

CREATIVE COUNTRYSIDE

Slow & Seasonal

august



AUGUST 2019

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			1st Lammas New Moon	2nd	3rd	4th
5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
12th	13th	14th	15th Full Sturgeon Moon	16th	17th	18th
19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th	25th
26th	27th	28th	29th	30th Black Moon	31st	

AUGUST'S COULD-DO LIST

Swim in the sea – British seas are as warm as they're going to get so try to get out and take a dip this month.

Prune lavender bushes.

Make a nature table – display all you've grown or foraged this month and celebrate the achievement with friends and family.

Dance in the rain – August generally sees a lot of rain, but don't let it dampen your spirit. The warmth in the air means you won't feel the chill, especially if you keep moving!

Keep a lookout for the first signs of autumn.

Pick a tree to keep track of for a whole year. Collect photographs, rubbings and notes on the tree throughout the year and see how it changes through the seasons.

Go barefoot – keep it simple and go for your favourite walk, but barefoot, and see what you notice differently.

MENU PLANNING / OTHER NOTES

- 1st.....
- 2nd.....
- 3rd.....
- 4th.....
- 5th.....
- 6th.....
- 7th.....
- 8th.....
- 9th.....
- 10th.....
- 11th.....
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- 22nd.....
- 23rd.....
- 24th.....
- 25th.....
- 26th.....
- 27th.....
- 28th.....
- 29th.....
- 30th.....
- 31st.....

Nature Spots in August

Use these pages to record your nature spots for the month ahead. Add notes, images, sketches and/or stick in foraged finds!

SUNFLOWERS

August in flower form – if you want these beauties this time next year be sure to sow indoors in spring for them to grow big and strong. Symbolic of adoration, loyalty and longevity.

Sunflower petals

A bramble smudged fingerprint...

BRAMBLES

They're finally ripe so get foraging...
Bramble and apple jam, jelly and pie are calling!

FLY AGARIC

The quintessential woodland fungi with its red and white-spotted cap. Not for eating however – it is poisonous!

Where have you seen a Fly Agaric?

YELLOWHAMMERS

One of the few birds still singing after the riotous chorus from previous months. Listen out for their song of 'a little bit of bread and no chee-ese'

Where did you hear the yellowhammer?

Ways I've eaten raspberries this month...

FIGS & RASPBERRIES

Ripening this month, is there anything better than a fresh fig warmed by the summer sun? Raspberries are a delicious late-summer treat, whether it's the last of the summer fruiting or first of the autumn. Add to everything or freeze to use later in the year.

IVY FLOWERS

These will start to appear later this month and are a major source of pollen and nectar in autumn.

The first ivy flowers...

Other nature spots this month...



AUGUST MICROADVENTURE

Wild Swimming

According to Alastair Humphreys, a microadventure is an “outdoor adventure that is small and achievable for normal people with real lives.” It’s the sort of activity you could fit into your 5-9 (i.e. once your working day is over!). Why not add this month’s microadventure to your calendar now?

Not close enough to the sea to go for a quick dip at the weekend? No matter! Try to fit in a little wild swimming this month closer to home. Research what streams and lakes are nearby and pay particular attention to any mention of waterfalls – truly magical places to explore and swim beneath.

Mountains are a great place to seek out a wild swim too, as these waters are generally some of the wildest and most remote to be found in the UK. The feeling of complete isolation as you swim can feel rather mystical.

Head to lowland rivers for a longer swim in calm waters, and if you do find yourself by the coast, try to seek out some sea caves to explore, they’re great for diving (though be sensible with safety risks).

A little wild swimming is great for the soul and chances are the opportunity is right on your doorstep. This time of year there is generally no need for a wetsuit and the faster you swim, the warmer you will feel!

FOR MORE ADVICE AND WILD SWIMMING SAFETY TIPS, HEAD TO
WWW.WILD SWIMMING.CO.UK/HEALTH-SAFETY/

Lost Traditions

Corn Dollies

A “Grain Mother” or “Corn Dolly” can be a simple way to mark the harvest and bring a little of the season into your home.

