



## MONTHLY MESSAGE FROM AN HERBAL LEAF

### JANUARY 2022

CHECK OUT  
[www.anherballeaf.com](http://www.anherballeaf.com)

[www.anherballeaf.com](http://www.anherballeaf.com) is a space to share information and my views on interrelated subjects surrounding plants, nature, art, crafts, and herbs.

On the website you can view the latest issue of *An Herbal Leaf Journal* for FREE. Each issue of this popular, bi-monthly, publication examines a specifically chosen subject and explores its relationships to nature, plants, and herbs. The journal looks at history, fun facts, and relevant information surrounding the selected subject, as well as articles by guest writers, recipes, and much more.

Sign up for a FREE **Monthly Message**, delivered to you through Mailchimp. (What you are reading now is the monthly message.) Get journal updates, enjoy seasonal reflections, and discover a new herb each month. Current monthly messages are available to view on the website.

**An Herbal Leaf Archive** is a fun resource for people interested in *An Herbal Leaf* subjects. It is a database of past journals and monthly messages with opportunities to expand on journals and monthly messages with your own musings. Join this fee-based archive through Patreon on the website.

Help to spread the word about this site to people interested in herbs, plants, and nature by telling your friends, or becoming my patron at Patreon to access the archives.

You can go to the website any time to read the latest *Journals and Monthly Messages*.

### CONNECT WITH AN HERBAL LEAF



FOLLOW on INSTAGRAM



FOLLOW on PINTEREST

### JOURNAL UPDATE



Bitter Oranges cascading over a wall in Granada, Spain. Photo: Skye Suter.

Go to [anherballeaf.com](http://anherballeaf.com) to view the latest issues of *An Herbal Leaf Journal*, and *An Herbal Leaf Monthly Messages*.

See the latest issue CITRUS SISTERS at [anherballeaf.com](http://anherballeaf.com).



# A YEAR OF NATIVE AMERICAN MOONS

JANUARY 2022



THE MOON'S INFLUENCE CAN BE SEEN IN THE MYTHOLOGIES OF ALL CULTURES THROUGHOUT TIME. SELENE WAS THE GREEK GODDESS OF THE MOON WHO LATER BECAME LUNA UNDER THE ROMANS. THE ROMAN DIANA WAS ONCE THE GREEK ARTEMIS, A MOON GODDESS OF THE HUNT AND TWIN TO HER BROTHER, APOLLO THE SUN GOD. THE CHINESE HAD CHANG'O, THE GODDESS WHO LIVED ON THE MOON WITH A RABBIT. THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE CLASSICALLY RECOGNIZABLE MOON DEITIES.

IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES NAMING THE MONTHLY MOONS RECORDED THE CHANGE IN SEASONS AND THE PASSING OF THE YEAR. NAMES WERE CHRONICLED AS "FULL MOON" NAMES AND HIGHLIGHTED AN ANIMAL, THE WEATHER OF THE SEASON, AN ACTIVITY AT THAT TIME OF YEAR, OR A PLANT. MOONS FOR EACH PARTICULAR MONTH HAD UNIQUELY DIFFERENT NAMES DEPENDING ON THE TRIBES AND THEIR LOCATIONS.

IN THIS YEAR'S MONTHLY MESSAGES I EXPLORE THE NAMES OF THE MOON IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES AND SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT TAKE PLACE DURING THAT MONTH OR SEASON.

CATEGORIZING THE MANY TRIBES INTO GROUPS FOR THE PURPOSES OF TWELVE MONTHLY MESSAGES TOOK A LOT OF THINKING AND RETHINKING. EVENTUALLY I DECIDED TO CHERRY PICK GROUPS OF TRIBES BASED ON A COMBINATION OF THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL REGION AND LINGUISTIC TERRITORIES FOR SOME ISSUES AND REFERENCE ALL TRIBES ACROSS THE AMERICAS IN OTHER WRITINGS. PLANTS AND HERBS DISCUSSED IN THIS MESSAGE HAVE RELATIONSHIPS TO THE TRIBES MENTIONED IN THE MONTHLY MESSAGE.

