

Chapter 1 : The Secret History of Gnomes. | Halloween Artist Bazaar

*Gardener's magic and folklore [Margaret Baker] on calendrierdelascience.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers.*  
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The Secret History of Gnomes. Their beginnings are much loftier than the life they hold now, residing in the suburbs among the daises and St. Once believed to stand feet tall, masculine, strong in physique with long beards. Their possible history reaches back to the ancient Roman Greco era to a tribe in Greek mythology who were secondary deities who co existed with humans. The Gnomes were considered highly skilled in nature magic. Gnomes were seen as benevolent beings that were intelligent and wise, hard working in manual labor, peaceful in nature yet fierce defenders when necessary. They were the guardians of farmland; gardens and small livestock and forest animals. When lands were under attack they rode upon goat back brandishing spears to drive out the invaders. In Roman mythology they were considered akin to the Roman fertility god Priapus protector of livestock fruit and gardens and considered very virile. It is believed that Gnomes are depicted consistently as male figures in history and rarely referenced as female in that the Gnomes were defenders of the meek and all things worthy of protection. It is believed they were very protective of their women and would defend them to all cost against predators and intruders, and later in history from humans. In Celtic and Germanic lore, the Gnomes were a tribe attributed with Earth element magic and were defenders of mines and under ground tunnels. It was believed that gnomes could move through the Earth and breath underground with the same ease their human counterparts do above ground in the air. Some associate Gnomes as descendants of the Dwarves of Germanic and Norse legends for the ability to move underground and the belief that Gnomes were skilled miners. It was thought that they helped to build under ground tunnels to hide treasures and riches of the fae folk after the great invasions of ancient Ireland, and from humans in modern times. The history and genealogy of the Gnomes is also believed to be traced to the Tomte or Nisse of Scandinavian folklore. The Tomote are sometimes believed to be an incarnation of a deceased ancestor of the home who comes back to defended the children and animals of the estate and would help with chores, particularly gardening and farm work. The Scandinavian folklore of the Tomote gave rise to the legend of and has associations with the winter elves who appear at Yule. The size of the Gnomes is widely accepted as a physical attribute, although some historians and mythologist suggest that their representation of small size was more figurative than literal in that in their possible origins they came form lesser spirits or gods. The modern depiction of Gnomes in literature is significantly smaller than what is written in ancient mythology. The modern accepted stature of a Gnome is feet tall and in many instances as short as 1 foot tall. One theory between folklorist and mythologist is that Gnomes adapted to the world around them. That the Gnomes became smaller to better navigate an ever-increasing population of humans and development. Shape shifting to a smaller size helps to keep them hidden. Others believe that the gradual change of Gnomes appearance was the result of the Christian church marginalizing pagan deities through depictions of art and restructuring of legends to aid in making Christianity more palatable to Pagans. Many descriptions of Pagan deities through the Christian church had their attributes downplayed and magical properties lessened. Benevolent entities and magical creatures of Pagan nature religions were often diminished from noble in spirit to mischievous sometimes comical and in most instances considered dangerous as the Church weaned the populace from their previous beliefs to Christianity. Stories of Gnomes were homogenized more closely with legend of Dwarves and described as irritable, impatient, war like and ugly in appearance. The Gnomes as stoic guardians eventually faded into the stuff of myths. Folks would display a small porcelain statue of a Gnome in there home as a protector. Tying to the legends of the Tomte. It was common practice to keep either a wooden, terracotta or ceramic Gnome in ones garden to act as a guardian to discourage nighttime intruders invading ones crops. When the sun rose they returned to their post, turning back to stone. The industry for lawn statues grew in time with demand for garden gnomes becoming hugely popular in pre Word War II Germany. Most were produced from hand sculpted molds, however declined post war to only a few original family manufacturers. They are now mass- produced all over the world using cheaper materials. The depiction has changed as well. Gnomes have had many depictions in

literature and often interchangeable to different small statured magical species, affecting their representation in art and statuary. Till this day Gnomes enjoy popularity in culture. Some Gnomes become victims of theft that results in a ransom note listing bizarre demands. Perhaps the existence of Gnome like creatures has existed in so many cultures and mythologies due to their ability to travel great distances undetected under ground. Maybe those cheery faced, pointy hat statues decorating the lawns of the sub-burbs still enjoy late night adventures. Is it possible the reason the petunias were spared from the grasshoppers as the result of the fierce protection of ones garden Gnome? Check out her artist page to find links to her shops and vintage inspired traditional holiday art. Visit again next month for more traditions and folklore.

