



SAMHAIN, HALLOWE'EN: SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Samhain or Hallowe'en is the third and final harvest festival of the year and falls on April 30 in the Southern Hemisphere, even though many celebrate this festival on October 31st, which is actually the Northern Hemisphere date. Samhain or Hallowe'en is actually the end of autumn and the beginning of winter. We move now deep into the yin part of the cycle, and the pumpkin patch! And as Mother Earth teaches us, if you didn't plant in Spring or if you didn't care for the vulnerable sprouts or the growing vine (etc) during the growth cycle, then there will be no harvest, simple as that.

This is an invitation from Mother Nature to be with one of the greatest opportunities and lessons in life, to be present with what is, and at this point in the cycle what is happening is the slowing down, going inward, letting go of all that no longer serves you and moving toward your still quiet centre. This time ahead invites inner reflection and contemplation.

Samhain Spiritual Practice

At Samhain time all the Earth's living beings commence their preparation for the decent into the colder darker season of winter and we as the gardeners, the caretakers, are not excluded from this process.

In our modern lives it is easy to miss this significant transition point, carrying on regardless. But do take the opportunity to connect deeply with the rhythm of the circle in the cycle of the seasons. Depending on how you feel about the dark and endings, will influence how you experience the energy of this season. The bottom line is that the letting go and the descent in to the dark is inevitable, so we may as well 'go with the flow', if we don't, some how or other, Nature and our nature will take us there anyway.

The final harvest at Samhain time is most evident in of our Earth and feel what is.

Literally, it's time to gather the firewood, harvest the last of the pumpkins from the vine, take stock and move our living and playing inside where it's warmer.

Seeing this metaphorically, its also time to move to a more reflective, contemplative space within ourselves, very different to the 'out there-ness' of summer.

With reflection and contemplation comes a deeper sense of self-awareness and 'awareness is curative' so this is a 'health-full' place to come to consciously, and an important part of the cycle.

These final 'fruits' you are harvesting now, are what you have to sustain you through the winter months when there is no outward growth. 'Find' these 'fruits' when you look at your life both literally and metaphorically. Look at your health, your relationships, your work, your life situation, what looks like the fruits, the harvest?

Remember, the 'fruits' also hold the 'seeds' of what will grow in the next growth cycle, they hold the lessons available to be learned from all you've done this growth cycle so far, since the beginning back in Spring earlier in the year.

***And these seeds will gestate over the Winter,
and be what will be reborn in the Spring.***

This happens literally in the garden and metaphorically in our lives, and often unconsciously, this is what's going on when its 'the same old same old' things happening in your life.

The idea is that you notice the patterns repeating and then bring your choice to it. For example on seeing the 'seeds' contained in the 'fruits' of this harvest, you might 'learn the lessons' from this ending growth cycle and change how you do things next growth cycle (Spring). This could be new ways you approach your work, relationships, health, where you put your energy etc.....you'll know.

Make your life your spiritual practice.

Notice how you feel the energy of this part of the Earth's season affecting you.

- How does your body feel?
- Do you have a dominant emotion?
- And what are the messages from these?

Notice what you need to notice, learn what you need to learn, change what you need to change and heal what you need to heal. That's the opportunity, that's the gift. Journal as you go.

Suggested Ceremony for Samhain, Hallowe'en

Samhain is the final harvest festival marking the descent into winter. A time for us to carve pumpkins and hone our intuitive skills so we can discern the tricks from the treats!

In ancient times Samhain was known as a dark time, honoured but not feared. It was said that on this night the veils between the worlds were at their most thin making it possible to communicate with the dead and that loving ancestor's spirits would return to connect with the living on this night.

The prejudices of our western patriarchal culture have, over the centuries, changed the messages of this powerful time from - respectful of the dark, the Crone and Wise Old Man and the death/rebirth part of the cycle - to fear, with the Crone represented as a scary witch and ancestor's spirits as spooky ghosts.

At Samhain you can light a candle and call your dearly departed ones. Have a conversation, say what you wished you'd said, hear what they say to you. Perhaps create an altar in their honour and sit there in a meditative space and see what happens. You can do this with your children too, perhaps they wish to 'speak' to loved ones, pets included, that have passed away. Its important to include the reality of the 'circle of life' in children's worlds.

With your community, gather the children and have fun dressing up and playing the traditional Hallowe'en games, and be sure to tell them the stories of the wisdom of the cycles that are playing out at the sabbats.

Blessed Be!