

Seasonal Guides

April 2018

THE EARTH IS OUR MOTHER

Jenn Campus Author

Newsletter Subscriber Exclusive Monthly Guide

Seasonal Guide : April 2018

The Earth is our Mother

By Jenn Campus

All Rights Reserved. Copyright (c) 2018 Jenn Campus

Find out more at <http://jenncampusauthor.com>

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the permission in writing from the author.

If you are reading this e-book and did not download it from <http://www.jenncampusauthor.com> or an authorized affiliate, then you probably bought a stolen copy. To report a suspected internet thief, please email jenn.campus@gmail.com

Table of Content

The Miracle	2
Just Existing is Enough	4
Jord and Nerthus	8
Earth Day & International Mother Earth Day	12
Earth Day History	14
Activities to Celebrate Earth Day	16
Arbor Day	20
Yggdrasil Day	22
Amazing Tree Facts	24
Tree of Life Meditation	26
Pine Needle Syrup Recipe	30
Dreams of Ydalir	32
Wanted: Fantasy Writer	36



We live on a blue planet
that circles around a
ball of fire

Next to a moon that
moves the sea...

And you don't believe
in miracles?

The Miracle

I saw this little gem on Facebook and with such earthy celebrations like Earth Day, International Mother Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrated all over the world in April, it was one of those things that made me just stop for a moment, take a deep thankful breath and smile.

Yes. I believe in miracles and I believe that being alive on this planet in this moment is one of them, and because of that, I believe it is my duty to help preserve the earth for the next generations by teaching my own children to do the same.

It makes me happy to see so many international celebrations which focus on nature and our beautiful planet. It is obvious that without it we couldn't be here, but how often do you really think about it? Does this knowledge influence your decisions and daily practices?

I am the person who brings recyclables home with me if there is nowhere to recycle them where I am. These days it is easier, since I live in Italy, which is the [leader in waste recycling in Europe](#).

I also use as little water as I can when brushing my teeth, use natural cleaning products and try not to use a lot of plastic. I even wash my plastic bags and use them until they have holes in them, drying them on the clothesline outside. Even with all that I find it is a good practice to think about the Earth and how much she gives to us (our very lives included) often, as a way to recommit myself to her care.



Just Existing is Enough

I believe it is a miracle that we live on a planet that is currently spinning out in the dark vastness of the universe while we sip coffee, go for our daily run or chat with friends over lunch. We live on a planet with such miraculous systems in place that we don't ever have to think about how everything works for it to work. We don't have to think for a moment about our planet's place in the Universe for it to function, provide and continuously sustain our lives. I believe it is a miracle that human beings get born at all when I think about all the intricacies that have to come together to create a life, and we live in such miraculous bodies we don't need to think about breathing in order for it to be done. Stew on that for a moment!

Every living creature eats something that is alive in order to live, whether it is microscopic bacteria, a plant or an animal. Each living being is going about its life to fulfill a greater purpose, which is in part continuing life on this planet but we are rarely conscious of it and if we are, we tend to get ahead of ourselves and think we individually know what is best for the planet and its systems.

Just existing is enough.

Read that again, just existing is enough. We can't know our ultimate purpose, or the ultimate purpose of the planet we live on, our mother, but just being here, right here right now, we are fulfilling it, effortlessly. WOW.

Sometimes we get so caught up in the tiny details of our life that we really don't think about the larger picture and our place within it. Even if you meditate regularly or devote time and energy to connect with the forces of nature it is hard to really focus in on and remember that we are part of a much larger cycle and environment.



Mother Earth is sentient and you can take that literally, or you can take it to mean that the earth is populated by sentient beings all living their lives in order to survive and thrive. Therefore we live in a web of life where everyone and all of our lives weave together to support life on this planet and it works. We are never alone and though it is important to be conscious of our actions there are so many other levels going on beyond our comprehension and so many other beings that help support us that it is completely OK not to be able to do it all. Just by existing, you are “doing it” on some level. As you will read later in this guide, we breathe just because trees exist.

We accept that truth, so why can't we accept this one too? We are part of nature, too, and just by existing we are fulfilling a larger purpose, even if we never know what it is while we are here.

When I start to focus in on this knowledge, I come to the realization that what I do in my life matters, but it is not the “be all, end all”. I don't have to do things perfectly or even understand all the mysteries of our world because I am part of a system, and I definitely don't control it. This means I get to revel in the wonderful mystery of it all because I am not in charge. The earth went on before I was here and it will continue to go on doing its thing long after I am gone from this plane of existence.

