



*Glennie Kindred*

*Letting in  
the*  
**WILD EDGES**

This is a sample taster chapter.

To purchase a print copy of the full 304 page book, see:

[www.green-shopping.co.uk/letting-in-the-wild-edges.html](http://www.green-shopping.co.uk/letting-in-the-wild-edges.html)

for the eBook, see:

[www.green-shopping.co.uk/letting-in-the-wild-edges-ebook.html](http://www.green-shopping.co.uk/letting-in-the-wild-edges-ebook.html)

*Letting in  
the*

**WILD EDGES**

**Written and Illustrated by  
Glennie Kindred**

**PERMANENT PUBLICATIONS**

Published by  
Permanent Publications  
Hyden House Ltd  
The Sustainability Centre  
East Meon  
Hampshire GU32 1HR  
England  
Tel: 01730 823 311  
Fax: 01730 823 322  
Overseas: (international code +44 - 1730)  
Email: [enquiries@permaculture.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@permaculture.co.uk)  
Web: [www.permanentpublications.co.uk](http://www.permanentpublications.co.uk)

Distributed in the USA by  
Chelsea Green Publishing Company, PO Box 428, White River Junction, VT 05001  
[www.chelseagreen.com](http://www.chelseagreen.com)

© 2013 Glennie Kindred  
The right of Glennie Kindred to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work has been asserted by her  
in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1998

First published 2013, reprinted 2014, 2015, 2016

Designed by Tim Harland

Cover design by Sarah Howerd, [www.sideways14.co.uk](http://www.sideways14.co.uk)



Printed in the UK by Bell & Bain Ltd, Thornliebank, Glasgow

All paper from FSC certified mixed sources

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-profit international organisation established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 85623 117 6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, rebound or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Hyden House Limited.

**Disclaimer**

The information in this book has been compiled for general guidance and is not intended to replace the advice and treatments of qualified herbal practitioners or trained health professionals. Do not attempt to self-diagnose or self-prescribe for serious long term problems. Heed the cautions given and if pregnant or already taking prescribed medication, seek professional advice before using herbal remedies. In the event you use any of the information in this book for yourself, which is your constitutional right, the author and the publisher assume no responsibility for your actions.

So far as the author is aware the information is correct and up to date at the time of publishing.

# CONTENTS

Foreword by Maddy Harland	vii
Preface	ix
<b>PART 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Chapter 1 Out On The Land	3
Chapter 2 The Wild Gardener	21
Chapter 3 Kitchen Medicine	35
Chapter 4 Seasonal Celebrations	55
<b>PART 2 A SEASONAL GUIDE</b>	<b>69</b>
Season 1 On the Edge of Winter October into November	73
Season 2 Winter's Wild Edge December into January	93
Season 3 On the Edge of Spring January into February	111
Season 4 Spring's Wild Edge March into April	127
Season 5 On the Edge of Summer April into May	151
Season 6 Summer's Wild Edge June into July	175
Season 7 On the Edge of Autumn July into August	195
Season 8 Autumn's Wild Edge September into October	219
Cycles Within Cycles	247
Plant Reference Guide	249
Resources and Recommendations	281
Index	285

## PREFACE

In these changing times, we find ourselves living on the edge between the old and the new. We are moving into a new understanding that all life on Earth is functioning as one whole living ecosystem, and the Earth is an intelligent living being, a self-regulating, self-evolving, complex system. We can no longer perceive ourselves as separate from the rest of life on Earth, and with this realisation we move into the next stage of our evolution. This evolutionary shift into the holistic perspective is the great adaptation we are called to make for the sake of the Earth and for our own survival.

We have centuries of conditioning to undo and unravel in order to bring this new perspective into the reality of our everyday lives. The present ecological chaos is the legacy of the old mechanical worldview, which science no longer supports but which has influenced our society for hundreds of years and continues to be embedded in the way we relate to the Earth. This old conditioning has created our isolation from nature and our over-reliance on logical thinking, but this is now changing. Many of us are naturally bringing ourselves back into balance, becoming more willing to trust what our intuition, instincts and hearts tell us and returning full circle to the ancient understanding that 'what we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves'.

Society has changed too, becoming more eclectic and more open. We are mixing with people and influences from all over the world and the more we celebrate our similarities as people, appreciate our different cultures and learn from the legacy of the past, we move together as one people, to work together in harmony with the Earth, our unique and special home.

We are being pulled at a deep cellular level by the need to change but we are not always certain of the way forward. Change begins with joyfully embracing our willingness to be adaptable; trusting our instincts and holding out our hands to help others along the way. Change begins by opening our hearts and exploring under-used parts of ourselves, there on the fertile edges of our consciousness. When we let in the wild edges of our imaginations and our creativity, valuing the spontaneous and intuitive, we create a form of natural alchemy. This leads us to 'eureka' moments of illogical brilliance, as the spark of inspiration releases the creative fire of new solutions from which we can find new ways forward.



We, like the Earth, have a huge capacity to self heal, regenerate and grow. By encouraging our wild edges to flourish we engage our whole selves in the process of change and healing. When both sides of our selves, the logical and the intuitive are valued, we access deeper levels of our understanding. Where these two edges meet, our new holistic perspective grows. We learn through our experiences and from our experiences we change and evolve. It feels important to me that whatever we do, we must spend as much time as we can outside, engaging with nature, appreciating the wonder of the natural world around us. This will help us to stay grounded and keep us connected to the life force that sustains and nourishes us. Our shift into becoming aware of the infinite interconnectedness of all life begins when we make the decision to let down the barriers of our separation and experience the beautiful unity of life for ourselves. When we let go of our need to control nature and we celebrate nature's natural wisdom and unity, we move from being dictators to being co-creators. We are no longer separate but part of the whole.

This is a book about our relationship with the natural world, never far from us once we let it in. It encourages us to keep our feet firmly on the ground, to be 'earthed' through our daily relationship with the Earth beneath our feet and the web of life that surrounds us and is embedded within us. 'Letting in the Wild Edges' is about letting new things in, letting new parts of ourselves flourish and grow. To begin this new exciting adventure we have to let go of some of the old social and mental patterns that hold us back; our fear of change, fear of our intuition, fear of becoming too fey, fear of the dark, of walking in the countryside on our own and fear of using our wild native plants as food or medicine. It is time to let go of these old isolating beliefs. It is time to be open to the bigger picture and let in our trust. I encourage you to let your heart energy expand and create room in yourself for the wild edges of your intuition and instincts to flourish. These often neglected parts of ourselves are there on the margins of our greater selves, waiting for us to engage with them, to learn how to use them and bring ourselves back into balance.

