

The Book of Smudge

Smudge Ingredients and Their Properties



Shamans Way

by Kriket

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Foreword

The goal of this book is to provide the basic tools, and framework from which, you can explore smudge creation and use, on your own. The herbs, and techniques provided, are in no way, a definitive list. There are far more herbs, resins and essential oils, than are mentioned in this book. What is presented to you, are Kriket's own experiences, and the ingredients, she has been drawn to use. Many of the herbs and resins, come in more than one form. For instance, Birch can be found in an essential oil, as well as in physical form. Amber, can be found as a resin, powder or essential oil. Some of the sacred ingredients discussed will have a variety of uses.

Shamanism, which includes making smudge, ultimately connects you more closely with your intuitive self. Smudges can be associated with East ~Air, which in turn will associate the vibration with the 6th & 7th chakra. As in the case of cardamom, in one form it is a seed, in another it is a powder, however both are associated with North, Earth. It is important to remember many of our plant medicines, have multiple relationships with our body and Earth.

Each reader will, likely have different access to herbs, then others may. However, with an ever-growing consumer resource on-line, it is fairly limitless, what you will be able to mix and create for your own use.

Introduction

When I first started on this path called Shamanism, I was truly overwhelmed by the amount I DID NOT KNOW. I am no longer overwhelmed, but I truly understand how much there is to know, and getting to know even a small portion of it, is truly a lifelong pursuit.

Smudge has been the central aspect of all of my spiritual work. The smells, the textures, the ashes, the affect. I did not have a connection to the plants from my Dutch/Finnish ancestry, rather the Lakota tradition was my teacher, in this respect. Smoke, Shota is a deep, powerful and sacred way, connecting Father Sky, Makpiyah Ate and Ina Maka, Mother Earth. It is also heyoka, in the sense that, while everything else is susceptible to gravity, smoke is "contrary", and rises. Smoke, defies gravity, therefore, it can truly, carry our prayers to our Ancestors.

I do not remember exactly when I started making my yearly trips to Drumheller, Alberta to gather wild Sage. I suspect it was during one of the many camping trips I had taken with my, at the time, small children. Drumheller, is one of the rare places on Earth, with a very large dinosaur bone deposit. Alberta's Dinosaur Provincial Park, wins the title of the [single site with the greatest variety of species](#), with over 500 individual specimens have been uncovered there. I like knowing the smudge I burn, grows directly over such great Ancestors. On the shamanic path, or any path really, we try to live life in a very sacred manner. I encourage you to remember, when taking something from the Earth, always explain to the spirit of the plant, why it is being done. I always offer some tobacco, or cornmeal and sugar mixture, you could offer something else, more in line with your practices, in return for the generosity and help of the plant, which shared itself so freely.

Early on my journey into shamanism, I received a gift of Frankincense pieces. I had a mortar and pestle. I ground my resin and added it my crushed sage. I admit, I was not an aficionado, small bits of resin invariably flew from my mortar. I quickly found an alternative, a coffee grinder. I can now easily mix, and shake energies of different elements together, to create Smudge as a form of Medicine. There are certain resins, such as Dragon's Blood, which stick to your blades and walls of the grinder, to clean your grinder to a shine, use a lemon peel, or an orange peel. Grind it, the oils of the lemon, clean the grinder deeply.

Each of the descriptions relate specifically to the plant. One of the joys of creating smudge, is the mixing and matching of the different energies and dynamics. Sometimes, it is merely a pinch of this and a pinch of that, and voila, energies combine. Other smudges are complex, due in part to the nature of the work intended, or perhaps for the size of the group you will be smudging. A smudge for a baby blessing, is very different in Tone, Chakra and Intent, than a smudge for a Depossession Ceremony.

How to Smudge

I still remember my first introduction to smudge; it was in the basement of a very old warehouse. I sat, for the very first time, in a group of women, a healing circle, led by a most beautiful Inuit woman. She told us, the following:

We smudge over our heads for purity of thought.

We smudge over our eyes for purity of vision.

We smudge over our mouth that we may speak the truth.

We smudge over our hearts for purity of emotion.

And we smudge down each leg that we may walk a straight path.

At times I smudge my ears, so that I may hear spiritual truths; and be open to the request for assistance from beings and humans alike.

You can smudge your jewelry, or anything you take off. I was taught that we remove all jewelry and glasses. We smudge with our pure skin, as we were born. When I am wearing my sacred circle necklaces I leave them on until the smudge comes to me. Then I remove them, place them in my hands, holding my hands cupped, I wait until I see smoke rising between my fingers. I place them back around my neck and continue. You can also smudge your drums, rattles and any other “bringers of medicine” that have come with you.

I still maintain this practice, but with time, I have added each chakra. If I have had a really sticky day, or I want to release my feet from whatever I think is holding me back, I wave them over the smudge bowl. I pray for balance and harmony, aid me in my path, & may the spirits that have been chasing me, flee from me.

There are as many ways to smudge, as there are herbs to use. Trust your intuition & be guided by your own Spirit. Before smudging, prepare everything needed- the shell or ceramic container, sand or charcoal for a base, matches, decide what herb to use, feather. I simply have ceramic bowls, with coffee grinder smudge, no charcoal or sand are necessary. The bottom of the dish can become hot, however, I use a trivet, or a ceramic tile, to put my smudge pot on.

I personally only use long matches to light it. I never blow on smudge. It seems like a taboo for many different traditions. You, delightful reader, can easily search for reasons, if you so desire. I use a feather fan, or a simple single feather. Using our hands and feathers, we can smudge ourselves, others, objects, rooms – really anything.

Practical Example: Smudging a Room or House

Tools required:

- Smudge
- Smudge bowl
- Long matches
- Feather fan
- Rattle / drum
- Cornmeal
- Salt
- Tea light candle
- [Pendulum](#)

Smudge is a powerful medicine often used to clear unwanted, or negative energy, from a house, room or place. The unwanted energy, may have been around for a very long time, or it may have occurred during a recent argument. I would suggest, there is no way wrong time to smudge. Intention, is key to any spiritual endeavor where the desired outcome, is change.

I use Cornmeal and Salt for every house clearing. I ask for a small plate, or bowl, to pour the two medicines/food together. Cornmeal is a yellow thing; it is of the East. It is an offering of food to the Spirits who gather to help you, and an offering of food for the journey home of the spirits who are leaving the space. I ask the Spirits to accept my offering of food, as a prayer of respect for gracing us with their presence. I light the tea light at the same time. I then have an ongoing flame for my matches. Oft times, your smudge will go out, or you will burn all you have in your vessel. It is not uncommon to use a new batch of smudge for each floor. And sometimes, a room will take an entire offering of the smudge you have been burning.

Salt is a white thing, it is of the North and of the Ancestors. It is often seen as sacred because it comes from the Water, the water must pool on the Earth, which then requires the Air and Fire (heat) to dry it. Therefore, Salt is a blessing, of all the elements. As many medicines have more than one meaning, I include in my prayer to the ancestors the reason I leave salt. Salt is an honoring to the Ancestors, and the Old Ways. Salt was essential to the survival of people almost anywhere. And it was often traded for high prices, and was valued, almost above all things. I give salt as a conveyance of how valued the Spirits are in any house clearing.

If I have been asked to smudge a house, I ask the people who have invited me, what the intention was to have their house cleared. I also ask what change they would like to experience when I am finished. Their answers form the basis of my prayers. Their intention, is what I keep foremost in my mind, as I move from room to room.

I like to start in the basement. If there is no basement, I start by the front door. Once in the basement, I start in the utility room. I have my smudge lit, I say prayers to the four elements, giving honor to the house. I acknowledge Fire running through the electrical wires; Air in the forced air furnace; Water in the Water Tank; Earth in the wood and concrete of the building. I don't specifically smudge clockwise or counter clockwise. I use my intuition and travel from room to room. I thoroughly fan the smoke to the walls, in a circle, around the room, I do not forget to smudge the baseboards, along with the rest.

I pay special attention to the windows and the doors. Some people like to have the windows and doors open, as they smudge. It encourages negative or unwanted energy, to get out of the house. I also envision a doorway between this world and the Spirit world, allowing energy to leave the house and return, from whence it came.

