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Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada



Vol. 8 | #4

S. Equinox



Beltaine

Mar 21 — May 1, 2025

HAMILTON ★ TORONTO ★ WINDSOR



The Wiccan Church of Canada

The Wiccan Church of Canada has offered open Wiccan temples facilitating classes, rituals, and training to the public since 1979.

Drawing on resources available in our own communities and temples, we are a diverse, accepting, caring group of people united by our love of the Gods and our own journeys. W.C.C. classes and rituals are open to one and all, regardless of one's level of experience in the Craft. We offer an open, and accepting place to worship as an experienced practitioner or someone who's vaguely curious, all are welcome. We encourage you to check out the F.A.Q section on our website or contact us if you have questions.

We hope our publication will reflect the diversity of our membership in offering a local pagan magazine written by the community for the community. Our articles are the voices of our community, those with knowledge and resources to share. Herbs and seasonal recipes we've tried and keep bringing back to our feast tables. We'll keep you abreast of pagan events, vendors and local artisans, as well as WCC classes & rituals.

The WCC is pleased to offer free online weekly classes Tuesday evenings 7:00-9:00 pm

As well as a social Meet & Greet every Wednesday night via the ZOOM conferencing app.

If you wish to participate, please email LPH.WCC@gmail.com with your email address.

In the Wheel of our year, the March equinox is the movement when the sun crosses the true celestial equator – or the line in the sky above the earth's equator – from south to north, around March 20 (or March 21) of each year. At that time, day and night are balanced to nearly 12 hours each all over the world and the earth's axis of rotation is perpendicular to the line connecting the centers of the earth and the sun. This moment of Balance is reflected in our response to the seasonal shift. We stand on the cusp of death and rebirth in some very literal ways. At this point we are ready to transition, ready to shed the winter and the things we have had to deal with in its cycle of introspection, regeneration and the process of germination. Armed with new ideas and eager for fresh starts we look ahead to the light half of the year, welcoming a lush, cleansing energy that enlivens us on levels we may have forgotten. In embracing the rejuvenation that Spring brings, we embark on a transformation right down to the blood and bone.

Scientists know that when seasons change, the retina naturally reacts to variations in the amount of daylight. This triggers hormonal changes. As a result of light changes, the body naturally produces less melatonin during spring, causing a lift in mood, a reduce desire to sleep, an increase in activity and a need to eat less. This is partly a psychological effect but also

physical. Evolutionary biologists believe that our bodies are programmed to be more active as the hormone mix changes with more light. Released from the chemical messages that make us withdraw in winter, the body feels energized, ready to hunt for food and to give birth (literally or figuratively) to new ideas and transformations.

Signs of spring are beginning to show and it's a beautiful muddy mess outside. Spring is wonderful time to get outside and explore. Every day there's something new, some

new change to see – bulbs are beginning to sprout, worms are out and it smells amazing! Take this opportunity to celebrate the season in the best ways ...

- Make a flower and willow crown
- Plan a garden, draw it out, walk it out
- Plant some seeds, plant with intent, make magic!
- Decorate eggs, its not just about the holiday, it's a celebration of life

(hard boiled, wooden, wax)

- Bring spring inside – open a window, hang suncatchers, bring in some cut flowers
- Enjoy a Spring picnic in the sun - Pack up a lunch and head to the park, public garden or trail for a lovely picnic together.
- Find a Spring Scavenger Hunt (find one online or make your own).

Good health and habits make a come-back, as our internal fire responds accordingly ... we have survived the winter, but now its time to Live ... bring on the Spring and the Queen of May



Bellas' Book Nook



I just want to remind everyone that Earth Day is on Tuesday, April 22, 2025. With that in mind, aside from mythology books and fairy tales, I've found that a lot of books on folklore are geared for older children and adults. It's hard to find a cute, well-illustrated, and fun book for youngsters.

The book? **Lore of the Land – Folklore and Wisdom from the Wild Earth**, by **Claire Cock-Starkey**, and illustrated by **Samantha Dolan**.

Dolan. At 75 pages it's published in 2022 by Wide Eyed Editions. ISBN: 978-0-7112-6982-8. Indigo has the hardcover priced at \$30.00Cdn.