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A Woman Caught a Fairy Wales. The Wonderful Plough Germany. Link to The Leprechaun: Migratory legends of type and other stories of drinking vessels stolen from or abandoned by fairies. The Fairy Flag of Dunraven Castle. Legends from the Scottish Isle of Sky about a gift from a fairy lover. Stories of type from around the world about mortals who are blessed or cursed by the "hidden people. The Hunchback of Willow Brake Scotland. The Legend of Knockgrafton Ireland. The Palace in the Rath Ireland. The Fairies and the Two Hunchbacks: The Gifts of the Mountain Spirits Germany. The Gifts of the Little People Germany. The Two Humpbacks Italy. The Elves and the Envious Neighbor Japan. Legends about thieving fairies. Of the Subterranean Inhabitants Scotland. Fairy Control over Crops Ireland. Fairies on May Day Ireland. The Silver Cup Isle of Man. The Three Cows England. Riechert the Smith Germany. Folktales of type Of Chastity Gesta Romanorum. Conrad von Tannenberg Germany. A Story Told by a Hindu India. Doralice Italy, Giovanni Francesco Straparola. Donkey Skin France, Charles Perrault. Ass-Skin Basque, Wentworth Webster. Cinder Blower Germany, Karl Bartsch. Rashen Coatie Scotland, Peter Buchan. Stories about mortals who enter into contracts with the demonic powers. Faust in Erfurt Germany, J. Faust and Melanchton in Wittenberg Germany, J. Faust in Anhalt Germany, Ludwig Bechstein. Selected literary works based on the Faust Legend. Selected musical works based on the Faust Legend. The Fisherman and His Wife and other tales of dissatisfaction and greed. The Fisherman and His Wife Germany.