I want to expand a bit on intention and the importance of setting an intention. Are you wanting to release negative energy out of the house? Are you clearing space, after a particularly nasty argument? Are you releasing a ghost, which has been causing disturbances in the house? Are you smudging to bring good spirits in, before you embark on a healing journey or performing a healing ritual? And I refer you, as always, to keep the intention of the people who live or work in the space you are clearing.

After I smudge each room, I return with my pendulum as well as my rattle or drum. When to use a rattle or a drum can be determined by different factors. Perhaps it will disturb the neighbors if a drum is used. Perhaps the energy is subtle and requires the touch of the rattle. The energy may be very stuck and in need of the booming sound of a drum to dislodge it from its corners. You will use your intuition to determine, what, if any shamanic tool is used during a house clearing.

The pendulum, is a very specific tool I use to communicate with the energy of the house. I watch how large the arc of the spin of the pendulum is. Sometimes the pendulum is at a dead stop, but vibrating. I ask questions such as: How many ghosts are in this house; Will you help me release the spirits of this house; What is the percentage of domestic disharmony in the house? I have come to anticipate the pendulum will continue to work, whether I am holding it or not. I place the pendulum down and I use my rattle or drum, and move methodically around the room, keeping my intention clearly in mind. Drumming and rattling negative energy out. Or sealing the space, ensuring a clear and clean space long after I have returned home. Once the pendulum has stopped moving, I clearly ask it if it is finished. I then move to the next room. If it says it is not finished I ask what further needs to be done. Do I smudge more? Do I rattle more? Does something need to be removed from the room? Shamans are investigators, even if what we are investigating, cannot be seen by most naked eyes.

As mentioned earlier I have lit a tea light candle. I envision this light, continuing to absorb, and release, any of the residue my smudge was unable to clear. I let it burn, continuously, until done. I do not blow it out. If a person is nervous to leave a candle burning, I suggest they place it in the metal sink in the kitchen, or the bathtub/shower. It does not matter where the candle is, in the house. The offering of cornmeal and salt remains in the house for three days. At the end of the three days, I request the home owners use it as an offering to trees or shrubs which are either on, or very close, to the house.

It is important to remember to smudge each of your tools, before you place them back into your bundle, basket or whatever you brought every over in. Spiritual hygiene cannot be stressed enough.

As Medicine

Smudge can be a combination of any of the following: plants, resins, seeds, wood, nuts and high quality essential oils. I am not sure there is a limit as to what Smudge can be. No two smudges, for me, are ever the same. Each one has a subtle change, or altering of the essence. However, the base of every single smudge I make contains Sage from Drumheller. Where can you find your Sage? What would be your base? Which plant, or plants, after reading this, will inspire you to create your own Medicine.

The Medicine Plants are also used in my drum and rattle cases. Sacred Medicine feeds the drum and the rattle. The Drum, rattle, whatever your sacred instrument is, has an energy and a power. I was taught to feed my sacred music makers with the medicines plants I had been gifted. It is an honor and a privilege to have, and cultivate, a relationship with my sacred drums and rattles.

Smudge is used in different ways. Sage has long been considered one of the most powerful medicine plants, in North America, for cleansing a space of unwanted energy or spirits. It can be used to release negative attachments from a human or animal body. It can be used to clear inanimate objects as well, such as antiques.

I would be remiss if I did not say to you, the following are my thoughts and gathered bits of information on each of the ingredients I write about. I have gained invaluable insight into the individual plant spirits by journeying to them. There are some you will just know, what they are for. They have a loud voice and have told their same story to many people... such as Sage. Some plants have quieter voices. Some Plant Spirits chose me. I had to journey to them. to understand their medicine. I encourage each person reading this, to do the same. It can be an accumulative knowledge. It does not have to happen overnight. The most valuable aspect of the work we do with plants, is to listen to them, understand them, build a relationship with them. A relationship very much our own. It all takes time. And it may not be your time yet to study plant medicine and varieties. For now, feel free to use this guide, as a skeletal part of your journey to smudge.

Reading the Smoke and Ashes

One of the curious things I have noticed about smudge smoke & ashes, is that sometimes, they share another level of awareness, we may have overlooked. When smudging a standing person, if you can, hold the bowl of smoke close to the body. Watch how the smoke rises. Close to the body? Does it angle out at some point? Where is it drawn to? If it veers out does that mean it is “going around” something? The trick to understanding anything, is to observe it for yourself. I can tell you what I have seen, however, I encourage you to learn the language of smoke.

The ashes can tell very interesting stories. When I am clearing a house, I watch to see how it burns. Sometimes it breaks off into very thin branches of burn, leaving the centre completely untouched by fire. I may interpret something is standing right in front of the sacred smoke, or I am being pointed in two different directions. When my smudge goes right out, for me, there is a water spirit in the room. It does not always happen in a bathroom, at all. I pay attention to the water spirits, they can share information about the emotional state of the house. It could also be an indication the house rests on a water line, and the ley line must be addressed.

The shapes ashes leave can be astounding. I have had a piper standing on a stool. It was plain as day. I like to show the shapes to the owners of the house, so they too can share the tangential relationship between Spirit and House, or formless and form. Shapes have included, boxes, complete doughnut burn, faces, drums, feet. I hope you take the time to build an interesting bond with smudge.

Once you have finished with the smudge, and the whole house has been cleared, you need to release the ashes in a variety of ways. Here are three ways and my own reasons:

1. We are not supposed to carry or keep those ashes. This is because it is what's left over from that ceremony of cleansing space or yourself. I have a spiritual belief that what you clean off goes somewhere, and aspects of it is contained in those ashes, and it should be put outside as an offering to a plant or water.
2. Some energy really needs to be “shown out the door” and so, when you get to the front, you vigorously fan the smoke out the front door, and then you wait a minute or two. I then go outside and put the ashes on the doorstep, and that is to protect the entrance.
3. Put the ashes in the garbage of the house. This is to signify you are truly done with the “garbage” you have removed from the house. It is treated like trash.

I try to ensure my smudge pot is cleaned of all smudge and residue. I like to wash it before I leave. I do not like to take any of the energy of another house, into my own.

Tones

What are Tones?

Tones may be a challenge for me to explain. I have a form of [Synesthesia](#). Tones are related to my perception of smell. Smells for me are sound and color. My knowledge of my perception allows me the chance to experience smells, as a metal bell in various tones in my ears; and I see a bright color; often associated with the chakras. I am sharing with you my perception of smells. I will share the ones I feel most dramatically. I encourage you to envision the color and create an energy ball in the chakra referred to. Allow yourself to experience smell in a manner, you may be unfamiliar with.

High Tones

High tones affect the top chakra; 6 and 7. High tones are purple colors, magenta, gold, sometimes white. Brings the energy up. The sound awakens the centre face to the top of the skull.

Mid Tones

Mid tones affect chakras 2 through 5. It has the ability to mix the high and low tones. Mid tones are the communicators and at time the soother of the sounds of the High and Low Tones. The mid tones are often colors you don't expect. I have seen creamsicle orange, taffy gold, it can also be a birch has a mid-tone, poplar bark has a mid-tone. They often reflect the colors of the middle world.

Low Tones

Low tones affect the lower chakras 1 through 3. The color is muddy red, Amazon River forests, murky water, deep rich black soil. Low tones bring energy down. The sounds are drums, low tonal sounds of Gyuto monks, low hums and beautiful sounds. For these tones, it is not uncommon, when you smell them, you can feel a vibration in the physical body. It is also not uncommon, to not feel the vibrations in the body. We all experience the world differently than anyone else. I only tell you my impression as an example.

Ask the Plant

Ingredients don't always work the same for each person. The best way to understand how it'll work with you is to journey to the plant and ask. For a journey, you can modify the [lower world journey](#) found on ShamansWay.net. You can modify it by journeying to meet a plant, once you have already met your power animal, ask your power animal to show you to the plant to speak directly to the spirit.

If you want, or are compelled to using something not listed in this book, journey to it and ask the plant what it can be used for. You can also email us at support@shamansway.net and we'll let you know what we know about it. Future versions of this eBook will contain more ingredients as well.