This is a book about communication, relationships and inter-relationships. It is about our joyful expansion from isolation into the vast and infinite network of interaction and inclusion, as we expand into the interconnected web of life. Our present disconnection from nature is easy to put right. We simply have to want, with all our hearts, to find the pathways that reconnect us to the Earth, to learn to observe and to listen to the Earth and all that lives here as part of her vast ecosystems, and live with a greater awareness and sensitivity to this life force we are all part of. This is a call to be honest, true to our feelings,

our hearts, our love, our growing understanding, and to be true to the joyful adaptation we are making. We may not always get it right and like any great journey it will have highs and lows, but if we don't set out we'll never know what possibilities there are waiting round the corner.

As we celebrate the Earth's wild freedom to evolve and grow within the infinite network of relationships and communication that is life itself, we recognise that we too are part of this same web of interconnected life. We are changed by this realisation and we can't go back to our old isolation. We become pioneers, great explorers of the web, dancers in the dark, expanding into the wild edges of infinite possibilities.

*I celebrate nature as a wild untamed spirit, a tangled complexity of interconnection and diversity, a creative fertile force, interactive, intelligent, adaptive and alive. I have no desire to control nature, but to work with her. I see myself as part of the Earth, made of the same elements as her, and infused with the same life force.*

*I celebrate our pioneering spirit, our irrepressible ability to adapt and survive and put my trust in our open-hearted generous and caring selves, in our love for the Earth and each other.*

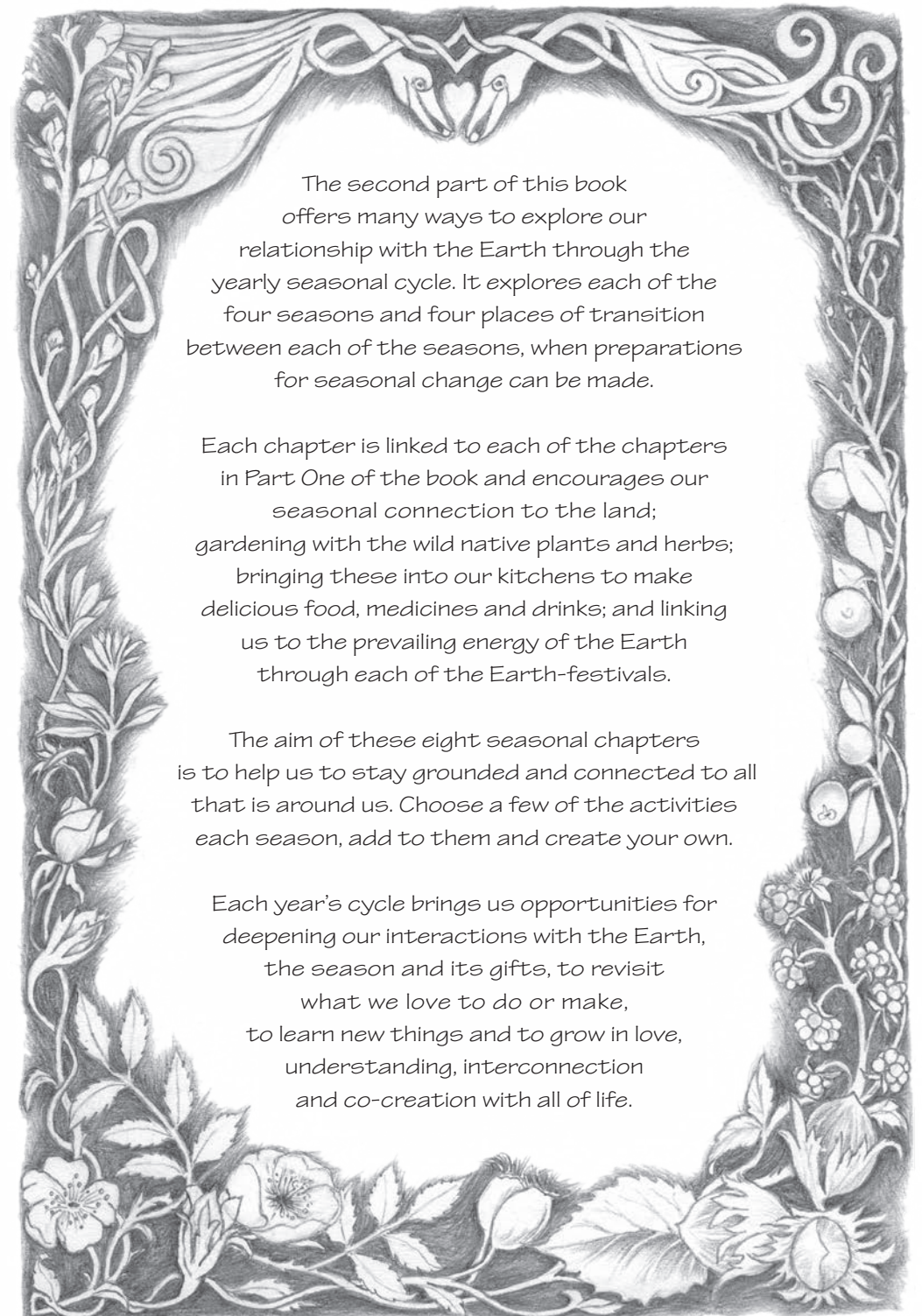
*I am filled with a deep need for a more honest dialogue with myself and the natural world... to expand, to stretch and reach out, to communicate with senses I know I have but have been ignoring.*

*I am expanding... no longer isolated but living within the whole.*

*I am expanding... and all my senses are alive to the subtle shifts in energy around me. I rejoice in my sure knowledge that I am part of this dynamic flow of life and connected to the whole evolving perfection and abundance of the natural world.*

*I am expanding... responding to my longing to let my wild edges flourish, to evolve and grow in ways that will help restore balance within me and in the Earth - for all things are connected.*