It's a delightful book that covers a wide variety of topics. The first chapter focused on, The Forests and begins with a lovely Czech tale about Betushka and the Forest Maiden. From there, the author introduces Gods and Goddesses associated with the forests from various pantheons.

Other pages are filled with the lore of forest flowers, and fungi, lichens and moss to Woodland Spirits and Mythical Creatures. Did you know that Foxes wear foxgloves on their paws to protect their feet from dew and allow them to sneak up on prey? I didn't.

The book covers everything from the Oceans and Seas, (and an explanation of why Sea Monsters moan...); to Mountains, including some sacred ones and volcanoes; Hills and Valleys, including standing stones; Rivers and Lakes – springs and wells; and finally, a chapter all about the Wetlands and creatures that dwell there. This book is filled with tidbits of information, from a wide range of Pantheons and stories from around the World.

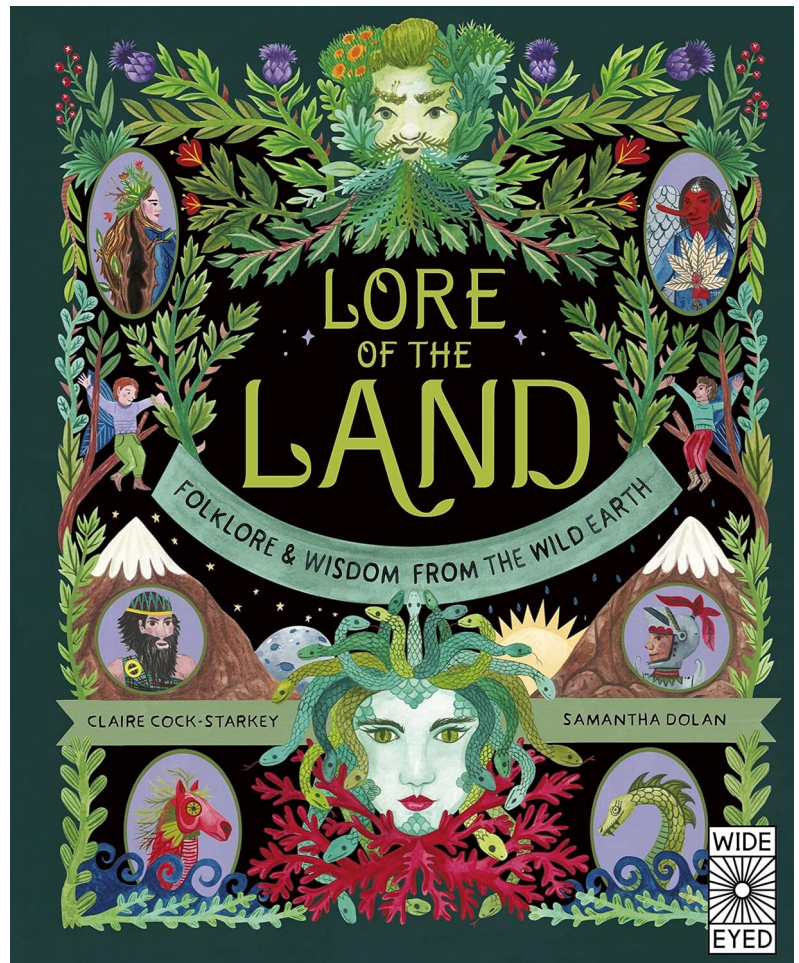
This book is well worth having and sharing with the youngst

ers in your life, and yes, I'm trying to hunt down a few copies for dear friends.

So, with that, I wish you all a lovely Leap into Spring, Happy Ostara!

Happy Reading!

Bella



ISBN: 978-0-7112-6982-8

Herb Lore with Glenys



As Winter wanes and the frozen ground thaws, we look to the signs that Spring has truly arrived. Beyond the earliest signs that appear at Imbolc, we now have clearer signs that the warmer weather approaches as day is in balance with the night at the Spring Equinox. Buds are prominent on trees and one of my favourites is from the Willow family (*Salix sp.*), the Pussy Willow

The Pussy Willow is not actually a specific variety of willow but describes the many small shrub like varieties of willow whose familiar furry catkins are prominent in the Spring. The most common in Canada is the *Salix discolor*. This North American variety is one of the hardiest that grows in areas rated as low as hardiness Zone 1. The catkins are the flower bud of the willow tree. Before flowering they are covered in fine greyish fur reminiscent of a kitten's tail.