Smudge Ingredients

Herbs

Amber

Tone: Medium to High

Good for journeys to Upper and Lower World

Chakras: 1 and 7

Direction: North (prehistory/ancestors) Sky Nation

Physical Description (or 0070icture):

Spiritual Description: A mixture of the elements of wood and water, and of the prehistoric, if you want to involve the grandmothers, grandfathers and ancestors. It is said the Ancestors of our believed that amber contained the resting place of the spirit. Could this be because many insects, reptiles, plant life, and even small animals, were found in many pieces of amber? Opens the 3rd chakra, balancing the energies in the body; draws out negativity; brings a sense of peace and confidence. Working with ancestral energy helps to improve memory, balance the emotions, and inspire confidence

Works Well with: smudges for healing, balance, protection and releasing

Anise Seeds – Star Anise

Tone: low

Chakras: 1-3

Direction: North (prehistory/ancestors)

Alternative(s): the star anise pod

Good for Upper World or Lower World journeys

Description: Related to the new moon, dreams and protection.

Spiritual Description: Related to the moon and is used in smudges to bring on good or psychic dreams, aids in protection and psychic awareness. It is still used in Japanese temple incense, to drive away negativity and to bring good luck. Fresh Anise has been used to ward off evil in a room. A small pillowcase of Anise is used to chase away night mares.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, protection and releasing fear and painful energy; it can enhance joy and awareness.

Birch Bark

Tone: low

Chakras: 1-3

Direction: West (water/dreamtime)

Alternative(s): birch wood

Good for Upper World or Lower World journeys

Description: Related to the new moon, dreams and protection

Spiritual Description: Wood and water, used for exorcism and flexibility. I loved Birch when I was a child, creating in me a desire to learn about the Boreal Forest, surrounding my house. Birch bark is waterproof, and as such, was used to wrap canoes, as well as the dead in some burials. It is a symbol of safety, and keeping things out. I have used it in my smudge to soothe emotions if I am teaching about wounds, coupled with deep healing.

Works Well with: smudges for protection; emotional stability exorcism, purification and releasing fear & painful energy

Bitter Ash

AKA: Quassia Root

Tone: neutral – has no scent

Chakras: 1-3

Direction: West (water/dreamtime)

Alternative(s): root or powder form

Good for journeys in all Three Worlds

It has a very bitter taste, and is used in tinctures for stomach and digestive issues. I regard this when I am creating a smudge used for releasing matters that are bitter. Such as forgiveness work, self-love. As a neutral tone, smudges made with this, are used for physical and emotional healing, such as ancestral work, or deep wounds needing to be addressed.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, protection and releasing fear and painful energy;

Cardamom Seeds

Smell: Sweet

Tone: medium

Chakras: 1 and 5

Direction: East

Alternative(s): Seeds, pods or powder

Good especially for journeys in the Middle World

Spiritual Description: Relaxes the mind and clears confusion. Brings about peacefulness. Cardamom is added to smudges which require a good grounding energy. It grows in countries such as Indonesia, India and Pakistan. When used in a smudge I recognize the ancient spiritual wisdom contained within the very soil it grows. As it is associated with East, Air this associates the vibration with the 6th & 7th chakra. But because it is a seed, it is also associated with North, Earth. It is important to remember many of our plant medicines have multiple relationships with our body and Earth.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, love and in tantric ceremonies

Deer's Tongue

Also known as Wild Vanilla

Smell: earthy/musky

Tone: medium to high;

Chakras: 5

Direction: East (innocence/intuition)

Alternative(s): plant material or powder form

Good for journeys in all Three Worlds

Spiritual Description: Helps you to speak clearly. Gentleness, love and compassion. It has been known for having aphrodisiac qualities, and as such, used in a smudge, it promotes harmony, speaking the truth and gathering love to you. I have an affinity for Deer. Deer was my first power animal. Deer, above all, taught me love, kindness and compassion.

Works Well with smudges for: love, bringing in gentle energy; soothing spirits when the work is heavy and hard

Dog Wood

Tone: Low

Smell: earthy/woody/bitter

Chakras: 2; 3

Direction: North East (blind spot)

Alternative(s): plant material or powder form

Good for Upper World or Lower World journeys: ie tracking and investigation

Spiritual Description: Dog wood is a very large tree, which produces flowers of different colors. It is a very hard wood, and as such it has been used as an ingredient for strength and Protection. I also consider the name “Dog”, who are seen as guardians, protectors and valued allies. Dogs have a very special relationship to humans, Dog Wood can also evoke feelings of happiness and loyalty, traits of man’s best friend. Dog Wood, is a base note for me, it strengthens the properties of whatever it is combined with.

In Northwestern tribes, such as the Quileute and Makah, the dogwood symbolized good luck and the berries were eaten during religious ceremonies. Dogwood fruit was a popular food item for the Interior Salish tribes. To the Blackfoot people, the dogwood tree was associated with masculinity, and women used to, refrain from eating its fruit. The bark and roots of dogwood trees were frequently used as medicine herbs and dyes, as well. Dogwood sap, however, is toxic and was used in some tribes as poison.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, protection and releasing fear and painful energy; It can also be combined to enhance joy, awareness, wishes & protection.

Eucalyptus

Tone: High; clear clean mint smell

Chakras: - 5-7

Direction: West (water/dreamtime)

Alternative(s): leaf/ powder form/essential oil A very tall tree, many different varieties.

Good for journeys in the Upper World

Spiritual Description: There is a long history with Eucalyptus as a healing plant. I combine it in smudges which require a higher tone to help balance vibrations; high tones help to access knowledge; prevent, or assist with an unbalanced awakening of psychic energies of the individual. The high tone amplifies the protective and dynamic healing, by affecting the subtle energies; high tones help to open the brow chakra. Traditionally our indigenous people used branches of fresh eucalyptus leaves on the sacred fire, and pass their family and tribe through the smoke for purification and healing. I keep a bottle of essential oil with me if I am teaching a long,

intense class. I put a few drops directly onto my smudge, I have noticed it drops intense energy levels down a notch or two. If I have had a particularly intense healing session, I will burn it in a diffuser, it is as effective as cedar for clearing stagnant and unusual energy.

Works Well with: smudges for healing and to maintain good health, purification and protection.

Horehound

Tone: Low – musky, earthy scent

Chakras: 1-3

Direction: East; good luck and spiritual protection

Alternative(s): root or powder form

Good for journeys in Lower World

Spiritual Description: Unlike the name suggests, it has nothing to do with hounds or the color gray. It has had medicinal uses for many generations. In smudge, it can be used two ways. First, as an agent for good luck or wishing well on a new endeavour. Used in a healing smudge if there has been a danger presented in the spirit world, or if the person journeying would like extra protection against adversaries in the spirit world.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, protection and releasing fear and painful energy; it can enhance joy and awareness.

Jasmine Flowers

Tone: High and Low – the flowers once dried have less scent and their musk comes to the forefront

Chakras: 1,2 and 6,7

Direction: East (love, beginning, purification)

Alternative(s): root or powder form

Good for Journeys in the Upper and Middle world

Spiritual Description: Long used in Asia and India, garlands of the flowers are used in religious ceremonies. Sacred objects depicting Gods and Goddesses are often draped with Jasmine flower garlands, it is believed the Gods and Goddesses, are present within the flowers. In my practice, I have included them in smudge for tantric rituals and sacred unions. As the smudge smoke rises I envision the Jasmine flowers carrying my prayers and wishes to the Spirits aiding me in my work; while keeping me connected to my purest intentions and highest aspirations.

Works Well with: smudges for love, money, prophetic and psychic dreams, communion with the sacred prophetic, spirituality and raising vibrations

Juniper Berries

Tone: High/Medium

Smell: earthy/woody

Chakras: 2; 3

Direction: North East (blind spot)

Alternative(s): plant material or powder form

Good for Journeys in the Upper and Middle world

Spiritual Description: I have read in various Archaeology papers traces of Juniper have been found in digs relating to our oldest ancestors of the Neolithic times; and was mentioned in the ancient Egyptian papyri. I add it to smudges for various purposes from clearing a house of unwanted energy to offering it for friends and loved one who are sick, as it is purported kill germs and purify the air. During ceremony, it helps to keep focus and concentration. I ensure to include it in smudges used for trance postures; divination; psychopomp work; palliative care; & curse removal. I find it helps me to engage with spirits I seek to aid me in my work. Juniper is one of the herbs frequently included in medicine bundles and amulets.

