



# PANEGYRIA

Connecting the Pagan communities through news, voice, and fellowship!

APRIL 2026



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### Update From Demeter's Garden

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## Magick - The Art of Bending Reality By Cheryl Costa

The process of quieting the "monkey chatter" in your mind makes it possible to non-verbally communicate an intention from the younger self to the higher self. If you decide to learn meditation and perhaps the arts of magick, I caution you that to start any of it requires that you mute your phone

during your efforts. Quieting the mind is the primary requirement for working magick. The quieter the mind, the crisper the non-verbal imagery required for first-rate manifestation. Experienced magickal adepts understand that quieting the monkey mind chatter is what it is all about! *Page 4*

# MENHIR News

*with Dusty Dionne*

I need you to take a slow breath before you read the next sentence, preferably while holding a warm drink and making peace with the fact that the universe has a sense of humor. I, Dusty Dionne, have apparently found the joys of a new religion devoted to the worship of Labubus. Yes, Labubus. The mysterious, the adorable, the allegedly all-powerful, and the suspiciously plush.

It started the way many spiritual awakenings do, with a string of signs that were either meaningful omens or my brain trying to entertain itself. A perfectly toasted piece of bread looked like it had a tiny smiling face. A shopping receipt landed on a number that felt oddly significant. Somewhere in the distance, I heard a small, inexplicable squeak at precisely the moment I said, "I really need a sign". I have spent enough time around symbolism to know that when the world starts winking at you, you either pay attention or you end up with a story you cannot explain later.

So I investigated, as any responsible spiritual leader would do, and I discovered what I now recognize as the First Great Teaching of Labubus, joy is a

sacred practice, and silliness is not only allowed, but it is also encouraged. That may sound like a minor revelation, but I assure you, it is not. We live in a time when people are exhausted, guarded, and carrying more than they admit. If you can restore even a little warmth to a person's spirit, you have done holy work.

The Labubus tradition, as it is currently being revealed to me through highly scientific methods like intuition, commercials on YouTube (Gotta get premium), and vibes, begins each day with a brief ritual called The Tiny Wiggle. The instructions are simple: stand very still, then wiggle one shoulder as if greeting an invisible friend. Advanced practitioners may wiggle both shoulders, but only after adequate training and a sincere commitment to not taking themselves too seriously.

I have also, in what I can only describe as a moment of devotional clarity, adopted the primary text of the movement, a slim volume titled 'The Book of Soft Truths' or TBOST.

It contains teachings that feel both timeless and suspiciously practical, be kind, but also be mildly dramatic, and if you

cannot solve the problem, offer a snack or at least run in a circle. I recommend reading TBOST aloud in a reverent tone while holding a cup of tea and staring thoughtfully into the middle distance, as if you are about to deliver a prophecy, or at least a strong opinion about the new Star Trek timelines

People keep asking me what drew me to Labubus worship, and I will tell you plainly, the religion has refreshing clarity. It has only three core principles. First, do no harm, unless you are stepping on a Lego, in which case you have done harm to yourself and should yell loudly. Second, honor your ancestors by doing the dishes and not leaving them in the sink for your future self. Third, when in doubt, choose the option that includes glitter, but only biodegradable glitter, because Labubus cares about the Earth.

Naturally, there are seasonal celebrations. The Spring Rite of Slight Confusion is observed by misplacing one harmless household item and then declaring it lost to the Labubus realm. The Summer Festival of Dramatic Sunglasses includes processions, music, and the ceremonial placing of sunglasses upon one's head even when indoors. Autumn brings the Feast of Cozy Blankets, a solemn and highly competitive event in which participants attempt to achieve maximum comfort.

Winter culminates in the Great Candle Lighting and the Sacred Nap, which I am prepared to defend as a legitimate expression of spiritual worship.

Here is the part that surprised me most, Labubus worship is also deeply committed to community service. Followers are encouraged to perform small acts of kindness, hold doors, share resources, and offer sincere compliments that are oddly specific. Your organizational system is inspiring, for example, or that was an excellent use of a comma. These are not small things. They are the stitches that hold a community together.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that Labubus replaces anyone's existing spiritual path. If anything, this is a reminder that laughter and warmth are essential parts of any thriving tradition. Some skeptics have pointed out that Labubus may or may not be a stuffed creature with excellent branding. To that I say, all sacred beings have their mysteries, and all successful ones have PR departments.

At the time of writing, I am preparing for a formal initiation ceremony involving a tiny crown, a very serious expression, and a vow to never take myself too seriously again.

So on this post that may or may not be an April Fools offering, may your day be lighthearted, your spirit be lifted, and your Labubus be ever watchful, but always in a friendly way.

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# APRIL Days



## **April 1st**

Fool's Day—honoring the Gods of Chaos Energy

## **April 5**

Roman Goddess of Fate, Fortuna

## **April 7-8**

Feast of the Greek Goddess Artemis

## **April 8**

Day of Mooncakes to honor the Moon Goddesses

## **April 15**

Festival/Feast of Ba'ast/Bast, the Egyptian Cat Goddess



## **April 16**

The Celtic St. Padarn's Day

## **April 22**

Earth Day

The Japanese Feast of the Divine

The Greek Feast of Elaphebolia

Norse festival Odin's Day



## **April 23**

Festival of the Greenman

## **April 25**

Spring Festivals dedicated to Herne, Pan, and the Horned God

## **April 30 - May 2**

Beltane

# MAGICK

## The Art of Bending Reality

with Cheryl Costa

Consider for a moment the idea that reality is pliable and bendable. Consider that real-life mystics have been massaging reality's pliable points using metaphysical techniques for millennia.

Magic is a topic that fascinates us! Stage magic dazzles and entertains us. But Stage magic, as you know, is cleverness and the art of illusion.

Of course, there are the high-tech computer-generated Images (CGI) that we see in modern motion pictures, the proverbial movie magic.

Then there is the magic that we read about in fairytales. It's powerful magic usually wielded by sorcerers and the ever-present stereotype witch. Magic in storybooks is made real by powerful prose and, most certainly, our own imaginations. In essence, it's theater-of-the-mind.



Then there is a real-life Magick. Please note the variant spelling with a "K" that magickal adepts used to denote the art of the reality-bending practice.