There is something extremely comforting in the truth that I am basically insignificant in the larger picture. Yet, I am very significant to those close to me, those who I spend my time with and with whom I share my life. And so that is why I tend to focus on things close to home, areas where I can really make a difference and to whom I will be remembered when I am gone, a legacy. That is why it is such a sacred duty to pass on our earth and nature friendly habits to the next generation so they can do the same.

Jord and Nerthus

In Norse cosmology the physical earth, known as Midgard, is personified in the goddess Jord. She is a female Jotun, or giant and is the mother of Thor. Her name literally translates to “Earth” in Old Norse. It is loosely understood that Jord’s domain is the wild places of the earth, the untamed parts. She is mother to all Wights, or land spirits. Thor, her son is often described as protector of Midgard, and works along with his mother to keep this planet alive and healthy. If we keep Jord healthy, we ensure our own health. I find it also helps to offer a glass of beer to Thor every now and again. But that is a whole other story.

Although it is widely accepted that Jord is Earth, there is another Northern Goddess called Nerthus. Nerthus, known to the Romans, was described by the Roman historian Tacitus in his *Germania*. She was associated with the Roman *Terra Mater* or Mother Earth and connected with places where the earth and water meet.

In *Germania* Tacitus relates that some of the Germanic tribes venerated her and maintained a sacred grove on an secret island. She was sometimes carted around in a holy cart draped with cloth which contained her essence, and only one of her priests could touch it. During her procession, all weapons were locked away, and there was a time of peace. When the goddess was finished being among humans she was returned to her temple by the priests.

Tacitus adds that once the festivities were over the goddess, the cart, and the cloth were all sacredly washed by slaves in a secluded lake, afterwards the slaves were ritually drowned so they were not able to tell anyone about what they saw and experienced on her sacred isle.





Nerthus is often partnered in a divine pairing with Njord, God of the Sea. The connection between the two is due to the linguistic relationship between the name Njörðr and the reconstructed Proto-Germanic Nerþuz, or Nerthus, the feminine, Latinized form of how the word Njörðr would have looked in the time of the first century.

Many scholars believe that Jord and Nerthus may be two aspects of the same figure, but named differently depending on geography - Jord in Scandinavia and Nerthus in Germany and Austria.

Known as Gaia in Greek mythology, Eorthe in Old English, later Natura in English during the Middle Ages and Danu among the Irish, every ancient culture revered a Mother Earth. In most Indo-European mythology femininity and earth are intrinsically connected, like masculinity and the sky. Often in folklore and stories they are married, Earth and Sky and it is known as the Divine Marriage. The union bestows prosperity on Earth which is fertilized by the sun and the rain.

Traditional offerings to Jord include milk and honey poured into the soil where you wish to plant something to ask her blessing.



Earth Day & International Mother Earth Day

Both Earth Day and International Mother Earth Day are secular holidays celebrated on **April 22** as a way to honor the earth we live on and the connection between all living things.

They are celebrated in ways that remind us to be good stewards of the planet we live on. To remember we are part of this great web of life. It reminds us how precious this cosmic rock is that we call home and that we should care enough to stop and think about how our actions affect it over the long haul.

We should absolutely do this.

It is important and I can get on board with any reason to spend time in nature, hugging a tree or planting a garden. For me it is also vitally important to say a prayer of thanks to this planet that is constantly providing for me and never take for granted that this happens everyday no matter what I do, whether I am taking the day to relax, or hard at work, whether I am protesting injustice or living my life the best way I know how.

I am humbled by the fact that it is not just for humans that this planet exists. Although we often erroneously think we know what is best for it, it is unlikely that we actually do. It is for all of us that live here and in turn we are definitely here to give something back to our planet, our home, even if we don't know exactly what it is. Even if it is just to feed her with our bodies once they come to an end.

Just existing is enough.