The genus Willow (*Salix sp.*) belongs to the family *Salicaceae* which is the Willow family. This family includes Poplars (Aspens) and Cottonwood as well as Willows. Willows are also known as Sallow, Saugh or Osier.

Willows are shade-tolerant and water-loving trees and are often found at the edge of streams or lakes. The leaves are often elongated, simple and alternate on branches that are supple.

The Willow has been used in many cultures for a variety of things including medicine, woven objects and magical charms. The record of medicinal use can be found in many cultures in history including ancient civilizations such as Sumerian and Egyptian. References to willows uses can be found in the historical Egyptian medicinal document, The Ebers Papyrus. Hippocrates also mentions the use of Willow for Pain management. There is archeological evidence of the use of willow in woven objects such as baskets, fish weirs and other construction uses dating back to the neolithic era.

Medically, willow leaves and bark contain salicin which is metabolized into salicylic acid. It is from

this compound that the modern-day acetyl salicylic acid (ASA) or aspirin comes from. Willow bark and leaves have long been used for pain relief, reduction of fever and when used as a poultice to remove warts

Magically, Willow is considered feminine and is associated with the moon and the element of water. It is associated with Artemis, Ceres, Circe, Hecate, Persephone, Hera, Hermes, Belili, Belenus and Brigid. The belief in the use of will for magic or charms is found throughout many cultures and traditions.

In the Chinese culture the Willow is associated with immortality, flexibility and strength, as well as Spring and rebirth. It is also associated with loss and mourning. Interestingly, although most willow trees are short-lived compared to other tree species, they are amazingly resilient. You can easily root a branch from a willow, and it will grow. In Celtic traditions Willow is also associated with fertility, rebirth and transformation. Because of this it is also used in grief and mourning and a symbol of enduring love. In Indigenous cultures the Willow is believed to bring luck. Branches were often tied to their homes to protect against bad spirits. Willow is even

mentioned in the Old Testament in Psalm 137 (sorrow), Ezekial 17:5 (rebirth) and Leviticus 23:40 (celebration)

Brighten up your Spring altar with those lovely, furry branches or add a pinch of

5 willow bark to your incense for Spring ritual or spells for healing, protection, transformation..



STONES WITH SORCHA

Chrysocolla

Chrysocolla is a beautiful bluish green crystal that grows near Copper. It ranges in shade from bright sky-blue to deep emerald green, often with a mixture of different shades and striations. It is often found intergrown with other copper-derived minerals such as Azurite and Malachite. Chrysocolla is mined at its primary location inside Copper mines, and is typically found as rounded nodules and in veins. It is formed in the oxidation zone of Copper ore mines when surface water containing silicic acid dissolves Copper out of the rock. It is opaque and is a softer crystal that is easy to scratch and damage so care must be taken when wearing or carrying the stone.

Native American medicine men and women used Chrysocolla to improve the body's natural defences and to protect against disease. Their leaders used its powers to encourage peace between nations. In Ancient Egypt it was known as the "wise stone" and was carried by diplomats in times of negotiations to ensure favourable resolutions. Cleopatra wore Chrysocolla jewelry whenever she met with foreign ambassadors and rulers. The Greek philosopher Theophrastus was the first to name Chrysocolla, deriving from the Greek words chrysos meaning "gold" and kola meaning "glue". This references the fact that Chrysocolla was used as an ingredient for solder, used to weld pieces together. It was later used during the Renaissance to make a blue pigment for paint.