Of course, most people will tell you that magick is simply make-believe. They will assure you that such things do not exist. There are a few people who believe in the power of magick. Usually, these are not people who practice magick, nor do they really understand a thing about it. They are happy to bend your ear and tell you that magick is dangerous and not to be fooled around with. They also frequently say that those who practice magick are evil. There are also many people who believe that only a divine being can manifest genuine magick.

"Magic in storybooks is made real by powerful prose, most certainly, our own imaginations."

Still, others are skeptical, but they leave the door open for real magick. Unfortunately, they frequently expect real-world practitioners to perform abundant and mighty feats. They almost always want over-the-top and overt demonstrations. Yet many of these people are less than impressed when a genuine practitioner demonstrates some small feat that defies the laws of physics. "It's not good enough," they say. In fact, it's never good enough for them. They almost always label it a parlor trick or call it a coincidence.

truth of the matter is that Reality is a Construct; therefore, it is bendable and malleable. In a book, Buddhist Scholar Robert Thurman described how experienced lamas are literally immersed in the art of manipulating the "machine code" of reality. Magickal adepts have been doing this sort of thing to one degree or another for millennia.

Buddhist and Pagan Magickal practitioners alike understand that there is a Great Common Consciousness, which we magickal adepts call the Higher Self. We both understand the idea of the dualist view. An adept refers to our personal aspect of the great consciousness as the Younger Self and our day-to-day human perspective as the Talking Self.

The basic technique of magick is simple enough in theory. It only requires communicating our intention from our Talking Self to the Younger Self to the Great Consciousness (Higher Self) for manifestation. That sounds like a "prayer," doesn't it? In effect, it is a prayer of sorts. Bottom line, all efforts to manifest something through supernatural means work through this mechanism. Some might call the Great Consciousness by a God or Goddess name, or perhaps by a Buddhist Bodhisattva name. Folks grounded in Star Wars mythos might call it The Force.



By whatever name you call it, the principle is still the same; ultimately, we are merely trying to get our intention communicated to the Higher Self or Great Consciousness to manifest the causes to turn our thought into form.

This metaphysical communication also works in another way: the gathering of information which some call Divining. As a Buddhist lama once told me, meditate on it and be open to the knowledge. So instead of 'experiencing something to know it', you contemplate it and 'come to know it without experiencing it.'

A student asked a Zen teacher how he should learn a particular thing. The teacher simply told the student to "know it." The acquisition of knowledge without experiencing it. Touching the Great Consciousness also accomplishes this. This is the technique that military and intelligence remote viewers used to gather intelligence information through psychic means.



In the movies, we're shown that great sorcerers read aloud powerful spells from venerable ancient books of magic. Such a scene makes for high drama but falls short in terms of actual magickal technique.

As a mystic, I will take three old ladies focused on saying a rosary, verses a supposed great sorcerer reading a long-winded, verbose spell, any time. Why?

Communication with the younger self is on a more primal level. Verbose higher language doesn't cut it! To communicate with the younger self, you need to use art like symbols, play acting, music, and dance. Think of magickal practice as a non-verbal game of charades.

For example, you want to have a new bicycle manifest in your life. An excellent, simple technique is to cut out a lot of photos of the exact bike you want and stick them up on your mirror, your doors, and even the wall across from your toilet seat. Put the pictures up anywhere where you can observe the photos in a relaxed state of mind. The other approach would be to engage those three old ladies with the rosary beads. Why?

Reciting prayers is something people call a mantra. Repetition of a mantra is a time-honored technique for quieting-the-mind. So now we reach the heart of the matter, quieting-the-mind.

Whether we are trying to divine or remote view information from the Great Consciousness-Higher Self or trying to express a magickal request for the manifestation of something, in reality, the key to both scenarios is quieting-the-mind.

Other time-honored methods for quieting-the-mind are chanting, drumming and ceremonial dancing. Meditation is an excellent way to do

what all the different techniques eventually achieve, mental quieting.

The process of quieting the "monkey chatter" in your mind makes it possible to non-verbally communicate an intention from the younger self to the higher self. If you decide to learn meditation and perhaps the arts of magick, I caution you that to start any of it requires that you mute your phone during your efforts.

Quieting the mind is the primary requirement for working magick. The quieter the mind, the crisper the non-verbal imagery required for first-rate manifestation. Experienced magickal adepts understand that quieting the monkey mind chatter is what it is all about!

A couple of last thoughts, Magick isn't hard, and it isn't easy either. Practicing the art of magick requires training, focus, practice discipline and flexibility to adapt. A wise person does not dabble at magick! True Magickal Adepts make a heartfelt life's commitment to the art. Real Magickal Adepts learn that Magick is an **Art**, a **Science** and a **Lifestyle**.



**About the author: Cheryl Costa** has been a Witch for forty-nine years. She spent seven years in contemplative Buddhist monastic life. She has been an ordained Tibetan Yogini for the past twenty-nine years. She considers herself a simple contemplative sorceress.