It doesn't have to be made with any particular stalks, so go for a walk to see what you can find. Stalks of grains leftover from harvesting would be great but if you don't live near to fields such as this, then grasses or reeds will work just as well.

Your dolly can be as simple or complex as you choose, but start by separating your stalks into two or three bunches.

At this point you could begin to weave them together if you're feeling confident, or simply tie them with coloured ribbons.

Lace your bunches together to create your desired shape, but remember it doesn't have to resemble a figure.

The dollies can be kept indoors until they are returned to the earth at Samhain, to contribute to the future harvests.



August 2019 Moon Phases

NEW MOON: 1ST & 30TH AUGUST

Set your intentions for the month ahead.

FIRST QUARTER: 7TH AUGUST

Check in with your intentions and take action.

FULL MOON: 15TH AUGUST

Have you achieved your intention? If yes, move ahead and continue with positivity. If no, re-set and allow for change.

THIRD QUARTER: 23RD AUGUST

Think back on our intentions set at the start of the month.

FULL STURGEON MOON

This month's full moon is often known as the 'Full Green Corn Moon', or the 'Wheat Cut Moon', as it marks the very first harvest. The name 'Full Sturgeon Moon' is suggestive of the fish that were most easily caught at this time of year.

BLACK MOON

This month there are two new moons - one on the 1st, and the second on the 30th. When this occurs, the second is known as a Black Moon, though it has little (if any!) astrological significance.

NEW MOON PROMPTS

August's new moon is a time to change patterns in our personal life to have a ripple effect on the world as a whole.

Consider these prompts around the time of the new moon to help you set intentions for the month ahead.

1. As the grain begins to be harvested and stored, ready to sow again in the spring, what metaphorical seeds do you wish to save? What has gone well this year? What habits would you like to retain?

2. Sometimes the state of the world can make us feel helpless, but even if you don't see how you can make a difference, it's always better to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Can you think of one pattern or habit that you would like to change, that makes you part of the bigger solution, even if it feels small?

3. In the summer months we can often feel guilty for spending time outdoors, relaxing, going on holiday and so on - but in order to function at our best, we need to aim for balance. What are you holding back on that you would like permission to do (or not do!) this summer?

4. How might you make the most of the light evenings before the sun begins to wane and the days noticeably shorten?



CELTIC TREE MONTH

Hazel

In the Celtic tree calendar, each month corresponds to a different tree. In opening ourselves to this arboreal wisdom, we connect further with nature's rhythms. My approach to the calendar is to use it as a reminder to embrace and celebrate all trees, and to learn more about their associated myths and folklore. It is an earth-centred approach, rather than a pagan one.

HAZEL

Wisdom. Inspiration. Life force.

Hazel pollen does not always stick together; the grains actually repel against each other, which makes it really difficult for bees to collect, so they only gather it in small loads.

Traditionally, weaving hazel twigs into a crown was said to help your wishes come true!

Hazel embodies the power of meditation, and is often associated with invoking creativity. This month, try to introduce or keep up with a meditation practice to let your ideas flow.

Hazelnuts are said to be a good source of protein, calcium, magnesium, vitamin E and potassium.

Often associated with hazel is the dormouse - they eat the nuts to prepare for hibernation, and in spring, eat caterpillars that have consumed the hazel leaves.

Eat Seasonably in August

Get ready for the August glut! Courgettes, beetroot and lettuce are in full swing by the time this month rolls around. Also good at this time of year are runner and French beans - the latter are ideal with salads and cooked on their own, whereas runner beans start to get a bit stringy towards the end of the month and will be better in a ratatouille dish.

Sweetcorn is also about to take centre stage; buy it as fresh as you can, then boil and serve with lashings of butter and crusty bread!

Tomatoes are also doing well, and are brilliant either with a salad or roasted in a pasta dish, or for a tabbouleh (serve with mint, onion, bulgar and season well). Towards the end of the month, they may start to over-ripen, at which point they're ideal turned into a chutney (green tomatoes work really well for this too if yours have stopped ripening).

