from absorbing the emotions of others. Those who have strong representations of Cancer and Pisces in their astrological charts are particularly likely to be emotional sponges, but others may also be vulnerable to this. Hematite is also known as the happiness stone, brings optimism, aids communication and speech, energy and vitality. This dark, almost metallic stone is one of the crystals for those born under the sign of Scorpio and Pisces. It is particularly beneficial when worn on the right wrist.

Hematite is known also as a "stone for the mind" as it brings mental organization and is very grounding and calming. It helps with original thinking, logical thinking and mathematics. It decreases negativity and can help balance the body/mind/spirit. Physically it has been used to keep the body cool, to decrease blood disorders, nervous problems and insomnia, as well as align the spine and mend broken bones. Hematite is associated with the root (base) chakra. Gem Shows: If visiting a Gem Show, carrying a piece of hematite around in each pocket will help to ground you from all the strong crystal energy there. Hematite is good at grounding out excess energy and acting as a stabilizing force.

In physical healing, mineral and crystal healers associate Hematite with blood and use it in their rituals for treating blood-related illnesses such as haemophilia, anaemia, heart, kidney and liver diseases, cardio-vascular weakness, menstrual cramps, and nose bleeds. They also recommend it for use in treating the stress of jet lag, birth and surgery, tumours, insomnia, leg cramps, nervous disorders and fevers. Hematite was also a Native American remedy for dental problems, pimples, canker sores and alcohol abuse.

In mental healing, crystal healers credit Hematite with the ability to bring about a calm mental state, improve memory, mental focus and concentration, bolster self-confidence and increase the effectiveness of logical processes of the brain. Considered by followers of the New Age to be an excellent stone for treating mental stress, hematite has a reputation for helping people bring order





Crystal Insights by Heatherlace Cont...

to mentally chaotic situations by drawing tension out of the body, neutralizing negativity and releasing anger. They also recognize its power for increasing mental function and believe it can improve memory, mathematical processes, logic, creativity and mental dexterity. Finally, it is an excellent aid in meditation, recognized by healers for calming the mental state, tuning the consciousness and increasing the pathways that lead to inner knowledge.

Given this stone's high iron oxide content, I suggest that it be cleansed by placing it under the light of a full moon/sun for 24 hours or burying it in the earth (make sure you mark it!), for 24 hours or by smudging as water and salt may damage your stone.

Witches Kitchen by Shepherdess

Something cheap, easy but very tasty.....

Carrot and Orange Soup

Serves 4

2 tablespoons oil
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
2lb (900g) carrots peeled and roughly chopped
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints (1 litre) vegetable stock (or water and some stock cubes!)
1-2 tablespoons fresh coriander (or 2 tsp bottled coriander)
Rind and juice of 1 large orange (or one glass from carton of orange juice)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat oil in pan and add onions, cover and sweat them for 2-3 minutes (do not have the heat too high).

Add carrots to the pan then add the rest of the ingredients (apart from the salt and pepper) and cook gently for 30-40 minutes (until carrots are cooked).

Liquidise the soup and then check the seasoning adding salt or pepper as necessary.

Delicious served with chunks of fresh wholemeal bread.

If you have guests coming, you can serve the soup garnished with fresh coriander and a thin slice of orange.





Animal Antics by Aggie (typed by Ladyfox)

AGGIE'S COMPLAINT

There's a lizard in my garden,
But he won't talk to me.
And I just don't understand it,
'Cause I'm friendly as can be.
No matter how I wag my tail,
Or growl so sweet and low-
Whatever overtures I make,
He'll just turn tail and go.
Now I don't think that is polite,
Just want a little chat-
And then perhaps a game of "chase"
But he won't go for that.
I wonder what his name might be;
I guess I'll never know.
In what way was I rude to him
For him to treat me so?
He sits high on the garden wall,
Far out of reach of me.
I only want to lick his face-
In greeting don't you see.
It could be that he's not awake
From napping in the sun,
But still don't think it very nice
For him to turn and run.
Guess I'll go see the sparrows-
They're not so hard to please.
Flying down low just past my nose,
They do it just to tease.
I like to play with sparrows-
But never catch a one.
They laugh at me 'cause I can't fly,
But still I think it's fun.
So Mr. Lizard I don't care
If you won't talk to me-
I'll go play with the sparrows,
'Cause they're my friends you see.





Natural Healthcare by Vita

A most unusual Pain Remedy for Pets I've ever heard!

As I was reading a book about Natural Pet Cures, I came across this most fascinating information about Pain Relief for pets (and humans alike). The story goes mainly about 2 black cats, Branik and Flek who had the most amazing, unusual craze for Capsaicin.

Capsicum is a genus of plants from the nightshade family, Solanaceae. Some varieties of Capsicum are used as spices, vegetables, medicine, and the fruits have different names according to the place and type. Their common name is Chilli Pepper, but in Britain they are known as Red or Green Pepper, or just Pepper in the US. The large mild variety is called Bell Pepper and in some countries they are known as Paprika (mainly Europe), although Paprika Powder comes from a different type of fruit. So, it can be a bit confusing to find the right varieties.

Most varieties of Capsicum have fruits that contain Capsaicin (methyl vanillyl nonenamide). This is a Lipophilic Chemical that gives a strong burning sensation in the mouth. Most animals find this unpleasant but it doesn't seem to have an effect on birds. The fruits contain Capsaicin to prevent animals consuming the fruits so that the seeds can reproduce.

