

Boundary Way

Plant Folklore with herbalist Maria Billington

Nettles

The Nettle has long been recognized for its bounty of nutrition as well as its sting. Folk medicine and lore worldwide attributes the powers of protection and fertility to this incredible plant. Wisdom handed down from ancient times includes advice on using nettle to protect one's self from lightning, to enhance fertility (particularly in men), to reduce the swelling of arthritic joints, to heal the sick and bestow courage on those who carry it; as well as how to avoid being stung by nettle.

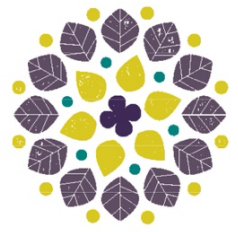
In Kawaiisu tribal practice, as in Celtic lore, nettle serves as a threshold guardian. Nettle fibres have been found in burial cloths from the Bronze age, also closely linking this plant with the threshold between life and death, and giving credence to the folklore that describes Nettles as growing from or near the dead.

In Hans Anderson's fairy-tale of the Princess and the Eleven Swans, the coats she wove for them were made of nettles. Indeed nettle fibres, like hemp and flax have regularly been used for textiles.

A quaint old superstition incited that a fever could be dispelled by plucking a Nettle up by its roots and reciting the names of the sick man and of his family. Called "wergulu" in old Wessex in the tenth century, nettle was one of the nine sacred herbs, alongside mugwort, plantain, watercress, chamomile, crab apple, chervil, and fennel.

In astrology, Nettle is considered a masculine plant and is governed by Mars. Nettle's element is Fire. In Ayurvedic medicine, nettle energy is recognized as bitter, salty, cool and dry.

"Gently touch a nettle and it'll sting you for your pains. Grasp it as a lad of mettle and soft as silk remains" - Sean O'Casey, Playwright.



Boundary Way

Plant Folklore & Hedgewitchery with herbalist Maria Billington

Nettle Magic

Nettle magic is the magic of Mothering. With her bounty of nutrition, she offers us the building blocks we need to be healthy, strong individuals. The flavour of nettle tea has been described as akin to milk or mother's milk; with nettle in your life reminding you to take the time to nourish yourself at the most basic levels.




Nettle's sting, however, reminds us to value our gifts just as we must honour and protect the work of mothering if we are to remain healthy. Nettle protects herself and her space with a mild sting that can last for days. In this, she asks us to recognize and honour the worth of what she gives; if you're willing to hazard the sting to gain her treasure, you're more likely to value what you have taken. When nettle has come into your life, especially around a project you're nurturing, take time to ensure you and those who might benefit from your work recognize and value your contribution.

Nettle magic is transformation through nurturing and self-worth, like that of a healthy, loving mother. Soggy, wet ground is her favourite rooting place; she's an expert at turning hard, clay soils into fertile ground. Her ability to undo the effects of an excess of water in the soil speaks to her affinity with water and with conditions of stress, especially of an emotional nature.

Just as nettle can turn a situation that appears hard and unloving into one of fertility, so can we. She reminds us of our power to shift our thoughts and deeds into a place of nurturing, encouraging personal and environmental growth, as a mother might shift hers to provide the best possible conditions for her children's growth. Nettle can bring out the mother in all of us, and our world will be the better for it.



Visit: www.boundaryway.co.uk
Email: boundarywayproject@gmail.com

 /boundarywayarts  @boundaryway  @boundarywayproject



LOTTERY FUNDED