AUGUST CHECKLIST

Raspberries
Plums
Cos lettuce
Tomatoes
Sweetcorn
Runner beans
French beans
Cucumber

Carrots
Peppers
Chillies
Early apples
Beetroot
Fennel
Aubergines
Perpetual spinach

MEAL PLANNING

Dishes I want to try this month...

Fruit or vegetable(s) I'd like to start cooking with more...

Easy midweek recipes to try (circle)...

Lentil-stuffed marrow Beetroot burgers with roasted new potatoes
Roasted pepper, aubergine & garlic dip Raspberry cinnamon meringue
Black bean chilli with pulled mushrooms Tomato risotto
Fennel & feta linguine Corn on the cob with burnt onion ketchup

You can also use the calendar at the front of this mini book as a space to note down your meal plans!

Seasonal Celebrations

LAMMAS

(1ST)

Not to be confused with the Harvest Festival, which occurs at the end of harvest-time, Lammas marks the beginning. It dates back to Anglo-Saxon times when it was named, “the feast of the first fruits”, and celebrated with a fair to acknowledge the first wheat harvest.

Derived from “loaf-mass”, Lammas is indicative of how important that first grain-harvest, and first loaf of the harvest, really is. Lammas is a time for gathering in and giving thanks for the abundance of this time of year.

The first sheaf would generally be ceremoniously cut at dawn, before being baked into this first loaf which was often taken into church to be blessed, or shared in the community with thanks.

The last sheaf was also cut with ceremony, and tied into a corn dolly to have pride of place at the Harvest Festival.



This time also marks the Celtic festival of Lugh, the Sun King and God of Light, marking the time when his power begins to wane, and the darker days of winter are coming. Lammas is therefore also known as Lughnasadh.

As the energy of the sun begins to wane, it is a time to give thanks for how it has transformed the landscape and our lives over the past few months. In the natural world, fields and gardens are still abundant with produce and life, but growth and transformation has slowed.

Lammas is also important in that it symbolises the start of preparations for the darker half of the year: the harvested grain contains the seed which will be re-sown into the Earth to remain hidden until the sun's light returns once more at the Winter Solstice.

CELEBRATING LAMMAS

Make a corn dolly! (see 'Lost Traditions')

Collect seeds for a future harvest. Dry them in the sun, and store ready to be planted in the spring.

Bake a loaf of bread. You could even add fresh herbs to signify another harvest.

Set your intentions. This year Lammas coincides with the new moon; the ideal time to connect with your intuition and to consider what it is you want from the month(s) ahead.

LUGH RITUAL

Lugh was also known to the Celts as a god of craftsmanship and skill, so Lammas is an ideal time to both honour Lugh, and to celebrate our own skills and abilities (something we often neglect to do!).

To begin, consider what skills you have. They might relate to your job (writer, singer, crafter), or they might link to your hobbies (dancing, cooking, painting). You might struggle to start with, but we all have skills, so dig deeper and think about all the things you can do. Often we realise we're much more accomplished than we first think!

Find an object to symbolise your skill - it could be something you use when carrying it out, or something symbolic of your ability. Light a candle, and take a moment to think about all the things you are good at. Try to shrug off any negative feelings, and focus on your accomplishments.

Speak the following:

MIGHTY LUGH, THE MANY-SKILLED GOD.

TODAY I HONOUR YOU, FOR I AM SKILLED AS WELL.

I AM *DEFT WITH A NEEDLE,

***STRONG OF VOICE,**

AND *PAINT BEAUTY WITH MY BRUSH STROKES.

**Insert your own skills here.*

Take a few more minutes to think of how you felt during this ritual. Did coming up with accomplishments come easily to you, or did you struggle? Do you need to celebrate your skills and achievements with greater ease? Close your eyes if you like, take a few deep breaths, and perhaps write your thoughts down if you think this will help. Blow out the candle, giving thanks for the skills and accomplishments the Earth has given you.