THE ALGONQUIN LINGUISTIC GROUP WAS SCATTERED OVER WHAT IS NOW NEW YORK STATE AND EXTENDED INTO CANADA, AROUND LAKE ERIE, INTO OHIO, PENNSYLVANIA AND FOLLOWED UP THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER TO THE SEA. THERE WERE EVEN POCKETS OF ALGONQUIN SPEAKERS, THE SUSQUEHANNOCK AND CHEROKEES, WHOSE TERRITORIES SWEEPED DOWN ALONG THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER AND INTO TENNESSEE AND THE CAROLINAS. A VERY INTERESTING MAP SHOWING THE TERRITORIAL LINGUISTIC GROUPS OF THE NATIVE AMERICANS MAY BE FOUND AT: [HTTP://GOOSIE.COCSCLINDIANA.EDU/FARG/REHLING/NATIVEAM/LING.HTML](http://goosie.cogsclindiana.edu/farg/rehling/nativeam/ling.html).

THE GROUP HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS MONTHLY MESSAGE IS THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY. THIS GROUP OF SEVERAL NATIONS STARTED WITH FIVE NATIONS, THE CAYUGA, MOHAWK, ONEIDA, ONONDAGA, AND SENECA, WITH A LATER INCLUSION OF THE TUSCARORA NATION. THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY WAS BASED MAINLY IN NEW YORK AROUND THE FINGER LAKES AND INTO CANADA. THE PLANTS DISCUSSED WERE USED IN MUCH THE SAME WAY BY TRIBES OF THE CONFEDERACY AS WELL AS OTHER NORTHEAST WOODLAND TRIBES.

**SKYE SUTER, AN HERBAL LEAF**



**TREE OF PEACE - SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER IROQUOIS. THE WHITE PINE IS THE CENTER OF THE LOGO REPRESENTING LAW AND PEACE AMONG THE NATIONS.**

# THE WOLF MOON

JANUARY 17, 2022

THE JANUARY WINTER MOON IS A WOLF MOON. ACCORDING TO THE OLD FARMERS ALMANAC "THE HOWLING OF WOLVES WAS OFTEN HEARD AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. IT WAS TRADITIONALLY THOUGHT THAT WOLVES HOWLED DUE TO HUNGER, BUT WE NOW KNOW THAT THE WOLVES USE HOWLS TO DEFINE TERRITORY...AND GATHER FOR HUNTING."

NAMES FOR THE FULL MOONS KEPT THE PASSAGE OF TIME FOR A FULL MONTH, UNTIL THE NEXT MONTH ROLLED AROUND AND A CHANGE IN THE SEASON REQUIRED A NEW NAME FOR THE MONTH.

JANUARY WAS A TIME WHEN FOOD BECAME SCARCE, SO THERE WAS A GREAT DEPENDENCY ON WINTER STORES AND A RENEWED URGENCY TO HUNT AND FIND FOOD. VARIOUS TRIBES IN LOCATIONS AROUND NORTH AMERICA HAD DIFFERENT NAMES FOR THE JANUARY MOON. SOME NAMES SPOKE TO THE FRIGID COLDNESS, TO HUNTING, OR TO THE MIGRATION OF ANIMALS, AND TO THE PLIGHT OF POSSIBLE STARVATION BEFORE THE LAND CAME BACK TO LIFE. WHILE THE MOON NAMES WERE DIFFERENT, THEY ALL CARRIED A SIMILAR THEME RELATING TO THE HARDNESS OF THE SEASON.



THE WOLF MOON: ILLUSTRATION BY HOLLY SHIMIZU.

