

M i d s p r i n g

A i r

Ostara



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The Season of Planting

When the death and decay of winter give way to a time of renewal and rebirth, it is time to pause for Spring--the season of planting which corresponds to the element of Air. Slowly it began with the first strings in the womb of Mother Earth during Imbolc or the Quickening Moon. Now, at the Vernal Equinox, she is in her maiden (adolescent) aspect and we are ready to celebrate the peak of the season as those little sprouts explode into a multitude of beauty and the promise of a good harvest. The Sun, who has been growing and gathering strength since Yule is now in the adolescent season of life too.

The Vernal Equinox occurs when the sun crosses the Earth's equator from South to North and one of only two times in the year when day and night are equal in length. It falls on or around March 21 in the Northern Hemisphere.

One common mythology that is shared around this time of year is that of the Greek Goddess Persephone which describes the eternal cycle of Nature's death and rebirth. Persephone was kidnapped by Hades and, while in the Underworld ate six pomegranate seeds. Her mistake sealed her fate and she would go on to spend 6 months of every year as Queen of the Underworld. During these six months which were Autumn and Winter, her mother Demeter, who presided over grains and the fertility of the Earth, was too sad to govern over the harvest and left the Earth to decline. During the Spring and Summer, Persephone went to Olympus to live with her mother and Demeter would shine from happiness and the land would become fertile again.

[Read: Spring Festivals Around the World](#) and [The History of St. Patrick's Day](#)

The Season of Planting

The Vernal Equinox is known to many as Ostara, which is one of the eight Wiccan Sabbats. It is the second of three fertility festivals as it is a time when the blessings of Spring become more visible in the natural world. Flowers bloom, the birds and the bees fly, and fertility can be seen in the animals and the land. Ancient fertility symbols like eggs and bunnies are everywhere.

The word Ostara is thought to come from the Anglo-Saxon or Germanic goddess named Eostre who represents Spring and new beginnings. But, the Spring Equinox has been honored and celebrated around the world and throughout history. In earlier times, the Vernal Equinox may have been considered the beginning of the new year and is still honored as such in the astrological year. The Vernal Equinox has always been an important day to those who lived with the land as it signifies the beginning of the season of regeneration and growth. This is a time that is seen as the resurrection of the Earth.

In ancient times, many festivals were held to celebrate the growth and fertility of the land. The traditions and activities that we carry out today are reminiscent of the past. Eggs have always been nature's perfect fertility symbol. One story tells of the goddess Eostre who healed a wounded bird by turning it into a hare. The hare retained its ability to lay eggs and would return every spring to leave eggs in a nest as a gift to Eostre. This is similar to the Ukrainian folk tale of the origin of pysanky--decorated eggs.

The eggs, bunnies, and baby chicks that are so prominently featured in today's celebrations derive from long-held fertility symbols, folklore, and stories from many cultures. Rabbits, seeds, frogs, eggs, baby lambs, and chicks are all seen in nature during this season and are usually associated with the fertile earth. These customs rooted our ancient ancestors to the fertile life-giving land.

Celebration Ideas

This cycle reminds us to pause and honor balance.

- Have a bonfire or picnic.
 - Greet the Dawn. Wake up early and watch the sunrise chanting or signing if possible.
 - Create an outdoor altar or sacred space
 - Divination for the coming year
 - Planning your garden
 - Cleansing your home, sacred, space, and items
 - Bless your seeds before planting them
 - Color eggs
 - Spring cleaning
 - Meditate outside
 - Have an Ostara/spring feast
 - Make egg-based dishes and dessert
 - Decorate your home for spring
 - Create an Ostara or spring altar.
1. Decide if you want to have an anchored altar that is up in your home all the time (I highly recommend this) or if you only want to incorporate decorations for a ritual altar when performing ritual. When creating an anchored altar, you can use a table, bookshelf, mantle, countertop, etc.
 2. Start by removing anything from your existing altar and giving it a good wipe down. Feel free to use charmed magickal cleaner for this.
 3. Next, energetically cleanse the space with your preferred method of cleansing before choosing what items you wish to include.
 4. Choose items that represent the season such as flowers, eggs, and seeds. Include any item that is special to you such as a representation of deity if you choose. I like to have a candle or incense of some kind. See a few examples on the next page.

Sources

Sophia Center for Goddess Study Priestess Training Class handouts by Dr. Candace Kant, Professor of History

Llewellyn's Complete Book of Correspondences by Sandra Kynes

Full Moon Feast: Food and the Hunger for Connection by Jessica Prentice

The Herbcrafter's Tarot by Latisha Guthrie and Joanna Powell Colbert

Stepping Into Ourselves: An anthology of Writings on Priestesses by Anne Key & Candace Kant

Rosemary Gladstar's Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health

The Center of Excellence: Master Herbalist

The Center of Excellence: Advanced Herbalist

The Center of Excellence: Crystal Healing

Hibiscus Moon Crystal Academy

Maud Grieve's A Modern Herbal

Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs

The Lost Book of Herbal Remedies

Llewellyn's Sabbat Essentials: Ostara

...and various other sources collect over 20 years. Some are printed, some are handwritten, while others are scribbled on a napkin. I've had many teachers over the years and many of my biggest inspirations came from simple conversations and gatherings rather than formal lessons or rituals. Because of this, I may not always have every source of information but if you recognize something, I would be happy to include and/or link to the original source.