



Photo from: <https://historythings.com/what-is-yuletide-anyway/>

All too often we stumble across the roots of blessing during this time of year. Just because the woman coming across the lawn is wearing a burka doesn't mean she's not a Christian, nor does the ham bone poking out of the neighbor's grocery bag mean that he's not Jewish, or Arabic, or Turkish. So, we're safe with Happy Holidays! Well...maybe not.

Happy Holidays is a good, inclusive term for the whole season that runs from November to January. It rests softly as a universal blessing suitable for all occasions.

Although, if you know the person or persons you're talking with, or sending a greeting card, or whatever are of a particular religious persuasion, feel perfectly free to whip out a heartfelt Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Cool Yule, or whatever tickles their fancy. Remember, the blessing is for them in their tradition, and is bestowed with kindness and love.

"Wishing your family peace and light this holiday season" is another pretty spiffy general-purpose blessing. It fits in many places and rarely offends even the easily offended.

December



December 7 th	Cold Full Moon 10:09 p.m. CDT Page 2
December 10 th	HON Grove Meeting Page 2
December 21	Alban Arthan/ Heuldro'r Gaeaf (he̞ɪldrɔr 'geɪɒv) Jól (Yule)-Norse
December 24 th	Alban Arthan Ritual 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
December 25 th	Christmas (Ho, Ho, Ho, Noni Noni)

There are no Islamic holidays associated with December but that does not exclude us offering blessings to our Islamic neighbors during this season. The blessing should be heartfelt and generic.

Our Hindu friends, on the other hand, have two celebrations this month: Pancha Ganapati, a modern five-day festival celebrated from 21st to 25th December in honor of Ganesha, and Vaikuntha Ekadashi, which is movable but celebrated between mid-December and mid-January.

Of course, when all is said and done, the intent in your heart is what counts now, as always. Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Blessed Yule, or simply expressing the kindness and love in your heart, all can fill the bill.

Wishing you and your family the peace and light of the grove this holiday season...and all year long!

—Art Scarbrough





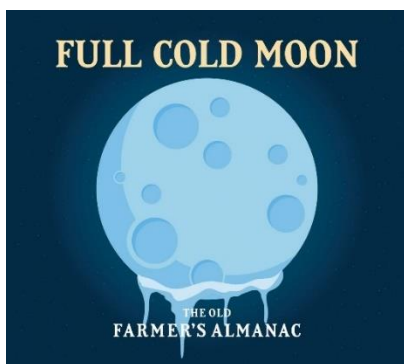
Grove Happenings



This month's grove meeting will be at La Madeleine Restaurant, located at 7615 Jefferson Hwy in Baton Rouge from 3:00 pm–5:00 pm on Saturday, December 10th. We meet in the private dining room, and we hope everyone will be able to join us.

In addition to catching up with our grove members, we will discuss the turnout at Pagan Information Day, Alban Arthan ritual, an update on GCG planning and other topics of interest.

If you are unable to join us in person, we invite you to join us in Zoom. To join Zoom, go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88338465418?pwd=TjFJb1h6NmhzSzUrN0czTzFuRVlvQT09>
Meeting ID: 883 3846 5418
Passcode: 319206



The Cold Full Moon

Wednesday, December 7, at 10:09 p.m. CDT

The Moon names we use in *The Old Farmer's Almanac* come from Native American, Colonial American, or other traditional sources passed down through generations. A variety of Native American peoples traditionally used the monthly Moons and nature's corresponding signs as a calendar to track the seasons.

Today, December's full Moon is most commonly known as the Cold Moon—a Mohawk name that conveys the frigid conditions of this time of year, when cold weather truly begins to grip us.

December's Cold Moon reaches peak illumination on Wednesday, December 7th, 2022, at 10:09 P.M. CDT.

Start looking for the full Moon just before sunset as it begins to peek above the horizon. December's full Moon has a high trajectory in the sky, which means that it will be above the horizon for longer than most full Moons.

Alternative December Moon Names

Other names that allude to the cold and snow include Drift Clearing Moon (Cree), Frost Exploding Trees Moon (Cree), Moon of the Popping Trees (Oglala), Hoar Frost Moon (Cree), Snow Moon (Haida, Cherokee), and Winter Maker Moon (Western Abenaki).

This full Moon has also been called the Long Night Moon (Mohican), as it rises during the "longest" nights of the year, which are near the December winter solstice. This name is doubly fitting because December's full Moon shines above the horizon for a longer period of time than most full Moons.

Other names include Moon When the Deer Shed Their Antlers (Dakota) and Little Spirit Moon (Anishinaabe).

In Europe, ancient pagans called the December full Moon the "Moon Before Yule," in honor of the Yuletide festival celebrating the return of the sun heralded by winter solstice.