The only pepper that doesn't contain Capsaicin is the Bell Pepper, and the amount of Capsaicin within the fruits mainly varies upon the genetic make-up of the plant.

Back to the story. These two cats, Branik and Flek had this very strange habit of playing with Habaneros Hot Chilli Peppers. There was one incident where the owners of these 2 cats found their fiery peppers lying on the kitchen floor with plenty of tooth and claw marks in them, which showed that their 2 cats had been sampling these Habaneros Hot Chilli Peppers.

At first they thought that may be their cats were showing signs of maturing and their high testosterone levels drove them to it, considering they were both young male cats. But something else was going on! Flek kept on leaping on top of the kitchen counter to check out a variety of peppers that their owners had left there in a vegetable basket. They didn't just sniff the peppers, oh no! Flek burrowed himself into the basket that was full of Jalapenos, Serranos, Cayennes, Manzanos, and Habaneros. Then Flek emerged with the largest of all Habaneros tightly clamped in between his glossy teeth!

The owners couldn't figure out what was going on and were totally stunned by this mystery until they contacted a colleague from a Veterinary College. The colleague in question mainly specialized in strange animal behaviour. When this Professor heard about Branik and Flek, he laughed out loud because these cats' love affair with the hot chilli peppers from hell was completely against





Natural Healthcare by Vita Cont...

common logic. Sometimes vets recommend putting Tabasco Sauce on animal's bandages to deter them from biting the bandages, so why on earth would these cats take a liking for chilli peppers that are burning hot?

As they got no further with the feline chilli pepper mystery, they consulted their own veterinarian. Their vet suggested that it was probably due to a strong stimulation of Endorphins that attracted these cats to the Capsaicin. Endorphins are peptides, which are a mix of different amino acids that are secreted in the brain, and they give a "Pain-Relieving Effect". The effect can be compared to that of Morphine and other Opiates.

Although there were no apparent external signs that Flek and Branik were in pain, they could have been experiencing emotional pain, they could have felt lonely, or perhaps some kind of anxiety, which the Capsaicin helped to alleviate through a greater Endorphin production.

Another Capsaicin Story. Ian Anderson (from the group Jethro Tull) lives in Scotland and grows Habaneros Peppers all year round in his greenhouse. He usually purees them in a blender and then pours them in containers before freezing. Several of his cats have also been attracted to these Chilli Peppers in a very similar way as Flek.

On one occasion, one of Ian's cats was feeling very unwell, but it found enough strength to hop onto the kitchen table where some of the Habanero Purée was sitting in a dish, and the cat started lapping a little bit of the purée. The next day, the cat was perky and active again.

Apparently, in New Mexico where lots of Chilli Peppers are grown, sick or injured dogs are often seen eating Chilli Peppers in the Jalapeno Fields, and a little while later they are frolicking around as if they had been healthy all that time. Even Dairy Cattle that are a bit unwell eat pepper skins and afterwards they behave in a normal healthy way.

There seems to be plenty of evidence to suggest that there is indeed a medicinal virtue in the Capsaicin for animals as well as for humans alike. During the past few years, it has become one of the major ingredients for remedies for the relief of human arthritis, muscle pain, and backache. So we can safely conclude that Capsaicin is also a beneficial pain relief for dogs and cats.

It is not a good idea to give peppers to your own cats, but instead administer it in the form of a fluid extract. Ten drops can either be squirted directly into the animal's mouth or mixed with some wet food. A Capsaicin Ointment can also be rubbed onto those parts of the body that experience the most pain





Sprain Salve

A very easy to make recipe for injuries and sprains. If you haven't got all the ingredients, make substitutions accordingly.

What you need:

60g Comfrey Infused Oil
30g Arnica Infused Oil
30g Mustard Seed Infused Oil
20g Beeswax
20g Mango Butter
50g Aloe Vera
30g Coconut Oil
8 drops of Vitamin E (or the content of 1 or 2 capsules)
20 drops Black Pepper Essential Oil
20 drops Ginger Essential Oil
15 drops Lavender Essential Oil
5 drops Blue Chamomile Essential Oil

Relevant beneficial properties of the ingredients used in this recipe:-

Comfrey Infused Oil: is excellent for fractures, sprains, muscular strains, joint strains, and it aids healing.

Arnica Infused Oil: is excellent for bruises, sprains, muscular aches, and is especially good to massage after sports or heavy exertion.

Mustard Seed Infused Oil: has anti-inflammatory properties and is helpful with muscular pain.

Black Pepper EO: anti-inflammatory, circulatory stimulant, muscle relaxant, muscular aches, osteoarthritis, rheumatism, rheumatoid arthritis, sprains.

Ginger EO: arthritis, circulatory stimulant, fractures, muscular aches, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, sprains.

Lavender EO: anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, bruises, muscular aches, swelling.

Blue Chamomile EO: analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, bruises, rheumatism, rheumatoid arthritis, sprains.

Aloe Vera: healing, pain-relieving, anti-inflammatory, sore muscles, bruises, sprains, arthritis.