Glennie Kindred  
Spring 2013



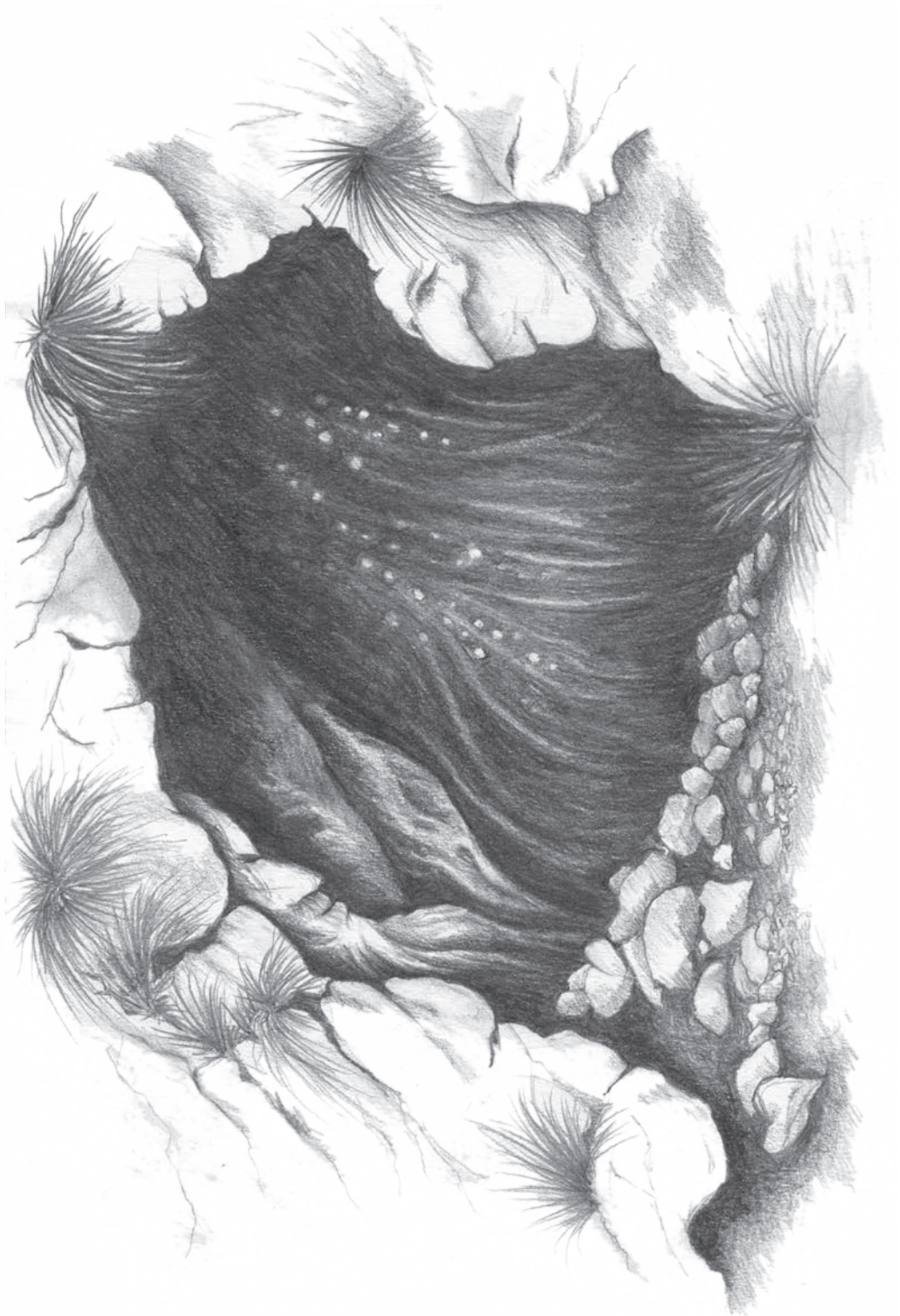
The second part of this book offers many ways to explore our relationship with the Earth through the yearly seasonal cycle. It explores each of the four seasons and four places of transition between each of the seasons, when preparations for seasonal change can be made.

Each chapter is linked to each of the chapters in Part One of the book and encourages our seasonal connection to the land; gardening with the wild native plants and herbs; bringing these into our kitchens to make delicious food, medicines and drinks; and linking us to the prevailing energy of the Earth through each of the Earth-festivals.

The aim of these eight seasonal chapters is to help us to stay grounded and connected to all that is around us. Choose a few of the activities each season, add to them and create your own.

Each year's cycle brings us opportunities for deepening our interactions with the Earth, the season and its gifts, to revisit what we love to do or make, to learn new things and to grow in love, understanding, interconnection and co-creation with all of life.





## *on the edge of* **WINTER**

October into November

**A**ll of life is in the process of withdrawing now, to regenerate and renew itself by resting in the dark of the year. The plants begin to die back, and seeds dry and fall. The last of the fruit and the leaves from the trees are blown off in the autumn winds, everything returning to the Earth, to break down, decay and give their nutrients and goodness back into the soil.

Below the ground, the time of root energy begins. Roots have the power to break up rock and concrete and to make soil. They grow deep, seeking the minerals and nutrients they need to grow strong. Seeds that have fallen and are covered by leaves, waiting for times to change and light to return.

The weather is very changeable now, the days shorten and the sun is low in the sky. In between the many beautiful sunny autumn days filled with the bright colours of the turning leaves, there are dark, wet, cold days, when the mists come down and we follow our own need to withdraw, rest and reflect.

## OUT ON THE LAND

### ✿ A Walk Every Day

#### ✿ Day Bag, Walking Stick and Weatherproofs at the Ready

#### ✿ Places of the Ancients ✿ Caves

#### ✿ Commemorative Tree Planting

#### ✿ Foraging – Gathering Sloes

The leaves gradually fall from the trees and each tree becomes surrounded by a sea of its own bright colourful leaves. As the trees are laid bare, the landscape reveals itself and this is a great opportunity to get a clearer idea of the topography of the landscape. Learn to identify the shapes that the different tree species make in winter, each unique and distinctive, aided by the leaves that are still on the ground beneath them. Bright green mosses shine out vividly amongst the increasingly brown landscape of the woods. The lichen are revealed, looking otherworldly and ancient, covering rocks and trees with their seaweed-like patterns.

