



Pooka's Page for Grownups

Great News, everyone! Rayne Storm, who's generously been creating WitchCrafts for our readers for years now, is launching a new book, "Everyday Magick for Children" through Schiffer Publishing. Her imaginative projects are geared toward all school aged kids and tested with her own boys at home. ***Pooka thinks this book is a Must Have for every pagan family!***

You can preview and order the book here:

http://www.schifferbooks.com/newschiffer/book_template.php?isbn=9780764340178

I'm also proud of Christine! This marvelous, witchy woman has been an endless source of pagan crafts that enchant adults and children alike. In this issue, she's focused on Bride, Goddess of Flame and Goddess of Poetry, combining the two into a delightful project for both you and your children. Hers is a project you'll both want to share this Imbolc!

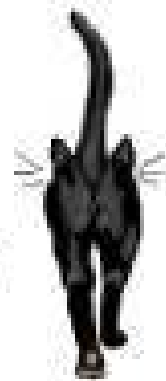
Among other things, Imbolc is a time for planning our outside garden and our inner garden. Hence, two stories in this issue... I've tried to explain and illustrate to children, in simple terms, the difference.

A Delightful Imbolc to Everyone!

Blessed Be!

LC & Pooka

*Be a good little witch -
and see you next time!*





Imbolc

February 2nd

Other Names: *Candlemas, Imbolg, Feast of Torches, Oimelc, Brigid's Day, Lupercalia, GroundhogDay, Feast of Waxing Light*

Imbolc means “in the belly”. Even though it is still winter, Spring is coming soon and, all over the world, new life is already growing in the bellies of mother animals. Deep within the belly of Mother Nature, below the snow and frozen earth, new life is stirring there also.

Contents

Story book Chair– A Time to Plan

Kitchen – Creamed Eggs on Toast

Herb Garden – Beginning Seeds Indoors

Story book Chair– Pooka's Patience

Book of Shadows - Inner Garden Spell & Spell to Waken the Earth

Little Witchcrafts: Poem Candle by Christine Drago

Pennsylvania Hex Symbols by Rayne Storm

Coloring Page - The magic well (a flowered well surrounded with unicorns and fairies and a hidden goddess face)

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The Storybook Chair



A Time to Plan

Between Yule and Imbolc is the “Quiet Time” of the year. Every witch knows that. And certainly every witch’s familiar knows that as well. But, it seemed to Pooka that his personal witch was terribly busy.

Pots of soil lined the window south-facing windows of the cottage, each planted with seeds or cuttings from the previous year’s plants. In the cat’s opinion, his witch spent a great deal of time fussing over them each morning.

And the cleaning! Why had she decided suddenly that *now* was the time to wash the curtains, wax the wooden floors, polish the copper kettle and sort through every closet and cupboard in the cottage?

When he’d asked her, Elsie had muttered something about Spring Cleaning and being ready for the Goddess. She’d then returned to her scrubbing and Pooka returned to his “Quiet Time” which, to him, meant curling up by the hearth and napping.

Eventually, he woke and stretched...first his front legs, then his hind legs and tail straight out behind him. He sat and gave his whiskers a quick grooming, then set out to find Elsie.

He found her bent over the little scrubbed wooden table in the kitchen. The table was covered with graph papers, crayons, catalogues, seed packets and lists. Elsie frowned in concentration as she sketched a diagram on one of the graph papers, paused to consult a catalogue, then quickly wrote an addition to one of her lists. She then returned to the graph paper and made a red circle with one of her crayons.

Way too much business. Pooka decided to give her a break. He jumped onto the table and flopped his body down, making sure it covered both the graphs AND the lists and as much of the catalogues as he could manage. He flapped his tail, scattering the crayons, and asked lazily: “What are we doing NOW?”

Elsie rolled her eyes, took a deep breath, and tried to push the cat off of her papers. “WE,” she said, “are planning our Spring Garden.”

Pooka raised his head and peered out the kitchen window at the snow softly falling outside. “We can’t plant a garden in the snow,” he told her using the patient, reasonable tone that grownups often use with young children.

“Not planting. Planning!” Elsie said as she again tried to shove the heavy cat off her papers.

“Why do we have to plan?” asked Pooka. “Aren’t we going to plant everything the way we did last year?”