# APRIL Festivals

**SPRING MYSTERIES FESTIVAL**—Seattle, Washington April 2 - 5, 2026

**THE BELTANE** – Darlington, Maryland April 29-May 3, 2026

**TRILLIUM SPRING GATHERING** – Cross Junction, Virginia TBA

**BROTHERHOOD BY THE BOG** – Virginia Beach, Virginia TBA

**FLORIDA PAGAN GATHERING** – Silver Springs, Florida April 29-May 3, 2026

**FERTILE GROUND GATHERING** – Triangle, Virginia April 30 - May 3, 2026

## MAY

**DAUGHTERS OF DIANA GATHERING** – San Bernardino, California, May 1-3, 2026

**BELTANE FESTIVAL** – Barneveld, Wisconsin May 1–3, 2026

**BELTAINE AT FOUR QUARTERS** – Artemas, Pennsylvania May 1 - 3, 2026

**ELF FEST** – Bedford, Indiana, May 20–25, 2026

**rites of spring** – Western Massachusetts May 20–25, 2026

# A DAY OR TWO in Demeter's Garden with Cassandee Meter

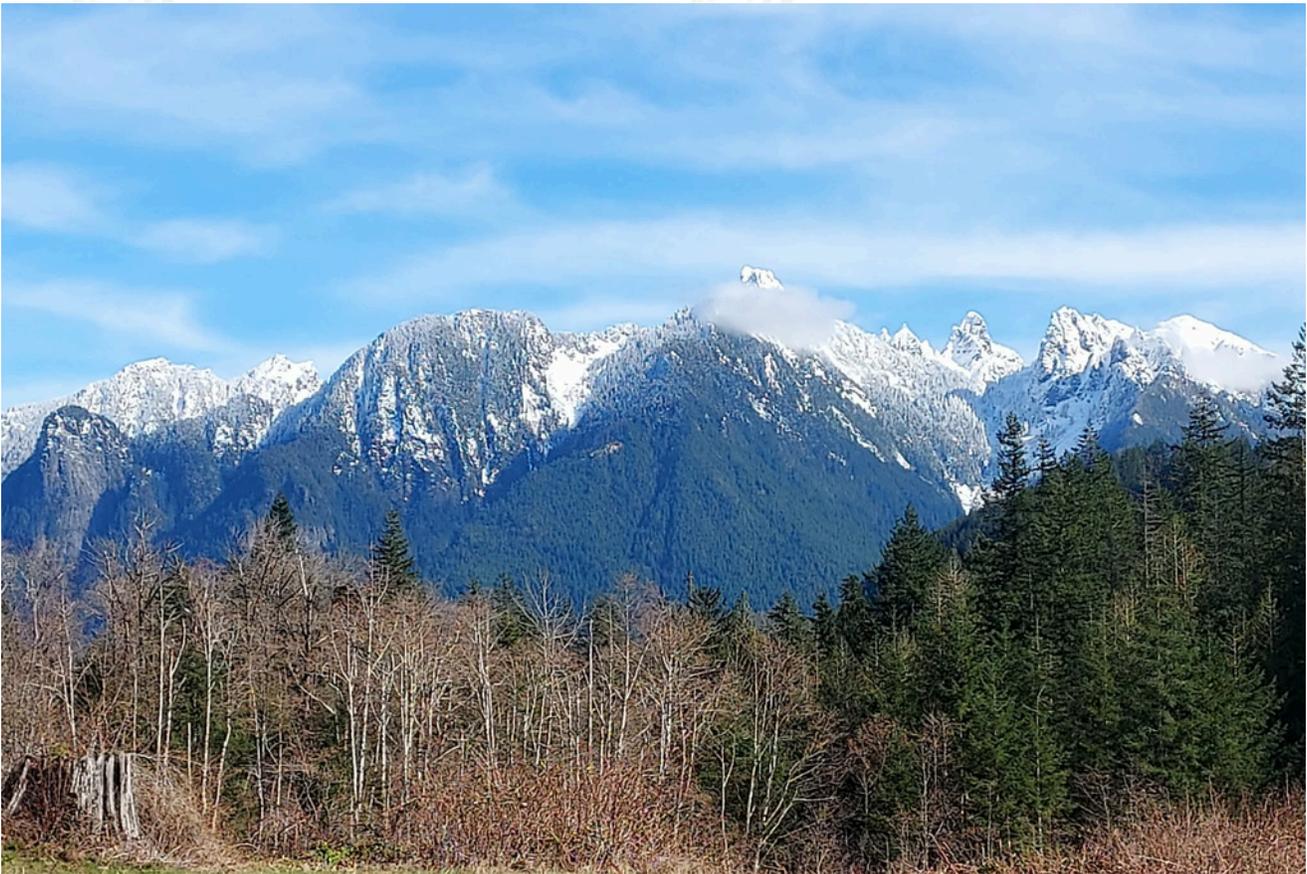


Photo taken from Demeter's Garden in Index, Washington, USA

## **Update From the Garden:**

Demeter's Garden at the [ATC Mother Church](#) in Index models remarkable resilience for us to aspire to. Overwintered crops, thriving herbs and flowers, lush weeds; the garden is a thriving cacophony of living things. Early efforts have been successful at restarting active cultivation, which included planting peas and radishes. These winter-hardy, early seedlings affirm our garden's role as a model of a sustainable food system. Save the Seeds Foundation's commitment to seed stewardship has been essential to this success, supporting our church community and the broader goals of food security and community resilience.

As we move into the early spring season, the garden reflects both the realities of winter adversity and the remarkable resilience that comes from our continuing efforts at cultivation and stewardship. Infrastructure and maintenance challenges are present and will need to be addressed before our full efforts can be successful this growing season. We had a windstorm this winter that left a broken fence and knocked over our beehives! The invasive berry brambles along the perimeter of the garden are thriving, and garden beds require rebuilding and top dressing. These issues may temporarily limit our productivity, but they also clearly identify where focused efforts will make the greatest difference.

Despite these challenges, the garden itself tells a hopeful story. A number of food crops successfully overwintered, including onions, watermelon radishes, beets, and scattered carrots growing among weed-heavy beds. In addition, many flowers and herbs—such as snapdragons, violas, calendula, thyme, and rosemary are thriving. This survival through winter conditions highlights the amazing productivity of our garden and points to an opportunity to extend our growing season to include a number of hardy overwintering crops.

Early-season volunteer work has already begun to bring the garden back into active production. It only took about 6 hours of weeding, removal of invasive brambles, and partial bed preparation to make it possible to plant peas and multiple varieties of radishes across several beds. These first seeds entering the receptive earth represent an important step forward into 2026 and signal the garden's readiness to re-enter its role as a living demonstration of sustainable food systems. I'm excited for another season of bountiful food production and lots of seeds to come!

This work would not be possible without the efforts of **Save the Seeds Foundation**. Years of directed effort are clearly reflected in the garden's ability to rebound after winter. The success of overwintered crops and early spring plantings is a direct testament to the hard work, ingenuity, integrity, and abiding mission of Save The Seeds Foundation. By safeguarding genetic diversity and ensuring access to resilient Food crops, Save the Seeds Foundation continues to support not only this garden, but the broader goal of long-term food security and community resilience.

Stay tuned for continuing updates on garden activities this growing season! If you would like to contribute time or funding to **Save the Seeds Foundation**, we welcome donations and gardening help! **[Savetheseedsfoundation.org](https://www.savetheseedsfoundation.org)**



**Cassan Dionne**, also known as Cassandee, is a First Degree Priestess in the Wise tradition of Wicca, studying under Belladonna Laveau and Dusty Dionne. As a botanist and long-time gardener, she serves as a Visory of the Temple of Demeter and Head Gardener at the ATC Mother Church in Save the Seeds Foundation's gardens of Demeter. Demeter's garden is dedicated to growing Heirloom Organic produce and is home to her beehives. Our mission is to be stewards of a human/nature relationship that involves collecting and saving the seeds and gardening wisdom for future generations. Cassan enjoys nothing more than immersing her senses in the garden, guiding new plant life, and listening to the wise voices of nature there. She is happy to bring other volunteers with her and to share her love of gardening with them. She invites local folks to make arrangements to come and garden with her sometime!