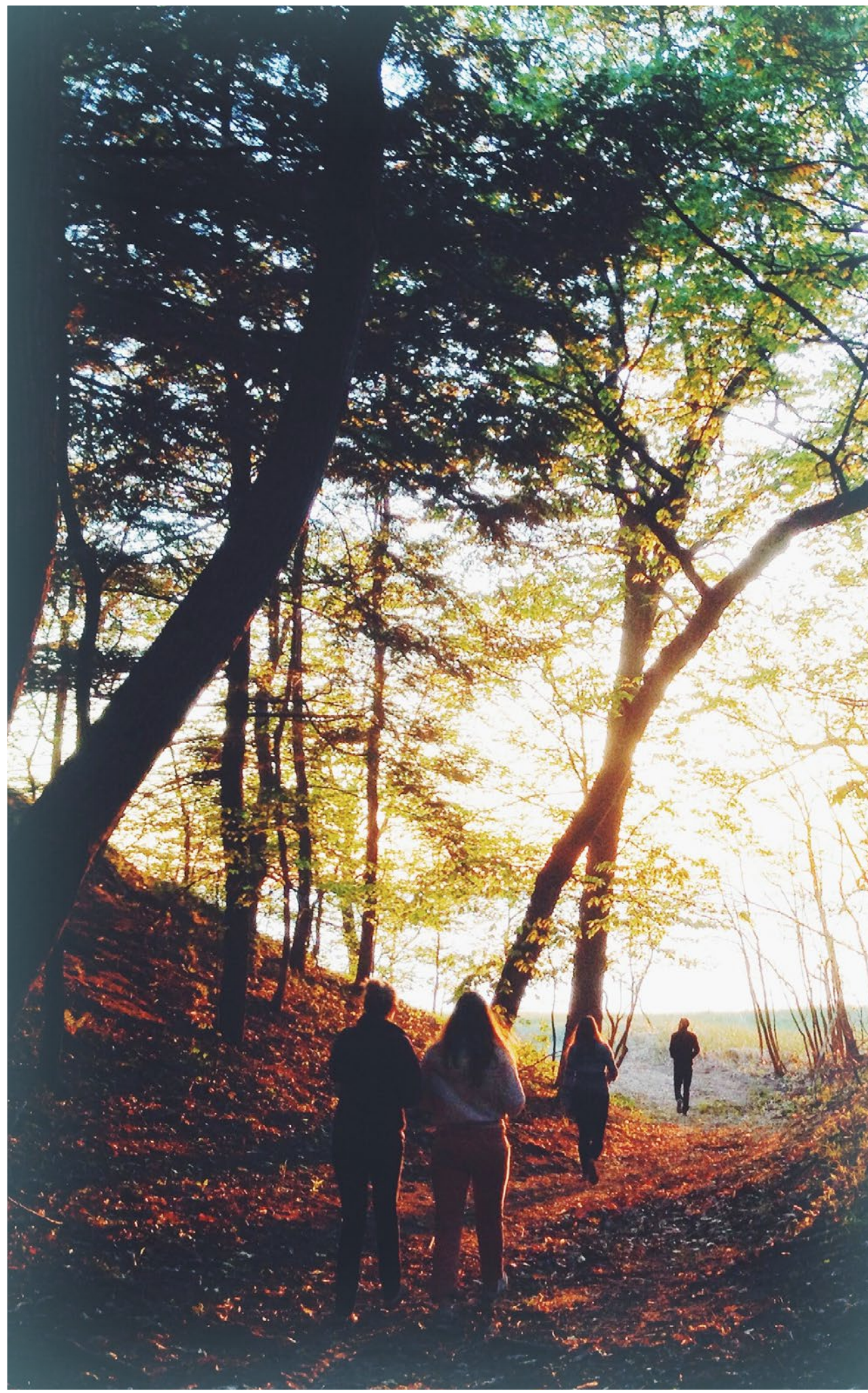
Earth Day History

The decision to make Earth Day fall close to the Spring Equinox, which occurs sometime between March 20 - March 22 was not a coincidence. At the moment of the equinox, it is traditional to observe Earth Day at the United Nations by ringing the Japanese Peace Bell, which was donated by Japan to the UN. Holding a celebration of Earth, the planet we all live on near the Spring equinox makes a collaborative global event truly possible.

Senator Gaylord Nelson, a Democrat from Wisconsin, dreamed up Earth Day as a way to get environmental concerns, like toxic waste dumping onto the national political agenda in the United States. Up until that point there was no formal political agenda to protect the planet's natural resources. Nelson envisioned a large-scale, grass-roots environmental demonstration "to shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda."

In 1990, Earth Day went global, with 200 million people in over 140 nations participating. Now more than 1 billion people are involved in Earth Day activities, making it "the largest secular civic event in the world" according to Earth Day Network (EDN), a non-profit organization that coordinates Earth Day activities.





Activities to Celebrate Earth Day

Here are some fun activities you can do to celebrate Earth Day with your family and teach the younger generations how to care for our planet.