Element: Earth & Water

Energy: Receptive

Planet: Venus

Chakra: Throat & Heart

Zodiac: Gemini, Taurus, Virgo

Tarot: The Hanged Man

Sabbat: Ostara

Magical Properties: Anger, Anxiety, Balance, Calm, Comfort, Communication, Compassion, Confidence, Creativity, Dream Work, Emotions, Empathy, Fear, Grief, Grounding, Harmony, Heartbreak, Inspiration, Love, The Mind, Peace, Power, Pregnancy/Childbirth, Problems, Relationships, The Senses, Stability, Strength, Stress, Wisdom

Magical Uses

Place a piece of Chrysocolla in your home after a burglary, theft or verbal or physical abuse to erect a gentle, but effective force field around the home. It will also help protect the home against unpleasant or intrusive neighbours. Chrysocolla helps promote open and positive communication with people who are unhelpful, quarrelsome, unresponsive or aggressive. It can be useful if you have to deal with officials or those whose services you need who persistently refuse to answer calls or messages. It is excellent for all creative work and is said to be the musician's stone. It will foster a love of music in children when worn, carried or placed in their room. Place a Chrysocolla near your pregnant pet's bed to help comfort them, especially if they're a first time mother. Sleep with Chrysocolla under your pillow, or wear it as a necklace to bed to induce psychic dreams that answer your questions, sacred earth rituals and rituals that honour the Mother Goddess. When you're wanting to attract love and banish fears of being vulnerable and open to that love, wear or carry a piece on you. It provides strength and protection during vision quests and travelling on the astral when worn or held. If you have to perform or speak to a crowd, it will give you confidence and lend eloquence to your words. People with wandering temperaments, who never stay in one place would benefit using Chrysocolla in their daily lives as it has an odd way of encouraging people to stay at home. It will diminish anxiety and depression for those that are often in seclusion.

Healing Uses

Chrysocolla is called "The Women's Stone" as it heals all female related problems, especially those related to hormones and reproduction. It is said to ease the process of childbirth if held during labour. Men and women alike benefit from Chrysocolla as it absorbs pain and fever, and regulates the thyroid gland and blood sugar levels. It is effective in easing trauma of all kinds. It is a stone that is recommended for victims of incest and sexual abuse as it helps calm and ease the mind. It is a powerfully soothing and balancing stone which can help us connect to our inner being. Chrysocolla helps us speak our truths with confidence, compassion and empathy.

We use Chrysocolla at this time of Ostara as it gently reminds us to be mindful of the rebirth, the fertility, and the creation Mother Earth is experiencing. It offers us a soft, soothing energy that helps us feel the peaceful energy of Ostara, helping us to let go of the past dark months, and opening our arms to embracing the coming warmth and vitality of the Sun. It's time to break out those sunglasses and dig in the dirt. Happy planting!!





The Art of Blessings

With Spring finally upon us, the ancient motifs surface and assure us of our own place in the dance of the seasons. Spring brings us new birds and beasts, growth and renewal, with emblems connecting us to the process since the beginning of time. Whether it is the ancient Greek concept of the Orphic Egg and the beginning of all things, or a cosmic egg hatching creators and sun gods; the egg has long been a symbol of fertility and rebirth. A motif that threads its way through all of our cultures, our myths and our hopes for the future.

Eggs as part of our Spring rituals have been used to ensure fertility, prosperity and peace. Always treated with reverence, the egg is a fragile symbol of Life and balance. There is a ritualistic element involved in the painting of eggs, a magical thinking, calling out to the gods and goddesses for health, fertility, love, wealth, and peace. We imbue our hopes in the language of art, colour and symbols; sharing with each other that need for renewal.

Many design motifs on modern Easter eggs date back to pre-Christian times to early Slavic cultures, some even give evidence to dating as far as matching Neolithic imagery. While the symbols have remained through the ages, their interpretation has changed or been repurposed through artistic or religious license. However, underneath of it all, a triangle still speaks of the three elements, earth, fire and air. The equal armed solar cross which depicts the rising sun is also now the symbol of the risen Christ, but its power remains steadfast through time. Sun and star symbols once referred to Dazhboh, a sun god, and the fish, spoke of a plentiful catch and a full stomach. In decorating our eggs today we still speak to our ancient connections through flowers, vines, the serpent, the sun and the moon, the old gods, the old ways, and the old beliefs.

One of the most enduring examples of the talismanic use of the egg is the Ukrainian pysanky. A pysanka is an egg decorated using a wax resist (aka batik) method of application. Its name derives from the Ukrainian verb "pysaty," meaning "to write." Colours, symbols and rituals were often unique to each family or region, however, customs were preserved faithfully and passed down, from mother to daughter, through many generations. A pysanka held very strong magic, and was used for protection of the family and the home throughout the year. Often on display throughout the spring and summer, a bowl full of colourful pysanky kept fire and harm from the home.