**Chapter 3 : MAGIC AND MYTH - Fairyland**

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They may become offended by the misuse of the wood from the elder. Folklore advises to never lay a baby in an elder wood cradle or fairies spirit the baby away or pinch them so that they bruise. Elderberry wine is considered fairy wine. Drinking it is said to enable you to see fairies. Add dried elderberries to an incense mixture that you burn to attract fairies to a gathering. The soft pith of an Elder branch pushes out easily and the tubes formed were used as pipes for blowing up fires, later Elder bellows were made for same effect. From this came the folklore name Pipe-Tree - and the belief that the most resonant horns were made from Elder trees grown in areas away from human habitation and away from the sound of a cocks-crow. Popguns and whistles had long been made from the Elder. Along with the Oak and Ash, when growing naturally together these three will make a natural place where fairies can easily be seen. A grove comprised of those three trees is believed to be the perfect habitat for fairies, and an excellent place to catch sight of them. Pixie Pears is another name for hawthorn berries. Hawthorn was once used to decorate May poles. At one time hawthorns were believed to be Witches who had transformed themselves into trees. Witches have long danced and performed their rites beneath the thorn. Hawthorn has long been used to increase fertility. Because of this power it is incorporated into weddings, especially those performed in the spring. The leaves, curiously enough, are also used to enforce or maintain chastity or celibacy. The leaves are placed beneath the mattress or around the bedroom for this purpose. Worn or carried it promotes happiness in the troubled, depressed, or sad. Call on the Goddess Grian to bring some sunshine and happiness into your life. Hawthorn protects against lightning, and in the house in which it resides, no evil ghosts may enter. It is also powerful for protecting against damage to the house from storms. OAK is the king of the forest. Oak trees are safe havens and homes for many varieties of fairies. Oakmen are created when an oak stump sends up shoots. One should never take food offered by the Oakmen, as it is poisonous. Fairies cherish the Great Oak and use the acorns for decoration, celebrations and use the tops for hats. The leaves are used in the autumn celebrations. There are some families of fairies who live in the Great Oaks. Hundreds of faeries have been found to live in the oldest Oaks. There are fairies to be found in every Oak tree, the health of the surrounding environment plays a major role in determining the number of fairies that actually inhabit the Great Oak. Planting an acorn in the dark of the moon ensures that you shall receive money in the near future. Carrying an acorn increases fertility and strengthens sexual potency. Carrying a piece of Oak draws good luck. ASH has healing properties in fairy folklore. Ash is a sacred tree to the Druids. The ash was made into wands used for healing, general or solar magic. It was believed that children with crooked bodies, legs or arms should be passed through young ash trees. If the tree grew tall and straight, so also would the child. The fruit or bark of apple trees can be used in fairy magic, especially for love spells. Connla the son of Conn is fed an apple by a fairy lover which sustains him but also makes him fall hopelessly in love with her. One of the tasks of the children of Tuirenn is to retrieve the magical apples of the Hesperides. Magic wands made from blackthorn can be used for many purposes. When a blackthorn magic wand is carried, it confers protection from evil, can be used for wishes. Also good for divining rods. Planted around the home it protects it and its inhabitants from mischievous sorcerers. Holly water infused or distilled is sprinkled on newborn babies to protect them. It is also hung around the house for good luck. Make an offering of Heather on "Beltane" eve to attract good fae to your garden. It is the Midsummer Tree of the Summer Solstice. Folklore says that humans should never pick a pansy with dew on it. It is said to cause the death of a loved one, and if you pick one on a fine day you will invite it to storm. PEONY seed necklaces were used to protect children being kidnapped by fairies, although with the limited fairy contact today this practice is rarely used. Thyme may also be planted by the doors and windows of your house to invite the fairies to come inside. The sweet smell and soft petals of ROSE attract fairies to your garden. A popular love spell uses roses. Sprinkle rose petals under your feet and dance on them softly while asking the Faery for a blessing on your magic. Looking for trees or flower seeds to attract

fairies??

**Chapter 4 : Garden of magic and myths - Fairyland**

*Plant Folklore: Myths, Magic, and Superstition. As many gardeners know, touching the plant and the leaves too much can be incredibly irritating to the skin.*