1. **Go For a Walk** - remember why you love the earth and marvel in her beauty.
2. **Recycle** - lead by example, and teach the young ones that waste management is important.
3. **Plant Something** - be it flowers, herbs, vegetables or trees.
4. **Clean up Trash** - make the world more beautiful and show respect for the Earth.
5. **Set Up a Bird Feeder** - it is easy to make one by hand. Cover pinecones with peanut butter mixed with an equal amount of oatmeal or cornmeal, then roll the whole thing in birdseed, and hang it on a tree branch.
6. **Go To An Earth Day Event** - this shows kids that many people care about the environment and there are many activities to teach kids the importance of preserving our planet and her natural resources.
7. **Make a Picnic of Local Foods** - let kids help pick the ingredients at a local farmers market, or the local foods section of your grocery store. Talk about how there is much less waste of fuels when eating food that doesn't have to travel far, and how eating local strengthens local economy.
8. **Decorate a Reusable Bag** - a fun activity for kids, they can take the bag with them to pick up the provisions for the picnic
9. **Live Like Your Ancestors For the Day** - go without electricity, unplug everything to fight the urge to turn anything on. Use candles when it gets dark; try cooking an open fire, wood stove, or grill. Play cards or

board games, read a book or go for a bike ride, then go to bed early and wake up feeling refreshed.

10. **Visit A Farm** - show kids where our food comes from, whether plant or animal. Thank the farmers for giving us healthy food to eat.
11. **(BONUS POINTS) HUG A TREE** (you'll want to after you read the next sections...)

Get to Know Earth

Humans are tall beings, and we stand upright, which means as adults our eye level is farther up from the ground. My kids see things on the ground that I would never notice, and sometimes I like to follow them as they explore to see what things they find. To really get in touch with the earth, it is nice to get down to her level and understand things from her vantage point. I enjoy sitting on the ground to have a picnic, garden and play with my kids. You get a different perspective way down low.

Get to know a particular piece of Earth. It is especially nice if it is a place you can easily access. Maybe sit in the dirt or grass in your backyard, or at a local park. Find a peaceful part of the forest or a quiet hill. Sit and sense the Earth, see what is around you at eye level - lay down if you can. Learn the plants that grow there, and whether they have uses as food or medicine. Do you see any animals down there, like certain insects? Who lives here? Learn to identify birds and other animals on this piece of earth. Breathe in the smells and feel the ground underneath you. Be aware that the ground literally holds you up, that you walk on Mother Earth with every step you take. What are ways you can honor that relationship? Are there steps you can take to be a better steward of the land? It is nice to come back to this place in different seasons and weather to see how things change.



Arbor Day

We as humans literally need the breath of trees to survive. Through their leaves, trees take in carbon dioxide from the air, that humans breathe out. Too much carbon dioxide is actually poisonous for us. But trees use it to make the sugar that is their food, and release oxygen they don't use back through their leaves. In fact every human needs about 8 individual trees per year to get enough oxygen to live and breathe. Therefore a holiday that celebrates trees is one deserving of a entry in your yearly calendar. In fact it is my belief that we should each strive to tend to eight trees if we can as a way to ensure our health, and that of our plant allies. Even if you don't have 8 trees in your yard (you might not even have a yard!) get to know some special trees in your neighborhood or vicinity, and visit them often. Thank them for the air you breathe, water them, and maybe even hug one once in a while.

Arbor Day is another international holiday that celebrates and encourages the planting of trees. It is celebrated in the US the last Friday in April, which is April 27, this year (2018).

Many countries observe this holiday. Though usually observed in the spring, the date varies, depending on climate and suitable planting season for each region.

The easiest way to celebrate Arbor Day is to plant a tree. If you are not able to do that, take an inventory of the various trees in your neighborhood to learn more about what kinds of trees grow in your area.

You can also donate a tree to be planted in your name here: <https://www.arborday.org>.



Yggdrasil Day

If you want one more way to celebrate trees and the earth, there is a fairly new holy day celebrated on April 22, by some pagans known as Yggdrasil Day.

It is not an ancient holy day by any means, but I like the sentiment of it, which is why I am sharing it. In Norse mythology Yggdrasil is the Tree of Life. There are some arguments among scholars whether the tree is a huge Ash, or a Yew.

Both have evergreen qualities. In Norse cosmology the branches of the World Tree tie together the nine worlds of Norse mythology, binding together the fabric of the universe, moving through lands inhabited by humans, gods, and giants, and joining them all together, as a living bridge which represents the living connection between all things.

It is encouraged on this day to contemplate humankind's place within the nine worlds, and to celebrate the blessings of nature, often shown by planting a tree on this day, similar to the celebration of Arbor Day. It is also a good time to celebrate culture, heritage, and spirituality.