In connecting with this age-old practice of offering an egg to your household and friends for prosperity, explore the significance of the Egg in your own cultural heritage. Embrace the energy of the season, inscribe your hopes and prayers with colour and meaningful symbols. Create magic.

As an emblem of life, the egg is the perfect magical tool. It is recognized globally as a symbol of fertility, new life, growth and prosperity.

- **Make a wish:** Write a wish on a hard boiled egg, then leave it in the woods or natural setting as an offering.
- **Bury a raw egg in the garden.** A buried egg in your spring garden blesses the harvest for fruitful yield.
- **Try Ovomancy,** a method of divination which involves dropping an egg white into boiling water and then reading the shape it takes.
- **Leave eggs at the graveside** of a loved one to bless their eternal life and heal grieving souls.
- **Craft some candles,** eggshells make excellent candle vessels. Use natural beeswax and a cotton wick, and they are also 100% biodegradable.

Naturally Dyed Eggs

Per cup of water use the following:

- 1 cup chopped purple cabbage = blue on white eggs, green on brown eggs
- 1 cup red onion skins = lavender or red eggs
- 1 cup yellow onion skins = orange on white eggs, rusty red on brown eggs
- 1 cup shredded beets = pink on white eggs, maroon on brown eggs
- 2 tablespoons ground turmeric = yellow eggs
- 1 bag Red Zinger tea = lavender eggs

Add one tablespoon white vinegar to every cup of dye.



Community Happenings

WCC Meet & Greet

Meet the Wiccan Church of Canada community every Wednesday evening @ 7 pm via Zoom. Open to the public across Canada, as our members across the country sign on for our online Community Get Together. A time to meet new friends, see the faces you have been missing. Whether the conversation is around sharing how you honour your Gods, your magics, or just to soak up the support of community during a tough time, it is a great get together. Come on out and join in the fun!

Email LPH.WCC@gmail.com FOR THE LINK

Toronto Pagan Pub Moot

"It is an open and friendly social event that meets in person every Third Calendar Monday of every month and virtually every Fourth Calendar Monday of every month.

It is open to Pagans, Wiccans, Witches, Druids, Asatru, etc of ALL ages and those who are new and would like to learn more, to those who have been walking the path for decades."

TPPM Dates 2024

Despite the forecast. live like it's Spring.

- Lilly Pulitzer



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The Sabbath Table

Wild Violet Jelly

- Rinse the violets in a bowl of water to remove any soil particles or bugs that may be hiding in the petals. Add them to a clean quart jar and pour the boiling water into the jar. Cover the jar with a lid and let the violets steep for at least 30 minutes to extract their color and create a violet infusion aka tea. If you want to do this step ahead of time, you can refrigerate the violet tea once it has cooled to room temperature for up to 3 days before proceeding.
- When you're ready to make the jelly sterilize five 4 oz. mason jars and lids in simmering water for at least 10 minutes. You don't need to sterilize the ring seals.
- Meanwhile, strain the dark blue tea through a fine-mesh strainer or sieve into a saucepan, pressing the flowers with the back of a spoon to extract as much of the liquid as possible. Discard the violet blossoms.
- Stir the lemon juice into the violet infusion. The color will change from blue to purple.
- In a small bowl mix together ½ a packet or 25g of powdered low-sugar pectin with 2 tablespoons of the sugar. Then stir that mixture into the violet infusion.
- Bring the violet mixture to a full rolling boil (a boil that doesn't stop bubbling when stirred) over medium-high heat, stirring constantly.
- Stir in the remaining sugar and return the mixture to a full rolling boil and boil for exactly 1 minute, stirring constantly. Then remove the saucepan from the heat and skim off any foam with a spoon.
- Take the jelly jars and lids out of the boiling water with canning tongs and place them onto a quarter sheet pan to use as a portable work surface.
- Ladle the jelly immediately into the sterile jars, filling them to within ¼ inch of their openings. Use a canning funnel to avoid any drips. Wipe rims and screw threads clean then cover each jar with a sterile lid. Screw the ring seals finger tight, being careful not to over-tighten the seals. You want air bubbles to be able to escape and not build up pressure, which can happen if the seal is too tight.
- Place jars into boiling water on an elevated rack in a water bath canner or a deep stockpot with a round wire rack placed at the bottom of the pot. You need enough water to cover the jelly jars by 1 to 2 inches. If needed add more boiling water. Cover the canner or pot with a lid and bring the water to a gentle rolling boil. Process the jellies for 5 minutes, adjusting the time for altitudes over 1,000 feet. See the altitude processing guide in the post.
- Turn off the stovetop then remove the jars with canning tongs and transfer them upright to the quarter sheet pan or onto a towel to cool completely. As the jars cool you may hear the vacuum seals make an audible popping sound.
- Once they are cool check the seals by pressing the centers of the lids with your finger. If the lid springs back up it is not sealed and needs to be refrigerated.
- Remove the ring seals and store unopened violet jellies in a cool, dry, dark place for up to 1 year.