“Some parts we can,” nodded Elsie. “But other parts of the garden need to be moved and changed. Tomatoes, for instance, don’t like being planted in the same soil that tomatoes were grown in last year. And, hey!” she added enthusiastically, “I heard about a new kind of tomato that’s supposed to be really good. I thought we might try planting some of those this year. There’s always room for improvement!” she smiled.

“Okay, so you’re moving the tomatoes...”

“Yes, here by the fence,” Elsie told him indicating a red circle on the paper. “And I thought the brussel sprouts could go here this year.” She pointed to a green “B” that she’d drawn. “The apple tree’s branches have grown and I think they were getting too much shade in their old spot.”

“What are all those green lines over there?” asked Pooka.

“Those are peas. I decided to plant more this year. One can never plant too many peas,” smiled Elsie happily.

The cat stuck his tongue out and shivered. He did NOT like peas! But he knew better than to argue.

He noticed a purple squiggle in one corner. “What’s this?” he asked, placing his paw on the squiggle.

“That’s your catnip patch,” said Elsie.

Pooka’s eyes nailed her with a cat-stare. “Only one?” he asked.

Elsie sighed in resignation and drew another purple squiggle on her diagram.

“What about over here too by the apple tree?” suggested Pookaeagerly. “In the summer, I think my catnip might like a bit more shade. Oh! And how about some here and more over there? One can never have too much catnip!”

The little witch rolled her eyes. “I’ve created a monster,” she groaned.



Color this picture of Elsie & Pooka planning their garden.

Afterward, on a blank piece of paper, try making a diagram of what YOUR perfect garden would look like. Look through some seed catalogs for ideas of what YOU would plant.

THE LITTLE KITCHEN WITCH



“Wake up, Elsie! Wake up!” Pooka was bouncing all over the bed with excitement.

The witch slit one eye open, groaned and rolled over on her back. “Pooks, it’s still dark,” she complained. “The sun’s not even awake yet.”

“Yes it is!” The little cat dashed to the window, stretched up on his hind legs and peered over the ledge. “I’m pretty sure I can almost see it through the trees.” He leaped back onto the bed and sat on Elsie’s chest. “It’s Imbolc morning and I’m starving!”

Elsie opened her eyes again and had a good view of her cat’s fat little belly parked inches away from her nose. She chuckled and scooped him up, cuddling him under her chin. “You’re hardly starving, silly. You just want some Creamed Eggs on Toast.”

Pooka squirmed away and galloped to the bedroom door, where he stood staring at her and swishing his tail impatiently. “And bacon!” he said.

Elsie threw back the quilt, sat up and shoved her feet into her slippers. “I’m coming,” she sighed....

For over a hundred years, Creamed Eggs on Toast was a beloved “comfort food” among children, adults (and kitties) alike. It’s just as delicious today as it was then. Yet, in our times of cold cereals and instant microwave breakfasts, this old favorite has been largely forgotten!

The ingredients: Cream, eggs & butter - are all traditional foods of Imbolc. Add a few slices of crisp bacon, a mug of hot cocoa, and you have the perfect “stick-to-your-ribs” breakfast for a chilly Imbolc morning!

Creamed Eggs on Toast

In a saucepan, over low heat, melt **¼ cup of butter** and add **¼ cup of flour**. Cook this over low heat for a minute or two, stirring constantly and being careful not to brown the flour or butter.

Stir in **1 ½ cups of cream (or half & half)** and **¼ tsp of salt** and a **good pinch of pepper**.

Continue cooking over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until it starts to bubble and thicken. Then stir in **4 chopped up boiled eggs** and serve over **4 pieces of hot buttered toast**.



Elsie's HERB GARDEN

Just because it's still cold and frosty outside, doesn't mean you can't start a garden now. In fact, many herbs will do better later in the year if given an early head-start indoors.

Some herbs, like lavender and rosemary, grow better from small cuttings taken from a "parent" plant around Mabon in the fall. But others, like basil, cilantro, chives, parsley and dill, are all easy to start from seed now. All you need is a container, a south facing, sunny window sill, seeds and water.

You can use all sorts of things for pots... even old egg shells which are good for herbs like dill and cilantro that don't like their roots disturbed. When Spring comes, and the earth outside warms up, you can just plant your seedling, shell and all, in the ground!