How to:

Place all the hard fats and beeswax in a Pyrex jug and heat au-bain-marie (a pyrex bowl placed over a pan with a small amount of water works if you don't have a bain marie). When everything is melted take away from the heat to let it cool down a little, but keep on stirring.

Then add the infused oils, and continue stirring.

When the mixture is not too hot anymore, add the Essential Oils, Aloe Vera, Vitamin E, and transfer the mixture to a suitable sealed glass container.

The Salve will keep fresh in the fridge for at least 6 months.

If you haven't got all the infused oils, you could also try St Johns Wort Infused Oil as an alternative, or you could make your own oil infusions by gently heating herbs in oil and let it sit for 12 hours before straining out the organic matter.

[Note from Editor: Vita sent me a pot of this cream when I fell and injured my ankle - it really helped the healing process so I can vouch for the efficacy of this potion.]

Meditation Tip by Hedge

This is the time of year when we can feel a bit down and gloomy because of the short days and continuing cold weather. Here's a little tip to give you a fast lift and feeling of cheer. Take whatever position you find most comfortable for meditation and take three long, measured breaths to calm and centre yourself. When you are ready, visualize yourself back into a happy situation from your past; it might be a family celebration, a party, a trip somewhere wonderful - whatever it is, take yourself back there. As you visualize this event, take time to smell the smells that were there, experience the feels and tastes that you once experienced and totally immerse yourself in the visualization.

Once you have achieved this, turn your attention inwards and see how your body feels - are you smiling? Do you feel lighter? Have your aches and pains (if you had any) diminished? Become aware of how you feel and the sensations that your body is feeding back to you. Now, as you come out of the meditation, try to hold on to the physical sensations from the time when you were feeling really happy. With practice, you should be able to call these feelings up and in doing so, improve your mood and brighten up a dark moment.





Crafts by Shushan

Dream Pillow

2 Squares of material, 4" /10cm square
Needle and thread
Mugwort
Piece of amethyst and moonstone
Piece of lace or ribbon 3" /8cm long (optional)

Place the pieces of material right sides together and sew around three and a half of the sides, with small stitches, about 1cm / ½" in from the edge of the material.

Turn the pouch the right side out and put the crystals and some Mugwort inside (a couple of teaspoons should be enough, you want it to be padded, but still soft.)

Align the material at the opening and sew up the hole. You can use the lace or ribbon to cover up where the filling hole was by sewing it carefully onto the pouch along that edge.

Bowl of Snow

If you have snow around where you live at the moment, then this is an old traditional practice you can do to mark the return of the light to heat the earth. If you live in a warmer climate, then crushed ice is just as effective!

Collect a bowl full of snow and place a floating candle on top. The heat of the flame will slowly melt the snow and the candle will float, staying alight. A lovely visual symbol! This would also work really well if you timed it right to have on your altar when you do a ritual.

Fairy Wine

I couldn't resist putting this one in, and the kids will love it - what does that say about me ;-)

Per serving:

1 cup of milk
1 tsp honey

¼ tsp vanilla extract
Cinnamon (optional)





Warm the milk being careful not to let it boil.

Put the honey and vanilla into a mug and stir in the warm milk.

Top with a shake of cinnamon.

This makes a wonderfully calming bedtime drink and can also be used as part of a Fairy Welcoming spell or ritual.

Make sure you make enough to leave some out in your house overnight for them and return it to the earth in the morning. Pouring a small amount of milk on the earth on the morning of Imbolg is a traditional practice to honour the fertility of the land and to mark the birth of the maiden.

Brigid's Cross

Traditionally this is made from dried wheat that has been soaked to make pliable, but I have found pipe cleaners work really well too, and are a bit easier for children.

12 pipe cleaners – brown would symbolise the wheat, but multicoloured is nice too! Or you can use colours that correspond with Imbolg.

Bend all the pipe cleaners in half.

Hold the first one horizontally and thread another through the loop and let it hang downwards with the bends together.

Thread the third through the second horizontally, but in the opposite direction to the first.

Thread the fourth through the third so that it points upwards.

The fifth goes through the fourth, in the same direction as the first.

Continue around the cross in the same way using all the pipe cleaners.

Lay the cross on a flat surface and with each set of 'ends' twist the ends right at the woven edge, so that the first intertwines with the fifth, and the fifth with the ninth.

Do this with each set of ends, and the cross should hold itself together.





Green Witch by Shimma

This year more than any, I've been struck by the lack of any real Winter so far. My garden hasn't had a break from growing. I've got roses in bloom, daffodils which are planted in frost pockets with a foot of growth on them, shoots and leaves on every plant and some of my perennials simply haven't died back at all.

Out and about, the same is true. Cherry trees in bloom, daffodils out, pigeons cooing and wooing, high mild winds, and no frosts, not even at night. It felt very strange indeed to take my coffee outside into the garden after Christmas lunch, and even stranger that all the hyper-padded winter gear has stayed in the wardrobe. Added to which, I've had a cold of one sort or another ever since September. This doesn't normally happen to me at all.