We now have a real sense of being on the edge of the winter cycle. The Earth festival of Samhain recognises this as the ending of one cycle and the beginning of a new cycle. Like the Earth, it is time to rest now and nurture our seeds through the winter so that new life can grow from our deep inner longings. It is time to let go of the old year and dream new dreams in the dark. All life begins inside, in the dark, in the womb, in the ground, in our imaginations, in our hearts and in our deep intuitive knowing. Take this understanding with you as you walk the land.

### A Walk Every Day

A walk every day becomes my aim, to counteract the tendency to be too sedentary at this time of year. If the sun comes out, even for a bit, then I am outside and making the most of it. It is a great treat to be out walking the land on wild weather days, to experience the wild richness and beauty of our ever-changing landscape. The early morning mists are worth getting up and outside for. Layers of trees and hills appear and disappear and if you are lucky, an intense golden sun can break through, causing the mists to lift and reveal

what has been hidden. On clear sky mornings find places where you can watch the sun rise and stand in its glorious golden rays.

### Day Bag, Walking Stick and Weatherproofs at the Ready

If you have a good waterproof jacket and leggings, good boots that keep your feet dry, and a hat to keep your head warm, then you can enjoy the wild weather this time of year brings. When out walking, be aware of the shorter daylight hours and keep a torch with fresh batteries in your day bag, in case you find yourself walking home in the dusk and the dark.

The landscape also changes as the rains return with streams and rivers swelling, crossing places are lost, boggy places reappear, forcing you to change your route and take a different path.

The weather can also change suddenly, fog can come down quickly, so keep a weather-eye open and let someone know where you are going if you go out alone onto the moors or into the hills.

A good walking stick is helpful in the winter when slopes can be slippery.

*Making Your Own Walking Stick, page 215*

### Places of the Ancients

This is traditionally the time to honour the ancestors, so make a pilgrimage to an ancient site or burial ground. Put aside some time for reflection and meditation here, and see what comes to you. Ask for help from the ancestors as you make a commitment to help the Earth.

The megalithic monuments of the past were often marked by huge stones, which the people who built them sometimes felt compelled to move hundreds of miles across the land from one site to another. They may have experienced the rocks and the geological anomalies at the points where they were placed in a different way than we do today. Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mounds, barrows, tumuli, dolmen and fogous, often mark the sites of great geological fault lines, places of geopathic stress, underground water and their crossing places.



They may have been built to harness the energy of the fault lines, which give off high radiation levels. This can cause a shift in consciousness and perception. Certainly when visiting them today, time seems to stand still there, and meditation and inner journeying come easy. By spending time in these places, finding stillness and extending our awareness, we can perhaps intuit a sense of the past and its imprint on the present.

## Caves

Find a cave you can go into and soak up the special atmosphere of being inside the Earth's living rock. Explore how this makes you feel and what it may awaken in you. Experience the damp air, the cold living stone and the darkness. Switch off your torch and soak up the dark. Take a candle and enjoy being in the cave in the flickering candlelight. Sing, tone and see what comes to you.

The more spectacular tourists caves are coming to the end of their season now and it is possible to book a private group visit and go into them with a group of friends. The acoustics in some of the big caverns are astonishing and it is worth doing some toning and chanting in them. You can request that the tour guide keeps the tourist chat to a minimum, and if you explain what you are doing, they are usually willing to stand aside and respectfully leave you to sit quietly, meditate, write poetry, sing or have a ceremony.

## Commemorative Tree Planting

Trees can be planted to commemorate an event or a person. This can be part of a community event, or something you do to mark a personal connection. Trees need to be planted out between November and early March.

Often commemorative trees are fruit trees and can be planted to celebrate a marriage or anniversary, when a baby is born, to commemorate a teenager coming of age, for special anniversaries, any of the big 'O' birthdays or as a memorial for someone when they die.

When planting commemorative trees, take a moment to pause and say a few words before and after putting the tree in, dedicating the tree with due ceremony and fully honouring the reason for planting it.

Invite friends and family to bring spring water from different locations and special springs, and to each pour a libation on the earth beneath the tree and say a few words, or to bring a ribbon to tie into the tree. This helps each person to make a personal connection.

*Planting Out Trees, page 97*

*Libations and Offerings, page 199*



## Foraging - Gathering Sloes

While you are out walking, keep an eye out for the blackthorn bushes and their ripening fruit, the sloes. They are found along the edges of fields and make thick impenetrable thickets, much loved by the birds and wildlife. A scratch from their thorns can easily turn septic so be careful when gathering sloes, which are traditionally picked after the first frosts have softened them. Make them into sloe gin and a dry red country wine.

*Sloe Gin, page 84*

*Sloe Wine, page 85*

### SLOE INK

The juice makes a natural red dye and was once used as marking ink. Try drawing with it - use your fingers, a sharpened stick or the sharpened end of a feather for a really natural experience. Draw a picture of sloes with sloe juice!

## THE WILD GARDENER

✿ No-dig Gardening ✿ Long Term Planning

✿ Growing Trees in Pots ✿ Growing Trees from Cuttings

✿ Guerrilla Gardening – Digging up and Planting Out

Often the day will look dark and dreary as I look out from inside, but the instant I am outside a miraculous transformation takes place and immediately I feel my spirits lift. I breathe deeply and feel instantly more alive. So this time of year wrap up warm and get out in the fresh air, and take every opportunity to soak up the natural light.

In this transition between autumn and winter there is plenty to do outside. Resist the urge to tidy up the plants too much though, especially around the wild edges. Let the vegetation die back naturally so that the plant's goodness returns to the soil and insects can find places to hibernate for the winter.

Pot up native biennials that have self-seeded and could be moved, planted out in the wild edges or given away.

See what spots near the house catch the low winter sun and move a bench there so that you can sit wrapped up warm with a cup of tea or breakfast, and enjoy some sunshine and watch the birds.

### No-dig Gardening

At this time of year we see the earth covered by leaves and other decaying plant matter. What we don't see are the earthworms and small burrowing creatures transporting it all underground, along with the droppings and urine left by birds and other wildlife. We don't see the micro organisms and bacteria involved in breaking up the decaying plant matter and creating the rich and fertile humus that stores the nutrients for future plants. We don't see the bacteria and fungi creating food chains between the roots of plants. It is a delicate and intricate web of interrelationships and the argument for doing as little digging in the garden as possible, as digging quickly destroys what nature in her wild wisdom has created.

Pull out any plants that will not be useful as spring greens or medicine and spread a fine covering of compost, or horse manure over the bed. Let nature do the rest and your bed will be ready for planting in the spring.

