***Lammas Night***

*I stood before my altar at Lammastide*

*And asked the Lord and Lady to be my guides.*

*"Please show to me a vision that I may see*

*What sacrifice is worthy to give to Thee."*

*They showed to me an apple without a core.*

*They showed to me a dwelling without a door.*

*They showed to me a palace where They may be*

*And unlock it without a key.*

*How can there be an apple without a core.*

*How can there be a dwelling without a door?*

*How can there be a palace where They may be*

*And They may unlock it without a key?*

*My spirit is an apple without a core.*

*My mind is a dwelling without a door.*

*My heart is a palace where They may be*

*And They may unlock it without a key.*

*I stood before my altar on Lammas night.*

*And gave my mighty Lord and Lady bright*

*The sacrifice They asked for-with spirit free,*

*Upon that Lammas ev'ning, I gave them me.*

*- Ravenna Angeline*

**Circle Eight: Lammas**

This cross-quarter sabbat approaches, and I feel reluctance, knowing that while the light of the Sun is still so strong and the days are long, they are both, indeed, waning.

I shrug off the thought and take comfort by looking outside my windows, marveling at the lushness of my gardens and the natural world surrounding me. My marigolds have multiplied, and the lilies take turns showing off their hues: bright yellow in the north, and a sort of dusty-rose/maroon color on the south side of my home. A pollinator garden has grown up around my raised beds (which are, themselves, overflowing with herbs and edible greens), and the milkweed has successfully drawn in the monarchs. I recently learned that the blossoms are edible, and might soon put this new knowledge to the test.

I’ve been delighted by the daily visits of the animal relatives who share this homespace with me: the rabbits enjoy their breakfast in the early morning hours while I weed and water my gardens nearby; the squirrels and chipmunks are working steadily, brilliantly stockpiling their own abundant treasures for the colder months ahead; and, of course, my bird kin (blue jays, cardinals, robins, orioles, sparrows, and even a pileated woodpecker), who genuinely seem to enjoy my attempts to sing their songs.

I revel in knowing that the seeds I planted this Spring are now producing ample sustenance, and I no longer need to purchase expensive organic tomatoes, peppers, herbs, greens, and other staples. There is such deep satisfaction that comes with working the land in this way. I muse to myself about a future homestead where we have more space for even larger gardens and land for chickens to graze, providing us with their precious eggs. I know it’s possible. I am willing it to be.

Abundance is the theme for this time of year, and it is in this vein we celebrate Lammastide.

I pause to consider the many ways in which abundance shows up in my life: in the good health of my body; in the resources provided to help me live in comfort and peace; in the gifts bestowed upon me which bring joy to share; in the love and support of my family, friends, and communities. Abundance permeates my life in so many ways. This is a time to honor and celebrate it all.

I look forward to soon hosting a dinner for my loved ones, cooking the very foods I have raised with such attention and devotion. I will share the best I have to offer, just as the Earth has shared Her best with me. We will offer Her a spirit plate of Her own, along with our deep gratitude for what She has already provided, and what we know is yet to come. This is how our ancestors celebrated the first harvest. In carrying this tradition forward, we honor and remember them as well. And so it is. So be it. Blessed be.

**An Introduction…**

The third cross-quarter sabbat in the Wheel of the Year is known by several names: Lammas (Anglo-Saxon *hlaf-maesse*, or “loaf-mass); Lughnasad (pronounced *loo-NAS-ah*, named after the Celtic craftsman god, Lugh); and Freyfest or Freysblot (honoring the Norse god of fertility, *Frey,* and *“blot”* meaning “sacrifice”).

This was an important sabbat to our ancestral peoples, whose lives were entirely at the mercy of the yearly harvests. A good harvest would ensure a community’s ability to survive the long winter months with ample nutrition, helping to stave off winter ills and even potential death. A weak growing year placed a heavier burden on having to hunt and forage during the cold seasons, with few resources available, all of which were hard to come by.