Despite the Stern Report there are still those who fail to acknowledge that humankind is having a marked impact on the ecology and climate of this planet. Note I don't say 'fatal'. As humans have existed for 0.1% of the Earth's history, and as we are due another ice age shortly, in geological terms, which we will be unable to prevent, it seems arrogant to assume we could single-handedly destroy this planet and everything on it. We place ourselves too high on the list of importance. Surely, we are the only species so far (that we know about!) that has had the capacity to alter the weather; we are also the only mammal that has acted so far outside the ambit of mammals generally, by not working at equilibrium with the surrounding environment, that there is an argument afoot that we should be reclassified. We are also the only species who has tried to preserve the planet exactly as it is, freezing it in time, when it's clear from the geological and archaeological record that Earth hasn't ever ceased to develop and change. We are simply lucky - our development as a species was predicated upon the confluence of an amazing series of coincidences - the chances of humankind ever developing were vanishingly small.

Having said all this, we're here. Wiccans believe that we are children of this planet and that therefore we owe her respect; we ought to tread lightly over her surface and not leave poison behind. I've been looking hard at what I can do to minimise my impact. As an ant in a teeming hill of billions of other ants, some of whom don't have the luxury of choosing, I feel as if I'm morally obligated to do whatever I can. It may not bring the Winter back, it may not stop floods and typhoons, it may not stop the creeping dead zone on the floor of the Baltic Sea - but at the very least it will make me feel better.

Note from the Editor - we now have a [Free Plant Exchange](#) set up in the Green Fingered Witchery forum for anyone who wants to offer plants that they have in over-abundance and for people to ask for plants they need.



Picture by Hedge





February Newsletter Wordsearch

Words may be diagonal, reversed ... or both !!

Z T X L N I I U R R Q W G G N I S N A E L C B H E
M I D W I N T E R J B R I J K N O J N C E G L P U
P Y Z P C G A N Q S I R K S Q V S U U B U A X U M
S A J L V Y N B I M B O L C X Q S N R S J D R E S
A N X Z U B Z F P S L S L V N P X I X N I I Q T I
C Z S A M E L D N A C O K F K G D O A X V H H K Q
O Y R T E O P D W W A W W R K E I E A G P G X C A
E H H D U R V G H T X Q L I S D W X O B I I O O O
M W F X G N I N R U T E R B W E N Z P L U R B R N
O B M Q E E F I I Y C P E K S H X O F N T B Y N M
W Z N F U U G L S B F D R M A K C O I N W T P M G
O Y L M D Y K A G V Z M I I Q G L I P N I Z F A K
B G F S V M M E N U K L V Y T A O I M L U Y Q I S
R U I G G V Z H I P K P Z M V U M H I B A T D D D
X D I F M W B V N J U O H I A B A T D F O O V E O
D R C L E M I O N E F R T C W I R L L N U L G N W
A O D K I Y U K I Z Z S I T A E D V P S U A G I K
H F N V G L J G G P E P D F F N N E L G L O U Y B
L D L Q L N J A E F K G F K I J D L N O X I R R D
R J N F M R N A B W B H Q D X C F L W G X M D G O
O T F A R C H T I M S B W R B K A S E K L Y B K J
A H H L Y X G S F Z Z I O P K Q R T Z S C Q W T C
W S P R I N G C L E A N I N G E E M I R V W Y Z F
R S Y Z E Z F Q M L P J T D B E F V X O C T U F N
C N I J X P E D G X I O W L G V R Z F M N N V Q R

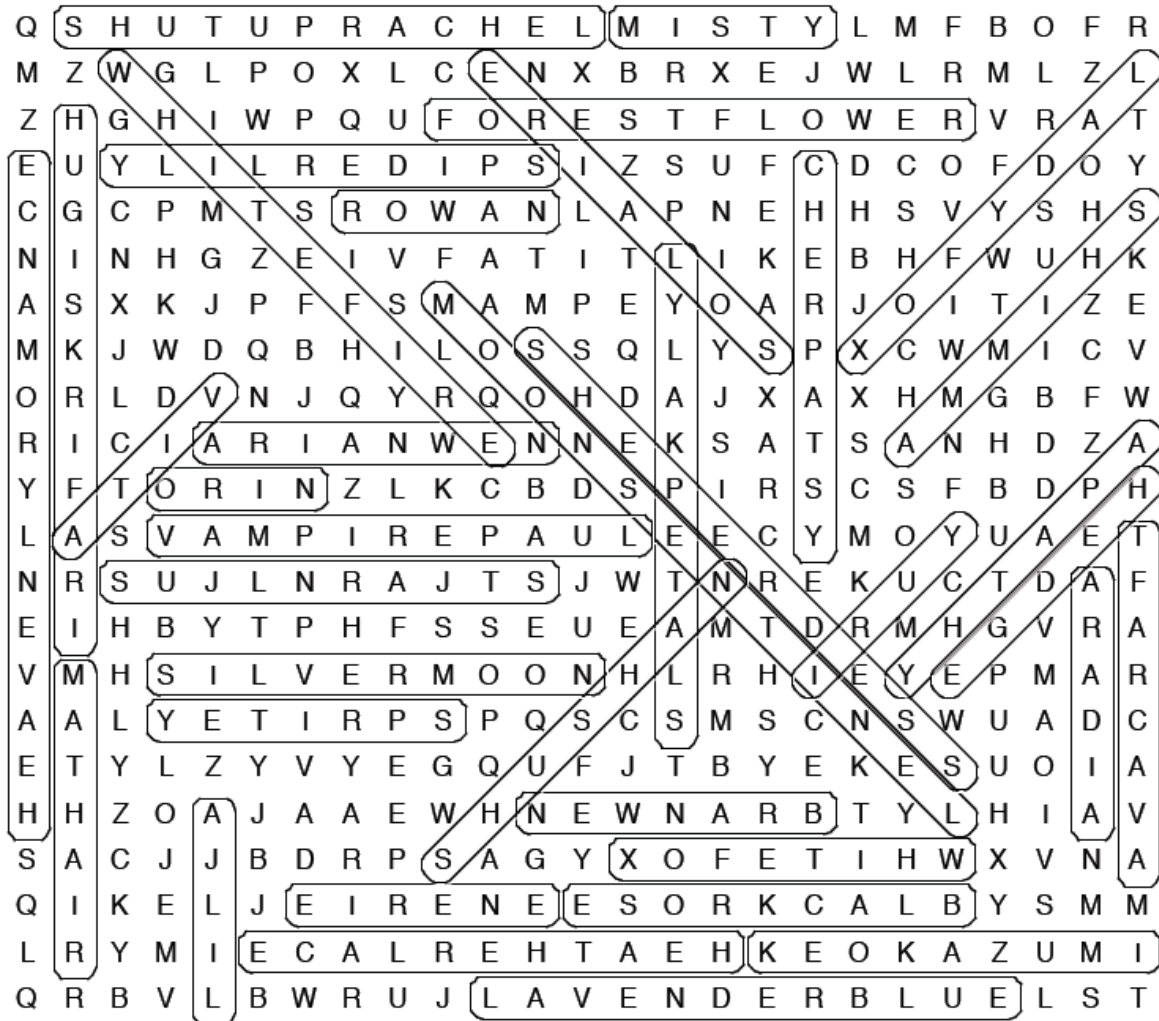
Imbolc
Imbolg
Candlemas
Brides bed
Brighid
Maiden
Candles
Festival of lights

