**Herb and Garden plants visited and picked for our Midsummer study group and ritual on 6/21/20.**

**Ashwaganda -** Sometimes referred to as Winter Cherry or Indian Ginseng. It is a very important herb in Ayurvedic medicine.

**Planet:** Sun

**Element:** Fire

* Magical Uses: Longevity, wishes, increasing Chi (energy of one’s body), aphrodisiac spells, sex magic, magical tonics, color magic.
* Medical uses: Adaptogenic herb that improves depression, brain function, immune system help, insomnia, reduces cortisol levels, improves stamina and endurance and improves sexual function.
* Leaves can be used in tea, milk, oatmeal, etc. and the root can be powdered and used many different ways.
* Only good as a plant for a year or two. Then take the roots. Reseed from the berries.

**Basil**

**Planet:** Mars

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Fire

**Deities:** Vishnu, Erzulie

* Magical Uses: Love, exorcism, wealth, flying, protection. The scent of fresh basil causes sympathy between two people.
* Medical and other uses: Culinary uses include pesto sauce, oils and vinegars as well as adding to dishes that include garlic, tomatoes, eggplant, etc. The leaf wine is tonic and aphrodisiac, as basil stimulates the adrenal cortex. The leaves are mosquito-repellent; expel worms, treats ringworm, insect bites and acne. Inhaling the essential oil refreshes the mind and stimulates a sense of smell dulled by viral infections. Avoid on sensitive skin and if pregnant.

**Bay** - Sometimes called Bay Laurel, Grecian Laurel, Sweet Bay or Daphne.

**Planet:** Sun

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Fire

**Deities:** Aesculapius, Apollo, Ceres, Faunus, Eros

* Magical Uses: Protection, psychic powers, healing, purification, strength. Repels negativity and promotes good fortune, success and victory.
* Medical uses: Leaves can put in food for culinary benefit, but the raw leaves if eaten may be mildly narcotic. Aids in digestion. A decoction added to bath water will relieve aching limbs and diluted leaf essential oil can treat sprains and rheumatic joints but may irritate skin so should be applied with a carrier oil. The leaves are a mild insecticide.

**Catnip -** Catmint, Field Balm, Cat’s Wort, Nip

**Planet:** Venus

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Water

**Deities:** Bast

* Magical Uses: Love, beauty, happiness and cat magic
* Medicinal and other uses: The leaves and flowering tops treat colds, calm upset stomachs, reduce fevers and soothe headaches and scalp irritations. The leaves are used in a poultice for bruises. The tender leaves can be added to salads and flavor meat. They can also be brewed as tea. The leaves can also be sewn or put into cat toys. Catnip intoxicates cats and repels rats and flea beetles.

**Fennel**

**Planet:** Mercury

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Fire

**Deities: Prometheus, Dionysus**

* Magical Uses: Protection, healing, purification, strength. In Dionysian ceremonies, the thyrsus was often made of giant fennel stalks with pine cones attached to the ends.
* Medicinal Uses: The seeds can be eaten after meals for indigestion, heartburn and flatulence. Also for constipation and stomach pains. Nursing mothers for colicky babies. Sore throats, laryngitis, gum problems. Urinary tract problems, diuretic, detoxifying. Strengthen eyesight and reduce eye inflammations.

**Flax**

**Planet:** Mercury

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Fire

**Deities: Hulda**

* Magical Uses: Money, protections, beauty, psychic powers, healing. Flax was used in rituals to Hulda, the Teutonic Goddess, who first taught mortals to cultivate flax and to spin it into linen thread and weave into cloth.
* Medicinal and other uses: The mineral-rich seeds yield cold-pressed oil for cooking and hot-pressed linseed oil for artists; and industrial use. The seeds contain soothing mucilage. The oil contains fatty acids that help remove heavy metals from the body, reduce the risk of thrombosis and treat nutritional deficiencies.