# APRIL Symbolism

## BIRTHSTONE:

Diamond



"Love, strength, courage"

## FLOWER:

Daisy



From Old English, the daisy comes from "day's eye."

## Aries

March 21  
thru  
April 19



## Symbol:

The Ram

## Motto:

*"I am!"*

## Taurus

April 20  
thru  
May 20



## Symbol:

The Bull

## Motto:

*"Keep going until you get it right!"*

# RE-ENCHANTING the Ordinary

WITH SHANNON MCNUTT

## Re-Enchanting the Ordinary: Making the Mundane Sacred

Most of us are waiting for permission to feel the sacred. We wait for the full moon. For the Sabbat. For candles to be lit and circles cast with precise words. We tell ourselves that spiritual life begins only with ritual — and quietly folds away when it ends. But what if the circle never closes? What if it follows you into the kitchen, onto the sidewalk, into the quiet moment before your feet touch the floor in the morning?

There is a breath before the day fully arrives — before the remembering of who you must be and what you must do. If you catch that breath, linger inside it for even a heartbeat, something subtle becomes clear: nothing is missing. The sacred was already here.

In Wiccan practice, a circle is cast to step between worlds. Yet the more I live, the more I wonder if the worlds were ever truly separate.

Perhaps the circle is not a boundary but a lens — not something we enter, but something we learn to see through. Every threshold of the day offers this lens. Your feet touching the floor. The doorway between rooms. The pause before sending a message. The quiet inhale before the exhale. Fire, Earth, Air, and Water are present — not in abstraction, but in tangible rhythm: sunlight warming your skin, the wooden floor beneath your feet, the whisper of wind through leaves, the soft flow of water in a cup or sink. All that is required is attention.

***“The Wheel of the Year continues to turn, whether we formally celebrate or not.”***

In the kitchen, transformation hums quietly. Grain softens. Leaves release their essence. Flame turns raw into nourishment. Stirring a pot becomes an act of intention. If your mind is restless, stir in calm. If your heart is weary, stir in warmth. The mundane becomes magical not by declaration, but by devotion. Magic whispers through the ordinary.

The Wheel of the Year continues to turn. Lady and Lord move through the seasons whether we formally celebrate or not. Autumn leans toward harvest, asking what is ready to be gathered — and what must be released. Winter draws the light inward, reminding us that rest is sacred. Spring exhales green possibility. Summer ripens joy. Even small seasonal gestures — tasting apples, opening windows, noticing sunlight shift — honor the turning Wheel.



Throughout the day, thresholds invite us. Step consciously. Pause. Let one breath stretch before opening a door, before replying to words, before moving from one space into another. These small moments are our quietest spell work. Even household chores transform. Sweeping can mirror clearing stagnant thoughts. Water running over dishes can rinse tension from your hands. Folding laundry becomes an offering. The act itself need not change; the magic is in the attention.

We often mistake devotion for grand rituals. But it frequently wears ordinary clothes. It is consistency. Care. Presence. The kettle singing on the stove, the plants on your windowsill, the rise and fall of your own chest — these are all ways the sacred announces itself. Attention, like magic, strengthens with practice. There will be days when it falters. Choose a small anchor: light a candle before dinner, stand at a window

to feel the sky shift, place a hand over your heart before sleep. Let that be your circle.

The sacred expands when recognized. Cooking becomes communion. Walking becomes a pilgrimage. Rest becomes winter wisdom. Beginnings taste like spring. Letting go feels like an autumn wind. Celebration ripens like summer fruit. The world does not need more magic. It is already enchanted. We only need to meet it with senses awake and breath willing.

Tomorrow morning, when that first quiet inhale arrives, pause inside it. Feel the floor. Feel the air. Feel the simple miracle of being here. You are not stepping out of the sacred when you rise. You are stepping further into it. The circle never closed. It widened.



**Shannon McNutt** is a pagan writer who has been practicing for over 15 years in the New England area. She fell in love with the written word at a young age and has been crafting worlds from stardust ever since. This passion drove her to obtain an MA in English from Framingham State University.

# WATERBATH CANNING

*With Teresa Jacobs*

## Hello, My Canning Friends!

We're rolling right along in our Water Bath Canning journey together. In our last newsletter, we focused on getting set up — tools, jars, and safety basics.

Now it's time for me to introduce you to my system of canning, which is called the PACKS Method of Water Bath Canning.

## What Is the Packs Method of Water Bath Canning?

Water bath canning has been used for generations to preserve fruits, pickles, jams, and other high-acid foods. While many home canners follow either the *raw-pack* or *hot-pack* method, I developed what I call **The Packs Method**—a simple and practical approach that focuses on consistency, flavor, and efficient jar filling.

In this blog series, I'm going to walk you step-by-step through how the Packs Method works and how you can use it to preserve your own food at home confidently.

## Why I Created the Packs Method

When I first started water bath canning, I noticed that many instructions were confusing for beginners. Some recipes required raw packing fruit directly into jars, while others called for hot packing after cooking the produce.

Both methods work, but they often lead to common frustrations such as:

- Floating fruit
- Inconsistent jar filling
- Uneven texture
- Liquid loss during processing



The **Packs Method** was developed to simplify the process and make it easier to produce reliable results every time.

### **What Makes the Packs Method Different?**

The Packs Method focuses on three key principles:

#### **1. Proper Ingredient Preparation**

Preparing your fruits or vegetables the right way before filling jars helps ensure better texture and even distribution inside each jar.

#### **2. Consistent Jar Packing**

Instead of loosely filling jars, the Packs Method focuses on structured packing that reduces trapped air and improves the final product.

#### **3. Balanced Liquid Coverage**

Ensuring that fruit, vegetables, brine, or syrup are balanced in the jar helps maintain flavor, color, and preservation quality.



### **What You Can Preserve With Water Bath Canning?**

Water bath canning works best for high-acid foods, including:

- Fruits
- Jams and jellies
- Pickles
- Tomato products (with proper acidification)
- Fruit syrups and sauces

Throughout this series, I'll show you how the **Packs Method** can be used with many of these foods.