Groundhog
Ewes milk
Midwinter
Springcleaning
Cornmaiden
Oimeic
Beginnings
Purification

Union
Healing
Smithcraft
Poetry
Fertility
Cleansing
returning sun
ritual



Solution to January's Wordsearch



Apathy	Aradia	Arianwen	Avacraft
Blackrose	Branwen	Cherpatsy	Eirene
ForestFlower	Heatherlace	HeavenlyRomance	Hedge
HugiSkrifari	KeoKazumi	Ladyfox	LavenderBlue
Lilja	Lylakpetals	Mathair	Misty
MoonSentinel	Orin	Rowan	Sheperdess
Shimma	Shushan	Shutuprachel	Silvermoon
Solaire	SpiderLily	Spritey	Stjarnljus
Vampirepaul	Vita	WhiteFire	Whitefox
Yuri			





CHOCOLATE VALENTINES by Ladyfox

Those lovely heart shaped boxes-
How they set my heart aflutter,
With luscious thoughts of chocolate
And all that cocoa butter.
Of all the holidays I think
That Valentine's the best.
So please just give me chocolate,
And you keep all the rest.
Flowers and cards, teddy bears too-
Well they're all very nice,
At least maybe for you.
As for me I state firmly
That there is only one thing-
It's that box with its treasures
That will make my heart sing.
So if you want to please me
One gift you will present,
That box of chocolate blessings
Which are truly heaven sent.
Cherries and nuts, truffles and cream-
Oh don't let me wake up
From my chocolate dream.
And one gift in addition dear
I'll need to give me ease,
When I have emptied out the box-
Some chocolate 'MAALOX' please.

Cross Stitch Corner by Solaire

This month we are going to do a little bit of back-stitching. All this means is that we will be outlining some of our stitching to define it more and make it stand out. The chart shows a small, simple flower and it can be stitched in any colour you like. Back-stitch is sometimes, but not always, stitched in black thread. Personally I like to do back-stitch in a darker shade of whatever colour I have used for the cross-stitch – so in this case I would have chosen a very dark pink. It is only a small design so can be done relatively quickly. Use any count fabric and threads you already have as this is just a 'tryer' – next month I will come up with a much more detailed design. If anyone would like a particular design to stitch then please let me know. Also I did think that there may be a few people unfamiliar with cross stitch who would like to have a try – if this is the case then please PM me and I will send you the fabric and threads so you can try for yourself. I also have a huge surplus of stitching magazines – so if anyone would like one I will be more than happy to pass one on.

Happy stitching! Solaire

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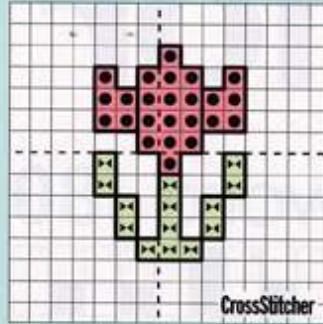


Step by step Beginners start here!

Watch your tulip grow with every stitch by following our simple stitching guide...