Elsie, who learned recycling from her grandmother, sometimes plants her seeds in leftover vegetable cans that have pretty, colorful labels. Just be sure to poke some holes in the bottom for drainage. And a long, shallow styrofoam meat or vegetable container works great as a tray under your pots when watering your seedlings.



Fill your containers with moist (not wet) soil and then sprinkle a few seeds on top. Cover this with a little more soil (Just a little!) and press down gently with your fingers like you're tucking the baby seeds into bed.

Water them either with a gentle spray bottle or by filling your sink with an inch or so of water and setting your container in there until you see that the top of the soil is damp. Then cover the top of your container with some plastic wrap to hold the moisture in.



Put the seeds in a sunny window sill and check in about a week for their little green heads to pop up out of the soil. (Some seeds, like parsley, take a longer, so be patient!) Once they immerge, remove the plastic wrap and remember to check every day to see if the soil is moist, but not too wet. As they grow, feed them once a week with fish emulsion (a natural plant food). Talk and sing to them too. Baby plants love that!



Pooka's Patience

Pooka perched on the back of Elsie's chair by the hearth and watched as the little witch set up their Imbolc altar. Suddenly his ears pricked forward as he observed 2 small clay pots filled with earth and a packet of seeds were placed among the candles and incense.

"What's that for?" he asked. "It's too early to plant seeds. Mother Earth is just now starting to wake up."

"It's not too early to start seeds indoors," Elsie replied. "And besides, these will be our Spiritual Seeds of Intent."

"Intent?" asked Pooka. "What's that?"

"Something you plan – or intend – to do," she told him. "These seeds represent something I intend to cultivate and grow in my Inner Garden this year. Your Inner Garden is where you plant thoughts that help you grow into a better person."

Pooka glanced at his reflection in the mirror over the fireplace mantle. He couldn't help admiring the handsome young cat that gazed back at him.

"You plant," he said smugly. "I'm growing just fine!"

Elsie's eyebrows lifted and she smiled. "I don't know... Seems to me you could grow some patience - with your little brother for instance?"

Pooka's head shot up and he glared at her. "How about we do a Growing Spell on him instead? Then maybe he would grow up faster and be less of a pest?"

Elsie just looked at him.

"Okay, okay... I know... That's not how it works," sighed Pooka. He climbed slowly off the back of the chair and joined his witch at the altar. "I guess I'd better plant one of those Spiritual Seeds for myself."

After the ritual, Elsie took each of their pots and placed them in a south-facing window sill. "Now our Spiritual Seeds will grow along with the actual, physical seeds we've planted," she told him.

Pooka hoped she was right and, a week later, when Aunt Tilly and Grimalkin came to visit, his spell was put to the test.

“Dear child!” Aunt Tilly exclaimed as she sailed through the door in a billow of purple skirts and assorted luggage. “How was your Imbolc?”

Pooka hid behind Elsie, but was quickly found by the little grey tabby kitten that bounced out of Aunt Tilly’s carpet bag. “Pooka!” cried Grimalkin as he tackled his older brother. The impact sent Pooka’s legs flying out from under him and he landed on his side with a WHOMP. Grimalkin took this as an invitation to play-fight. He wrapped his legs...all four of them! ...around Pooka’s face and started chewing on his ears.

“I’m growing Patience,” Pooka told himself.

Somehow, he managed to stand up and shake the kitten off. Grimalkin immediately disappeared.

A much relieved Pooka sat on the rug in front of the hearth and began licking his fur back into place. Suddenly, a terrible thought occurred to him. He sprang up and dashed to the kitchen.

Sure enough, there was Grimalkin, polishing off the last bit of Pooka’s breakfast. The kitten grinned up at him as he cleaned his whiskers. “I was hungry!” he said.

“I’m growing Patience,” Pooka reminded himself. Aloud, he asked, “Do you want to play with my new catnip mouse?” Elsie gave him a fresh one every Yule. He normally didn’t share his mouse with anyone!

“Sure!” exclaimed Grimalkin.

They scampered back to the parlor and found the mouse “hiding” under a table. Pooka batted at it. This was his favorite game! The mouse scurried across the floor and Grimalkin pounced. He bit fiercely into its little flannel body and ripped over and over with his terrible little back claws. Suddenly he was chewing a limp carcass and the mouse’s catnip stuffing had spilled out onto the rug.