Works Well with: smudges for protection, house clearing, psychopomp, health, mental acuity.

Lavender

Tone: High; Upper World Work

Smell: sweet, fills the senses

Chakras: 4 6 and 7

Direction: South (Passion and Learning)

Alternative(s): flowers, buds, essential oil

Good for Journeys in the Upper world

Spiritual Description: Lavender is personal for me. I have long associated Lavender with my Grandmother. She had lavender satchels in her drawers. Lavender, for me, is a heart scent. It also has a strong relationship to sleeping well. My Grandmother always gave me satchels for my pillow, to calm my nightmares. Later, I combined Lavender with Mugwort. The calming properties of Lavender are a good balance, to the vivid and sometimes overwhelming dreams that Mugwort in my pillow can produce. When I add it to smudge, I am

asking the Grandmother to join me in my work. It is one of the plant medicines I do not blend, rather place it separately on the smudge. Lavender is a bridge between this world and the Upper World.

Works Well with: smudges for love, protection, sleep, longevity, purification.

Lotus Leaf

Tone: High; Upper World Work; illumination

Smell: earthy/woody

Chakras: 6, 7 and beyond

Direction: East and West (Purification and Ancestors)

Alternative(s): plant material or powder form

Good for Journeys in the Upper world; Celestial Realm

Spiritual Description: The Spirit of East teaches the Lotus is a mystical symbol of life, spirituality and the center of the universe. Lotus introduced itself to me as an in-between spirit. The lotus grows in the Spirit of Water, and the Spirit of the Earth, all the while stretching, to catch the Spirit of Air. Lotus leaf is used to call in all the cooperating Spirits. The Leaf becomes our heads, our exalted state, held high, pure and undefiled in the sun.... our human feet are rooted in the mud, and the soil, the World of Experience. In my years of Yoga, I have been taught the lotus serves as the seat of Deity, signifying divinity and purity, is called *padmasana* or *kamalasana*.

Burned for protection and as a sacred offering to the Gods. It is said to attract good fortune and love while promoting long life. Used to symbolize intellect, mental energies and illumination. It is used to clear the mind, purify and inspire.

Works Well with: smudges protection, and reconnecting with the Divine.

Mugwort

AKA: Crone Wort

Tone: High

Smell: earthy/woody/bitter

Chakras: all of them

Direction: North (Ancestors/Protection)

Alternative(s): plant material or powder form

Good for Journeys in All the Worlds

Spiritual Description: Mugwort is added to smudge to enhance the experience of the journey; It is said to be able to mimic a dreamlike state. As mentioned above, it can be used in dream pillows. Named the Dream Plant by the Paiute peoples, mugwort would often be burned as incense or dried and sewn into a pillow to ensure positive and spiritually meaningful dreams as well as improve people's dreams, making it more likely for them to remember them and interact with them for spiritual purposes. Mugwort introduced itself to me as a Guardian of the Threshold; I like Gatekeepers. During ceremonies for Divination, or circles devoted to tracking, Mugwort is added to the smudge to nudge our psychic and intuitive self to awaken. As a Gatekeeper Mugwort is a protective herb, watching over the journeyer. I have worn it during house clearings to keep away ghosts. This plant, for some, represents clumsiness, awkwardness, and ugliness. As may be assumed this plant is used to infer these qualities onto our enemies. I leave around the houses I clear, to keep away the spirits who are not welcome. Used also with Wormwood.

Works Well with: smudges created for strength, psychic powers, protection, prophetic dreams and healing

Rowan Berries

AKA: Mountain Ash Berries

Tone: High

Smell: Red, Earth, Sweet bark

Chakras: 1, 5 and 7

Direction: West and North (ancestors and psychic abilities)

Alternative(s): berries or powder form

Good for Journeys in the Lower and Upper World

Spiritual Description: Rowan has a long association with Divinity and Spiritual strength. It has been a part of folklore and blessing for many generations. Key words are: meditation, clearing the mind; inspiration, protection. I have a rowan stick for my drum beater. Rowan is the power that guards, nourishes and strengthens, representing an inner and an outer cleansing to wash away the effects of the past to create positive results in the future. Rowan is the realization of greater potential which purifies and protects against the circumstances and conditions of life.

Works Well with: smudges psychic powers, healing, protection, meditation

Oak Moss

Tone: Low

Smell: earthy/woody

Chakras: 1,2

Direction: Centre/North

Alternative(s): plant material or powder form

Good for Journeys in All the Worlds: for self exploration; connection to nature; **Seton Sitting**

Spiritual Description: Moss was viewed as a very practical plant in most Native American tribes. Since moss is one of the most naturally absorbent materials available, it was valued by Native Americans for use in bandages, baby diapers and bedding, sponges, and paint applicators. Dried moss was also used as a fire-starter in some tribes. Moss is often used as an example of Native American cultural beliefs about finding the best uses of everything in nature, no matter how lowly. Some mosses, like Spanish moss and club moss, were also used as medicine herbs.

Oak Moss invites the Ancestors to join. Since before my Ancestors' Ancestors, Oak was a Grandmother or Grandfather tree. Oak has been regarded as the World tree (Unity of existence), and still is related to the Land of the Fey, an energetic portal between the physical world and the mysterious/mystical worlds.

Works Well with smudges for: Connection, Soul Retrieval; Summer Solstice

Oak Bark

Tone: Low

Smell: earthy/woody

Chakras: Lower Three

Direction: Centre/West

Alternative(s): it could be powdered, but I do prefer seeing it as bark, it helps me connect

Good for trance postures invoking the spirits of nature; lower world journeys; deep roots to underground streams

Spiritual Description: Oak Moss and Oak Bark differ, to me, in the subtlety of their presence. Moss has absorbing properties, making it a smudge additive for absorbing and integrating your spiritual experience. The Oak Bark maintains the mystery connection; it is that which also binds and protects. Bark inspires my spirit body to remember to be strong as its bark. To have the ability to grow. And the resiliency to return from great fires and droughts. The oak symbolizes strength of character and courage. Individual oak trees of great size and

longevity have often been considered sacred and used as spiritual and civic centers for important tribal gatherings (such as weddings, peace conferences, and naming ceremonies.)

Works Well with: smudges for protection, healing, potency, growth, strength

Sandalwood

Tone: high, pinks and oranges

Smell: evokes lemon awakens my third eye; woody, sweet, rosenacious

Chakras: 6; 7 and connection

Direction: Centre/East

Oil or powder

Good for awakening; Sun Inviting;

Good for Journeys in the Upper World

Spiritual Description: The Tree, as a symbol of unity, is demonstrated with the Sandalwood. The Tree does not release its sacred Oil until it is at least 60. The heartwood ~ The centre of the tree is filled with rich oil. The roots also are rich with this oil. The wood itself is artistically transformed to statues and beads. Sandalwood has sedative properties when burnt helps to clear stress from the nervous system. The root oil is said to awaken the third eye; bring clarity to the mind (air) and can lift depression and quiet the mind. It has been a plant of psychopomp proportions as an essential ingredient to ceremony and rituals for marking death, helping Spirit cross over, and to comfort mourners. Sandalwood is an Ancestor among Ancestors. Trees, The Standing Nation; have been our resolute teachers. The Wisdom of the Trees.

Works Well with: smudges for initiations; It clears away negativity, it is good for protection and healing workings.

Willow

Tone: mid; centre

Smell: wood; brown and green;

Chakras: heart

Direction: South/West

I harvest my own

Good for Journeys in the Middle world

Good for reminding us to bend, stand together

Spiritual Description: The willow symbolizes inner wisdom, an open mind with the stability and strength of age and experience. Willow has shown itself to me to be soft and yet incredibly durable. Shamans have long seen the willow tree as a messenger between the worlds – The willow tree is one of the few trees that can bend into outrageous poses without snapping. – it reminds us to look for ourselves, not just as we imagine, but truly as we are. The inner wisdom is expressed is to adjust WITH life, rather than fighting it. Surrendering to the process; inviting adaptability into the smudge. The Willow is a tenacious tree, surviving the harshest conditions. Tree's ability to not only survive, but also thrive.

