



E L F S E E O S

A newsletter of EarthLove Fellowship: a Grove of FoDLA



Reflections of the Rev – Honoring the Ancestors

By Rev. Linda Costello

Samhain (the end of summer), the last of the autumn festivals and the first of the winter festivals, represents the end of the harvest and the beginning of the new year. In ancient times, a new day/year started in the darkness, just as we start in the darkness of the womb. Thus, a new day begins at sunset, and ends the following sunset. A new year begins at the onset of winter, and ends a year later, as winter again circles 'round.

Samhain, therefore, reminds us of the cycles of life and death, and we are aware that leaves must die to fertilize the ground for the new growth of the spring. We honor the natural phenomenon of death as the ending of a cycle and simultaneously, the beginning of a new cycle.

In ancient times, Samhain spanned three days, and was known as the time when the veil between the worlds was the thinnest. Because of this, it is the time of year when we pay special attention to the ancestors.

When we honor the ancestors, those who have moved from our world into the otherworlds, we honor their memory, and their significance in our lives. We honor ancestors of blood – those who came before us in our lineage, passing on to us the hereditary patterns that we currently possess. We also honor ancestors of heart – those beings with whom we most resonate, who express our own heart and lend

us their wisdom. And finally, we honor ancestors of place – those beings who walked the lands upon which we currently stand, paving the way for us to be here. Honoring the dead is honoring where we came from, an important step in knowing who we are.

At this time of year, we often have special ceremony for those who have passed in the year just ended, sometimes calling out their names, sometimes simply praying for them silently within our hearts and minds, and sometimes feeling a connection from this world into the otherworld, so that we can express our love in spirit.

Because the veils are thin between the worlds, some believe that those beings that have passed out of this world and into the otherworlds can again walk among us. People would often dress up in costumes and wear masks to ward away any undesirable beings. This is the root of the current traditions of Halloween.

Another ancient tradition included placing a candle in the western window to honor the departed. Other traditions included carving faces on pumpkins, turnips, or rutabagas. Combining these two traditions gives us the jack-o-lanterns of today. Many cultures continue to honor this time of year with a Festival of the Dead. A blessed Samhain to all!

Grove News

EarthLove Fellowship continues to do public ritual for each high day. We are gathering more regular participants at our rituals, as well as seeing new folks. We are dedicated to serving the public by providing an opportunity to celebrate the turning of the year.

In the Ancient Celtic Studies Discussion Group, we are making progress with Ronald Hutton's new book, Blood and Mistletoe, definitely finding that this is an ambitious undertaking.

Pagan Pride Day took place during the second weekend in October, here in Phoenix. EarthLove Fellowship had a booth for the third year in a row, and we saw a great deal of activity and interest at our booth this year. We had over thirty people sign up for our email list.

EarthLove Fellowship now has a board of directors. Members include Avery Goodman, Randy and Cindi Pitcher, and myself.

Blessings of the new year,

Rev. Linda

Schedule of Events for 2009:

High Day Rituals

*Held at El Dorado Park
77th St and McDowell Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251*

- Imbolc - 1/31 @ 5:00
- Spring Equinox - 3/21 @ 5:00
- Beltane - 5/2 @ 6:00
- Summer Solstice - 6/20 @ 7:00
- Lughnasadh - 8/1 @ 7:00
- Autumn Equinox - 9/19 @ 7:00
- Samhain - 10/31 @ 6:00
- Winter Solstice - 12/19 @ 5:00

Ancient Celtic Studies Discussion Group

8:00 PM
*Held at Comic Zone
5909 N Granite Reef Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85250*

- Jan 5, 19
- Feb 2
- Mar 2, 16
- Apr 6, 20
- May 4, 18
- June 1, 15
- July 6, 20
- Aug 3, 17
- Sep 7, 21
- Oct 5, 19
- Nov 2, 16
- Dec 7, 21

6th Night Blessing Rites

Blessing Rites are held on the 6th night following the new moon. *Locations and times TBA*

- Jan 1
- Feb 1
- Mar 4
- Apr 1
- May 1
- May 30
- June 28
- July 28
- Aug 26
- Sep 23
- Oct 24
- Nov 22
- Dec 22

Please call for more information. 602-722-2562



ELF Seeds is a quarterly publication of EarthLove Fellowship: a Grove of FoDLA.

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

Please contact Rev. Linda at 602-722-2562 for information regarding advertisement in our publication.

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My organic herb gardens

By Linda Costello

Most of my gardening was inspired by the time I spent living in an earth-friendly community with some good friends. David introduced me to Greg Peterson and took a few of us to see Greg's Urban Farm. We were so impressed that we began learning about permaculture and other growing methods, which we had incorporated around our community.

When I moved out of the community, I wanted to continue to use the principles I had learned, and so I applied them to growing herbs.



I've had two herb gardens now.

The first one was at a townhouse in Scottsdale. I had a little patch of land, so I started out by planting

lots of squash, because I knew that squash would help condition the soil. Once I had a season of squash, I turned the soil with my own aged composting and started my herb garden.

Some of the herbs were starter plants – parsley, sage, rosemary, and basil to start. In between the herbs, I also grew carrots and radishes. I planted onions all around the perimeter to keep out pests. Eventually, I included a patch of catnip on the opposite end of the garden area – which my cats adored!

I learned a few things. For example, I learned that basil loves the heat and parsley loves the cooler weather. So, I planned my

second season accordingly, and left lots of room for the basil in the summer, and then trimmed the basil back and made room for the parsley in the winter. I also added a few more herbs – oregano, mint, dill, and lavender.

I got so many herbs that I harvested them in great quantities, dried them, and put them in jars as gifts for friends. People are still talking about the herbs they had gotten from my little townhouse garden.

When I moved out of the townhouse into the home I currently own, I planted another herb garden in the back yard. I grew the same herbs, although I also added sunflowers to that garden, as well as tomatoes, peppers, and nasturtiums.

I have also planted a rosemary shrub and a sage shrub in the front yard, both of which I use for fresh herbs as well as decoration.

My plan is to put a greenhouse in the backyard within the coming year, and grow herbs and vegetables year round in the greenhouse, utilizing shade in the summer and sun in the winter.

My future plans include an earth-friendly retreat center, where I will continue to apply all that I have learned about permaculture and rainwater harvesting.



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