



EarthLove Fellowship

A newsletter of EarthLove Fellowship: a Grove of FoDLA



Reflections of the Rev – Celebrations of the Harvest

By Rev. Linda Costello

We, as Neo-Pagans, celebrate three phases of the harvest, the time of the abundance of the earth. The first is an acknowledgement of the ripening of the fruits, and we give of our first fruits back to the land to assure the prosperity of the rest of our harvest. We, in EarthLove Fellowship, celebrate this time as Lughnasadh as we acknowledge our connection with the land.

The second of the harvest festivals is a time of balance, when we reap what we have sown. This is the time of greatest harvest, as we bring in our crops, our rewards for the year past. We celebrate this time as Autumn Equinox.

The third harvest is the last of the season, when we bring in all that remains, and ready for a season of introspection. We celebrate this as Samhain, a time when we also honor our ancestors, those from which we have come.

The harvest festivals symbolize the cycles in our own lives when we express our gratitude for all of our blessings, gather in that which we have created, and share our wealth with others. Please read on to find out more about each of these special festivals in the wheel of the year. May your harvest be all that you expected and more!

Bright harvest blessings, Rev. Linda

Lughnasadh '08

In Arizona, we are in the middle of the hottest time of the year. Traditionally, Lughnasadh is the time for games and sport, to participate in physical activity. In Phoenix at this time of year, that may not be the best idea. This leads me into some thoughts on being a Druid in modern times.

The Druids of old were attuned with the land upon which they lived, planning their activities in accordance with the seasons. When I lived in New England, it was easy to follow the seasonal celebrations as they did in ancient Ireland, as the seasons were very congruent. However, in the Southwest, the seasons are very different.

At this time of year in Ireland, the days are comfortably warm and people like to be outdoors. In Phoenix, the temperatures are often over 100 degrees and being outside for any length of time, including in the shade, makes one feel as though they are going to melt. Although some flourish, such as basil, many food plants and flowers die in the relentless rays of the hot Arizona sun. Therefore, to say that this is the first of the harvest seasons may be a misnomer for Arizona. Or is it?

This marks the time after the summer monsoon season, and when we start to turn our attention towards autumn, when the nights will again bring a breath of coolness to the land that may linger in the early morning hours.

So, as we celebrate the turning of this season, let us celebrate a different sort of harvest. Let us honor this time as a gratitude for the monsoons of the past season, for the rains that quench the thirst of this dry land. Let us rejoice in the promise of the lush autumn which can result from the harvesting of the waters.

Autumn Equinox '08

The Autumn Equinox is the time when day and night are in perfect balance. It is the midpoint between summer and winter – between the unbearable heat of summer, and the welcome mildness of the refreshing winter air in Phoenix.

At this time of year, we turn our thoughts towards the coolness to come. We can already feel a breath of coolness in the early morning air.

The flowers put out a last grand flowering before they hunker down for the winter, for even in Phoenix, many of the plants stop growing, taking the time for an introspective rest before bursting forth again in spring.

I tend to think of this time of year as a time of healing, as we turn toward our own self-introspection.

Let us honor the innate inner wisdom that directs our lives and keeps us in balance.



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This issue was written and edited by the Reverend Linda Costello.

Future issues will include advertising. Please contact Rev. Linda at 602-722-2562 if you have any questions.

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Samhain '08

Now that Samhain approaches, we can definitely feel the change in air in Phoenix. The mornings are actually quite cool, and we often find ourselves reaching for a sweater. In another few weeks, we will be wearing our winter wear. For me that means putting away my summer dresses and breaking out the leather blazer.

Samhain is the last of the harvest celebrations as we bring in the last of the harvest, and turn our attention towards the coming winter. We remember where we came from – the year behind us – as well as those who came before us. In doing so, we honor our ancestors at this time of year, those beings who brought us to this moment by virtue of their existence and our subsequent births.

Samhain is the time when the old year ends, and we begin the gestation for the new sun to be born at Winter Solstice. At this time, the veils between the worlds are thinnest, and we can easily commune with the powers in the Otherworlds.

What a great time to renew our pacts and connections with our gods and ancestors, a time to let go of the past with an honoring of all we have gained from it, keeping that which will serve and letting the rest go, and a time to welcome the possibility of the new.

The harvest has been gathered in, and all that remains is that which will return to the earth as fodder for next year's crops. Let us honor all that we have gained in the year just past.