### Long Term Planning

Any big change in a garden layout needs to be planned in the winter months. This is part of the winter dreaming. While it is still fresh in your mind do a review of your gardening year, what worked and why. What changes would you like to make both in the garden and in yourself as a gardener?

Take into consideration what parts of the garden get the most sun and where gets the most shade. Which are your driest beds or wettest beds? What are your darkest least productive spots? What native plants could be grown there? Do you plan to have a wildlife area or a pond? Where do you like to sit? Where could you have a fire pit?

You can take advantage of being outside on dry sunny days and begin to draw up plans on paper. New beds can be marked out and covered with woollen carpet or cardboard to block out the light and suspend further growth, making digging out the roots easier in the spring.

Trees and hedge plants need to be moved and planted between now and early March.

*Making a Pond, page 116*

### Growing Trees In Pots

Nuts and fruits such as acorns, hazelnuts, haws, wild plums, rowan, walnuts and chestnuts can be can be poked into labelled pots and left to grow. Cover with mesh if there is a danger of squirrels digging them up. Sprinkle other native seeds such as silver birch, elder and alder, into labelled pots.

Re-pot any trees you grew last year into bigger pots if they need it, giving them some fresh compost and generally giving them some attention and care. Make sure that the root collar – the point from which the roots grow – is just at the soil surface, and remove the bowls from under them now, as they dislike

having their roots in cold or frozen water. If they are not too heavy, move them to a sunny spot for the winter.

You can also be creative with the trees as you repot them, raising them slightly each time so that you begin to expose roots. Put a slightly bigger stone under the roots each time you repot them. Young trees in pots can also be encouraged to bend and twist using string and wire. Be very gentle with the trees, only manipulating them a little at a time so as not cause them undue stress. These features will continue, as they become mature trees.

Sprinkle native plant seeds in with them or plant them up with native plants. This creates special partnerships, called guilds, which continue when you finally plant them out.

*Creating Living Tree Sculptures, page 98*

*Collecting Tree Seeds, page 222*

## Growing Trees from Cuttings

### ALDER, ELDER, HAZEL, HOLLY, WILLOW

This is an easy way to propagate new trees. Cuttings are best taken late autumn, early winter, and this is a great way to make use of some of your garden prunings.

1. Find a strong new shoot that is pencil thick and has many buds on it. Take the cutting just below a bud. Cut into 20cm (8in) lengths, with the bottom cut square to the twig just below a bud, and the top cut at an angle just above the top bud.
2. Store the cuttings by burying them in moist sand or compost and leave in cool dark place such as a shed or garage.
3. Between January and March plant the cuttings upright in the ground or in pots of moist compost, with about 5cm (2in) showing above ground.
4. By late spring the cuttings will be sprouting leaves. Keep the strongest shoot, and cut the rest off. Keep watered in dry weather and they will be ready for planting out in the autumn.

### LEAF MOULD

This is a precious resource and it is worth gathering up leaves. Leaves can be bagged up and left to rot in their bags for a year and then added in layers to the compost bins. Native plants that previously would have grown in woodland also appreciate a dressing of leaf mould.

## Guerrilla Gardening - Digging Up and Planting Out

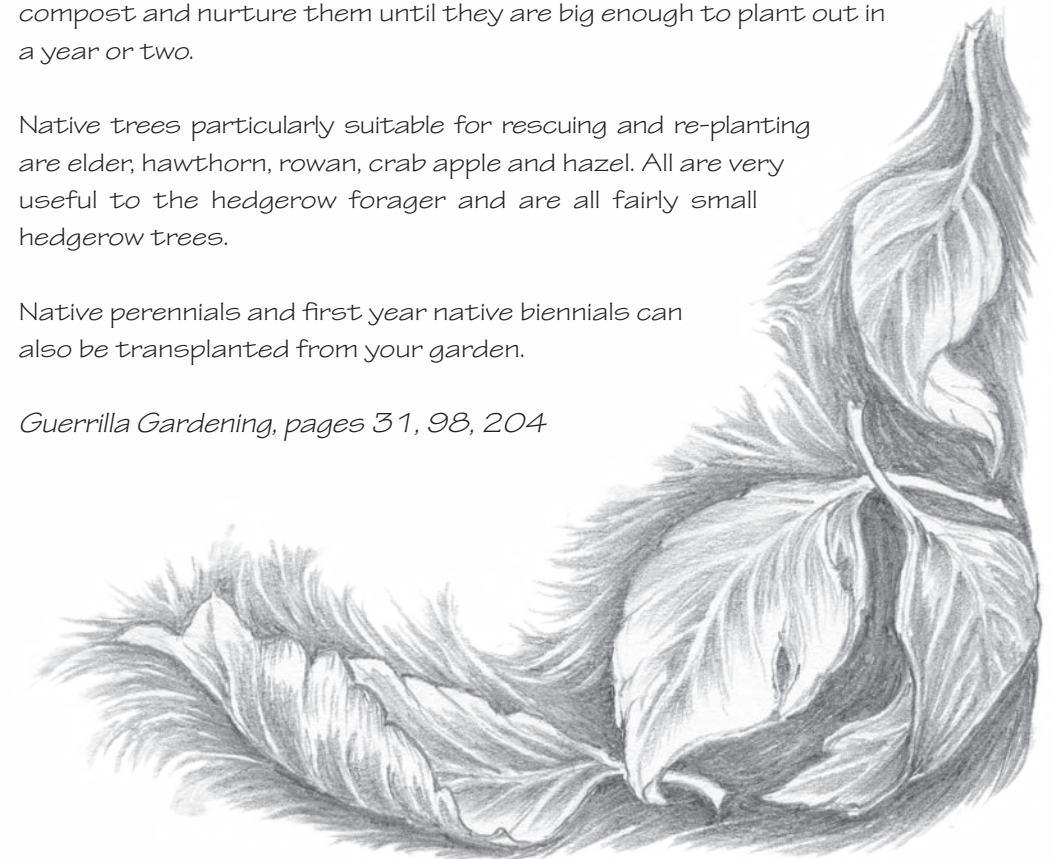
Now is the time to look for young self-seeded native trees, either in your garden or any that are growing where they obviously have no chance of reaching maturity. You can spot them now as the vegetation begins to die back, and the young trees have enough leaves on them for identification. Mark with coloured ribbons or wool, with a colour code to identify each species and then dig them up over the next few months and move them to a better position.