The inner wisdom; our innermost selves reaching a deeper understanding of our subconscious. Changing our perceptions can be difficult, at times it can be a death of self, or a death of ideal. Willow reminds us through great loss, we can grow into... insert where you have the potential for growth here ☺ .

[druid willow](#)

Works Well with: smudges love, divination, protection, initiations; release negative energies, old patterns

Wintergreen

Alternative(s): Sweet Birch

Tone: high; third eye;

Smell: wood; brown and green; olfactory visceral sensation

Chakras: 5; 6; 7

Direction: North/East

Essential Oil

Good for Journeys In all the Worlds

Spiritual Description: it releases the lower base smells in the room; Sweet Birch can lift heavy energy up; if you smudge after ceremony, this will help lift any residue from the room. By opening the third eye it invokes protection & healing. The high scent aids hex breaking by becoming a cool & calm energy aiding the shaman, practitioner, a refreshing scent soothing fears and to calming nerves. It boosts the intensity of the rest of the smudge. Wintergreen is an activating energy. It has been an active ingredient in many of the smudges I have made over the years.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, protection and releasing fear and painful energy; it can enhance joy and awareness.

Wormwood

AKA: Absinth

Tone: mid to high

Smell: wood; brown and green;

Chakras: 1; 3; 6

Direction: East

plant

Good for Journeys in the Lower World: tracking; banishing; protection ~ generally mix with Mugwort.

Spiritual Description: Wormwood has a long history in Folk Medicine. It was used practically as an insect repellent. It was made into tinctures for astral travel; to protection from evil; healing yourself and your powerphrenalia. It is burnt to Call the Spirits, it acts as a conduit for spiritual energy. It lends itself to the intention of the smudge. I use it sparingly. Wormwood and I journeyed together this way: I put the plant on my chest, listened to the [drum track](#), and journeyed to the Spirit. It showed me how it moves between dimensions, which is why it is used in smudges for depossessions, house clearings as well as protection for deep journey work. I appreciate the strength of it.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, protection and releasing fear and painful energy; strongly represents the Element of Air,

Palo Santo

Tone: high; Golden

Smell: sweetness, floral and woody

Chakras: 1; 3; 6

Direction: East/South; Hails from the Amazon Rainforest

Oil or wood form

Good for journeys In the Upper World: healing work; communing with Ancestors; invite and release energy at the same time

Spiritual Description: I do not know what Palo Santo was called, before Spanish monks called it such; meaning “Holy Wood” or “Wood of the Saints”. Scientists call it *bursera graveolens*, or “a bag of oil”. It has powerful Spiritual Kin in Frankincense and Myrrh. All hailing from the same family ~ Burseraceae. In smudge, or as a smudge itself, it adds a thicker smoke, and is very aromatic. Raising the tone of the smudge. Palo Santo can only be harvested long after the branch has died. In a smudge, this brings slowness to the intention of the smudge. It also brings the potential for transformation. It can banish negative energy, and welcome positive,

at the same time. Palo Santo, evokes feelings of peacefulness. This is another ingredient used when the person creating the smudge is seeking clarity; a deeper connection to Spirit or the Source. The uplifting scent, raising the tone in turn, raises the vibration of the smudge, and ultimately the energy of the space you are working in. The shaman of Peru burn Palo Santo sticks in preparation for meditation, as the aroma is said to clear misfortune, negative thoughts, and evil spirits.

Works Well with: smudges for healing, special rituals, house clearing, curse breaking

Sweetgrass

Tone: High; Golden

Smell: airy, sweet, light

Chakras: 1; 3; 6

Direction: East/South;

Grass and oil

Good for journeys in All Worlds: healing work; communing with Ancestors; banishing negative energy; clarity

Spiritual Description: Sweetgrass, also known as Seneca grass, holy grass, and vanilla grass, is circumpolar & found in the northern parts of North America and Europe. When drying, Sweetgrass can turn yellow, as well as remain bright green. I associate Sweetgrass in the East because it can turn Yellow, and Yellow is East. Sweetgrass smoke is what we use to gather the attention of the Wanagi, the spirits. Just as dawn, and the new fire kindled in the East gathers our attention to begin our day, so Sweetgrass does the same. Sweetgrass teaches us kindness. When it is walked upon it bends, but it does not break. It is often said to signify the hair of Nokimis Akiin; Our Grandmother Earth. I use Sweetgrass sparingly. For me it is one of the plants for special occasions. I like to use it when I am building a welcoming smudge, or a smudge to invite in spirits, as opposed to a smudge, for banishing. I grind it in with the rest of my batch, as well as leave loose hairs on top, as it burns. Sweetgrass in a smudge, leaves a very different scent in the room, after being burnt. I keep a braid of sweet grass in all my drum cases, as food for the Spirit of the Drum.

Good for journeys such as: healing work; house blessings, baby blessings, Earth renewal ceremonies

Cedar

Tone: High;

Smell: aromatic, minty, left eye opening

Chakras: 1, 2 and 6

Direction: South;

Branch, wood, oil

Good for journeys In the Middle and Upper world: healing work; journeys to seek ceremonies, understanding and knowledge from the Ancestors;

Spiritual Description: Cedar is not a simple wood, it has come to be associated with many different tree genera including: Northern White Cedar or Arbor Vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) which grows in wet forests and swamps; Atlas Cedar of the Atlas Mountains of Algeria and Morocco (*Cedrus atlantica*), Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and California Incense Cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*) to name a few. Cedar smoke is what we use for protection. Just as Makpiyah Ate, Father Sky protects the earth, so Cedar protects us. Cedar has a rich history spiritually; and as such has come to signify some of the following traits: earthy, grounding, balancing, harmonizing, purifying, repelling negative energy and welcome in positive energy protection, prosperity & healing. The Arbor Vitae, which thrives in swampy wet places, shows us how to transform unresolved cold, damp and detached emotions. When it is breathed in, it touches our inner courage and stamina, to survive whatever may come. When Cedar is used to symbolize the World Tree, we are reminded to put down strong roots during times of external change or when we find ourselves in unfamiliar places. Strong roots, allow us to take in new situations, which may feel threatening. Our roots remind us we can draw on deep strength and wisdom. I use wood I gathered from a clear-cut forest in interior British Columbia. I keep cedar wood in my drum case, as medicine/food for my drum. Cedar is frequently included in medicine bundles and amulets.

Good for journeys such as: deep prayer, healing, dreams, protection, focus & for connecting to the Authentic self. When I consecrate new powerphrenalia I ask Spirit of Cedar to help me in welcoming them into my house and my practice.

Sage

Tone: All of them

Smell: aromatic, spicy

Chakras: All

Direction: West;

Branch, leaves, oil

Good For All Worlds and All Journeys

Spiritual Description: The Sage I have seen for sale, in most shops is bee sage, California white sage. It is very different in scent from the Sage I gather. White sage is airy and richly aromatic. It shares many of the qualities I have learnt about my sage. Sage is the base of my smudge because it can carry all other ingredients. Sage, in and of itself, can calm agitation, cleanse person, space and energy, encourage trance states, purification of objects and powerphrenalia; expel negative energy. Combine those particular qualities, with any other ingredient, to intensify, enhance and activate it. Not all smudges smell good, that does not particularly mean

it is a bad smudge, sometimes we need a strong odor to remind us heavy work has been done. Remember to read your ashes. Remember to watch how the sage burns. It does signify what is in the space with you, or around you.