Pooka stared at what was left of his toy. That catnip mouse was supposed to last him all year!

Before he realized it, his paw had lifted and he cuffed the kitten’s ear. Grimalkin was sent reeling.

Just then, Elsie and Aunt Tilly walked into the parlor. “Pooka,” said Elsie. “What happened to growing Patience?”

“I think I had a crop failure!” growled Pooka.

To his surprise, instead of being angry, his witch lifted him up and cuddled him. “Not really,” she whispered. “Without your spell, I think you probably would have smacked your little brother a long time ago!”

Pooka gazed up at her with relief.

“But keep working on it,” Elsie winked. “You aren’t done growing yet!”



A Little Book of Shadows



Inner Garden Spell

What is it you'd like to grow inside yourself? Is it Patience, like Pooka? Or maybe you think you need to be more tolerant and kind towards kids who are different than you? Maybe it's a talent you want to grow – like art or music or dancing. Sometimes talking to a best friend or grownup can help you realize an area in which you should focus.

When you've decided on something you want to grow this year, here is Elsie's spell that will help:

First, draw a little picture that symbolizes what you want to grow... a musical note for music, or a pallet and easel for painting.... A thunder and lightning cloud in a crossed out circle for Patience. Maybe your job is to take out the trash and you always forget. Draw a picture of the trash bucket overflowing... Whatever it is, you can think of a picture to represent it!

Then, put your picture in the bottom of a clay pot along with a tiny crystal to focus your magical energies. Add some moist dirt and then some seeds. (Sunflower or Marigold seeds are good. They represent the Sun and Success!) Hold your hands over the seeds and feel the magical energy pouring through you.... Down your arms and through your hands...blessing the seeds with your magical intention.

Add a little bit more dirt and, on top of the dirt, add some crushed ice. In the center, partially bury a small golden or yellow or orange candle to represent the sun.

Light the candle and say:

"This year I will grow.....(whatever you intend to grow) May the Gods bless me and help me. So mote it be and Blessed Be."

Then watch the sun candle burn down and the ice melt, all the while thinking of your goal...seeing how you will accomplish it, seeing how you will act and be when it is done. What will be different?

When you are done, blow out the candle and let any remaining ice/snow melt.

Light your candle again every night and repeat the words until the candle is gone. Then place the pot in a sunny window sill and take good care of the little seedling that emerges! It's part of YOU!

A Spell For Wee Witchlings: Right now, Mother Earth is sleeping. But You can help wake her up! Go outside and stomp 3 times on the ground with your foot or staff or, better yet, smack 3 times on a bare patch of earth with the palm of your hand. Yell, "Wake up, Ma!

Soon after, if you look very close, you will see baby buds on the trees and tiny green shoots coming out of the earth.

Little Witchcrafts

Imbolc Poem Candle

by *Christine Drago-Lombardo*



One Imbolc tradition we carry on in our home is the lighting of candles in every window. We decorate our candles with pictures and wishes for the year and I make a poem candle to honor Brigit, the Celtic Goddess of Poems, healing, and Smithcraft. I either write a poem or use a favorite one from a book.

You will need:

A encased glass candle or glass candle holder

2 or 3 cups of cold coffee

A print out of a poem, spell, or picture you want to age. I used a page out of a

Edgar Allen Poe book I had that had fallen apart and I

couldn't bear to just throw away. NOTE: *I do not ruin a book for any project. They must be already damaged for me to use them.*

Cookie sheet or aluminum foil

Dish that paper will fit in and deep enough to add coffee

Decoupage or Elmer's glue and water. Equal parts, mix well. Same as decoupage.

Embellishment: I used twine and a piece of bark.

Preheated oven at 200 degrees

1. Take your piece of paper you wish to age and place it in your dish.

Pour coffee over paper making sure you cover it completely. Let sit for 45 minutes. That is the length of time I had mine in the coffee. Rub the edges of the paper while wet to roughen up the edges giving it an aged appearance. *See picture 1* to see the color difference.