**Cranberry Hibiscus -** Roselle

**Planet:** Venus

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Water

* Magical Uses: Love, lust, divination. The flowers of the red hibiscus are brewed into a strong red tea which is drunk for its lust-inducing powers.
* Medical and other uses: “The plant is thought to contain polyphenols, a compound that may combat inflammation and is commonly used to treat inflammatory diseases. Some research supports the claim that anthocyanins, the antioxidants found in hibiscus, help fight cancer, improve the functioning of your liver and lower cholesterol levels. A very nutritious vegetable; the leaves are high in vitamins B3 (niacin), B2, A and C. It is high in protein and an excellent source of antioxidants and anthocyanins.” - <https://www.happehatchee.org/cranberry-hibiscus.html>
* “In Angola, an infusion of the leaves in water is used as post-fever tonic and is also used to treat anemia. In East Africa, children with an aching body are washed in cold water to which some mashed Cranberry Hibiscus leave have been added. In folk medicine the leaves and seeds are used to alleviate fever, headache, rheumatism, hemorrhoid, to treat ringworms, tumor, conjunctivitis, sores and abscesses. The leaves, flowers and calyces are used in heart and nerve conditions, as diuretic, sedative, anti-scorbutic, colorectal and intestinal antiseptic. Cranberry Hibiscus is known to contain Rutin, Hyperoside, Rosmarinic acid, Caffeic acid and Chlorogenic acid.” - <https://www.facilities.fsu.edu/sights/?p=372>

**Horehound -** Bull’s blood, Llwyd y cwn (Welsh), Soldier’s tea

**Planet:** Mercury

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Air

**Deities:** Horus

* Magical Uses: Protection, mental powers, exorcism, healing. Burn to Horus, the ancient Egyptian God, after which the plant was named. ‘
* The leaves are used in tonics, liqueurs, ales and are made into expectorant and antiseptic cough drops. An infusion relaxes muscles and helps expel mucus, treating bronchitis, croup, and asthma. Helps with intestinal worms, digestion, and is a laxative. The tea can be used for eczema and shingles. The Navajo tribe gave mothers a root decoction before and after childbirth.

**Horsetail -** Snake grass, puzzle grass, mare’s tail

**Planet:** Saturn

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Earth

* Magical Uses: Snack charming, fertility. Whistles made of the stems of the horsetail, when played, will call snakes to the musician.
* Medicinal and other uses: Horsetail, when young, can be peeled and eaten much like asparagus, but not suggested as they are very bitter. The stalks are extremely high in silica, which benefits joints and connective tissue. It is a gentle diuretic, astringent and styptic. Use carefully and only occasionally, as it can have side effects with overuse.

**Hyssop**

**Planet:** Jupiter

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Fire

* Magical Uses: Purification, protection, cleansing. Promotes spiritual opening and lightens vibration.
* Medical and other uses: The leaf is added to liqueurs, adds bite to sweet and savory dishes and aids in digestion of fatty meat. It was used to purify temples and cleansing lepers as the leaves contain an antiseptic, antiviral oil. Infusions can be taken as a sedative expectorant for flu, bronchitis and excess phlegm. Poultice for bruises and wound. Essential oil to treat cold sores, disperse bruises and heal scars. Added to potpourri and laundry rinses. Do not use if pregnant, epileptic, or have high blood pressure.

**Lemongrass**

**Planet:** Mercury

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Air

* Magical Uses: Repel snakes, lust, psychic cleansing and opening. Lemongrass planted around the home will repel snakes and discourage mosquitoes.
* Medicinal and other uses: Culinary uses such as in Thai dishes. Leaf tea treats diarrhea, stomachache, headache, fever and flu, and is an antiseptic. The oil is used in aromatherapy to improve circulation and muscle tone as well as treating athlete’s foot and acne.

**Mint**

**Planet:** Mercury

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Air

**Deities:** Pluto, Hecate

* Magical Uses: Money, lust, healing, travel, exorcism, protection. Promotes energy, vitality and communication.
* Medicinal and other uses: The culinary uses are vastly used in our society. Mints are a stimulant, aid in digestion, and reduce flatulence. Peppermint has additional antiseptic, anti-parasitic, antiviral and sweat-inducing properties. It is used in ointments, cold remedies and used internally and topically for headache. If the essential oil is inhaled it can improve attention, nausea and help with shock.