Amazing Tree Facts

I've been known to hug my fair share of trees. In fact, I make a pilgrimage to visit some ancient olive trees in my area, they are 4,000 and 5,000 years old respectively, and they still bear fruit, which amazes me every time I see them. To put that into perspective, they were around when woolly mammoths still roamed the earth. If that is tough to wrap your head around, then this will blow your mind. A colony of quaking aspen called Pando, or "The Trembling Giant," in Utah is over 80,000 years. It spans 106 acres, and although it appears to be comprised of individual trees, all of the trees are connected by their roots and all are identical clones of each other, technically this makes them a single organism.

The fact is, humans need trees to survive. Here are some of the reasons why:

1. Trees absorb odors and pollutant gases, they filter dangerous particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and bark, making the air cleaner
2. They provide much needed shade in hot climates to help regulate body temperature
3. They help prevent soil erosion keeping habitats for humans and other animals intact
4. They provide food for all kinds of animals (including humans), like nuts, seeds, fruits, leaves and bark - some of the animals in turn pollinate the plants we humans eat or use as medicine, while others eat pests like mosquitoes which can carry harmful diseases. Scientists have found that by adding a single tree to a pasture, can raise the number of bird species from zero to 80 because the [tree provides the needed shelter](#).
5. They provide medicine which humans and other animals rely on to maintain good health

If you weren't already a tree hugger, I bet you are now! :)



Tree of Life Meditation

One meditation I have been doing for decades is a simple Tree of Life meditation. There are many variations of this meditation, but this is the one I adapted for myself. I use this when my energies are all over the place and I need to focus and feel grounded, or when I want to connect to Earth energies.

Begin by sitting in a comfortable position. You can use a chair but I prefer to sit on the ground. If you are sitting in a chair, make sure your feet are firmly on the ground. Sit up straight, but don't be rigid.

Spend the next 2-3 minutes breathing slowly and deeply; focus on your breath. Try to make your inhalations and exhalations equal. If thoughts come into your mind, just let them go. Once you feel relaxed move on to the next step.

Let Your Roots Dig Deep

Bring your attention to your spine, imagine it is the trunk of a tree, and at the base of your spine are your roots. What kind of tree are you? If you don't know, that is OK. But take notice if one tree seems to catch your attention. With each breath, stretch your roots down into the Earth. Feel your roots go through the floor if you are inside or the grass or cement, then further until you reach the dark, fecund soil that blankets the planet.

With each breath, allow your roots to dig deeper, through fresh, underground springs and deep water tables.

Finally you reach the Earth's hard crust. Notice whatever images or sensation you feel here before you move further into the Earth. Don't concentrate or focus on these thoughts or feelings, just notice what they are and move on.

Keeep breathing and let your roots continue to dig until you begin to feel heat. This is the heart of the earth, the molten core.

The Heart of the Earth

Breathe and allow your roots to emerge at the Heart of Earth the molten core. Feel her heat rise all the way up your long roots until it reaches your body. Allow the warm bright light to fill your body, each and every cell. Breathe deeply as you feel this deep connection to Earth. Feel how grounded you are and thank Mother Earth for her many gifts.

The Canopy

Focus the warm energy at the top of your head, and feel branches and leaves sprouting from there. The top of the tree is called the canopy. Your branches are home to many animals and plants. What lives here in your branches? Take notice. Don't focus, just notice and move on.

Feel your branches reach up the sky and to another source of heat and light, the sun. Let the warm light of the sun touch all your leaves.