- 1** Cut a 40cm thread length to start. Take each strand individually from this shorter length, before regrouping them together – Cross Stitcher's key will always indicate how many strands are required. Now thread your tapestry needle.
- 2** Work from the centre of your fabric and chart, and make your first cross stitch. Bring your needle up at the bottom left of your aida block, then take it down diagonally at the top right of the same block. This is known as a half cross stitch.
- 3** Make a second diagonal stitch, from the bottom right to top left of the same aida block. It should sit directly on top of your first half cross stitch.
- 4** Work from the centre of the design upwards, and then from the centre downwards. And always refer to the chart to see where to make your next stitch.
- 5** Once all the cross stitched areas are complete, you can now work the backstitched outlines. Swap your tapestry needle for a sharp embroidery needle, and secure the thread on the back of the fabric.
- 6** Make a backstitch over a single aida block in the direction as shown on the chart. Now bring your needle up a block away from this stitch, before taking it down next to your previous stitch, and so on.

Cross Stitcher's charts and keys are always simple and straightforward to follow...



Where to start

Find the centre of your fabric by folding it in half and then into quarters. Where these fold lines cross over will indicate the centre of your fabric.

Reading the chart

Cross Stitcher's charts are printed on a squared grid with dotted lines that indicate the centre of the design. The coloured symbols represent each thread colour.

Tulip key

Anchor DMC Madeira

Cross stitch in two strands

	29	891	0411
	225	913	1306

Backstitch in one strand

	403	310	2400
all outlines and details			

For perfect results, we suggest you stitch the tulip in Anchor threads on 14 count aida

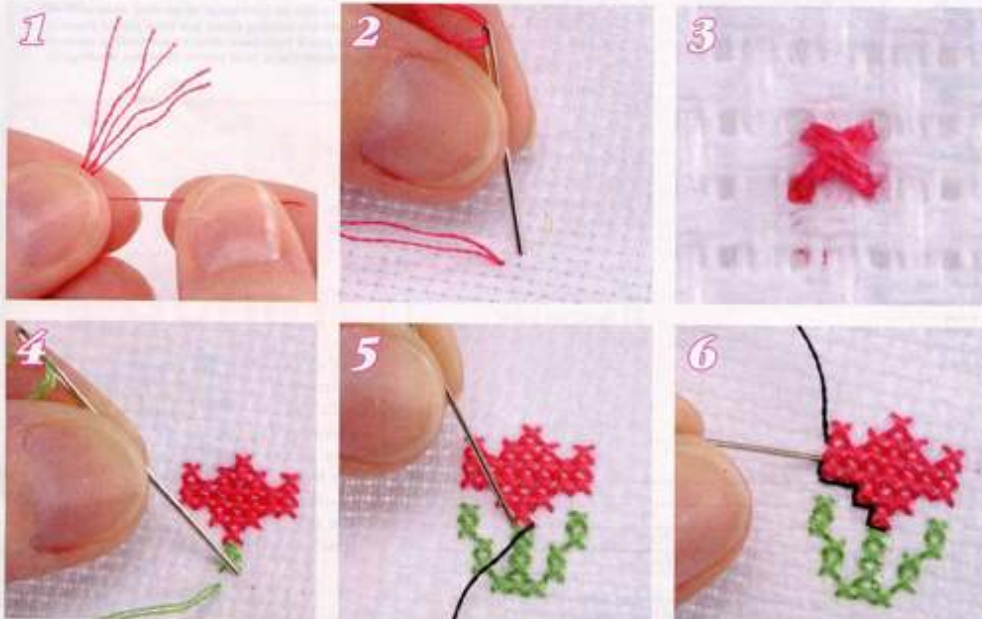
Motif stitch count Design area
10 high x 7 wide 2x1.5cm (3/4x3/8in)

The key

The key lists all the symbols that appear on the chart, with their corresponding thread code alongside it. The key also tells you the different types of stitches used in the design.

Stitch clever

The closest column to the symbols is always the thread we've used in the design. The other two are similar colour matches.





Reiki by Arianwen

Well I finally passed my Level 1 in Reiki before Christmas and have now embarked on my Level 2. As mentioned before some of the contra action associated with Reiki healing can include being emotional. When we had our Level 2 attunement although I felt good that evening the following morning I was crying for no reason and snapping at my son. I knew that I was all right and this was just a form of crisis healing and that any blockages within my emotional self were dissolving. If I were to go ahead and practice this would be where I would like my client to contact me to discuss how he or she felt and offer support and guidance if necessary.

The next session we had involved learning how to beam and scan. This is either sending Reiki over long distances or scanning a person to 'feel' where there are blockages. During this session the students are given certain symbols to help them send Reiki over distance and to help focus on the mental and emotional side of a person. These symbols must be learnt along with their names and placed on the palms of the hands - boy did I find it hard! I could not concentrate and kept fumbling my symbol and couldn't pronounce the names. Needless to say my faith in my ability that night was very low and whilst the rest of the class were beaming at long distances I was still stood in front of my 'client'. My Reiki Master could see how disheartened I was and put the symbols on my hands for me. WOW! I walked back away from my person and straight into the table on the other side of the room. I realised that all I need to do is believe in myself and practise a little more because it is in me.

I must admit I found scanning quite hard and did not have a very good experience when my partner that evening was scanning me. He did say he thought I had a ear nose and throat infection but I was fine - until tonight and I have come down with yet another bug! Again I was very emotional and my Master gave me a big hug and reassured me it would pass. After class I stopped to talk to another student until I felt better and by the time I got home I was tired but no longer emotional.