Good for journeys for... Anything

Tobacco

Tone: Low

Smell: strong, aromatic, astringent

Chakras: All

Direction: North

Leaves

Good for Journeys All Worlds: North, West – connection to internal wisdom

Spiritual Description: Tobacco is black when fresh, hence I associate it with North. It is the smoke I offer to the Ancestors and the Grandparents. Tobacco has a rich tradition, researching it for yourself, will be easy. Tobacco is offered as a token of high respect. Tobacco is offered as a gift for something received. I have offered Tobacco to plants, such as Sage, I have harvested. I have left tobacco ties in graveyards and in sacred sites, such as the traditional Medicine Wheels in Southern Alberta. When I do water prayers, I offer tobacco to the Spirit of the Water, to give thanks for the lifeblood of our Mother Earth. When making moon water, I will burn tobacco as an offering of gratitude to the Moon for spiritually changing my water. I do not grind it with my other ingredients, instead I offer it loosely on top, to burn naturally with the smudge. It has requested of me, not to grind it, but to keep it as whole as possible for my offering. Tobacco with its roots deep in the earth, and smoke rising high to the sky, connecting all the worlds.

In the pocket of my drum case, I always have a small tin of tobacco, not only as Food the Spirit of the Drum, but to always have sacred medicine nearby for impromptu offerings. Tobacco is a friendly spirit, acting as a medium between us and spirit

Good for journeys such as: connection to the Ancestors of Each Direction; gratitude; exploration of the inner self; psychic depossession; removal of heavy spirits;

Resins

Myrrh

Its Latin name is *Commiphora molmol*. It is an earthy, smoky, piney resin, gathered from a sturdy, almost leafless shrub that lives in the hot, dry regions around the Red Sea. In smudges I use Myrrh to release spirits, thoughts and expel negative energy from a space or person. Myrrh has been used in temples and apothecary applications throughout history. If one is interested in researching the healing and aromatic benefits of Myrrh, I recommend you do so. Myrrh is among the other ingredients, which helps to boost and activate healing properties of that which is mixed with it. Most notably Myrrh enhances confidence, stability, banishing negative energies, breaking curses, protection from negative spirits, aids in personal enlightenment, meditation and stimulates 6th and 7th chakras. I also use Myrrh as one of the primary ingredients in my smudges for consecrating new, or recently acquired, powerphrenalia.

Frankincense

Its Latin name is *Boswellia carteri*, it is also known as *olibanum* or *salai guggal*. It is a resin which, when light is very smoky. Harvested from an African tree, frankincense has been used by many spiritual traditions through time. Frankincense was the first resin I was introduced to, and hence is the one I have used the longest. It, like other ingredients already mentioned, can boost other ingredients. When I add it to my smudge it is always with the prayer that the Ancestors watch over the work I am to do. I have used it with great efficiency for banishing, house clearings, soul retrieval work, extraction and blessings. If I need a very potent smudge for clearing the mind, and the body of repetitive thought patterns, or obsessive behaviours, releasing old fears, I will simply just use Sage and Frankincense.

The combination of Frankincense & Myrrh is powerful for opening the 6th and 7th Chakras, healing, protection, exorcism purification, meditation as well as for journeys for enhancing our spiritual connection and knowledge.

Copal

I was first introduced to Copal by happenstance. I saw a small bag marked Copal, and when I picked it up, I could feel a warm breeze blow through my body. I discovered, it too, is a tree resin of the torchwood family of trees (which are sometimes also referred to as “copal trees” in Mexico.) “Copal” is a Spanish variant of the Nahuatl word *copalli*, meaning “incense”. Copal matures through exposure to heat and pressure, though not yet enough to have turned into amber. Copal can be found around the world, and comes from several trees whose resin is called copal. The smell of it is sweet, spicy, earthy, and woody. When I journeyed to the Spirit of Copal I was taken to many historical ceremonies. Copal shared with me it is helpful as a; protector, to cleanse the body, aids in deepening trance states and divination. Copal showed me, Shamans of old, interpreting the patterns that appear in the smoke as an aid in divination.

I ask for Copal to assist when opening the doorways between the worlds. Especially in ceremonies for Solstice, All Hallows Eve as well as rituals for purification and initiations.

Dragon's Blood

Dragon's blood has different sources and is sold widely. I was introduced to Dragon's Blood by my friends who are dedicated to the Path of the Witch. It is bright red in color, and has a very distinct and sweet smell. It does stain the coffee grinder and will leave a stickier residue in the smudge pot after it has been burnt. I am not sure if that is a sign of impurities in the resin, or if it is just the normal property of the resin. I was attracted to it, because of the name, Dragon's Blood. It was shared with me to use it in smudges for protection, exorcism and love. After I journeyed to the Spirit of the Resin I was instructed to only use it when I needed Fire energy or I needed a large spirit protector. I use it in smudges for house clearings, Summer and Winter Solstice ceremonies. I was able to meet a Dragon spirit when I journeyed to this resin. I asked if it was associated merely because of the name, or if it chose to be associated. I learnt that Dragon is associated because it wants to be, and not because it has to be.

Benzoin

Benzoin is a resin, derived from a tree that is native to Southeast Asia, Java and Sumatra. In Asia, the resin has been used for sacred and medicinal purposes for thousands of years. It has a sweet scent, which I believe opens the heart chakra, reminding me the vibration of love is a balance between give and take. Benzoin appeared to me as bright as the Sun in my journey. I later found out it is associated with the Sun. It awakens our higher consciousness It helps guide us, to the inner most depths of our soul. For smudge, I call upon the bright light of Benzoin, to shine on shadows, such as painful emotions, our deepest wounds; insecurity. I ask Benzoin to bring comfort, and to cushion the soul, allowing it to receive. I have also used it in smudge for Trance postures with the intention of shape shifting, such as Jaguar Posture. [Trance Postures](#)

Oils

Sweet Birch

I love Sweet Birch has a Wintergreen smell002E When I smell it my Third Eye opens wide, and uplift my mind. I get the sensation in my body of everything being lifted. In smudge, it cannot help but raise the vibration and tone. I will particularly use it if I know the work I am doing will be emotionally heavy for myself, my patient, my circle or my class. It can clean up after any gathering, much like Cedar; It invites bad energy to leave, and then lingers, to invite good energy back in.

Fennel

I have a very strong association with Fennel, Anise and Licorice root. Each is a different plant, with its own qualities and benefits to the physical body. Fennel is personal, I am consciously putting an aspect of myself into a smudge. Because it is present in my personal life, I am putting my essence into my smudge. I use it very rarely, in fact I only choose it when I am blind choosing. I ask my energy, through the Fennel, Anise or Licorice Oil to ground the smudge, by lending my endurance, courage, strength, alert awareness, stable mind, body and breath. Perhaps, there will be, or already is, a smudge ingredient you really associate with, and you will be called to put a some of your own energy into a smudge.

Black Spruce

Spruce trees are mythologically important among Southwestern tribes, where they are symbols of the sky, and directional Guardians of the North. According to Hopi myth, the spruce tree was once a medicine man, Salavi, who transformed himself into a tree. Among northern tribes, spruce trees (like other evergreens) are associated with peace and protection. Spruce is a symbol of good luck to the Salish tribes.

As a child, I would spot a Black Spruce tree in the wet, soggy soil, at the edges of the muskeg. I admired a tree who could live in some of the smelliest waters I had walked in. It is also called bog spruce and swamp spruce. The tree itself is small to medium sized, but the roots always fascinated me, they are shallow and far-reaching. When I leaned up against the tree I could feel it storing and conducting energy. With my shaman eyes, I know see it also has long been negotiating with the Earth elementals. In smudge, I use it to lower the tone, and bring light to our muddy selves. To learn to thrive in soggy soil, as humans we can get ourselves into situations before fully knowing how to get ourselves out. In the meantime, Black Spruce in a smudge, helps to grow roots and gain sustenance by putting our roots out beyond the base of the Tree.

Pine

Pine is a tree of protection, cleansing, strengthening, and soothing to the soul, bringing balance, peace, creativity and harmony. Pine is burnt with cedar and juniper by native peoples of North America during sweat lodge purification ceremonies. The Pine is asked to help dissolve melancholy, undue guilt, and restore our energetic boundaries. When I was growing up I spent quite a bit of time in the Boreal Forest. I knew then, that the Pine tree had a long history with the First Nations where I grew up. I knew that is symbolized longevity, wisdom and harmony with nature. Because it had such soft and beautiful needles I thought of it as a symbol of peace. When doing a fire ritual outside I burn Pine to pacify ghosts and banish negative thoughts and dreams. I was even told to use pine gum as a protection against witchcraft. I was impressionable at that age, and was scared I would see a witch around the Pine tree, during my walks. I grew out of that unjustified fear. In smudge it helps to bring focus to our intention and to cleanse the environment we are working in.