Share An example of a gnome Gnomes are very widespread species, known to a number of human races. Germans name them Erdmanleins, except in the Alpine areas, where they are called Heinzemannchens. In Brittany they are called Nains. Tontti to the Finns and Foddenskkmaend is their name in Iceland. The Polish call them by the familiar Gnom. Bulgaria and Albania, however, use Dudge. The Dutch use Kabouter and the Belgian, Skritek. Switzerland and Luxembourg use the same name, Kleinmanneken, which means "littlemen. Gnomes consist of a number of different types. The most common is the Forest Gnome who rarely comes into contact with man. The Garden Gnome lives in old gardens and enjoys telling melancholy tales. Dune Gnomes are slightly larger than their woodland brethren and choose remarkably drab clothing. House Gnomes have the most knowledge of man, often speaking his language. It is from this family that Gnome Kings are chosen. Farm Gnomes resemble their House brethren, but are more conservative in manner and dress. Siberian Gnomes have been more interbred than other Gnomes and associate freely with trolls. They are much larger than the other types and have an infinitely more nasty nature. It is best never to evoke the ire of such Gnomes for they delight in revenge. Believed to be originating in Scandinavia, Gnomes later migrated to the lowlands some years ago. Gnomes are usually an average of 15 centimeters tall but in some stories they are said to be around a foot 30 cm in height, but with its cap on it appears much taller. Their feet are somewhat pigeon toed which gives them an extra edge on speed and agility through the wood and grass. The males weigh grams, and female is grams. The male wears a peaked red cap, a blue brown-green pants, and ether felt boots, birch shoes, or wooden clogs. Around his waist is a belt with a tool kit attached, holding a knife, hammer, etc. They are fair of face, though the boast rosy red cheeks. Long beards adorn their faces and turn gray far sooner than their hair. The female wears gray or khaki clothing, consisting of a blouse and skirt to ankles. She also has black-gray knee socks and high shoes or slippers. Before she is married, she dons a green cap. Prior to marriage her hair is hanging down, the outfit is complemented by a green cap and braids with which later disappear under a scarf while the green cap is replaced by more somber tones after she marries. Males are the guardians of animal kind and show little preference for their animal friends, notwithstanding their aversion to cats both wild and domesticated. Their enemies are mainly Trolls, and other beings who would try to destroy them or their homes. Otherwise, they are mostly peaceful beings. Gnomes tend to live in hilly meadows and rocky woodlands. Most Gnomes are 7 times stronger than a man, can run at speeds of 35 miles per hour, and have better sight than a hawk. These abilities help the Gnome to do many things, such as find wounded, dying animals for which they feel they are responsible for. Many people say that gnomes have elevated practical jokes to an art form. But most especially they love gems and jewelry and are considered by many to be the best gem cutters and jewelers in existence Element: Earth They are generally vegetarian and never worry. The main meal consists of: Nuts hazelnuts, walnuts, bechnuts, etc, mushrooms, peas, beans, a small potato, applesauce, fruit, berries all kinds, tubers, spices, vegetables, and preserves for dessert. As a beverage, the gnome drinks mead dew fermented honey, fermented raspberries which have a very high alcohol content, and spiced gin as a nightcap. The history of gnomes: A gnome is a diminutive spirit in Renaissance magic and often in alchemy, living underground. They are often mentioned as one of the four spirits of the four elements, making them: They dwell underground and die there as well. Ancient and dark, they often wear monk robes. They are usually small and humpbacked, but may become giants. The word comes from the Renaissance Latin gnomus, which first appears in the works of 16th Century Swiss alchemist Paracelsus. Alternatively, the term may as well be an original invention of Paracelsus. He classifies them as earth elementals, and describes them as two spans high, reluctant to interact with humans and able to move through solid earth. The chthonic spirit has precedents in numerous ancient and medieval mythologies, often guarding mines and precious underground treasures, notably in the Germanic dwarves and the Greek Chalybes, Telchines or Dactyls.