#### **What You'll Learn in This Series**

In this series, we'll cover:

- Differences between the raw pack and hot pack methods
- Preparing fruits and vegetables for canning
- Step-by-step instructions for the Packs Method
- Troubleshooting common canning problems
- Storage and shelf life tips

If you're new to canning, don't worry—this series is designed to help beginners get started, while also sharing useful tips for experienced home canners. By the end of the series, you'll have the confidence to build a full pantry filled with your own home-canned foods.

#### **Ready to Start Canning? Lets Begin Raw Pack vs Hot Pack!**

#### **Raw Pack vs Hot Pack: Understanding the Foundations of Water Bath Canning**

In my last post, I shared a little about who I am, the equipment I use for water bath canning, and one of my favorite recipes for strawberry jam. If you're new to canning, that post gave you the basic tools to get started.

Today we're going to talk about something that often confuses new home canners: **packing styles**.

Before you can understand my **Packs Method**, it helps to understand the two traditional approaches used in water bath canning, **raw pack** and **hot pack**. Once you see how those work, you'll better understand why I developed my own approach.



## What Is a Raw Pack?

A raw pack means placing uncooked food directly into jars before processing them in the water bath canner.

For example, when raw packing fruit, you would:

- Wash and prepare the fruit
- Pack it directly into clean jars
- Pour syrup, juice, or water over the fruit
- Leave the recommended headspace
- Process the jars in the water bath canner

## Benefits of Raw Packing

Raw packing is often recommended for beginners because it is simple and quick. Advantages include:

- Less preparation time
- Minimal cooking before canning
- Works well for some fruits

## Challenges of Raw Packing

However, raw packing can sometimes create issues in the finished jars:

- Fruit may **float to the top**
- Air may remain trapped between pieces of fruit
- Texture may become uneven after processing

Many first-time canners experience these problems and assume they did something wrong when in reality it's just a characteristic of the method.

## What Is a Hot Pack?

A hot pack involves heating food before placing it into jars.

With this method, you:

- Prepare the fruit or vegetables
- Cook or heat them in syrup, juice, or brine
- Pack the hot food into jars
- Add cooking liquid
- Process in the water bath canner

## Benefits of Hot Packing

Heating the food before canning helps remove air from the product and can improve the overall quality. Benefits include:

- Better jar filling
- Less floating fruit
- More consistent texture
- Often, longer shelf stability

## Challenges of Hot Packing

Hot packing can require a bit more work.

Possible drawbacks include:

- Additional cooking time
- Softer fruit if overcooked
- More steps in the process

For experienced canners, this isn't usually a problem, but beginners can find the instructions complicated.

*"The way food is packed into jars affects several important things."*

## Why Pack Style Matters

The way food is packed into jars affects several important things:

- Food safety
- Jar sealing
- Appearance
- Texture
- Flavor preservation

Choosing the right pack style helps ensure that your finished jars look good, seal properly, and store well in your pantry.

## Where the Packs Method Comes In

After years of water bath canning, I found that both raw pack and hot pack methods had strengths but also some weaknesses.

That's what led me to develop what I call **The Packs Method**.

The Packs Method focuses on:

- Preparing food in a way that reduces trapped air
- Packing jars consistently
- Balancing the food and liquid inside the jar

This approach helps create jars that are:

- More evenly filled
- Less likely to develop floating fruit
- Consistent from jar to jar

It combines some of the advantages of traditional styles while simplifying the process.



## Looking Ahead

Now that you understand the difference between raw pack and hot pack, you're ready for the next step in this series.

In the next month's post, we'll talk about how to properly prepare fruits for the Packs Method, including the small preparation steps that make a big difference in the finished jars.

Those preparation details are one of the keys to making the Packs Method work successfully.



## This Month's Recipe:

### Blueberry-Lemon Jelly

Yield: 6-7 8-ounce, half-pint jars

#### Ingredients:

- 4 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1 cup water
- 1 package (1.75 oz) fruit pectin
- 5½ cups sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

#### Instructions:

1. Mash blueberries and combine with water in a large saucepan.
2. Simmer 10 minutes, then strain through a jelly bag overnight or use a fine mesh strainer.
3. Measure juice and add lemon juice and pectin.
4. Bring to a rolling boil and add sugar all at once.
5. Boil 1 minute, stirring constantly, remove from heat, and skim foam.
6. Fill sterilized jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace.
7. Process in boiling water bath for 10 minutes plus altitude based on where you live.



**Teresa Jacobs** has been gardening since she was eight and canning since she was ten, learning the timeless skills that have been passed down through generations in her family. Over the years, she has transformed her passion into a mission: helping others gain confidence and joy in home canning through clear, practical guidance and her friendly, encouraging style.



**Teresa Jacobs**  
**Canning**

**The Wonderful World**  
**of Water Bath Canning**



# DYING to KNOW

*With Diana Rowan*

## **My Dearest Gentle Reader,**

It's me again!

This month's column is a little bit different than the others I have written thus far. Okay, maybe it is a lot different. My previous columns have been focused on death positivity and the various aspects of planning one's own end-of-life affairs. This one is themed around a different part of the dying process, one that often goes overlooked by even the most experienced death worker.

It is the act of living.

We death workers, whether we are death doulas, funeral directors, or simply hospice volunteers, often forget that there needs to be a balance in life. This is especially true for those of us who are pagan.

*But, Diana, everyone needs balance in their life. That doesn't just apply to those in the deathcare industry.*

That is true. Anyone who has experienced life's chaos understands that an unbalanced life leads to stress and stress can lead to illness. That is why self-care is so important, and I am personally glad that our culture seems to have eagerly embraced that wellness practice.

Self-care is especially important for deathcare workers. However, I propose that it should look a bit different for pagan practitioners.

Especially if you practice any Wiccan tradition or any practice that follows Nature's cycle.

Does the year spend all its time in Winter?

Does the year spend all its time in Summer?

No and no again.

It does not matter where you are in the world.

You could be in the Faroe Islands or in Eritrea and you would still experience a seasonal change. The daytime would also turn into nighttime. The present into the past. Life into Death.

There's that word. Life.