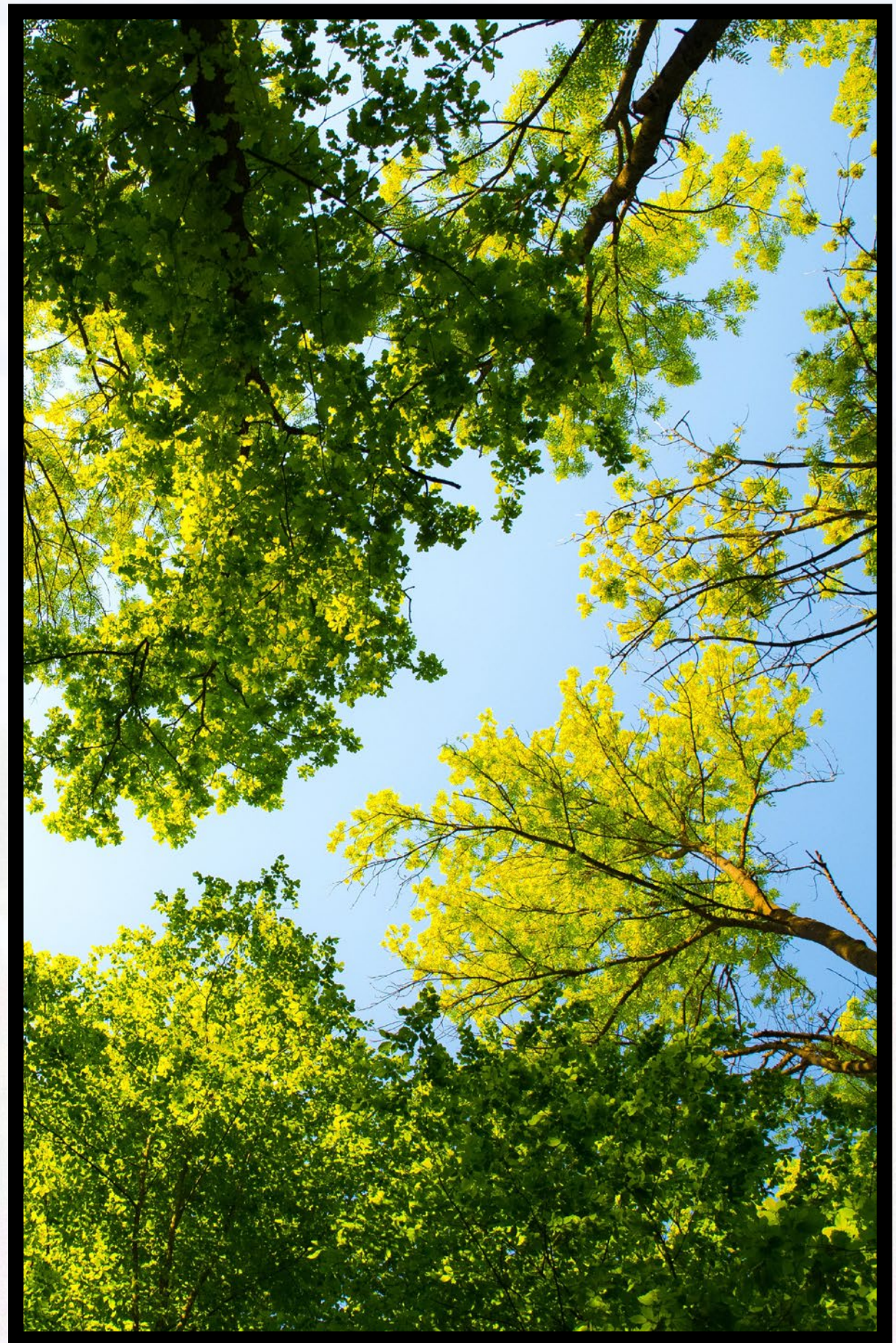
Feel the wind in your branches, you might sway a little, and bend but you don't break.

Earth and Sky

Sit for a few moments, feeling the deep roots in the Earth and your branches reaching up into the heavens. Let the light from the Earth and Sun fill your body. Relax into the feelings that this stirs up. Once you feel more restored and connected it is time to come back to this time and place.

Begin to pull the roots and branches back into your body by taking deep breaths. Then allow your breath to return to its normal state and open your eyes.

At this point you might want to jot down some notes or journal about your experience.





Pine Needle Syrup Recipe

I like to share a recipe in each guide. This month it seems appropriate to share a recipe for pine syrup. It is easy and quick to make (about 45 minutes). Pine needles contain vitamins (especially vitamins C and A) and nutrients that can stimulate the immune system, improve eye and respiratory health. Pine needle syrup is a simple, easy way to flavor teas, savory dishes, and even cocktails, adding an extra boost of vitamins during the winter months. The needles have a citrus flavor mingled with an herbal essence, similar to rosemary in culinary applications. It can also be taken as a daily tonic stirred into seltzer water with some lime or lemon. It is best to make the syrup from fresh emerging spring green needles when they begin to come out in spring. They are softer than the older growth and should have a citrus like flavor when you taste them. Pick from scattered places around the tree so you don't damage it.

NOTE: Not suitable for pregnant or breastfeeding mothers.