Image and excerpts taken from The Farmer's Almanac 2022 Edition
<https://www.almanac.com/full-moon-december>



<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/full-moon-winter-solstice-mandala-caterina-martinico.html>



The Seven Gifts of Druidry

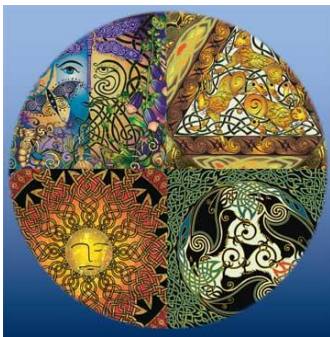
The fifth gift opens us to other Realities: with techniques for exploring other states of consciousness, other realities, the Otherworld.

Some of these are also used by other spiritual traditions, and include meditation, visualization, shamanic journeying, and the use of ceremony, music, chanting and sweathouses, but they are all grounded in specifically Celtic and Druidic imagery and tradition.

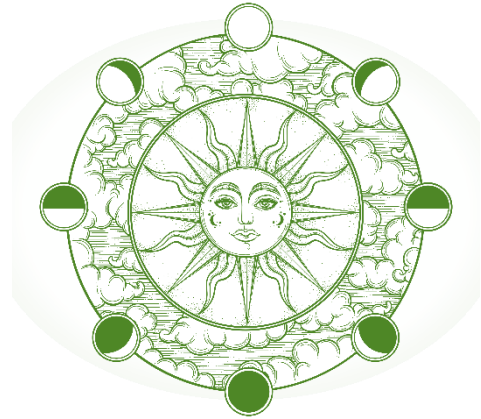
Excerpts taken from <https://druidry.org/druid-way/what-druidry/the-seven-gifts>

Practicum

For this exercise in opening up to other realities, light a candle and some incense. Take several deep breaths and with eyes open, focusing on the flame while putting aside the stresses and concerns of the day. If you'd like, chant the Awen or "Imbas" as you begin your work to connect. The path you come to will be up to you, and while you may not see or feel anything at first, that's ok. This form of meditation takes a bit of practice, but you will get the hang of it. If you wish, make notes of your experience.



Artwork by Jen Delyth



Pagan Information Day

I'm excited to let the grove know that the Pagan Information Day, held on November 12th, was a great success. Hosted by several groups working together, it was an afternoon filled with presentations by several large pagan groups in the area. The Unitarian Church provided the venue and supported the event, even after a few stumbles with scheduling. Special thanks to the church and those who modified their schedules to accommodate our event.

The groups presenting were: The Sixth Source Sharing Circle (UU Pagans), Stonewolf Clan (heathens), Taure Alcarin (British Traditional Wicca), Gryphon's Nest (Eclectic Wicca), and our own Highland Oak Nemeton.

Local stores that participated were Bohemian Cove, Spellbound, and Soul Roots. There were over a hundred people present and we saw several walk-ins from the street as well as members of the Unitarian Church and they were both interested and curious. It was a great event and we really hope to build on the success of the day for future events!

—Salvatore Culotta



<https://www.nature-and-garden.com/gardening/mistletoe-plant-tree.html>



Celtic Devotional

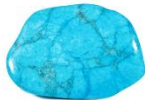
By Caitlin Matthews

I don the breastplate of wisdom:
Protection of evergreens, guard my heart,
Brightness of Pine,
Sharpness of Holly,
Protection of Juniper,
Courage of Laurel,
Nobility of Cypress,
Endurance of Yew,
Health of Eucalyptus,
Splendor of Cedar,
Beauty of Arbutus.

Nine evergreens to guard my breast this Winter Day,
This Winter Night!



Stone of the Month—Turquoise



Turquoise is a very efficient healer stone. It provides comfort and solace for the spirit and support for the physical body.

It has been used in amulets for protection for millennia and is said to change color to warn the wearer of any infidelity in their partner.

Turquoise is an attractive stone with a distinctive blue-green appearance as it is often made into jewelry pieces of striking beauty and one of the oldest and tried and tested stones for charms and talismans since ancient times.

Turquoise was also a symbol of wealth, prosperity, and abundance in many ancient societies.

Characteristics like sensitivity, strength, protection from evil, and connection to the spiritual realm are all

attributed to Turquoise. It's also a symbol of good luck, good fortune, kinship, and peace.

The chemical classification of Turquoise is Phosphate. Its luster is waxy to sub vitreous, and it becomes dull or chalky when weathered.

Excerpt from <https://meanings.crystalsandjewelry.com/topaz/>

SHE'S HERE!!



Beatrice Alia Thibodeaux!

With chanting Awens and bright blessings, Highland Oak Nemeton is so happy to introduce to you our newest (and youngest) member!

Beatrice Alia Thibodeaux was born on Friday, November 4, 2022, at 9:04 p.m., weighing 8 lbs, 6 oz and measuring 19.5 inches. She and mom are doing fantastic!

Vanessa is looking forward to introducing her beautiful baby girl to all of her fellow Druids in the near future!



Deep within the still center of my being,

May I find Peace.



Silently within the quiet of the Grove,

May I share Peace.



Gently withing the greater circle of

human kind,

May I radiate Peace.