*Are you sure you want to remove Gardener's magic and folklore from your list?*

Sand garden at the Ryoan-ji temple, Kyoto. It consists essentially of an area of pale sand carefully raked into a pattern of parallel lines, the surface broken only by 15 carefully placed stones. Looking out from one of the pavilions of the Red Fort garden, Delhi. Image from a French sixteenth-century manuscript showing an enclosed garden in the medieval style. Statue of Hercules at the Villa Castello, Florence. The Fountain of Oceanus in the Boboli garden, Florence. Garden of the Villa Garzoni, Collodi, Tuscany. One of the fountains of the seasons at Versailles: Myth, Magic and Meaning Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC: A figure of Pan points the way in the Dumbarton Oaks garden. Paving at the entrance to the Cullowhee garden. Druidic mystery in a town garden Case study 2: As above, so below Case study 3: My theme is the garden as a sacred space, an outdoor temple carrying an intentional transformative message, religious, mystical or philosophical in meaning. For the author, this rich subject has been a compelling personal quest. It began in the year when I was invited to write an article on Stonypath now called Little Sparta , the world-famous garden in Scotland created by the poet and artist Ian Hamilton Finlay and his then wife Sue Finlay. One afternoon in late summer I found myself driving up a bumpy dirt road towards what appeared from the distance to be a small green oasis, sheltered by windswept trees, amid the bleak Lanarkshire hills. But, once inside the garden, its dimensions seemed miraculously to expand like the Tardis of Dr Who. With Ian Hamilton Finlay as my guide I was shown an astonishing world filled with specially created objects – sculptures, reliefs, plaques, sundials, classical columns, bird-tables, poems written on paving-stones – each placed in a carefully chosen and beautifully tended setting and each carrying a verbal message that resonated with its surroundings and evoked a response on many levels. It was and is a garden of profoundly powerful impact. Another person who opened my eyes to the possibilities of garden design was the French artist Niki de Saint Phalle, who died in and whom I met in the s when she was in the early stages of creating her amazing Tarot Garden in Tuscany. A documentary film has been made about her life and the creation of the garden. Myth, Magic and Meaning in, brilliantly coloured and decked out in a shining mosaic of glass and ceramic. With echoes of the weird sixteenth-century garden of Bomarzo near Rome, it is a place of intense exuberance and vitality. What Niki de Saint Phalle and the Finlays were doing made me realize how impoverished most modern gardens are by comparison. It showed me how a garden, instead of being just a collection of ornamental plants in a decorative setting, can be a place resonant with meaning. The experience led me to realize that they were not the first people to use gardens in this way. Indeed, they themselves were consciously rediscovering and reinventing the art of using gardens to convey a message. Inspired by their example, I began to study the gardening traditions of other cultures – China, Japan, Persia, the Islamic world, Renaissance Italy, eighteenth-century England. I read all the relevant material I could find, and I began to visit and photograph as many gardens as I could. After I joined the United Nations system in I found myself travelling to many different countries in all regions of the world – and of course gardens were on my agenda whenever possible. Most of the photographs reproduced here were taken by me on those journeys. Like all good quests, this one contains an element of the impossible. Trying to identify the meaning of a garden is like trying to read some old book, half mouldered into illegibility, where certain pages are written in a long-forgotten code and others are re-writing themselves constantly, adjusting their message to the age or to the individual reader. A garden is not a text with a fixed meaning. Even if some gardens begin that way, over time they change hands, become overgrown, are re-shaped, re-planted and re-ornamented, always acquiring new meaning. During the course of this book I will allude to a number of such moments that I myself have experienced. This book is therefore about an impossible quest – impossible, but not quite. Many gardens were created as places of deliberate meaning – meaning written in a language that can sometimes be understood, however dimly, by the visitor of today. All languages have a structure, Introduction Contents xvii and I have attempted in Chapter 1 to categorize the basic elements that make up the symbolic language of horticulture – even though the grammar, vocabulary and idioms may vary from culture to culture. Taking this structure as a point of reference, I describe a range of