INGREDIENTS:

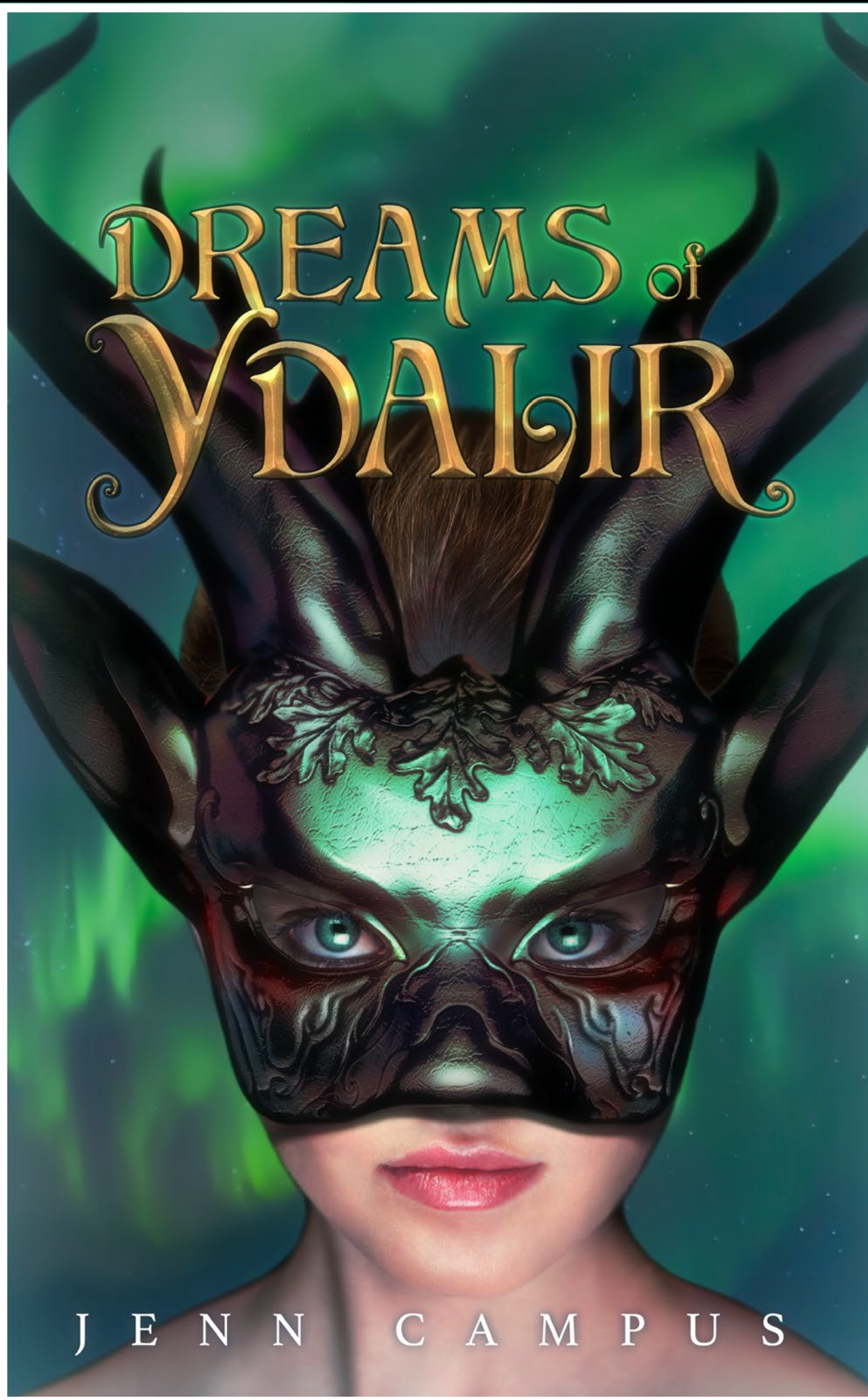
1 handful conifer tips or needles, roughly chopped (Douglas Fir or Spruce work well - be sure to accurately identify the tree species you harvest needles from. Not all evergreens are edible. If you aren't sure, get your needles from an herbalist).

1 cup boiling water

1 cup granulated sugar

METHOD:

Place the tips and needles in a heat-proof ceramic or glass container. Pour boiling water over and cover. Let steep for at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer into a saucepan and discard the greenage. Then add the sugar. Bring the mixture to a slow simmer over medium-low heat, stirring constantly until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and let it cool. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.



Dreams of Ydalir

I am in the process of writing (and my husband, world renowned fantasy artist and illustrator is creating art for) [Dreams of Ydalir](#), an illustrated historical fantasy fairy tale based on european folklore.

Although some may look at the genre of fantasy as fluff, this story is far from it.

It is folklore. If you enjoy these guides (and I really hope you do!), you enjoy folklore.



I have been writing this story for the past 4 years and working with the material for the past 8.

It has become a part of me, or maybe better said, comes from a deep place inside of me that I cannot be separated from and it is very steeped in a love and respect for the natural world and the wild places.

MESSAGES FROM THE GODS

There are several sections in the story from the perspective of particular gods from the northern european pantheon of whom not much is known today.

