



IMBOLC: NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

About the season.....

Spring. At Imbolc (which means Ewe's Milk), or also known as Candlemas, it is the time of metaphoric rebirth. The traditional day is February 2nd.

At Imbolc we see, feel and hear the beginning signs of Spring. Winter is over, Spring cometh. It may well still be very cold but the energy has shifted. It is the time we see new growth following the seeming dormancy of Winter. Imbolc is a time of hope, a time filled with the excitement of new possibilities for the future, either brand new possibilities or those we've dreamed up, 'seeded' over the winter.

Imbolc was traditionally a Celtic Fire Festival dedicated to the Goddess Brigid.

At Imbolc, the seed, held in the dark Earth over the Winter has germinated, it finds its way through the Earth's surface to see the light, to show itself, to grow. Aligning with the Imbolc energy - taking our cues from Nature, we can now 'see' the beginnings of our plans and dreams that have been gestating within us over winter.

'See' these dreams as 'seeds' and see what's 'sprouting' after the months of incubation.

Spring Spiritual Practice

Ask yourself:

Do my dreams and plans look like they have or will "sprout and grow"?

If they don't, how do I feel about that?

What do I need to do to nurture the new growth?

Is it time to revisit my plan or dream making or am I getting the 'dream' I 'need'?

As well as a time of new beginnings, Imbolc is a potent time to clear away past disappointments, to let go of old dreams and to step fully into the present, to 'rebirth' ourselves. Our 'dreams'/desires and attachments reveal a lot about us and their manifestation, or not, is part of this information.

Imbolc is either dream 'tweaking' time or dream nurturing time.

Thinking metaphorically, 'seeing' your life as a garden, and thinking of 'weeds', what can you see peaking its head up again? Do you really want to take that through the next growth cycle again? to get bigger and stronger? Or can you 'nip it in the bud' so to speak and replace it with the 'growth' you want to see happen this cycle?

Time to be the loving gardener at the beginning of the springtime of this next year's cycle in your life.

Suggested Ceremony for the Imbolc

You can enact this energy ceremonially in a variety of ways.

* Create an Imbolc altar with things around you, both your treasures and gifts from Nature, that remind you of the energy of the beginning of Spring.

* You could literally nurture some seedlings so that you 'see' what it takes to nurture new sprouts. You could do this with your children, for quick results you could sprout alfalfa or other beans and perhaps name the sprouts for a new way of being or learning etc eg *"as I care for these sprouts I care for the new part of me that will be braver/kinder/tidier/more focussed etc"*.

* Light a candle, call on the energy and power of Imbolc. Write down all your dreams and plans you've been "gestating", see them as sprouts all in a row and now as the loving gardener, cull the sprouts that have less life force, those that 'look' less likely to survive and focus your energy on the sprouts that have the best chance over the coming cycle of survival and growth to their full potential. The conditions this coming cycle may suit some "sprouts" over others, bring that awareness into your culling process. That's what this time gives you - the opportunity to 'see' which of your seeds/plans/dreams have the greatest chance of survival so you can let go of the others and nurture and focus on these. Notice any feelings or past issues that come up for you as you choose one 'sprout' over another and journal with yourself to find all that represents for you and how that may inhibit or obstruct your path forward nurturing your chosen 'sprouts'. Let go of the 'sprouts' that aren't going to make it, perhaps they will another time, perhaps not. Their life force, as in the garden, will 'feed' the remaining 'sprouts'. Be ruthless and courageous with the culling of your 'sprouts'. How many 'sprouts' can you manage/nurture this Spring? Maybe 4, maybe 1? You will know. And remember, you will get this opportunity every year.

* Start your Spring Cleaning, both literal and metaphoric. Empty out the old and make room for the new.

* Emerge from the darker part of the cycle into the building light as the days get longer and the sun gets warmer. It will still be dark early and cold during the weeks ahead but with a slow lengthening of the days. It is as if we slowly emerge from the dark where we have been relying on our inner senses to say "see in the dark", to feel our way around in the darkness. Think of the metaphoric meaning of this and the opportunity to bring these inner senses out, to bring the skills of clairvoyance, clairaudience and clairsentience into our lives more. Do you know what your 'access sense' is? How you receive information?

* Prepare a feast of locally grown seasonal foods and give thanks at your table for all that this new cycle will bring you. Traditional foods of Imbolc include those that represent growth, such as seeds (sesame, sunflower, pumpkin, etc) as well as dairy foods, bread, cake, curry, onions, leeks, garlic honey and herbal teas.

* Herbs and flowers associated with Imbolc include: angelica, basil, bay, benzoin, celandine, heather, myrrh, snowdrop, rowan and all yellow flowers. Perhaps make a wreath of one or some combination of these or use them in your cooking or herbal teas.

Imbolc is the time to visualize life flourishing with abundance, creativity and renewed strength