gardens of different ages, regions and traditions that convey meaning in different ways. The choice reflects my own particular interests – religion, myth, magic and the esoteric – although I touch on other areas of meaning as well. Since I began work on this book a number of others have ventured into similar territory. Among the resulting books are: This book, while dealing with many of the same motifs, has a fundamentally different approach and focus. On one level it is a detailed account of my own personal journey through this territory and my encounters with a number of remarkable gardens and sometimes with their creators. It also contains a chapter with practical suggestions. There, however, my approach is not to start from a particular model of sacred garden but rather from the nature of the space available, and to ask what sort of symbolic language it calls for, in the light of the information given in earlier chapters. Inevitably, given the vast scope of the subject, there was much that I had to leave out. For example, I devote only a small part of Chapter 9 to cemeteries and just one chapter 11 specifically to the theme of interacting with nature, its energies, intelligences and cycles. Obviously there is much more to be said on both of these subjects. During my research I had recourse to many books on different aspects of the subject, to which I refer in my endnotes and in my bibliography, but I will mention here a few of them that I found particularly interesting or significant. An author who has greatly inspired me is Princess Emanuela Kretzulesco, whose book *Les Jardins du Songe* latest edition is a remarkable study of the Renaissance work *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and its influence on garden design throughout Europe. Her xviii *Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic and Meaning* book, although controversial, enabled me to perceive in a whole new way the symbolism of such gardens as those of Versailles, Fontainebleau and the Medici villas in Tuscany. The book *Landscape and Memory* by the cultural historian Simon Schama, is a rich exploration of the way in which history and myth merge in our perception of landscape and gardens. Turning to the Orient, a classic study is *The Chinese Garden* by Maggie Keswick, which contains much valuable information on the influence of Taoism and other religious and philosophical traditions on garden design. There are also a number of more general works that I have found useful. Although written three-quarters of a century ago, it remains one of the best and most comprehensive surveys of gardening history. However, the most important source for me has been the gardens themselves, which can speak more eloquently than any book. Many of the gardens that I mention have long since vanished, like the fabulous gardens of Heidelberg created by Salomon de Caus in the seventeenth century. Some have fallen into ruin or semi-ruin, like the once legendary gardens of the Red Fort in Delhi. Some, like those of the Zen Buddhist monasteries in Kyoto, have been lovingly maintained for centuries. Some have been created very recently. Some exist only in the minds of poets or on the canvases of painters. Some will remain for ever unrealized dreams. All, however, have in common a conception of the garden as a place in which nature and art come together to create a special kind of meaning. I hope this book will inspire its readers to look at – and perhaps to create – gardens in the light of an expanded vision of what a garden can be. What is a garden? But the people who dreamed up the gardens I have just mentioned would give a very different answer. To them, gardens were – or are – not merely places of beauty but places of meaning. To the modern mind the idea of gardens as conveyors of meaning is an unfamiliar one. Yet a garden can convey meaning in the same way that a building can. To visit one of the great medieval cathedrals such as Chartres is to experience not just a building but a kind of book, a text written in carved stonework and stained glass, which makes a statement about medieval theology, 2 *Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic and Meaning* cosmology and values – indeed about the whole order of things as the medieval mind saw it. Similarly, to visit, say, the garden of Versailles is to catch a glimpse of the world order as it was seen by Louis XIV and his court. In other words, a garden can be a metaphor, used to convey a world view, a mood, a thought or an ideal. A whole book – or many – could be devoted to the garden as a metaphor in literature and art. We shall of course touch on this aspect of the subject. Primarily, however, we shall focus on real gardens. What makes gardens such potentially powerful metaphors is the way in which they bring together nature and art. This combination allows for enormous variations in emphasis, depending on how nature is viewed in particular cultures. For cultures that live inseparably from nature the concept of a garden can have no meaning, since a garden is by definition something that is set apart. For some cultures, such as those of ancient China and Japan, a garden is a refinement of nature. The modern city dweller is likely to see gardens as places where a lost natural beauty can

be recreated. Then again, a garden means one thing to a dweller in an arid desert environment and another thing to someone from a damp and verdant region. On the other hand, there are certain motifs that appear to have a universal or widely shared meaning that crosses cultural boundaries – the fountain, with its life-giving water, is one example. A garden, like a good poem, contains many levels of meaning and draws a different response from every individual. There are, however, enough shared images and symbols either within or across cultures to make possible the existence of a language of gardens – or rather many languages, in fact an almost infinite The symbolic language of gardens 3 number. It would be impossible to learn all of these languages – in any case, many are lost to memory. Nevertheless it is possible to identify a common structure to these languages, which has three basic ingredients. First, there is the form of the garden as a whole. This includes the lines traced by the perimeter and the internal divisions, which can be straight or rounded, symmetrical or asymmetrical. They can incorporate significant numbers or special geometrical shapes. Compass alignments can also be important. The formal aspect would include the question of what proportion of the garden is left to nature and what proportion is shaped by human hand. The English gardening tradition, for example, prefers to leave more to nature than the French tradition with its preference for symmetry and formality. Japanese gardens employ a sleight of hand, which creates a natural appearance that is in fact carefully contrived.