Lammas falls at the beginning of August, usually around the 1st or 2nd of the month. In the old cultures which celebrated Litha as Midsummer, Lammas then represented summer’s end, and the beginning of the harvest season.

In fact, Lammas is the first of three celebrations of the harvest. This celebration is for the grain, the time for gathering in, the first fruits of our labor. Lammas is then followed by the Mabon, the harvest of the fruit; and later by Samhain, the harvest of the nuts and berries. What is significant about Lammas is easily revealed by its name – the celebration of the loaf, or in simpler terms, the celebration of the bread.

The first cuttings of the grain crops (barley, wheat, oats, and rye) are important for they provide the staple food for the upcoming winter, and also because they provide the seed necessary to plant the crop the following spring. This combination guarantees the continuance of the people.

Traditionally, the first sheaf of grain would be ceremonially cut at dawn, winnowed, ground and then baked into the Harvest Bread which all would share in as a sign of thanks. The first barley stalks would be made into beer or ale. The last sheaf would be kept in the home, often above the family hearth until the next harvest, when it would be returned to the earth.

Lammas was a time to honor the abundance of our Mother Earth. People would gather, sharing the best their first harvests had to offer, celebrating their bounty, and praying for continued abundance in the harvests yet to come.

Although our modern cultures are more removed from the process of seeding, growing, harvesting and storing our foods, these wisdoms are being revived once more as we face the dire effects of climate change, and the proliferation of GMO crops and foods. Lammas offers us the opportunity to reflect on our interdependence of the Plant Allies, without whom we could not survive.

**The Grain/Corn Mother**

At Lammas the Goddess is in Her aspect as Grain or Corn Mother, Harvest Mother, Harvest Queen, Earth Mother, Ceres and Demeter.

Demeter, as Corn Mother, represents the ripe corn of this year's harvest and Her daughter Kore/Persephone represents the grain - the seed which drops back deep into the dark earth, hidden throughout the winter, and re-appears in the spring as new growth. This is the deep core meaning of Lammas and comes in different guises. The fullness and fulfillment of the present harvest already holds at its very heart the seed of all future harvest. (It is a fact that a pregnant woman carrying her as yet unborn daughter is also already carrying the ovary containing all the eggs her daughter will ever release - she is already both mother, grandmother and beyond, embodying the great Motherline - pure magic and mystery.)

So as the grain harvest is gathered in, there is food to feed the community through the winter and within that harvest is the seed of next year's rebirth, regeneration and harvest. The Grain Mother is ripe and full, heavily pregnant she carries the seed of the new year's Sun God within her.

To fully appreciate the goddesses of the grain, it is useful to peek back into Neolithic times at the dawn of the agricultural revolution.

Our Paleolithic ancestors were food-*gathering* peoples. From the emergence of Homo sapiens until about 7000 B.C., human beings hunted and gathered their food. The spiritual orientation of this time was focused on Mother Earth and how she provided for the people in wild environments such as forests, meadows, oceans, and rivers.

The Neolithic era brought the development of settled villages and the *production* of food. Animals were domesticated, grains were cultivated, and bread was baked. In numerous Neolithic village sites, an altar to the goddess, with a figurine of the goddess, was placed next to the oven that baked the bread. The spiritual orientation of these villages shifted from the goddess of the wild to the goddess of the grain.

It is interesting to note that the bread-baking ovens were dome shaped, like the shape of a pregnant belly. The alchemy of baking was likely considered to be a mystical process. One takes gooey bread dough, places it in the belly of the goddess, adds heat, and wonderful bread is created to feed and nourish all the village.

This alchemical process was a gift from the goddess to the people. She was honored with praise and thanksgiving in return. In addition to the miracle of bread, the harvest goddess was honored in all other aspects of food production.

Lammas is the celebration of the ripening of the grain, and we find Grain or “Corn Mother” goddesses in numerous cultures around the world.