***"We need Life.  
We need to live."***

That is what we need to balance our deathcare practice. We need Life. We need to live. We cannot just stay in the dark. We need to step into the sun to feel its warmth. We must worship Apollo alongside Artemis.

Contrary to popular belief, you absolutely can be a goth babe and love the sun. Everyone needs Vitamin D, after all. Plenty of witches focus on the deep, dark, and mysterious. A side effect of getting too deep into the dark is being susceptible to depression.



Myself included. I am a Scorpio. I also work with dark goddesses. Plenty of deathworkers are like me. We often forget that we need the light and warmth of the sun.

If not for the Light, we would forget the sacredness of the Dark.

So, how do you incorporate the sun into your practice? Perhaps the energy of life is not in the form of the sun, perhaps it is in the form of fire. It is the time of Beltane, and that's a fire sabbat.

Beltane is the perfect time to practice life magic or to bring fertility into your practice. I must admit the most recent season of *Bridgerton* on Netflix did help inspire this month's column. Benedict, the second eldest son of the *Bridgerton* family, refuses to marry someone who does not have that (metaphorical) spark of life in them. It's quite a scandalous season.

However, it does pose a most relevant question, my Dearest Gentle Reader.

### ***What sparks life in you?***

Your partner in death,

*Diana Rowan*



**Diana Rowan** is a First Degree Wiccan priestess, specializing in funerary magic. She is a death doula born and raised in Nebraska. Diana holds a Bachelor's Degree from Woolston-Steen Theological Seminary (WSTS), is a member of the Spiritual Psychics Association (SPA), the National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA), and The Order of the Good Death.

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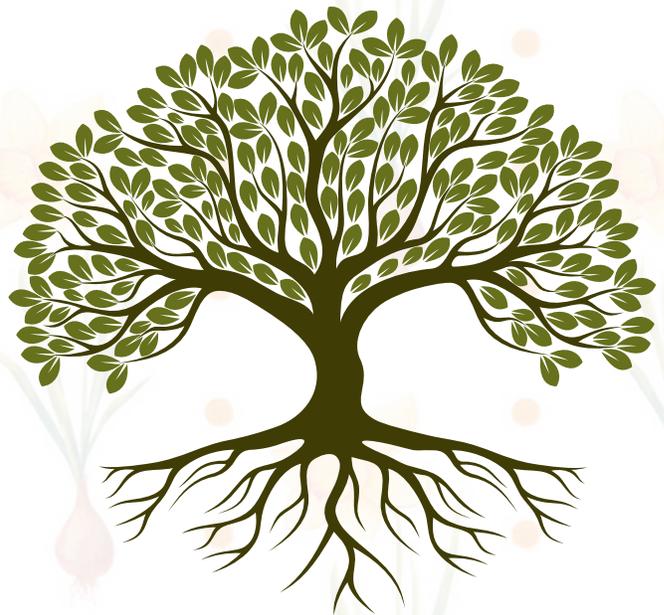
# WEAVERS of the Web

*With Malakai Silverstar*

## **Beltane at Weavers Of The Web**

Beltane at Weavers of the Web is when we, in Lansing, truly know spring has taken its hold on the ground. Ostara was the spark that creates life, but Beltane is the fertile earth beginning to bring forth the first fruits of spring's bounty. Beltane is where life begins.

What is Beltane to the pagan community? On the wheel of the year, Beltane is represented by the runes Eihwaz and Perthro. Eihwaz is the great yew tree; it is transformation, endurance, and the bridge between death and life. It is Yggdrasil, and a phallic symbol of eternal life. Perthro is the lot cup; it is fate, adaptation, and the hidden mysteries. Together, they bring new life. Beltane is associated with the sacral chakra, carrying the energy of Adonis' meeting Aphrodite. In Tarot, it is the abundance, fertility, and creativity of the Empress card, and the stability, security, and authority of the Emperor. Beltane is a fire holiday that comes at the height of the earth season, blessed by the abundance and prosperity of the gnomes and brownies.



What is Beltane to those who practice Wicca? It is spring at its height; it is the "soft launch" of summer. The world outside is waking up; did you know that May 2nd is Monarch Butterfly Day? It is a time of rapid transformation and new life, the celebration of the earth's fertility and new beginnings. Beltane is the blossoming of flowers, ideas, relationships, and business ventures. The ground, our ideas, and our plans start to show what spring's progress has been laboring for. At Beltane, we take a minute to focus on the divine masculine energy projecting its fertile seed into the receptive, divine feminine energy. This energetic coupling brings fruit, growth, and sustainability.



Did I mention that Beltane is a fire holiday? It's a celebration with bonfires, blossoms, and bosoms ... ahem, besoms. It's a day of celebration and consummation, whether that be with a partner, a creative task, or a business venture. It is a day of nurturing, nourishment, healing, and soothing for the receptive. It is a day of protecting, defending, building, and providing for the projective. Beltane is a holiday for all who wish to be productive, for those who clearly identify as masculine or feminine, and for those who fall somewhere in between.

Many deities, such as Freya, Venus, Adonis, Aphrodite, Pan, and Cernunnos, have been called on to help us celebrate. Gods of fire, passion, fertility, and manifestation are all called in one tradition or another. The goddess Flora has even been part of the celebration. Druids have made flower crowns for her and jumped over fires to bless their fertility and that of their crops.

At Weavers, we celebrate Beltane with feasts, family, and mirthful frivolity. Here, you will find full families celebrating, children making art projects, and adults preparing for business ventures and other creative passions. If you are lucky, you will even find couples handfasting, getting married, renewing their vows, and braiding the maypole. We prepare the receptive hole in the ground to receive the projective maypole, adorned with ribbons, while the sacred in-between tends the fire and prepares the seed.

After that? It's time for the handfastings, of course! Then we place the maypole and dance around it, celebrating the fertility it brings to our lives. What a rich and lively energy raise! After all that hard work, we ground and refuel with our feast, brought by all the members of our community.

Now it's time to start the mundane work; tend what you want to see grow in your life this season. Happy Beltane and blessed be!



**Weavers of the Web, ATC**  
***Lansing's Pagan Home since 2018***

# REMEMBERING Death at Beltane

*With Rev. Lilliana Blackstar*

People don't often talk about death at Beltane - a spring festival that celebrates union and fertility. In the Northern Hemisphere, we celebrate Beltane in the middle of Taurus Season, around May 1 - just as the flowers are blossoming and the weather is shifting away from rain into days of warmth and sunshine.