**Chapter 6 : Myths & Legends | Ancient Origins**

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**Persea americana** The avocado, common to salads and Mexican dishes, is featured in a tale of savage revenge from the South American country of Guiana. In the forest, there lived a man Seriokai, who was very fond of avocados, and he spent much of his time gathering them to eat. One day, when he was off doing this, a tapir came into his camp where his wife was alone doing chores. The next day, when Seriokai again went to collect avocados, his wife went along, pretending to gather firewood. As Seriokai came down from an avocado tree, intent on descending, she used a rock to knock him down, severing one of his legs. A neighbor heard Seriokai calling for help and took him home, where he slowly healed. Using a wooden stump on his leg, he set out to find his wife and the wicked tapir. He found a trail of avocado trees growing in the forest, springing from the avocados which fell from the basket of fruits the wife took with her. He followed the trail, which led farther and farther from the center of the Earth, noticing that the trees became younger and younger. At last he came upon freshly dropped seeds, and knew that he was drawing near. Finally he came to the edge of the world, where he saw the runaway couple. He shot an arrow at the tapir, which struck his eye. Howling with pain, the beast leaped over the edge. Following her love, the woman jumped as well. Seriokai followed, and chased them through the sky. He follows them to this day, for he became Orion, the wife is the Pleiades, and the wicked tapir is Hyades, with a bleeding eye. One of the most nourishing fruits known to man, the banana has been a life giving food in the tropics since ancient times. As a result, many different cultures have tales about its origins and uses. According to the Burmese, when man was created, he looked and looked for good food for himself and his children. He came upon a beautiful, tall green tree with many fruits, being busily devoured by birds. Ever since, the Burmese have eaten the fruits of the banana, which they call hnget pyaw, "the birds told. In India, mythology holds that there is a Banyan tree in heaven, under which Vishnu, one of the Indian deities, was born. Today, it is believed that Vishnu plays beneath at the foot of a great Banyan outside of Mount Govardhana, illuminating all that is nearby with his presence. The Banyan is considered the tree of seers and holy people, and as the Tree of Knowledge There is a Banyan tree growing near Surat, on the river Nerbudda, which is reputed to be the oldest in all of India. Believe to house a go, it is never touched with metal or trimmed, and is over 3, years old it is thought to have been visited by officers of Alexander the Great. It has a figure carved into its bark, which is painted red and presented with offerings by pilgrims. Revered by Chinese Buddhists as well, it is believed in that religion that Buddha sits beneath a Banyan tree and faces East, where he is venerated by Brahma. One day, while Buddha was meditating at the bottom of a hill, Dawadat rolled a huge stone down the hillside to crush him. When it fell to the ground, the blood turned to a brilliant and beautiful red flowered plant, which we know as Canna. In Burma it is called Bohdda Tharanat. A Chinese legend says that a Cassia tree grows at the middle of the moon. Because of this, the moon is known as Kueilan, the disk of the Cassia. According to the story, a man from Si-Ho named Kang Wou found a genii and abused its powers. **Coffee** *Coffea arabica* What would the morning be like without coffee? A favorite beverage of humans since early history, the coffee plant originated in the Middle East, where the Ethiopians have a legend about its discovery. A young boy named Kaldi was out in the hills one day minding his herd of goats, when he noticed that the animals, instead of grazing peacefully, were actively cavorting. Puzzled, he watched them for a time, and saw that they were eating bright red berries from a lovely, glossy green plant. Worried about their safety, he himself tried some of the beans, and was astonished at the vibrant, wide awake sensation that they produced. That night, he took a few berries home with him to the mullah of his village, who thought their waking properties would be useful at evening religious services! Not only did they keep the congregation awake, the beans became a favorite of the people, and the rest is history. In the British Isles, a wonderful and much coveted heather mead was made by the Picts, who once dominated the territory. The secret recipe for this brew was known to only a small number of them. When the Picts were conquered by other Celtic tribes,