If they are small then pot them into large plant pots with plenty of compost and nurture them until they are big enough to plant out in a year or two.

Native trees particularly suitable for rescuing and re-planting are elder, hawthorn, rowan, crab apple and hazel. All are very useful to the hedgerow forager and are all fairly small hedgerow trees.

Native perennials and first year native biennials can also be transplanted from your garden.

*Guerrilla Gardening, pages 31, 98, 204*





## KITCHEN MEDICINE

- ✿ Digging Up and Drying Roots ✿ Making Root Tinctures
- ✿ Root Drinks – Dandelion and Burdock, Dandelion Coffee
- ✿ Blackthorn – Sloe Gin, Sloe Wine ✿ Simple Winter Posies

The garden is resting and this is the time to crack open the jars and bottles, enjoy the jam, pickles, and other delights you made in the summer and early autumn or wines from previous years. Your stores of medicines will help with winter colds and to boost up your immune system.

### Digging Up and Drying Roots

Between November and March is the best time for digging up roots. They can be dug as part of the end of autumn garden tidy up.

#### **Method**

1. Scrub the dirt off them, dry with kitchen towel, chop them up, and put in brown paper bags.
2. Leave the roots to dry on the radiators or in a warm airy place, shaking them every few days.
3. When fully dry they can be stored in dark jars or fresh brown paper bags. (Don't forget to label them.)
4. They can be made into herbal teas by soaking them in cold water overnight and then bringing them to the boil and added to winter stews.

*Decoction, page 44*

### Making Root Tinctures

#### **DANDELION, VALERIAN**

Now is the best time for making root tinctures when the energy of the plant has returned to the roots. Save any good roots you dig up when gardening.

Scrub them clean and cut into slices and make the tincture while they are still fresh. They can also be made from dried roots but soak them in a little water first. Use the soaking water as it is full of goodness.

*For their herbal uses, see Plant Reference Guide, page 258, 276  
Making Tinctures, page 46*

### Root Drinks

Root beers were once very popular. They are easy to make and ready in a week or two. They have the added advantage of imparting their herbal properties.

#### **DANDELION AND BURDOCK BEER**

Burdock roots are a prime blood purifier and detoxifier. It is an alkaline and helps counteract over-acidity. It stimulates the immune system to get rid of bacteria, toxins, viruses and tumour cells, strengthens the liver, kidneys, circulation, lungs, lymphatic and urinary systems, unblocking and detoxifying where ever they have become sluggish. It can be grown as a root vegetable but the roots are eaten in their first year only.

Dandelion roots are a prime liver and lymph tonic, and a good digestive tonic.

#### **Method**

1. Scrub two large dandelion roots and two large burdock roots.
2. Chop them into a pan with 2.25 litres (4 pints) of water. Boil for half an hour.
3. In another pan, gently dissolve one pound of sugar in four pints of water with 2 tablespoons of black treacle and the juice of a lemon.
4. Strain off the roots, mix the two liquids together and leave to go tepid.
5. Then add an ounce of yeast mixed to a paste with warm water.
6. Leave to ferment in a covered bucket for three to four days, then bottle. Ready to drink after 1 week.

## DANDELION COFFEE

Worth saving are any of the big roots you dig up to make into dandelion coffee. It is easy to make, delicious to drink, and of course holds all the beneficial properties of dandelion root.

### Method

1. Dig plants up when the soil is wet so that the long roots slide out easily. Scrub them clean and then leave them to dry out somewhere warm for a couple of days.
2. Slice them and chop them finely or rough chop in a food processor.
3. Spread out on a baking tray and roast for 1 or 2 hours on a medium to high oven with the door open. The size of the pieces and the level of roast is a matter of personal taste.
4. When cool grind them in a coffee grinder and store in a dark jar.

## Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)

Making sloe gin is one of those end-of-year delights as we say goodbye to the old year and give thanks for its rich harvest.

### SLOE GIN

Traditionally wait until after the first frost has softened the sloes. You can also pick them before and put them in the freezer to mimic nature.

1. Fill one-third of a wide-necked jar with sloes that have been pricked.
2. Make it up to half full with organic sugar and fill to the top with a good quality gin.
3. Shake daily for 3 months and watch the gin turn deep red.
4. Strain off the fruit, but do not squeeze. Rebottle, keeping some for the Solstice and some to save for 1 year for an improved flavour.
5. Rather than throw the gin soaked fruit away, cut the flesh from the stones and add to melted chocolate or chocolate cake!

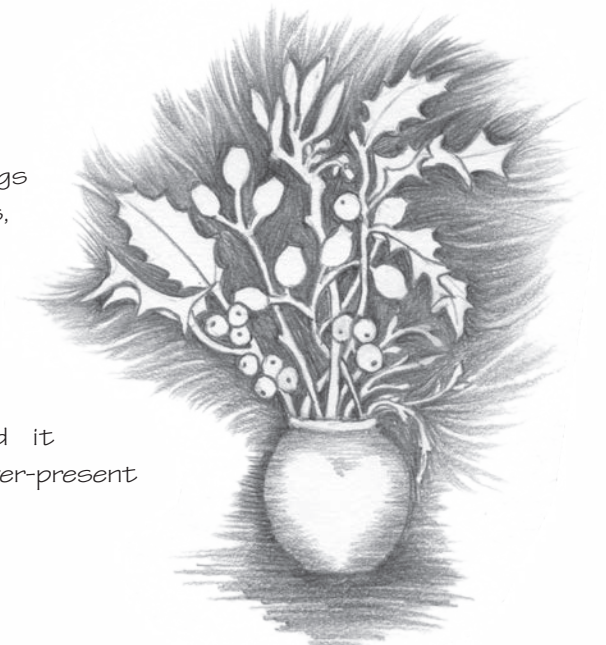
## SLOE WINE

- 1.35kg (3lb) sloes
- 1kg (2.2lb) sugar
- 2 oranges
- 4 litres (1 gallon) water
- 1 teaspoon yeast

1. Boil the sloes in half the water for 30 minutes, crushing them with a wooden spoon to break the skins and release the juice.
2. Pour to a clean bucket with the rest of the boiled water, the peel and juice of the oranges, cover and leave for three days, stirring every day.
3. Strain and bring to the boil with the sugar until the sugar is dissolved.
4. Let the liquid cool to lukewarm, stir in the yeast and then pour into a demijohn.
5. Fit an air lock and leave in a warm place until it stops fermenting.
6. Siphon off into wine bottles, cork and label. Wait for a year before drinking.