Traditionally, Beltane is a celebration of the metaphorical union of the Divine Feminine with the Divine Masculine; a union that results in fertile lands, pollination of crops, and the energetic conception of new energy that will carry life forward. There are many ways that Beltane is celebrated - usually it is a time of dancing, celebrating, and opening up to the energies of pleasure, bounty, and our wild and instinctual natures. Bonfires, feasting, decorating with flowers, courtship and flirting, and prayers for fertile crops and success in our lives are usually the focus of our Beltane celebrations.

In my initiatory tradition, we are taught that the work of witches is to maintain the balance. We recognize that energies that flow must be balanced, and a life out of balance will generally not propagate happy results. Each month, when we honor the Full Moon, we are given an opportunity to find this Balance in our lives, as the Full Moon will shine from the opposite astrological sign of the sun. Thus, at the season of Beltane, when the sun is in Taurus, the Full Moon will be in the sign of Scorpio. (If you are in the Southern Hemisphere, the season of Taurus comes in the middle of fall, with Samhain)

Scorpio is the sign most commonly associated with Death. More aptly, Scorpio is the sign of Secrets, the Hidden and the Unknown - and since we can never truly know the mysteries of Death



until we experience it, Death is the realm of Scorpio. Death is that truly secret final journey we will take, that will be hidden from us until the time we cross that boundary. Scorpio is therefore associated with the dead and the ancestral realm - as well as secrets, mysteries, and the occult.

So here in the Northern Hemisphere, at the end of April and beginning of May, we will be celebrating Beltane - a feast of fertility and sex and pleasure, alongside a Scorpio Full Moon - reminding us of death and endings. This is the balance. North of the Equator, we will have our Beltane festivities with Spring to celebrate fertile lands, but in six months, we will celebrate Samhain and watch as the world settles into a cold and dark time when we cannot grow the crops. In the Southern Hemisphere, we will celebrate Samhain at the time of the Scorpio Full Moon, and in six months, observe Beltane near the  
21  
time of the Taurus Full Moon.



We can dance with both of these energies year after year at both Beltane and Samhain - remembering to honor death even at times of spring and rebirth. Remembering to honor birth and spring even at times of death. Ideally, we learn to carry the energies of Taurus and Scorpio with us at all times, through the whole year, as we embrace the balance of Light and Dark and find inspiration to celebrate and enjoy life to its fullest potential every day!

**Sun in Taurus: April 19 - May 20, 2026  
(Tropical Astrology)**

**Scorpio Full Moon: May 1, 2026**

**Astrological Beltane: May 5, 2026 (Sun at 15 degrees Taurus)**

In truth, fertility and death are deeply connected. In agriculture, we know that soil is fertilized by rot and decay, by mushrooms and fungi, and by the droppings and waste of living animals. Without this process of decay, the soil becomes dead and dry, unable to support the growth of new plants.

Look deeper and see beyond Beltane - to the balance that we seek between Taurus and Scorpio. Taurus is the sign of embodiment and pleasure, of our earthly experiences like food and shelter, and all our embodied needs. Through Taurus, we learn what we enjoy and how to preserve or make our enjoyment more sustainable. Through Taurus, we seek to prolong our human embodiment by making sure we have food and shelter, and we seek to increase our enjoyment of life by making sure we have continued access to the things that give our life value and meaning.

Through Scorpio energy, we are reminded that everything ends - nothing in this physical realm is permanent. Through Scorpio, we learn to let go, to transmute or transform our values into spiritual form that is hopefully carried with us in some way through that death portal. We learn to find value in that which is not physical, but spiritual, and we experience endings, change, and rebirth.

#### About The Author:

Lilliana Blackstar is a 2nd Degree Priestess of the WISE tradition ATC, and the Maiden of The Ever Green Hearth in Centralia, WA. Lilliana is also a professional Astrologer at [www.hestiasmuse.net](http://www.hestiasmuse.net) and a certified member of the Spiritual Professionals Association. You can learn more about their astrological services and writings by finding Hestia's Muse on Facebook and Instagram.



# WAVEBOUND Whispers

*With Silas the Sea Witch*

We already know that the human body is made up of around 70% water or so. Men actually are more water than women statistically. The moon affects the tides, so that can explain how some people act crazy during the full moon.

The thing about water, though, is that the power it has over us is underestimated. Without water, we day in a mere few days. Too much water can drown us. Being slightly dehydrated can make us ill. Not paying attention to our bodies can have dire consequences.

Are you comfortable with your body? Recently, I saw a joke in Spanish. It was another self-imposed joke about being overweight. Since we have such a high percentage of water, I'm not overweight, I'm just flooded. Let's talk about the perfect body. Go to your bathroom. Yes, keep the light on. Gently disrobe and look at yourself. There you go, the perfect body! If you don't believe me, just ask Aphrodite, and she will tell you the same thing. You are perfect the way that you are, and nobody should tell you otherwise.

If you have image issues and wish to change the look of your body, be sure that you are doing it for the right reasons. "Mark called me fat." Is not a good reason. "I'm out of breath quickly." Is a good reason since it has to do with your health. Being a little bit bigger (like me) doesn't make you less attractive or less healthy.

This month, I'd like each of us to take a nice bath. Add your favorite herbs, light your favorite candles. Make it a romantic night for you, yourself, and you. Tell yourself how much you love yourself and your body. Invite Aphrodite to participate in this, too. Make a ritual of it.



