

## ***Earth's Green Milk – a Tonic for Spring***

As we emerge from a Winter of challenges we have been gifted crystal clear starry skies and a February full Moon that was beyond words of beauty that I can conjure. Emerging from Winter into the stirrings of Spring is a journey of transition. Leaf-buds are swelling, nests are starting to be built, crocus and snow-drops are blooming and much of Earth's energy is still deep in the soil, deep in Her roots. So there is no need to rush, to do everything or be everything all at once...



The days are growing longer and brighter as the Fire in the Sky waxes and the days are still cold. Taking care of our health and well-being is essential, particularly in these times, and we are fortunate to be surrounded by places of beauty to walk, forage and to give our appreciation to.



***Earth's green milk*** is the old name for the humble stinging nettle; an earthy, generous creature if ever there was one. Its leaves, new shoots and seeds are edible and the tough stems can be dried and woven into cloth or made into cordage. Nettle is anti-inflammatory packed with vitamins A, B & C, iron, potassium and chromium.



Now is a great time to forage for nettle and combined with a handful of cleavers makes a strengthening and cleansing Spring tonic. Gather a generous handful of the new shoots and leaves of nettle. Some people don't like the 'sting' of nettle so wear a glove. Over the years I've grown to like and appreciate this sensation, it feels like a good strong handshake from the medicine of the plant. Gather a similar amount of cleavers. Nettle and cleavers can often be found on the edges, in the margins by the river banks.



*When foraging ask permission from the plant before you take anything, if you feel you get a 'no' then move on. Never take all of the plant, just what you need leaving plenty for others. Forage out of the way of traffic fumes, pollution and dog walks. Always thank the plant for what it has given to you.*

Cleavers, a cleansing herb full of vitamin C lightens the heart and soothes inflammation in the lymph and nervous system. Its shallow roots yield a red dye and it is said that if birds eat the roots, their hollow bones can turn red! Cleaver's sticky seeds are used by lace-makers to enlarge their pinheads.



Place the gathered greenery in a jar or large glass of cold water. As water holds memory offer your gratitude or a prayer to the water as you connect with the medicine of nettle and cleavers and swish the water around the jar 4 or 5 times, then place it in the fridge. (For an additional infusion I left my jar outside under the Moon as she became full). After 24 hours remove the greenery onto your compost heap and each day drink a glass of the spring tonic.

**Ally Plot 77**