## Simple Winter Posies

Pick a small vase of beautiful things from the garden such as herbs, seed heads, twigs, evergreens and the last of the flowers and bring them into the kitchen. Renew it frequently. There is always something to find and to celebrate in the garden and it means that the outdoors is an ever-present inspiration in your home.



## SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

### \* Samhain

#### \* Making an End of Year Headdress or Mask

#### \* Making Elder Beads

The days are short now and we sense the wild edges of winter creeping in. This is the beginning of the deepest darkest part of the year. We recognise our own need to rest now, like the Earth, to slow down and adjust to a new set of conditions. It is time to finally let go of the old year, to follow the urge to withdraw, to remember who we are on the inside, reflect on the old year and dream the seeds of the future we wish to see happen.

Welcome these dark days as an opportunity to shift your focus from achieving and doing, to reflecting and assimilating all that comes to rest in you now.

### Samhain

**End of October - Beginning of November**

The festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-ein), is one of the great fire festivals of our ancient past, affirming regeneration and rebirth in the midst of endings and darkness. Celebrated on 31st October or the nearest dark moon, and overlaid by the church as All Hallows Eve, Halloween.

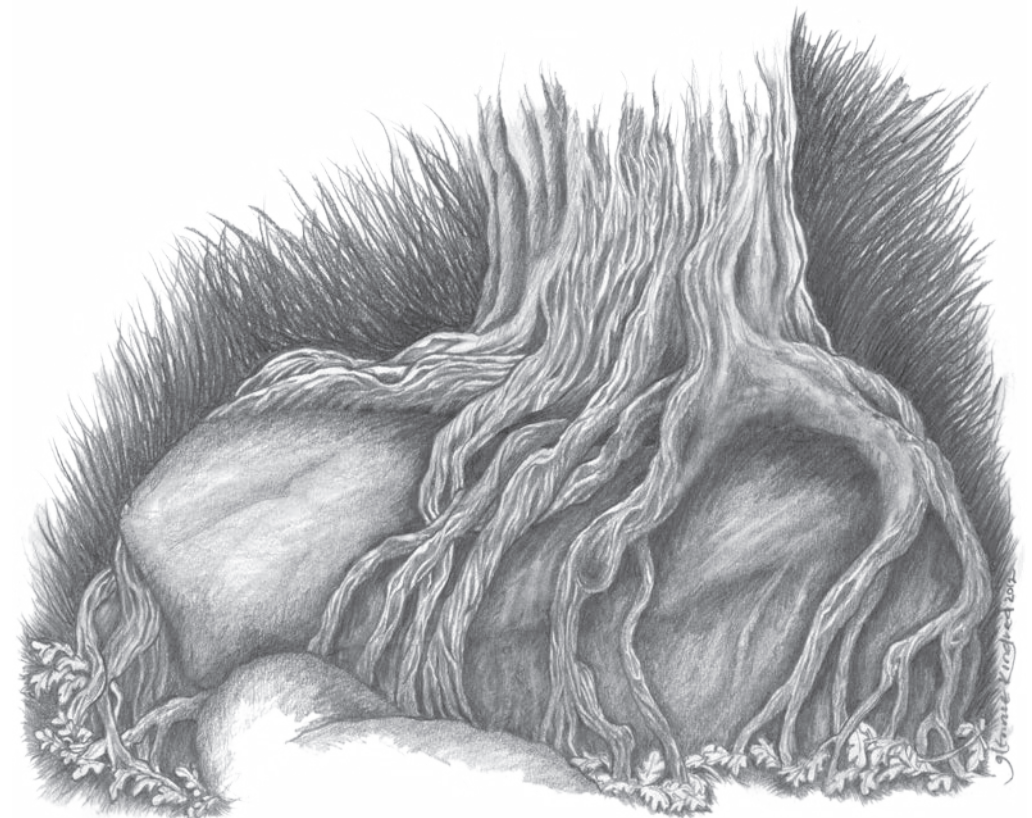
In the Celtic tradition Samhain was recognised as a special time of year. It is a time when the veil between the worlds is thin, when we can seek communication with other realms that lie along side of ours or within ourselves. The Celts called this the Otherworld. We can push the wild edges of our perceptions and assumptions, to seek out what truths this may hold for us.

This is an opportunity to move from the popular myth that the dark is a place to fear and choose to see the dark as a place of renewal and regeneration. When we see the dark of the year as part of our own cycle and needs, we recognise that we can, like the Earth, make time to rest now, send down our roots, and strengthen ourselves on the inside.

The Earth teaches us that everything in nature is cyclic – death will eventually lead to rebirth. But first like the Earth, we must have a period of rest, gather the seeds of our future intentions and nurture them in our dark and fertile imaginations. These seeds and future visions will grow within us, and as part of the interconnected web of life they will become fertile in ways we could never imagine for ourselves.

Samhain is a celebration of all that has finished and ended, the seasonal end of the old year. We are called upon to let our old selves die so that we can expand and grow into new parts of ourselves.

This endless cycle of change is healthy and necessary, bringing renewal of understanding, renewal of cells and regeneration from within. It is an opportunity for us to honour what has finished and ended, so that when the time comes, we are ready for the new beginnings that present themselves.





## SAMHAIN CELEBRATIONS

Included here are some ideas for connecting to the Earth, the seasonal energy, and your inner wisdom at this time. Choose a couple of things to do, and be open to your own spontaneous inspirations of the moment.