Slow Sundays

Each week, try to find a day to actively live more slowly. It doesn't have to be a Sunday, whatever works best for you! Use the page opposite to plan or record (or both!) how you spend this day.

What you might include in your Slow Sundays...

- Choose not to travel in a way that uses fossil fuels. Stick to walking or cycling.
- Make space for creativity, in whatever form that takes for you. Spend ten minutes sketching outdoors, or spend the morning crafting, whatever brings you joy.
- Move your body slowly. Stretch throughout the day, and make time for a short yoga or Tai Chi session.
- Cook something from scratch, using seasonal ingredients if at all possible.
- Switch off any electronics that you don't need. Light candles instead of turning on the lights.
- Don't spend anything.
- Bake bread. The process itself is an act of meditation, and you've got a wonderful food to enjoy at the end! There are no-knead recipes out there too if you're after even more simplicity.
- Spend at least one hour outside, if not the whole day! Resolve to see this one through, whatever the weather,
- For some religions, Sunday is a day of gratitude and prayer. Why not choose to give thanks to Gaia, or Mother Earth, with a short meditation.
- Go to bed early!

For August...

- Make the most of gluts in the vegetable patch and try making some chutney, jams or jellies.
- Head out to the woods, or choose a shady spot under a tree, to try and escape the intense midday heat of the sun.
- Try standing barefoot on the grass and doing a few stretches first thing in the morning - it will wake up your body and help to realign your circadian rhythm.
- Make a simple flower crown to celebrate this season of fullness; a bit of florist wire, or some bendy twigs and twine will do the trick, then fill in with blooms of your choice.

WEEK ONE: 1ST - 7TH AUGUST

WEEK TWO: 8TH - 14TH AUGUST

WEEK THREE: 15TH - 21ST AUGUST

WEEK FOUR: 22ND - 31ST AUGUST

Rituals and Rites

LAMMAS RITUAL

Blessed be the Harvest,
Blessed be the Corn Mother,
Blessed be the Grain God,
For together they nourish both body and soul.
Many blessings I have been given,
I count them now by this bread.
Guardian of the East, I pray for your indulgence.
Hear me now as I request your aid in the cycle of life.
As your winds blow through fields of ripened grain,
Carry loosened seeds upon your back
That they may fall amidst the soil
That is our Mother Earth.

WEATHER LORE

If the first week in August is unusually warm,
the coming Winter will be snowy and long.
For every fog in August,
There will be a snowfall in Winter.
If a cold August follows a hot July,
It foretells a Winter hard and dry.

Thomas Tusser

IN AUGUST

Katharine Lee Bates

Beside the country road with truant grace
Wild carrot lifts its circles of white lace.
From vines whose interwoven branches drape
The old stone walls, come pungent scents of grape.
The sumach torches burn; the hardhack glows;
From off the pines a healing fragrance blows;
The pallid Indian pipe of ghostly kin
Listens in vain for stealthy moccasin.
In pensive mood a faded robin sings;
A butterfly with dusky, gold-flecked wings
Holds court for plummy dandelion seed
And thistle-down, on throne of fireweed.
The road goes loitering on, till it hath missed
Its way in goldenrod, to keep a tryst,
Beyond the mosses and the ferns that veil
The last faint lines of its forgotten trail,
With Lonely Lake, so crystal clear that one
May see its bottom sparkling in the sun
With many-colored stones. The only stir
On its green banks is of the kingfisher
Dipping for prey, but oft, these haunted nights,
That mirror shivers into dazzling lights,
Cleft by a falling star, a messenger
From some bright battle lost, Excalibur.



CREATIVE COUNTRYSIDE

For those who strive to live more slowly, who are inspired by the first snowdrop and who walk outside in the rain. For lovers of stories, everyday adventures and local traditions. For those who opt for simplicity, appreciate ancient crafts, and celebrate the seasons.

www.creativecountryside.com