**Mugwort -** Artemis Herb, Naughty Man, St John’s Plant, Sailor’s Tobacco

**Planet:** Venus

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Earth

**Deities:**  Artemis, Diana

* Magical Uses: Strength, psychic powers, protection, prophetic dreams, healing, astral projection and clairvoyance.
* Medicinal and other uses: Can be used as a tea, tincture or externally as an oil. Can be rolled and burned as a smudge stick since the smoke is calming, cleansing and is said to promote good dreams. The teas, tinctures, smudge sticks, and oils can be used for menstrual, digestive and respiratory/asthma issues. It is soothing on the skin and helps relieve skin rashes (such as from poison ivy), burns and helps the skin heal faster. Mugwort leaf tincture inhibits the growth of numerous bacteria.

**Sage**

**Planet:** Jupiter

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Air

* Magical Uses: Immortality, longevity, wisdom, protection, cleansing. Promotes mental clarity and psychic opening.
* Medicinal and other uses: Sage has many culinary uses. It is an antiseptic, antimicrobial, anti-mutagenic, antibacterial, helps stop neuropathic pain, improves memory, lowers glucose levels and alleviates menopause symptoms. An excellent all-around herb.

**Scullcap** - Helmet Flower, Hoodwort, Madweed, Quaker Bonnet

**Planet:** Saturn

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Water

* Magical Uses: Love, fidelity, peace. Used in spells of relaxation and peace.
* Medicinal and other uses: It is a calming herb, useful for anxiety and nervous disorders of all kinds. It is usually used as a hot tea or tincture but can also be powdered and taken in capsule form. It can help with exhaustion and depression as well as help calm the body when going through withdrawal symptoms of alcohol and smoking. Not be used while pregnant or breastfeeding and large doses may be harmful to the liver.

**Thyme**

**Planet:** Venus

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Water

* Magical Uses: Health, healing, sleep, psychic powers, love, purification, courage. It is said that if you wear thyme, you will be able to see fairies.
* Medicinal and other uses: The Romans used thyme to purify their rooms and to flavor cheese and liqueurs. Thyme is an antiseptic, antiviral, anti-parasitic, and antifungal. It can be used in cooking as well as teas and tinctures. Used as a mouthwash for dental health, helps clear up acne. Used to treat digestive upset and worms, lice, scabies and general skin irritations. The essential oil is very “hot” and can cause skin irritation if used full strength. Better to dilute with water or carrier oil before use.

**Tobacco**

**Planet:** Mars

**Gender:** Masculine

**Element:** Fire

* Magical Uses: Healing, purification, offerings. Use to promote peace, confidence and personal strength. Promotes love and sensuality, protection and freedom from outside influences.
* Other uses: Tobacco is used by many Native Americans for ceremonial purposes and may be ingested under the supervision of a Shaman. Burning tobacco as an incense purifies the area of all negativity and spirits. It is used as an offering such as burying to honor ancestors or Earth Spirits or placed in a body of water to honor Water Spirits.

**Yarrow**

**Planet:** Venus

**Gender:** Feminine

**Element:** Water

* Magical Uses: Courage, confidence, love, psychic powers, exorcism. Draws love.
* Medicinal and other uses: All parts of the herb as used medicinally for tea (though very bitter, use honey), poultices, tinctures, or oil. Yarrow will stop bleeding quickly by contacting the blood vessels and encouraging clotting. It is anti-inflammatory and antibacterial. Use for bruises, sprains, swelling, and for hemorrhoids. Can help reduce the duration of fevers, colds and virus’. Helps with menstrual problems, dental pain, mastitis, and anxiety.

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All of the information is from the following texts, unless otherwise indicated.

* Scott Cunningham (2nd Edition, 2014). *Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs*
* Nicole Apelian, Ph.D and Claude Davis (2020). *The Lost Book of Herbal Remedie*s
* Peggy Sias Lantz(2014). *Florida’s Edible Wild Plants*
* Lesley Bremness ( 1994). *Herbs (a Smithsonian Handbook)*
* Rev. Donald Lewis-Highcorrell (2nd Edition, 2010). *Witch School, First Degree*