Ghost Beads

A very generous friend of mine had travelled to Sedona, as a gift to me, she gave me a string of orange beads mixed with, what looked like seeds. I was immediately drawn to it. I remember opening the bag, with the intention of putting them on as a bracelet. The string of pretty colors felt immediately comfortable on my wrist. After some searching, I discovered they were “Ghost Beads”. As a practitioner of Compassionate Depossession, House clearings and investigation of unexplainable mysteries, it seemed appropriate such a wonderful gift had found its way to me.

I learnt that the Juniper berries were harvested after the ants had their fill. Ants will nibble off one end, and proceed to eat the inside of the berry, leaving a hollow bead. The harvester would cut off the other end, and voila... a bead.

The necklaces were thought to represent an interconnection of the earth, trees, animals and humans and they bring peace, harmony and safety to the wearer. It also protects from evil spirits, ghosts and nightmares. My Grandmother taught me that my Finnish Culture was firmly rooted in matters concerning an ongoing relationship with the Spirit World. I was taught rituals and other practices to keep evil and other dark elements at a distance. I wonder if my Grandmother guided my friend towards these beads. Ghost bead necklaces were worn, as one of the tools, to accomplish this. Further to the beads, I learnt, dried juniper ashes were applied to the skin before making any trips into the darkness of the night. Further, spreading ashes around the bed, provided an extra barrier between the sleeper and the evil spirits, bad dreams and other dark messengers who visit during our sleep.

It is of little doubt the Juniper tree has long been recognized as one of the most powerful of all fairy tales trees. Legends of old tell us “Frau Wachholder” the Juniper tree goblin, could be invoked to make thieves return stolen goods to their rightful owners.

The Juniper's wood was most commonly used to burn, not for its heat, but rather for its smoke. Though burning Juniper gives off only minimal visible smoke, this smoke is highly aromatic, and in ancient times was used as incense or “smudge” in most rituals of blessings and purification. In many cultures, from the Chinese to the Pueblo Indians, Juniper was used to guard against “bad magic.” In ancient Samaria and Babylonia, Juniper was burned to appease the Gods of the Underworld. In Europe, Juniper branches were smoldered and carried around fields to protect crops and animals. In Wales, it was believed to cut down a Juniper tree, would surely result in the woodcutter's ensuing death.

Bonus Chapter: Feather Fans

How did it all Begin?

My very first road kill find was a Swainson's Hawk, like the one pictured above. I did not know what I wanted to do with it. I knew enough, however, to know I needed to get it to a freezer as soon as possible. Partly because they decompose so very quickly, but also to preserve the integrity of the supple wings. I knew I had to create a beautiful ceremony, befitting my very first gift from the Spirit of the Birds. Prior to this, I had been using a single feather from an Owl as my feather fan. I still have this feather, even after 25 years. I don't like to release my feather fans to a new home, unless they specifically request to be rehomed.

My very first task was to take the dead bird to the then "Alberta Fish and Wildlife Office" to obtain a permit for the bird. Any bird of prey, must be legally assessed, after which, you pay \$10 + taxes, receive your bird back, with the proper documentation, voila... From there, you can make your feather fans. The laws will change based on where you live, but be aware that there often are laws around owning feathers, as a measure to protect certain species of bird.

Feather fans can be made from any bird. Harvesting feathers over time, gives you a beautiful bouquet of feathers to create with. You can go to any Fish and Tackle store, and purchase whole wings. Any craft store will sell a variety of legal feathers, of which you can mix and match, to create beautiful works of Spiritual art.

My Ceremony

I create a small altar. On it I placed offerings to Four Directions; candles in each direction; cornmeal and sugar; salt; seeds; tobacco; sage; sweet grass; cedar.

I sat against a wall, placed the frozen hawk on my lap; used my drum; journeyed to the Hawk to ask for permission and instruction. He told me I could take his feet, his wings and nothing else. I asked how I could honor his gift to me. He told me to bury him at sunrise, not very deep, with poplar branches; maple leaves; and black spruce needles.

I harvested all he asked me to, dug his grave, faced him to East, lined it with the branches, leaves and needles. I smudged over what remained of his body, I laid tobacco on his feathers. I laid a mouse on top, just in case his spirit was hungry. I drummed and sang my prayers of gratitude for the gift of such beautiful

proportions. I slowly covered his body. I tied a prayer pouch to the closest tree, the contents are personal 😊.

I did not know how to make a feather fan, there was no YouTube. So, I did the best I could. It is still together and much beloved almost 17 years later! Since then, I have made Feather Fans from an Owl Tail, Owl Wings and a Raven wing. Sometimes, the feather chooses you. A number of years ago, I attended a workshop on Gnomes, Elves and Fairies. One of the women brought a beautiful box of Eagle Feathers to gift. She was legally entitled to do so, because she was gifted these feathers by a Cree Elder in her community. Since my shamanic flavour is Finnish, I never envisioned I would receive an Eagles feather. I was given permission to take a pair, one large and one small. I made a very simple feather fan from them, which has become my most used smudge fan in my healing room.

I have different Feather Fans for different occasions. Some occasions require a large feather fan. Each spring I host an annual Ceremony called Waking the Bear. Bear calls quite a few people together to celebrate. I use my Grandmother Owl Feather Fan. I need the energy of Grandmother Owl to brush hard against the air of each person who attends. Her wide tail catches all the swirls of energy which have come to be released back to whence they came. The Smudge used with her, as well, must be a potent smudge for the task.

My Swainsons Hawk Feather Fan was my first. I beaded, without any skill, on it. I tried to copy what I saw in my journey. I have bells on it, to scare away the spirits who are not welcome. It has long, strong feathers; strong enough to brush the energy off the body we are smudging. The feathers choose where they want to brush on the body, as well as who, it wants to touch.

I also have a lone feather in my car tucked between the window and the dash... just in case I am called to ceremony unexpectedly...

[Feather Fan Instructions](#)

The feathers used for a ceremony, are as important as the smudge. The feathers of the Fan have a vibration, just as the smudge does. There are vibrations from the color of the feather, and the aura of the bird in which the feather came. I use my feathers in different ways, as we discussed earlier. It is also important to me to choose the proper feather for the work I am going to do. I want to share some of my insights into the Birds, who have shared their feathers with me.

Swainson Hawk

Hawks and Eagles have vision far superior to our human eyes. The Hawk has sight eight times more acute than humans. The structure of the Hawk eye has up to 1,000,000 per square mm, photoreceptors in the retina. Combined with a very high number of nerves connecting the receptors to the brain & a second set of eye muscles not found in other animals, the Raptor has finely tuned vision. Incredible.

I had these facts in mind when I was preparing my Fan. Like adding my own energy to smudge, when I add Anise, I asked the Hawk to provide me with some of its incredible physical and spiritual attributes. The acute keen eyesight, might help me to see where the energy is coiled in a body or a room. The sharp and powerful claws, will hook onto the energy stuck in the room, or on the body, capturing it; tearing it into manageable sizes for eating/devouring. The Fan would catch the energy during flight. I typically use a swift, 'swooping' technique with the sacred smudge.

As the Spirit Keeper of the East, Hawk is a messenger tasked with moving between the seen and unseen realms gracefully, joining both worlds together. The acuity of their vision energetically reassures me they can discriminate any paths leading to dangers. As the Fan moves over a body I hope the broad vision of Hawk will allow people a glimpse into the future. Hawk reminds me, as the Fan carrier to keep my analytical mind under control, not allowing it to run wild, but to stay present while attending to the smoke.

Hawk, as a power animal has gifts of clear sightedness, alert awareness, receptors for messages from the universe. As Guardian of the East, Hawk can enable us to recall past lives, awaken our courage, seeks wisdom, illumination with the ability to soar high and envision the larger picture.