INGREDIENTS

2 loosely packed cups violet flowers blue or purple,
2 1/4 cups boiling water
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 packet, powdered sugar pectin
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar



Tiny though they may be, these flowers are powerful aids in magickal workings. They are useful for spiritual growth, protection, healing, faithfulness, love, and glamour. They are also associated with psychic abilities, dreams, and visions.



LOCAL RESOURCES

Looking for ritual or metaphysical supplies for your Craft? Check out our local favourites and support the stores in our communities.

Obskurah Bazaar

www.obskurahbazaar.com

Candles, Tarot & Oracle decks, magical curios, ritual supplies, spiritual self-care items, herbs, books, incense and occult inspired accessories are available online or at our retail shop in Hamilton, Ontario. Our goal is to provide ethically sourced, sustainably made, fair trade and ecofriendly products that support fair wages and working conditions for the makers and honor their traditions.

Madame Phoenix Esoterica

madame-phoenix-online.myshopify.com

Madame Phoenix produces top quality spiritual and occult supplies using only the highest quality, all natural ingredients from beginning to end.

Madame Phoenix products are hand made in Canada. We use only the highest quality, earth friendly, fair trade ingredients.

The Occult Shop

www.theoccultshop.ca

Your one stop shop for quality occult, Pagan, Santeria and Wiccan spiritual supplies & gifts.

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SABBAT SCAVENGER HUNT

white
rabbit

Coloured
eggs

a woven
basket

5 green
candles

a spiral

3 red
tulips

a serpent

a singing
robin

a nest

a rainbow

spring

T	S	E	L	S	V	R	N	L	D	E	E	S	H
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DELICIOUS
SUNNY
FROSTY
BIRDHOUSE
SNOWDROP
AIR
FRESH
EARTH
DAMP
ALIVE
TINY
WARM
MELT
SEED
BLOSSOM
NEST

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/142422/>

“
Blossom by blossom
the spring begins.



ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Ukrainian Pysanky





Sword & Chalice is open to pagan writers with a vision of growth, encouragement and shared knowledge.

We're welcoming single submissions, regular contributions and an opportunity to shared what you know and love. Ask questions, offer recommendations or share your thoughts on your Path.

Sword & Chalice offers our pagan community a chance to connect, to showcase each others skills or wares, as well as the bards, artists and crafters. We want to talk about magic, and herbl lore and how to live in the wheel of the year, we want to hear from you and your Path. If you have the desire to share your voice and knowledge, we are waiting for you.

wccswordandchalice@gmail.com

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Looking to find out whats going on in your local temple? Perhaps you have questions regarding classes and rituals. Maybe you're a new seeker, or a solitaire looking for company or to share favourite seasonal fare; all are welcome. Our online communities are rich with diverse experience, skills and pagan knowledge. WCC Facebook groups strive to be safe spaces to discuss the Wiccan Craft and explore ideas of paganism in general without politics or proselytizing. Come see what we get up to between the sabbats!



Wiccan Church
of Canada



Hamilton



Toronto



Windsor

Spring is nature's
way of saying,
'Let's party!'

Robin Williams