the secret died with them. According to tradition, after the war between the tribes, only two Picts who knew the secret recipe remained, a father and son. When interrogated for the recipe, the conquerors put the son to death, in an attempt to scare the father into revealing the desired information. He refused, allowing that he was glad that his son was gone, for the conquerors might have forced him, as a more gullible youngster, to reveal his secret, but he, the father, could never be forced to divulge. In some versions of the tale, the father is killed for his insolence, in others, he is allowed to live for his face of bravery when confronted with the enemy. But in all of the tales, however, he takes his recipe to his grave, never allowing the barbarous conquerors to enjoy the heavenly brew of the Pictish warriors. Holly is mostly widely known as a plant used to decorate for the winter holidays. Its association as such goes back to the time of the Romans. The Romans used holly, as an evergreen, to decorate their homes for the riotous fest of Saturnalia. Several centuries later, Roman Christians, who had followed this practice in their days before conversion, continued to decorate their homes with holly for the Christian winter holiday of Christmas. Over time, holly lost its Saturnalian associations and became a beacon of winter and of the Christmas season. Through the years, holly has accumulated many other myths and legends centered around its Christmas associations. In England, holly is believed to house fairies and elves who come indoors to enjoy the holiday with humans. In other parts of Europe, holly is thought to repel witches and evil, and so is brought indoors to protect the Christmas festivities. There is another custom attached to holly, quite different from its Christmas connections. In Northumbrian England, holly was traditionally used by young girls as a charm for revealing the identity of their future husbands. She would then go to bed. She would first be awakened by terrible wails and screeching, later by the sound of a horse neighing. Following this, her future spouse would enter the room. If he was to be greatly in love with her, he would rearrange the pails of water. If not, he would leave the room unchanged. Ivy is not only the emblem of the prestigious American Ivy League schools, it is also deeply rooted pardon the pun in mythology. According to the Greeks, Bacchus had a son named Kissos, who, while playing with his father, died suddenly. Heartbroken, Bacchus tried to revive him to no avail. Taking pity on the unhappy father and dead child, Gaia, the goddess of Earth, changed the boy into ivy, which in Greek is named Kissos, after the child. Bacchus thereafter held sacred the ivy plant, and is most often depicted wearing a crown of its green leaves in Greek art. A more romantic ivy legend comes from Cornish sources. In this tale, a beautiful maiden named Iseult was betrothed to a handsome and brave knight named Tristan. When he was slain, she was so brokenhearted that she died as well. From each of the graves, however, an ivy vine grew, and, over time, they met and joined in a true love knot in the sanctuary where the graves lay. The sweet scented Jasmine is often carried by brides in their bouquets, but few know the story behind this tradition. Jasmine was first introduced to Europe in by the Duke of Tuscany. Wishing to remain the only person who possessed the lovely plant, the Duke ordered that no cuttings be given away. His gardener, however, was very poor and had a beautiful sweetheart. For her birthday, having no other gift, he picked a sprig of the flowering Jasmine for her to wear. She planted the sprig in fertile Earth and it rooted. In time, the plant grew large, and she was able to grow others from its cuttings, selling them to wealthy ladies and gentlemen who coveted its exotic fragrance and beauty. With the money gained from selling the plants, she and the gardener were able to marry, and lived happily ever after. In memory of this woman who used a gift of love to make a life of happiness for herself and her sweetheart, the jasmine is carried in bridal bouquets to this very day. There was a very brave knight in Normandy, whose exploits were famous and who was known throughout the land. He had been offered the hand of several maids, each more lovely than the next, but he refused each, and lived alone, searching for the perfect maiden to be his wife. A rather melancholy person, he spent many hours wandering in graveyards. One day, while on such a stroll, he saw a young woman, dressed in expensive and beautiful robes sitting on a tombstone. Taken with her beauty, he approached her and kissed her hand. At this, she smiled, and revealed that she was the woman for whom he had searched. Elated, the knight took her home to his castle, where they spent a year in happiness and joy. At the end of the year, at Christmastime, they held a huge banquet and invited scores of knights and their ladies. It was a very festive occasion, with good food and drink and fine music. Towards the end of the feast, a minstrel with a voice more beautiful than all the others sang a series of songs, finishing with one about the loveliness of heaven and life after death. At this, the wife became pale and wan, and dropped at

her place. She slowly collapsed, and her husband, the knight, rushed to her side. He took her in his arms, only to find that instead of embracing his dying wife, he held a lily, whose petals slowly fell, one by one, to the floor. Heartbroken, he ran from the castle and the banquet, to the cold outdoors. As he knelt in his courtyard, snow began to fall: The daughter of the sun was a beautiful and accomplished girl, more lovely than any other girl on Earth. She was married to a powerful king on Earth, and they were very happy. A wicked enchantress was jealous of her happiness, and vowed to make her miserable.

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*Patti Wigington is a pagan author, educator, and licensed clergy. She is the author of Daily Spellbook for the Good Witch and Wicca Practical Magic. The ancient Greeks and Romans also held butterflies in metaphysical regard. The philosopher Aristotle named the butterfly Psyche, which is the Greek.*