Hawk, in our collective mythology, and global myths, are associated with Psychopomp Deities and Beings. Valkyries transformed into hawks, swooped down onto Norse battlefields and carried souls of fallen warriors to Valhalla. Souls of emperors were illustrated flying from the earth into the heavens in the form of an Eagle, beside the Hawk would fly escorting their soul to be with the Gods. Charon, one of the Spirits I have met traveling through the Land of the Dead, is responsible for ferrying the souls of the dead across the River Styx. Charon has a hawk's head. In ancient Rome, a hawk was released during at the death of important figures (like pharaohs) to show the soul being released from the mundane into the afterlife. Aztecs in Central America held the hawk as a divine liaison between the gods and the souls of the newly deceased.

My Swainson Fan has so much spiritual history with its feathers. It is a fan with the spiritual abilities to handle many different aspects of the human...and Spirit... condition.

Owl

I have long been fascinated by the Beautiful Creature we call the Owl. I know it has seven extra vertebrae in its neck, allowing it a rotation of 270°. It has very special eyes, allowing it spectacular vision, especially at night. It has special feathers, giving the Owl the nickname Ghost Bird, because it cannot be heard. Great Grey's ear asymmetry is in the temporal parts of the skull, giving it a "lop-sided" appearance. Owls are the oldest living birds, and their origin has been traced back 60 million years. They have been featured in almost all ancient mythologies. The oldest specimens found show that the bird has not changed much. Its capability of night vision, silent flight, strong claws, and excellent plumage contributes to its survival skills. Only a few cave drawings have been found relating to birds, and the owl is one of them.

Athena, Goddess of the Night & Wisdom had a companion Owl on her shoulder. The Owl on her shoulder, and the Owl which flies with me, both can reveal unseen truths. Owl can light up Athena's blind side, enabling her to speak the whole truth, as opposed to only a half truth. When using my Fan, Owl's feathers illuminate the darkness surrounding the body, allowing the whole Truth to be accessed.

I refer to Owl as Grandmother, I associate it with the Crone aspect. Owl has often accompanied me to and through the Underworld. She is a creature of keen sight in darkness, and helps me to unmask those who would deceive me, or take advantage of me while I am travelling through the Underworld and the Land of the Dead.

A Great Horned Owl was the first one I found it in a ditch, during one summer drive. I took it home, put it in the freezer, and on a week day I took it to my local Fish and Wildlife office to receive the proper permit. I have done so, with each bird of Prey I have found and used parts of. As for honoring the Bird, I repeated a very similar ceremony for the Owls, as to the one I performed for the Hawk. I feel very close to Owl, I have had a relationship with it, as one of my power animals, for many years.

When I use my feather fan, I keep in mind the Owl is a Messenger, responsible for carrying messages from the Blue Road of Spirit to the Red Road of Physical Life. Great Horned Owl is the Messenger, synonymous with the Gift of Higher Knowledge and insight that speaks of new cycles, the continual state of the Soul's Transformation. The Fan itself is quite large, with very strong feathers. It allows me to use swift, forceful strokes around the body. The Fan does not usually give me the message to touch the person with the feathers. Owl prefers to illuminate that which is hidden, and remove it. Owl is a very powerful fan, I usually only use it when the work is Big, such as a ceremony for Spirit Canoe, or clearing a very large building.

Bald Eagle

I shared above, how I received my Eagle feathers. I do know, if you are lucky, you can find Eagle feathers on the ground in different parts of Canada. I would check with the Rules and Regulations, in your area to ensure you can legally own them. This is an issue, because it is the law, and you can receive substantial fines for owning a Bird of Prey, even feather, without proper documentation.

Eagles have unusual eyes. They are very large in proportion to their heads and have extremely large pupils. Eagles' eyes have a million light-sensitive cells per square mm of retina, five times more than a human's 200,000; much like what was described above in Hawk information. While humans see just three basic colours, eagles see five. These adaptations, gives eagles extremely keen eyesight, and enable them to spot even well-camouflaged potential prey from a very long distance. In fact, the eagles' vision is among the sharpest of any animal, and studies suggest, that some eagles, can spot an animal the size of a rabbit, up to two miles away.

My Eagle feather Fan is used quite often in my practice. I keep in mind that the vision they possess, can help me and my patient, to take a step back and view the bigger picture. When a person comes for healing work, they are ready to, or currently are, reviewing the past and the present objectively. Receiving healing work takes courage, Eagle reminds us to act courageously while facing our fears. As I smudge around the body, taking care to tap the energy of the smudge into my patient, I consciously ask to be shown the strengths needed to be utilised wisely. One aspect of the healed outcome is to remind us we can soar like the Eagle, and view things with courage, confidence, all the while trusting their own healing abilities.

When we are receiving healing work we are challenged to give up our limited perspectives. The Fan reminds us that the feathers help to release comfortable, familiar thought patterns, especially when they don't appear to be working. On the healing table one is requested to be brave enough to enter unknown realms.

The Fan reminds me, with any healing work, mental and emotional shapeshifting is sometimes necessary. Especially, because we want to grow and learn. As with all things there are risks involved in allowing our beings to assume new forms, however the rewards are great. Eagle asks us to recognise that the earth is not our only home, but that the world of Spirit is equally accessible.

MacCaw

A few years ago, I attended a Pagan Faire in my City. I saw this beautiful hand crafted Feather Fan made with molted MacCaw feathers. The handle was carved from Kiawe root from Maui. Set within the handle are pieces of Kyanite, Seraphinite and Charoite. I am sure it was Owl, the Far-seeing Spirit, who whispered in my ear, not to buy it. About a month later, I was handed a most beautiful gift, it was the MacCaw Feather Fan. I was truly humbled to be the recipient of such an exquisite Feather Fan.

It also meant I had to do some research, both academically and spiritually, to engage with the Spirit of the MacCaw Parrot. [MacCaw](#) is an great link to the information I found most useful, when trying to listen to the message of Parrot. The three stones: Kyanite, does not retain energetic residue, so it never needs cleaning. Seraphinite, connects with the Divine Feminine and the Seraphim, Angels of the Highest Level. Charoite is a beautiful purple color, for me it is the soul stone, encouraging Transformation.

I have enjoyed my journey with this Fan. I was introduced to a Spirit I was unfamiliar with, with a combination of stones.

This Fan is powerful, not just because the feathers are very strong, but because it also combines the healing properties of the semi-precious stones. Anytime you move into ceremony, and clear you space, you are problem solving. Parrots naturally solve problems.

Any bird with the ability to not only mimic sounds, but learn and copy a human language is another messenger between the Mundane (Human) and the Sacred. "Parrots serve as a bridge in which both can gain a deeper understanding about one another".

The color of the Fan is green, with red scarlet MacCaw feather in the centre. The color is uniform, and does not distract with brilliance and beauty. I sense this Fan is very insightful. I generally use this Fan when I am teaching. Parrot lends its innate ability to know when to voice my opinion and when to be give space for others in class to express their opinion and experience. I have been steeped in Lessons associated with discernment, my entire life. Apparently, Parrot medicine includes discernment.

I create a high tone smudge, heavily influenced by East, when I teach. In the East, we are awaking and seeking illumination. The Parrot can be one of the most visually beautiful birds. Every nuance of color within the hues of the Parrots, remind me to be aware of color, tones, hues & blends. The Fan, in turn, reminds me to be aware of the confluence of these factors, as we move with the smudge, making way for the Lessons. Parrot medicine includes great communication skills. This medicine is responsive and understanding. To teach, one must be responsive when necessary, quiet and listen for the revelations, and consciously aware of surroundings, energies, body language... Alert Awareness.

I have the gift of Joiking and Glossolalia, both very vocal qualities. I whistle to call in my spirits. I whistle for spirit to come close. Parrots, as well, are vocal. "They have special tones and whistles that their flock

mates recognize. You can bond with your parrot by imitating its personal whistle. Vocalization is somewhat dependent on your parrot's species and personality. But, more importantly, parrot vocalization depends on the opportunities you allow your parrot to talk."

Beyond the Fan, this also ran very close to myself & my relationship with Spirit. I use very special tones, whistles and call backs from Spirit. [Joiking](#) is expressing back, vocally, to Spirit, what spirit shares with me. Glossolalia, the Christians call it "Speaking in Tongues", but Shamans, have been doing since the time of My Ancestors, Ancestors.



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