#### NORTHEAST, MAINE, EASTERN WOODLANDS

**Abenaki** = Greetings Maker Moon

**Mohawk** = The Big Cold

**Passamaquoddy** = Whirling Wind Moon

#### NORTHEAST TO GREAT LAKES, GREAT LAKES

**Algonquin** = Sun Has Not Strength to Thaw

**Anishnaabe (Chippewa and Ojibwe)** = Great Spirits Moon

**Potawatomi** = Moon of the Bear

#### MIDWEST, OHIO, PENNSYLVANIA, GREAT BASIN, NEVADA, WYOMING

**Shawnee** = Severe Moon

**Shoshone** = Freezing Moon

#### NORTHERN PLAINS, CANADA, GREAT PLAINS, DAKOTAS, SOUTHERN PLAINS, CENTRAL PLAINS, NEBRASKA

**Apache** = Time of Flying Ants

**Assiniboine** = Center Moon

**Cheyenne** = Moon of the Strong Cold

**Comanche** = Year Moon

**Cree** = Old Fellow Spreads the Brush

**Lakota** = Hard Moon

**Omaha** = Moon when Snow Drifts into Tipis

**Ponca** = Snow Thaws Moon

**Sioux** = Wolves Run Together

#### SOUTHWEST, ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO

**Hopi** = Moon of Life at its Height

**Pueblo** = Moon of the Cedar Dust Wind

**Zuni** = Limbs are Broken by Snow

#### EAST COAST, CAROLINAS, SOUTHEAST, MISSISSIPPI, LOUISIANA, SOUTHEAST, ALABAMA, GEORGIA

**Cherokee** = Cold Moon

**Choctaw** = Late December to Early January = Moon of

Sassafras, Late January = Moon of Little Famine

**Creek** = Winter's Younger Brother

#### ALASKA

**Haida** = Bear Hunting Moon

#### PACIFIC NORTHWEST, OREGON AND COAST, COLUMBIA RIVER, WASHINGTON

**Kalapuya** = Stay Inside Moon

**Tlingit** = Goose Moon

**Wishram** = Her Cold Moon

# WHITE BIRCH & EASTERN WHITE PINE

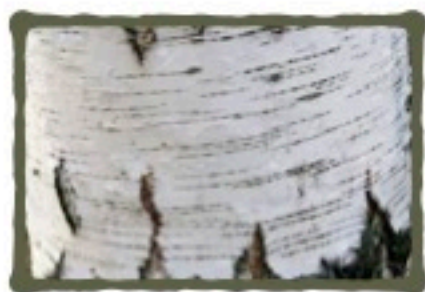
## TWO IMPORTANT TREES

NATIVE AMERICANS USED THE BARK, BERRIES, LEAVES, ROOTS, NUTS, AND FLOWERS FROM NON-WOODY PLANTS, SHRUBS AND TREES TO CREATE FOODS LIKE BREADS AND STEWS, TO MAKE MEDICINES FOR EVERY SORT OF AILMENT AND COMPLAINT, AS WELL AS USEFUL ITEMS LIKE BASKETS OR CANOES.

THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERATION WAS A CONSOLIDATION OF FIVE MAJOR TRIBES BASED MAINLY IN NEW YORK STATE. THEY WERE THE SENECA, CAYUGA, ONONDAGA, ONEIDA AND MOHAWK, WITH THE LATER ADDITION OF THE TUSCARORAS. THE IROQUOIS AND OTHER TRIBES OF THE NORTHEASTERN WOODLANDS USED MANY LOCAL PLANTS IN SIMILAR WAYS.

HERE IS A PARTIAL LIST OF PLANTS USED IN THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF THE NORTHEAST NATIVE AMERICANS: APPLES, ASH, BASSWOOD, BEACH PLUMS, BEANS, BIRCH, BLACKBERRIES, BLACK WALNUTS, BUCKWHEAT, CATTAIL, FLAG, CHERRY, CHESTNUTS, CHOKECHERRY, CONEFLOWER, CORN, CURRANTS, FLAX, GINSENG, GOOSEBERRIES, GRAPES, GROUNDNUTS (VARIOUS LEGUMES), HAZELNUTS, HEMP, HICKORY, BETONY, HOPS, HOREHOUND, HUCKLEBERRY, LETTUCE, LICHEN, LOBELIA, MAPLE, MAY APPLE, MELON, MULBERRIES, NETTLE, OATS, PEACHES, PEAR, PEAS, PEPPERMINT, PLANTAIN, PLUM, POTATOES, PUMPKINS, PURSLANE, RASPBERRY, ROSE, RUSHES, RYE, SASSAFRAS, SNAKEROOT, SQUASH, STRAWBERRIES, SUMAC, THIMBLEBERRY, TOBACCO, TURNIP, AND VARIOUS WEEDS.

ALL TYPES OF PLANTS WERE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE IROQUOIS AND WOODLAND INDIANS BUT TREES PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE, ESPECIALLY IN WINTER. THE WHITE BIRCH AND THE EASTERN WHITE PINE ARE TWO IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIVE TREES.



### **WHITE BIRCH** (*Betula alba*)

White Birch is also known as just plain Birch. There are nearly forty species in the *Betula* family with the name "birch" in common.