*For insights and overview about co-creating seasonal gatherings, see page 66*

- Gather with friends for a Samhain celebration. Each bring seasonal food to share, made from roots, the last of the vegetables from the garden, apples or dried fruit and berries. Share preserves, fruit cordials and last years berry wines.
- If celebrating on your own then make yourself special seasonal food and treats!
- Fire is important, so if possible have a fire outside. If this isn't possible then fill a large wide bowl with earth or sand and light candles at the centre of the gathering circle.
- Create a central focus of colourful autumn leaves, nuts, seed and seed-heads, and give thanks for the end of the Earth's growth cycle and the seeds that ensure it will continue.
- Make some time at the beginning of the celebration for reflection and meditation. Sit and stare into the fire or candle flames and remember the old year. Reflect upon the joys you experienced, as well as the difficulties. Look for the hidden blessings that they may hold. Remember all the special places that you visited in this beautiful land of ours, and your experiences there. Write them down in your journal and if gathered with others, share the highlights and your insights.
- Write down what you leave behind in the old year, what is no longer helpful to you. Include old beliefs and old attitudes that dampen your life force and the life force of the Earth. Write on pieces of paper and burn them in the fire if you are outside. If you are inside then light them from the candles and put them in a lidded pot to finish burning. Say anything you need to say as you burn them. The burnt remains can be taken outside and put back on the earth or buried later.
- Each throw a stick or a dead leaf in the fire to represent what you let go of. Name them out loud to give weight to your resolve. Later write about your feelings about this in your journal.

- Each light a candle and make a pledge to the Earth to be part of her human support system. Pledge to give something back, such as time and energy to help her, and pledge to stop doing the things that are not helping her ecosystem to repair. Name these in sacred space.

- Light a candle for yourself. Be peaceful and at rest with yourself. Promise to nurture yourself in the dark. Name ways that you might do this. What restful things will you do this winter? What will fill you with happiness? What will help you move forwards?

- Resolve to keep moving into a holistic consciousness and not stay stuck in old separation thinking patterns. Look for where you have changed your thinking and have become more connected to the Earth this last year. Look for the triggers that help you to create connection. Share these insights with each other.

- Find ways to become more integrated in your local communities this winter. What groups could you join? What groups that already exist could you support? What new group could you set up? Be prepared to communicate, to accept and be open with each other, beyond judgment, beyond 'Us and Them', to embrace the 'We' of our common humanity. Share your ideas and see who else is interested.

- This is the season of remembrance, a time to remember our ancestors and those who have died, including people we didn't know personally but have touched our lives. Invite everyone to bring photos of them. Make a special Ancestors Shrine. Light candles for them. Share your thoughts with each other.

- There are a lot of little deaths in our lives, losses, things we will never get back. Take a moment to name these losses and then look for the positive gifts they might hold. Light candles for these things and find peace in reflective silence and your personal philosophy.

- Pass round a bowl of acorns, hazel nuts, haws or rowan berries. Take one to represent each gift or lesson you feel you have gained this year. Name them and plant them in a pot of earth to grow. Label the pot and decorate by wrapping it in material and coloured wool. Put the pot outside without a bowl under it, and you might be rewarded by a tree shoot in the spring.

- As we go into the winter, ask yourself: What do I need to do to look after myself and help myself to regenerate in the dark?

- What are your Visions of Hope for the future? Write in your journal and share your thoughts, feelings and insights with each other. All our actions make a difference. What can you do to help this to happen?
- What do you want to nurture in the dark? Write your thoughts on pieces of silver birch bark or card cut into hearts or leaves. With a large-eyed needle and embroidery thread, hang them up or make into a simple mobile to delight and remind you.

## Make An End Of Year Headdress or Mask

Masks and headdresses made from the last of the vegetation of the old year are very traditional at Samhain.

1. Use pliable stems of dogwood, ivy, honeysuckle or willow to create an initial circlet to fit the head or the frame of a mask shape to fit the face, and then weave or tie in autumn leaves, berries and seed heads. Use a natural thread to help tie the stems in place.
2. Wear it at the beginning of the celebration to honour the old year. It can then be burnt in the fire at some point, to represent what you let go of, from the old year, in order to move forwards. Name these as you throw it in the fire.
3. Alternatively return it to the Earth with your thanks to compost down. Something may grow from the seeds that were in it! With this in mind, you might like to lay it on a pot of earth outside your door.

## Make Elder Beads

Elder represents the power of the regenerative life force, and reminds us that in every ending there is always a new beginning. Its herbal action encourages us to throw off congestion and stuck energy. Small elder branches, about 2cm ( $\frac{3}{4}$ in) in diameter, can be cut and sawn into beads. Respect the tree and ask first. If you sense you are not welcome to cut the branch, then ask another tree. Elder, more than any other native tree, has a lot of folklore surrounding the respect due to the tree before cutting it.

1. Saw the stem into small pieces between one and 2cm ( $\frac{3}{4}$ in) in length.
2. Inside the stem is a soft pith, which can easily be poked out with a nail, or bradawl. This makes a natural bead.
3. The bark can be shaved off with a penknife and then sanded down. As you peel the bark from the bead, peel off what you let go of in your life and no longer need. Burn the parings and speak out what you leave behind.
4. Elder has a beautiful yellow oily close-grained wood, which polishes up well with fine sandpaper. Any herbal oils you have made during the year can be used to feed the wood and add to your intention and resolve.
5. Thread the bead onto leather thread or thin elastic to make a necklace or bracelet. Add other beads or shells or tie on coloured threads to represent the threads of new ideas you take into the dark to incubate.
6. Create a special ceremonial moment to honour the moment and say what your beads mean to you.

Elder beads can also be used like a wooden toggle for fastening clothing, bags and pouches.

# LETTING IN THE WILD EDGES

In this beautifully illustrated book, Glennie Kindred inspires us to celebrate and engage with the wild edges of the natural world around us, especially our wild native plants, and to become more fully open to our own inherently wild and profound inner wisdom. *Letting in the Wild Edges* takes us on a seasonal journey through the year, encouraging us to grow and manage native edible and medicinal plants and trees in our gardens or on the wild edges of the land. We are shown how to forage and make our own medicines, to become guerrilla gardeners and help nature to regenerate through our actions.

“Here are a thousand ways in which you can reconnect with nature, whether you live in town or country, have a garden or not, are community minded or enjoy your own company, spiritually inclined or otherwise. Glennie’s book is so rich in ideas that it will open the door on a new way of living, one in which nature becomes a real part of your everyday life.”

*Patrick Whitefield, author of The Earth Care Manual and permaculture teacher*

## *About Glennie Kindred*

Glennie Kindred is the author of eleven books on Earth wisdom, native plants and trees and celebrating the Earth’s cycles. She is renowned for her ability to inspire people to engage with the natural environment and convey the vision that, as individuals and collectively, we can create positive change, both for ourselves and for the Earth.

© Glennie Kindred 2013



UK £14.95 US \$24.95

SUPPORTED BY  
**permaculture** magazine



DISTRIBUTED IN THE USA BY CHELSEA GREEN