One of them is **Wuldor**, also known as Ullr, God of the Hunt, and the other is **Elen of the Ways**, an ancient pan-european Deer Goddess.

They are both stewards of the green places of midgard (earth) and beyond, and they have many valuable lessons for us, as humans that are in a similar vein to what you've read in this guide.

The parts of the story told from their perspective is a result of years worth of personal meditation sessions and devotional work with these figures and knowledge that is near and dear to me.

ELEN OF THE WAYS

I have seen a strong resurgence of interest in Elen of the Ways over the past year, and it validates my own experiences that she really wants her story to be told, and she is ever tied to the wild places.

If these types of subjects interest you, you will love my story. Please check it out and [subscribe here](#) to receive monthly issues of the story.





Wanted: Fantasy Writer

I recently shared this image and the following thoughts about it on my page on [Facebook page](#):

Fantasy Author Wanted. Apply Within.

Must be experienced in geography, anthropology, military history, linguistics, applied and theoretical physics, cartography, mythology, sociology, theology, climatology, biology, economics, classical civilizations, philosophy, history of textiles, botany, human physiology, command and control, world history, chemistry, forensics, engineering, psychopathology, metallurgy, transportation, urban planning, creative writing, editing, graphic design, trauma care, ancient weaponry, architecture, historical

“The credentials of a Fantasy Writer often goes something like this. I am drawn to write in the genre because I love history and everything associated with it (folklore, art, culture, history, anthropology, food, herb lore, mythology, etc). The way I describe the fictional story I am writing Dreams of Ýdalir, takes place in the late 18th century in lowland Scotland, as well as what I refer to as “The Otherworld”. In my own words, “It is a world that exists beneath the veil of our own familiar world and one that you will love getting lost in”. The familiarity in a lot of fantasy novels - like a geographical location, a time period, and of course the story arc of the characters, etc. allows the readers to connect to the book and its message, and then the fun and fantastical parts of it just make the story more intriguing.”

IF YOU THOUGHT THIS GUIDE WOULD BE ABOUT BELTAINE...

Don't worry. I will cover Beltaine in the next guide, which will be out before the holiday.

Thank you!

If you know someone else who might enjoy this type of guide, please tell them about my website and invite them to sign up for the newsletter so they can receive their own copy.

Thanks,
Jenn

Follow me at: jenncampusauthor.com



And if you need more help around celebrating this season, feel free to get in touch with me, or start a discussion on my [Facebook Page](#).

Thank you!

NORSE MYTHOLOGY MEETS MISTS OF AVALON



A COMING OF
AGE TALE AND
THE UNTOLD
LOVE STORY OF
THE GODS, ULLR
(WULDOR) AND
ELEN OF THE
WAYS, AS WRITTEN
BY THE FEY-
TOUCHED HUMAN
FAWN.

Available on
 patreon

About the Author

FOLKLORIST, MODERN PEASANT, CULINARY ANTHROPOLOGIST, MATRIARCH, KITCHEN WITCH, MYSTIC, HEARTH KEEPER

I am a two time Amazon bestselling author. As an expat living on the ancient and enchanted Italian island of Sardinia, I am inspired by the days of yore. I long for simpler times and quiet joys. As a Sagittarius I am hardwired to seek out truths. I enjoy food, art and cultural traditions. I am deeply drawn to creating personal traditions and ritual and through the art of writing, I am able to share with others long held traditions, different perspectives and practical modern tips for navigating this often chaotic and unsettling world. In this global world, traditions can help everyone to feel that they have a place to come “home” to, even if that place is not a physical location.

In my writing I look for ingenious ways to bring together my favorite fiction and nonfiction genres which are fantasy/mythology, culinary arts, ritual, the magical arts, history and the many uses of herbs. I am passionate about the wild places, where my food comes from and sustainability, as well as the stories, foods, culture and mythology of Europe.

If you love deep, introspective cultural experiences, connecting with nature and preparing delicious food, then make yourself a warm drink and pull a chair up to my proverbial hearth. I will tell you fantastical stories or talk about practical skills for everyday life, that allow us to tap into the ways of our ancestors who often made much with little. There are riches to be had through simple joys and experiences, like a delicious meal or a day of foraging with the family. I want to share this with others. Life can be full, even if your wallet is not.

I have a degree in Anthropology from Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. I studied culinary arts at Sterling College in Craftsbury, VT. I have taught cooking classes to children and adults, alike. I have traveled extensively to and lived in Italy, Norway and the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. I also have a decade worth of experiences creating rituals and traditions for my family and myself. I have written two books on the subject of bringing more ritual into your life to help you connect with family, nature and where you are in the present moment.

