



Spring newsletter

Spring has arrived. While March 20th officially heralds in spring it doesn't appear to reach Scotland until later. I have heard that spring travels at walking pace up Britain and this certainly correlates with my experiences as the daffodils are only just out with me. The days are obviously longer and brighter, greenery is bursting forth and the stresses and strains of the festive season have passed. Spring is a time of growth and this can either be the physical growth of the plants around us or personal growth.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter each season has its own energy and rhythm and the more we live in harmony with these rhythms the easier each season is. Spring is the polar opposite of winter's introverted internalised energy. It is all about going forth, being more extroverted, expending more energy and focusing on future plans. What we sow in spring we reap in the autumn.

So, here are a few ideas on how to harness and use this spring time energy for your own benefit.

Spring activities

- **Journaling:** *Now* is the time for your New Year resolutions as spring is all about **action**. Those ideas, thoughts and plans that were formed over winter are waiting to be acted upon. Remember the journal you wrote over winter? The one full of your plans for the New Year? Look back at your journal entry or entries and focus on the section that contained your aspirations for this year. Look at the plans you laid down and/or the goals you set yourself and put them into action. If you have many and you are the type of person who can feel quite overwhelmed by too many things, *or* someone who does many things all at the same time, then pick one that is the most important to you and focus on that one for the moment. Additionally if you are someone who is quite fastidious try not to get bogged down in all the tiny details of your greater plan as this will interfere with your ability to put your plan into action.
- **Eating:** Foods in spring should be lighter and, if eating seasonally, foods will be much more cleansing. The bitter flavours of spring greenery will help to gently cleanse the liver after it has spent winter dealing with higher fat foods and excesses of alcohol. *If* you have been thinking of doing a detox then this is the time of year to do it...a spring clean. When picking a detox to follow make sure it is one where you are not left feeling weak and depleted. While in the initial week you might expect to have side effects such as headaches or feel bad tempered as chemicals such as caffeine leave your body after that there should be a sense of being energised. Also remember that it is a detox not a starvation diet and you should still feel satisfied after eating.

- Exercise: Weather may not be more clement but it is warmer and brighter. It is now possible to get out for longer walks and enjoy the sun in between the showers. Exercise doesn't *have* to be strenuous, although jogging/running is a good activity for this time of year if you fancy something a bit more energetic.
- Gardening is a perfect activity for this time of year and planted seeds will almost always, with a little care, germinate and grow. It's what they do at this time of year. Try and stop them. Herbs and vegetables are not only for large gardens they can be grown in any small space including hanging baskets or pots outside or on the windowsill.
- Gathering: There are a few wild greens that are prime for picking at the moment and these include my two spring favourites: wild garlic and nettle.

Wild garlic leaves



Add them to [soup](#), use to make [garlic bread](#) or blend them up into [pesto](#). If none of those take your fancy try them chopped up to salads, lentil dals, stews, Spanish tortillas or mix them in with seasoned gram flour to make pakora's.

The leaves, as well as tasting fabulous, are useful for helping to boost the immune system so can help in both reducing the length of a cold if you already have one or preventing them from reoccurring so frequently.

Nettles

Nettles are wonderfully young and tender at the moment and are full of iron, magnesium and vitamin C. They shouldn't be feared! Fair enough wear gloves to gather and prepare them but once they are cooked or juiced they lose their sting. I like to use them anywhere spinach works such as in pasta sauces, stews or risotto but they can also be juiced. Both contain iron but nettles don't contain oxalic acid which can inhibit the absorption of this important mineral.

Don't be put off by the idea of nettle juice. Really and truly the juice has very little flavour and can be mixed with other fruit and vegetable juices. Be warned though nettle and carrot juice will always look murky so it may be worth trying it mixed with berries. I like to make sure I get the fibre from the berries by juicing only the nettles and then blending that together with the mixed fruit. Also, frozen fruit is absolutely fine to use and much cheaper at this time of year.

Medicinally nettles have been used to treat gout, rheumatoid arthritis, allergies (including hayfever) and increase the volume of breast milk produced.

