

A Perennial Course in Living Druidry by Bobcat, Emma Restall Orr

GREEN STILL MOON (August - September)

Moon : Green Still

Green Still Moon is the name I use for this tide. For the green growth is now dark, thick and heavy; there is a sense of waiting, a stillness while the apples swell, the earth is dry, and the wasps lazily seek out sweetness to steal.

Find out what other names people and traditions use for this moon, and by the end of the tide choose your own name for it, one that reflects the cycle in your environment and your own nature.

Festival : Equinox

During this moon we prepare for the Autumn Equinox, and again I encourage you to go out at dawn and dusk to chart exactly where the sun rises and sets upon the horizon near your home. Just as it did through spring, you'll see the position changing quickly, the sun emerging and disappearing significantly nearer the east each day.

Through the inertia of sticky warm days and heavy growth, the undercurrent of change rising beneath us, drawing us closer to the point of balance. What do you rely on to hold you balanced through periods of change? How present or reliable is that in your life? Think about the issue with relevance to your family or close community, and to all humanity: in the turmoil of change, what do we need to feel secure? Becoming aware of these issues will be a guide for the festival rite.

Season : Harvest

This Moon takes us through the thick of harvest season, a time which for our ancestors (until only a few generations ago) meant blistering hard work. Long hot days spent in the fields, the whole family at work, sharing laughter, stories, sweat and tears, drinking gallons of ale or cider where safe water wasn't available. Once gathered, that harvest was given over to the land owner, or needed to be sold; either way, its value was crucial to the community. How much contact do you have with this powerful cycle and understanding of food? Can you find a way of getting more involved, or - if you do grow your own food - allowing others to get involved who don't have the opportunity. How does it change your behaviour and your awareness of food, of the land, the weather, the gods?

Perception : Touch

In the sweat of the day's working, in the lazy evenings, through this Moontide wake yourself to the power of touch once again. This sense is also a focus in the tide before the Spring Equinox, yet then the land was hard with cold and sleep. As you explore, be aware of just how is it different now.

Indulge in the heightened awareness of what the world feels like on your fingertips, beneath bare feet, upon your cheek or lips, resting on your belly. Explore sensations of wet and dry, sticky and slippery, sun-baked warm and shadow cool, prickly thistles, soft moss, hazel leaves and beech leaves, oak bark and cherry bark. Close your eyes, and touch. Open again to the wonder.

Element : Thirst

Staying with water, through this tide acknowledge the element in its most precious forms. Explore what happens when you are thirsty, and consider how that powerful craving is ever-present in many communities of the world.

Find a place where water is scarce and sit, in summer's stillness and warmth, until you can feel the value and power of water here. Raise your awareness of the precious nature of tears and sweat: what is released in these two, physiologically, chemically, and emotionally? How much do you sweat and shed tears? Raise your awareness of what is happening when you do.

Recalling how water connects all life, holding memory, how are sweat and tears so important in and to the stories of our people?

Humanity : Human Beings

Through this Moontide, the relationship to work on is your relationship with humanity as a whole. What do you share with every other human being across the world? What do you share with human beings who have lived through the past five thousand years, and the past fifty thousand? What makes your culture, your family and yourself unique? What makes this period of time unique for humanity?

In holding awareness of these things, the Druid feels acutely the connections that link him or her into the energy and consciousness, or the spirit, of humanity, as it exists within the flow of time, upon the Earth. What is the benefit of this wakeful connection?

Through our actions and attitudes, we can each make a difference to the wellbeing of our species; how can you improve what you contribute to humanity? Do it.

Environment : Nuts

The hazel is the tree honoured by many through this moon, and indeed it is at this point a dense green, putting forward its precious nuts, food that will be all too quickly devoured by the wild creatures (notably our gorgeous red squirrels, here) of any environment. The thistles are at their height, tall and gloriously spiked, their purple flowers transforming into the softest cotton down.

Which plants, trees and animal are most visible in your landscape? Which are putting out nuts and seeds? Among the birds, which migrants are already disappearing and where are they heading? Which are most commonly seen now? Can you see that mix of inertia and change in the wild creatures around you? What is the energy and life on the fields that have been harvested?

Self : Harvest

At this time, our personal harvest is becoming clear. Before us are the results of what began as dreams at Gwyl Fair, of the seeds that we sowed in the spring, that we nurtured through the sunshine of summer. Some may have thrived and offer us a harvest of those dreams, bringing an abundance of achievement and wellbeing. Some will not have germinated, some will have withered and died, and at times that will have been a good thing, while at others there will be a sense of failure and regret.

Through this Moontide, let us consider our own harvest, looking back to midwinter and the journey through the tides of this growing cycle. What lessons can be learned?

Where did we push against the season and where did we allow nature to support our work?

Creativity : Sharing

Sharing poetry is about sharing a perspective. It can be suffocatingly bland, devoid of inspiration, like a narrative told without enthusiasm. It can be hugely dull simply because there is no depth or originality in our vision. However, the poet's skill is in part similar to that of a photograph: framing, in time and space, a moment and presenting that moment in a way that is poignant.

During this moon, writing more and looking at what you have already written, see if you can touch others with your poetry: not skin on skin, but soul to soul, as you share the poignance of your perception of a moment.

Ethics : Generosity

What can you do to make life easier for others? In the heavy long days of August and early September, energy is slow, irritation and apathy rising in tides, the Sun pulling us into a new flood of change. Looking around you, see who is finding it particularly hard. How can you help?

It is important that what you offer is given because the other person wants or needs that service, and not because it's what you think he might want or need, not because it will make you feel good about yourself.

Think about that powerful word that was so important to our ancestors: generosity. Big gestures may be appropriate, but continuity is more important; commit yourself to giving no more than you can wholeheartedly and truly give, ensuring that you can maintain the gift for as long as that help is needed.

Review :

In the last few days of the Moontide, when the Moon is dark, consider what you have achieved through the cycle. What have you learned, changed, understood, and given in exchange?