None of the emotions can put me off going; I know I am being healed and once I am more confident in myself I will be able to help others. My friend has agreed for me to practice on her so hopefully my confidence will grow.
Arianwen

Thought for the month

A Thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness





Diary of a University pagan by Aradia

This month, I have been very thoughtful about where I am going with my craft, and I really think that it would do well for me to sit down, stop moaning and write everything down so as to put a bit of structure into my Craft.

I think every eclectic must reach a point *sometime* where they think, wait a minute.... I'm interested in all these different things, but I don't know how to put them together! If asked to sum up my faith on a bit of paper, I wouldn't have a clue! I am very interested in the Dianic tradition, all the goddess-worshipping and womanly stuff, but I see divinity as essentially male and female all at the same time. I just identify with a woman figure better. Guess it comes from being female. I don't have any problems with a male divinity and I wasn't brought up in god-thumping environment so I don't have any bitterness at the idea of a god. I want to bring my vision of a male deity to the surface because my spirituality feels better when I talk to my God and not just my Goddess.

My vision of god is based on something I read in a book about faeries a year or so ago. I've always loved faeries and have always wanted to see one, and this book talked about faerie Kings and Queens. After at first thinking that the author was taking faerie-lore a bit too far, I read a description about a faerie King that's stuck with me. Finvarra was the head of the Daoine Sidhe in Irish folklore, a race of faery Kings, and his father is cited to be Dagda, King of the divine race of the Tuatha De Danann. Whenever I see him in meditation (he likes to turn up even when I'm not looking for him) I always get a sense of power and protection from him, a sort of calm kindness. I also get the impression that he's pretty damn charming and knows how to treat a girl properly, which I like. No point revering someone who, if he were human, wouldn't have the first idea about how to relate to the opposite sex. I chat to him occasionally and ask him questions, tell him my worries - whenever I do so I feel so much more balanced for having left the view of deity as goddess and seen it as god for once as well.

But how does one manage to fit all their different ideas together? How can I carve a balanced goddess-centred faerie-loving eco path so I can see clear connections between all of the different elements? In the same way, how does a crystal angel aura voodoo freak manage to balance all their passions? I think some careful thinking is needed.

This month I thought something else. I was talking to a friend about occult 'Wiccary' things and he was saying how he's used magic against people who have used magic against him in the past. I didn't describe my faith to him because I immediately thought it might seem a little too new-agey for him. I'm all about trees and goddesses and love and happy energy, and it seemed hard to me to tell someone that I believed magic should only be used in love,





Diary of a University pagan by Aradia Cont...

because it sounds so naff and clichéd. I find it very hard to talk about spiritual feelings, perhaps because I wasn't brought up in a house where spirituality was something that got talked about. I know I should be proud that I don't mess around with the hurtful stuff, but it is pretty intimidating when you meet someone so fastidious about spending an hour casting a circle to make sure he's properly psychically protected when my lax spell protection standards usually consists of throwing a pebble into the sea.

Oh well. It's Imbolg in a few days, and I've never really celebrated Imbolg before. At every Sabbat I tramp around in my red ritual skirt for a few days, and I'm looking forwards to being able to wear it again. I'm quite excited, I'm thinking long country walks and time on the beach. Happy Imbolg!

IMBOLC BLESSING by Ladyfox

(Northern Hemisphere)

Imbolc's a time for cleaning,
Brush cobwebs from your mind.
And as the days grow longer,
All new beginnings find.
With buds the trees are swelling
To usher in the Spring,
And Nature now is telling us-
Start fresh with everything.
Each day the darkness lessens,
Seeds open in the earth.
Bring goals now to fruition-
Give hopes and dreams rebirth.
It's time for blessing candles;
In windows let them shine
And with their glow remind us
That this is Brigid's time.
Accounts must now be settled-
Pay bills and taxes too,
And as the Earth awakens
All things now start anew.
And as the Sun grows stronger,
His blessing now we pray-
So that we too grow stronger
With every light filled day.





LAMMAS/LUGNASADH BLESSING by Ladyfox

(Southern Hemisphere)

The Sun God now starts waning,
Yet fruitful is the Earth.
A time for celebration-
The Goddess now gives birth.
First Harvest's now upon us,
The Festival of Light-
Thank Earth now for Her bounty
Whilst Sun continues bright.
Place grain and fruits on altars
As Lammas does arrive;
Build up the fire, fill the shed-
Ensure that all shall thrive.
Take stock of all you sow now,
For that is what you'll reap.
Plan carefully your actions;
Their fruits are yours to keep.
The dark times will be coming,
So must we be aware-
And now while times are fruitful
Make efforts to prepare.
A blessing on our Harvest,
As well as those to come,
We ask upon this Lammas-
First Harvest has begun.

Anagram Puzzle by Shushan

The following are all well known phrases relating to our path, many can be found on White Wicca. You just have to unscramble them!

1. village hot tiffs
2. new iced car
3. calcite cars
4. chicken twits eh
5. tart chef
6. rod star cat
7. packhorse rang in
8. granduncles bin
9. cat girls dry
10. bergamot ice bell





WICCA 101 by Arianwen

BOLLINE

This is a white handled knife used to harvest herbs, cut branches from trees for wands, slice bread and carve magic symbols in candles and talismans. It is used for only ritual purposes and thus is thought of as sacred.

BOOK OF SHADOWS

This is a witch's personal collection diary of spells, incantations and invocations. Some write recipes, poems, visualisations anything that is personal to them. Usually a protection spell is written inside the cover to protect from snooping eyes. Some covens have their own joint BOS and in some traditions once a witch dies the BOS is burned or buried with them.