## And now a message from our dear Ocean Mother:

*"Child of tide and breath... come closer.  
I have watched you stand at the shoreline of your  
own reflection, measuring yourself against waves  
that were never meant to be still.  
Do you not see?  
I do not sculpt myself into sameness.  
I am vast in some places, shallow in others.  
I am calm one moment, storming the next.  
I carry salt, shadow, life, wreckage, and treasure—  
and none of it makes me less sacred.  
Your body is not meant to be a statue.  
It is meant to be a sea.  
It swells. It softens. It changes with unseen moons.  
It holds stories in its tides—every mark, every  
curve, every place you have called "too much" or  
"not enough" is simply a current that has carried  
you forward.  
You have been taught to fear your depths.  
To smooth your surface.  
To apologize for taking up space.  
But I tell you this:  
The creatures of my deepest waters do not ask  
permission to exist.*

*The waves do not shrink themselves to please the  
shore.  
The tides do not hold back out of shame.  
Why should you?  
Come back into your body as you would enter my  
waters—not to judge, but to feel.  
Let your breath be a tide.  
Let your skin be kissed by your own awareness.  
Let yourself be held, not corrected.  
You are not here to be consumed by the gaze of  
others.  
You are here to live, to move, to become.  
And like me, you are allowed to change without ever  
needing to justify your beauty.  
So when you stand before your reflection again, do  
not ask, "Am I enough?"*

*Instead ask:*

*"Can I honor the ocean I am today?"*

*And listen...*

*I am always answering you in the rhythm of your  
breath."*





*“Honor yourself,  
honor the  
ocean mother,  
honor the lord  
and the lady.  
Yes you are  
enough. Next I  
give you a  
bathtub ritual  
to help with any  
negative  
feelings you  
may have about  
your body.”*

## **“The Abyssal Phoenix: A Rite of Tidal Rebirth”**

A sacred bathing ritual to dissolve body shame and rise sovereign, sensual, and seen

### ❖ **The Current You Are Entering**

This is not just a bath.

This is a descent into the abyss...

Where distorted reflections dissolve,

Where the body is no longer judged—only  
felt,

And where you rise not as who you were told  
to be...

...but as something ancient, sovereign, and  
ocean-born.

You are not becoming beautiful.

**You are remembering you already are.**

### ❖ **Ritual Tools**

- Salt (sea salt preferred — the ocean remembers)
- A dark bowl of cool water (your abyssal mirror)
- A candle (blue, black, or gold)
- Optional adornments: shells, seaweed, pearls, dark florals
- Oil for anointing (coconut, jasmine, rose, or something sensual)
- Paper + pen

### ❖ **Step I: The Invocation of the Deep**

Light your candle. Stand before the water.

Place one hand on your heart, one on your body.

Speak:

"Ancient ocean, keeper of truth beneath illusion,  
I call upon the depths that do not lie.

Strip from me the false reflections I have worn.

Return me to my raw, untamed form."

Pause. Feel the shift.

### ❖ **Step II: Naming the Illusion**

Write—without censoring—every story you've carried about your body:

- "Too much"
- "Not enough"
- "Wrong"
- "Unworthy"

Let it be messy. Let it be real.

Then whisper:

"These were never mine. These were given.

And I return them now to the void."

Place the paper nearby.

### ❖ **Step III: Entering the Abyss**

Slip into the bath slowly.

This is not gentle water.

This is the deep ocean—dark, ancient, knowing.

Imagine:

- The water turning inky, shimmering with deep blue light
- You descending below surface illusions
- No eyes here but truth

Say softly:

"In the depths, I am unseen... and finally, I am free."

### ❖ **Step IV: The Unmaking**

Submerge yourself.

Feel the water pull at:

- Every harsh word
- Every comparison
- Every moment you turned against your own body

Visualize it unraveling from your skin like threads dissolving into salt.

Speak (or think):

"Unmake what was never truth.

Unbind me from distortion.

Let the false self drown."

Stay here as long as needed.

### ❖ **Step V: The Sea Witch's Becoming**

Now... something stirs.

From beneath you, from within you

—

a presence rises.

Not fire—

but a phoenix of tide and current, vast and luminous.

It moves through your body.

Where it passes:

- Shame turns to sensation
- Numbness becomes aliveness
- Rejection becomes possession

You feel yourself again.

Say:

"I claim this body as mine.

Not to perfect—

but to inhabit.

Not to fix—

but to feel."

### ❖ **Step VI: The Abyssal Crown** (Rebirth Pour)

Take your bowl of cool water.

This is sacred.

Pour it slowly over your head, neck, or heart.

Feel the shock. The clarity. The return.

Speak:

"I rise from the deep—

not cleansed, but claimed.

Not softened, but sovereign.

I am the tide reborn in flesh."



### ❖ **Step VII: Devotion to the Flesh**

Step out, but do not rush.

Before drying fully, anoint your body with oil.

Touch yourself like ritual—not routine.

No fixing. No critique.

Only presence.

Say:

"This body is not an object to be seen—

it is a vessel to be lived.

I choose to dwell within it fully."

If you use a mirror, gaze like a sea witch:

Not for approval.

For recognition.

### ❖ **Step VIII: The Release to the Deep**

Take your paper.

Tear it slowly.

Drop it in the trash or (if safe) wet it and let it dissolve.

As the bath drains, watch it go.

Whisper:

"The tide has taken it.

It does not return."

### ❖ **Closing Sigil**

"By salt and tide,

By depth and breath,

I sever the illusion

And return to the body that is mine."

## ❖ Notes

This ritual is not about loving your body every moment. It is about ending the war.

Do it when:

- You feel disconnected
- You catch yourself shrinking
- You are ready to come back to yourself

Repeat as needed. The ocean never tires of reclaiming you.

Now how do you feel?

We have already completed the first quarter of the year, and Beltane is our next celebration, a day of love, laughter, joy, and warmth.

How will you celebrate it?

Will you dance around the maypole and be joyous in your newfound comfort?



**Silas the Sea Witch** is very active all over the pagan world. He founded the Mystical Rainbow Tradition of Wicca (Incorporated in Michigan State as the Mystical Rainbow Church International, Inc) in 2023, where he has developed the 3-degree Clergy and non-clergy program. He is an active member of the Spiritual Professionals Association and also runs his own small business, "Silas the Sea Witch, LLC." You can find him on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as **silastheseawitch**. You can support his small business by browsing his online POD store that has witchy/sea witch/astrology designs at <http://silastheseawitch.store>

Additionally, if you are interested in a private reading with him or to find out more about what he does, feel free to visit his BuyMeACoffee at <http://silastheseawitch.com>, which also has a monthly subscription service.



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# Thank you!

Dusty Dionne for Menhir News!

Diana Rowan for Dying to Know!

Teresa Jacobs for Water Bath Canning!

Silas The Sea Witch for Wavebound Whispers!

Shannon McNutt for Re-Enchanting the Ordinary!

Cheryl Costa for Magic: The Art of Bending Reality!

Rev. Lilliana Blackstar for Reframing the Retrograde!

Malakai Silverstar for Beltane at Weavers of the Web!

Cassandee Meter for A Day or Two in Demeter's Garden!

*& All of you who Subscribe!*