The showy bark of the birch comes in many colors including white, yellow, brown and dark brown. The smooth bark of the younger trees becomes marked with horizontal lines as it ages, giving it the familiar characteristic texture we are familiar with. Common names like Bog Birch, Cherry Birch, Japanese White Birch, Paper Bark Birch, Silver Birch, Sweet Birch and Water Birch give descriptive clues to the nature of each birch tree type.

The bark and leaves are used for medicinal purposes. The active constituents are extracted through water or alcohol to make infusions or tinctures. Medicinal birch acts as an aromatic, a stimulant and a diaphoretic. Medicinal birch is used to treat diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, and disorders of the alimentary tract. It is also used as a blood cleanser, for rheumatism, for gout, and to expel worms.

The Native Americans tapped birch trees, like maple trees, for the sap which was made into beverages and syrups. Oil of wintergreen is distilled from the inner bark and twigs.

Birch bark is most famously noted in the making of birch bark canoes, but it was also used to make utilitarian baskets for food preparation and storage containers. The fungicidal property betulin in the bark likely contributed to longer food storage times, making it useful to the Native Americans. If you are interested in creating birch bark projects, the best time to collect materials is in June.

# WHITE BIRCH & EASTERN WHITE PINE

## TWO IMPORTANT TREES



### **EASTERN WHITE PINE** (*Pinus strobus*)

The Iroquois called the Eastern White Pine the *Tree of Peace*. The origins of the *Tree of Peace* began with a man called Dekanawidah, which meant "the peace-giver." He helped create the Iroquois Confederation between the five nations mentioned on the previous page. While traveling between the tribes on his mission, he would invoke the White Pine, symbolic to all the tribes for its *Roots of Peace* which extended in the four compass directions. The five needle clusters of the Eastern White Pine symbolized the Five Nations joined together as one. Also, peace talks were held under the pine as another symbolic gesture. Weapons were often ceremonially buried being under the tree as well.

A notable characteristic of the White Pine is the long supple needles which were used for sewing and basket weaving. The Iroquois would use the pine resin, mixing it with beeswax to seal their canoes. Tree resin was used as a cement, while pine nuts were eaten whole or added into soups as a mash.

Teas made from the gum resin, with twigs of other plants added like juniper, were sipped for colds and flu and other interior ailments such as indigestion and kidney troubles. Gum resin was chewed for sore throats and it was also dried and powdered, then patted onto the throat, similar to a vapor rub treatment. Externally the resin was used for muscular pain, to draw out splinters, or to bring boils to a head. It was also used on sores, cuts, swellings, insect bites and the like.

The bark and new sprigs were used as an expectorant and rheumatism ailments. The high vitamin C content in the needles helped prevent scurvy, chest infections, tonsillitis, laryngitis, croup, and similar ailments. Boiled bark was drunk as a tea for a cough suppressant.

When times were tough in the middle of winter, the Native Americans would eat the inner bark of the White Pine and other trees such as the maples. Warriors of the Algonquin tribe would chew the inner bark of trees to sustain them when they were on the war path, which happened to be most often against the Iroquois. Small mammals also feeling the sting of the hard winter also chew on the bark of trees, eat the seeds in the cones and in the winter rabbits chew on the outer bark.

Birch and White Pine Info from: *A Handbook of Native American Herbs* by Alma R. Hutchens. Shambhala Publications, Inc. 1992, <https://nrd.kbic-nsn.gov/sites/default/files/GatheringBirchandBirchBark.pdf>, <https://easternwhitepine.org/tree-of-peace-the-iroquois-legend-of-the-eastern-white-pine/>, and *Indian Harvest, Wild Food Plants of America* by Jannette May Lucas & Helene Carter. J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York. Copyright 1945. Stand of White birch: [thespruce.com](https://thespruce.com), Birchbark close up: [pinterest.com](https://pinterest.com), Canoe: [winippsaukecanoe.com](https://winippsaukecanoe.com), White Pine tea. Photo: Skye Suter, Pine needles: [countryforcity.com](https://countryforcity.com).

### **AFFILIATIONS**

International Herb Association  
Herb Society of America

PPSEAWA  
(Pan Pacific South East Asian Women's Association)

Friends of Blue Heron Park  
Staten Island Herb Society

SICC Staten Island Creative Community  
NYS Women, Inc.

Copyright © 2022 An Herbal Leaf, All rights reserved.