CANDLE MAGIC

The use of coloured candles which represent people and thing to which spells are directed. Each colour symbolises a different emotion, attribute and influence. Anointed with special oils and carved or painted with magic, they are then meditated upon and lit to activate. A candle used for a particular spell should not be reused for another.

Some Interesting dates in February

1st Imbolc Throughout the UK

Imbolc was the second of the four great fire festivals. At Imbolc, Brighid, the daughter of Daga, was pregnant with the seed of the Sun. She was ripe with the promise of new life, as the seeds of the earth deep within its soil begin to awaken at this time, thus signalling the return of spring.

Imbolc, which literally means "in milk", traditionally marked the lactation period of ewes and cows. Ewes are unable to produce milk until after they bear their young, which occurs at this time. Since milk was very important to the basic survival of the tribes, this was a time of great joy. It meant that the end of a long winter was in sight, and green pastures were only a few months away. During the Imbolc ritual it was customary to pour milk (or cream) onto the earth.

2nd Candlemas Day Throughout the UK

This, being the fortieth day after the birth of Christ, it was the day on which, the purification of the mother and the presentation of the son should occur. Also known in England as The Wives' Feast.

"If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, Winter will have another flight But if it be dark with clouds and rain, Winter is gone, and will not come again."





Some Interesting dates in February Cont...

2nd Jedburgh's Ball Game Jedburgh, Roxburghshire

A ball game played by two teams made up of 'everyone that wants to play'. The game has very few rules and is played with a ball approximately the size of a baseball. The object being to get the ball past a certain marker. Legend recalls that following a local battle the first game was played by Scottish soldiers with an Englishman's head.

5th Hurling the Silver Ball St Ives, Cornwall

Hurling the Silver Ball is one of those ancient English traditions, such as egg and spoon races and chasing big round cheeses down hills that provide evidence, if evidence were needed, that islanders are often a people apart.

Held on the first Monday after 3rd February (Feasten Day), the mayor will hurl a silver ball from the wall of the parish church, which will then be passed around the town, children's birthday party style, until the clock strikes midday, an hour and a half after it all began. Whoever is holding the ball at that time takes it back to the mayor who exchanges it for five shillings. If you are on the streets of the town that Monday you can take part, and who knows, you might get "lucky".

13th/14th Blessing the Salmon Nets Pedwell Beach, Northumberland

Close to midnight on 14th fishermen gather on the banks of the River Tweed where the vicar of nearby Norham blesses the nets and boats. The fishermen then set out to make their first catch of the season.

14th St Valentine's Day Throughout the UK

Originally a pagan priest in third century Rome, St Valentine became a Christian convert. Despite being noted for his chastity, he became the patron saint of lovers. It became an old country custom to choose sweethearts on his feast day. The earliest Valentine cards written on parchment appeared in the fourteenth century.

14th Valentine Fair King's Lynn, Norfolk

The true, proper ceremony of St. Valentine's Day was a drawing of a kind of lottery, followed by ceremonies similar to the game of forfeits. Mission, a learned traveller of the early part of the last century, gives an account of the principal ceremonial Valentine's Day; he says, "The young folks of England and Scotland by a very ancient custom celebrate a little festival. The girls, and young men assemble together and write a name upon slips of paper, the girls writing the name of a gentleman, the young men that of a lady. These are mixed up in separate receptacles, and drawn from by the persons present, who in this way get each a "Valentine," who, though only compulsory for a year, was not unfrequently chosen for life".





Some Interesting dates in February Cont...

18th Arse Leather Sledding Championships of the World Neudorf, Germany

I have included this competition because the name of it is so funny. "Arschleder" are special patches miners used to protect the seat of their pants when they slid into the mine on the back of tree-trunks. As small towns in need of tourists are wont to do, the good citizens of Neudorf brought the idea back about ten years ago to create the Arse Leather Sledding World Championships.

Tree trunks were obviously considered too dangerous, so now the participants slide down the hill with only the arse-leather between them and the snow, and the best news is that absolutely anyone can enter. Just be there at midday on the 18th February, and you could be going home as the 2007 World Champion. Live the dream!

Moon Correspondences by HeavenlyRomance

February

Also known as: Storm Moon, Horning Moon, Hunger Moon, Wild Moon, Red & Cleansing Moon, Quickening Moon, Solmonath (Sun Month), Big Winter Moon and Ice Moon

Nature spirits - house faeries, both of the home and house plants

Herbs - balm of Gilead, hyssop, myrrh, sage, spikenard

Colours - light blue, violet

Flowers - primrose

Scents - wisteria, heliotrope

Stones - amethyst, jasper, rock crystal

Trees - rowan, laurel, cedar

Animals - otter, unicorn

Birds - eagle, chickadee

Deities - Brigit, Juno, Kuan Yin, Diana, Demeter, Persephone, Aphrodite.

Power Flow - energy working toward the surface, purification, growth, healing. loving the self. accepting responsibility for past errors, forgiving yourself, and making future plants.

Moon phases for February 2006:

Full Moon - February 2nd

Last Quarter - February 10th

New Moon - February 17th

First Quarter - February 24th



All the information is for the Northern Hemisphere.