2. Place on cookie sheet and put in oven for 5 minutes

3. Remove from oven and carefully take paper off cookie sheet with fork.

4. To give it the appearance of old and dirty dips your finger in the coffee and dab on your paper in a couple spots. Let dry.

5. Take your decoupage or glue mixture and cover the entire back of your paper and place on the glass where you wish it to be. Take your brush or finger and rub out any bubbles pressing it firmly onto the glass.

6. Take more decoupage and brush on the top of the paper covering it and smoothing it out. When you have this in place wipe off the glass of any glue as close as you can to the paper but not up to the paper. You want to seal the paper onto the glass. Let dry and give one or two more coats.

7. Place on your candle anything you like. I added a piece of bark I had that was curled already and tied it one with a piece of twine.

That's it! *See picture 3*

I also aged some yellow tissue paper and decoupage it to a candle holder and added flower petals



Little WitchCrafts

By Rayne Storme

Hex signs are functional circular art with geometric shapes, birds and/or floral designs. Each Hex has a Magickal attribution like protection, balance, rain and sunshine, invocations, luck, etcetera. And no a Hex symbol does not mean you are putting a Hex on someone or that you should... because that would just be wrong.

The use of Hex symbols stems from the Old World and has traveled with families as they have immigrated to various places. Specific symbols and designs would adorn important documents; symbols of Blessings and Prosperity could be found on wedding certificates and symbols for rain and sunshine could be found on Hex signs painted proudly on family barns.

The most commonly recognized Hex symbol is the Rosetta, a geometric design consisting of 6 petals. It is this design that we get the term, Hex. Hex being short for Hexagon which is a 6 sided object. Though these sometimes very intricate and very time consuming designs are traditionally Dutch ('fancy' Dutch), they get their name from the German word for six which is "sechs," and was pronounced as "hex" by the English.

Today, there are many different options you can choose from to create your very own, specifically built Hex symbol. Each Hex sign is designed based on Color, Symbols, Design and Meaning. Now, try creating your very own Magickal Hex signs, taking careful consideration of your choice of Colors, Designs, Symbols, Meanings and other options you choose to include.

Here's what you will need:

Paper and Cardboard or Cardstock (for older kids; wooden circles from the craft department)
Pencils, Markers, Colored pencils, Paints (acrylic paints work best on wood)
Ruler, Compass or other round objects to make circles

Instructions:

First ground and center yourself. Focus on the intent or the purpose of your Hex sign.
Now take into consideration your colors, designs, meanings that you will use to create your hex sign... they should reflect your purpose. (I have included a Quick chart below to help you get started)
Let your design come naturally. Using your pencil, ruler, compass, etcetera... Start at the center of your circle and work your way to the outer edge. (I have included some examples to get you thinking)
Once you are happy with your design, color it in. Cut it out and hang it up where it can do the most good, for the intent you designed it with.

Because you created your Hex sign with so much love and care, be sure to treat it well and take care of it, so that its intent will never fail you.

The following quick charts are just a guideline to help you construct your very own Hex Sign.

COLOR

Red	emotions, passions	Orange	abundance
Yellow	health, the sun	Green	growth, success
Blue	peace, calmness	Violet	things that are sacred
White	purity, the moon	Black	protection
Brown	mother earth, friendship		



SYMBOLS

Rosetta	Good Luck	Stars	protection against fire
Sun Wheel	Warmth, sunshine	Raindrop	water, good crops
Tulips	Faith, Hope	Heart	true love, lasting love
Distelfink	good luck and happiness	Rooster	watching over home & family

DESIGN

A symbol or pattern repeated twice... gives you double of its meaning
 A symbol or pattern repeated three times... gives you three times its meaning

Using the traditional 6 points... in a Rosetta
 Using 8 points... like in a sun wheel
 Using 12 points... representing the 12 months in a year

Here are some examples for you:

corn: good harvest

star

clover: good luck

raindrop

heart

tulip

Distelfink

Rooster

Bless this HOME

6 points: "Winds of Change"

8 points: Sun Wheel

12 points: Year long Blessings

The 6 pointed Rosetta is one of the oldest Hex symbols. Color in your Rosetta, then when you are done, cut it out and attach it to a piece of cardboard (larger than the Hex circle), add a small hole at the top and attach a piece of string so that you can hang up your Good Luck Hex sign... because we can always use a little more luck.