In the western hemisphere, “corn” refers to the indigenous maize plant, while in the old world it refers to any grain. In the Navajo tradition, she was paired with Pollen Boy, the regional Green Man. In Germany, when the stalks of corn wave in the wind, it is said that Corn Mother is running through the field. The Zuni people of the Southwest have a myth of eight corn maidens. They are invisible, but their beautiful dancing movements can be seen when the wind blows on the fields of corn. The Maya believed that humans had been fashioned out of corn.

Here are examples of Grain and Corn Mother goddesses from around the world:

CHICOMECOATL is an Aztec Corn Mother goddess and mother of all nourishment. Her fiery nature is seen when she is depicted with the sun as a shield.

PARAVATI, a Hindu mother goddess, is venerated as a Corn Mother.

CERES is the Roman goddess of corn. Our words “cereal” and “create” come from her name, both of which come from the root word “ker,” meaning “to grow.” In Rome the women of the region honored Ceres in October with an offering of the first grain of the harvest. From the nourishment of the goddess we are able to create our lives.

DEMETER is the Greek goddess of corn. She is the goddess of fertility and life, guardian of all growing and blooming things, and also the goddess of death and rebirth.

BABA YAGA is a Slavic triple goddess. She is often represented by the last sheaf of corn that is harvested.

Some myths of corn mother allude to the cycle of the seasons. Winter or a barren season indicates that the mother has left and withdrawn her nourishment. Other myths speak of the death or sacrifice of the mother to feed her children.

SELU is a southeastern Native American corn goddess. In her story, she plants her very heart so that the people could be nourished.

CORN MOTHER was the first mother for the Penobscot Indians. When the children of the goddess had killed all the game animals and were hungry, Corn Mother had her husband kill her and drag her by the silky hair on her head until her flesh was scraped from her very bones. Seven months after these bones were buried, corn plants with silky tassels emerged from the ground to feed the people.

CORN MOTHER of the Seneca people appears as a beautiful woman on the top of a cliff. Her beautiful song spreads out across the valley, enticing an older man to be her lover. After they make love, the old man faints. When he awakens she is gone, but young corn plants are growing up from the earth. When the corn ripens he gives the seeds to many, spreading the gift of corn around the world.

Each culture has its way of describing the withdrawal of the life-force energy from the surface of the earth and its return.

ANNAPURNA is a Hindu goddess of nourishment. “Anna” means food and grain, while “Purna” means full, complete, and perfect. She is a form of Paravati. In one myth of Annapurna, Shiva told her that the world was an illusion and food was a part of the illusion. This angered her, so she left this world. Of course, the earth became barren and the people suffered from hunger. Out of compassion, she returned and set up a kitchen. Shiva came with his begging bowl, saying “Now I realize the material world, like spirit, cannot be dismissed as an illusion.”

HENWEN is the Celtic goddess Cerridwen in the form of a pregnant sow. The sow represents the cycle of life; her rooting into the earth makes her a prime symbol for the underworld, and her fat belly suckling lots of piglets makes her a prime symbol for the nourishment and abundance provided by the mother*.*

Some goddesses represent the processes of agriculture and the harvesting and baking of bread.

TAILTIU is a little known Irish goddess, who is credited with clearing the plains of Ireland in preparation for agriculture. She was absorbed into the cult of Lugh, the solar god, being assigned the role of his foster mother. Lammas festivals have been held in her native village for centuries. In these festivals the first loaf of bread baked from the new harvest was offered to the goddess, and athletic contests of strength and skill were performed.

FORNAX is a Roman goddess who guided the baking of the bread, the staff of life. She was the heart and hearth of the home. On her festival day women would hang garlands of flowers on the bread ovens and put them around the necks of the mules that turned the grain-grinding mills.

OPICONSIVIA is an Italian goddess of the fertile earth. Our words “opportunity” and “opulence” come from her name, which means “the sowing of the crops.” Clearly our ancestors believed that opulence, riches, and the good things of life emerge from the earth by the grace of the goddess. Her realm was the underworld, or inside the earth, and so she was invoked by sitting on the earth and placing one’s hands on the ground. She is depicted with a loaf of bread in one hand and the other hand outstretched, offering aid to those in need. Her consort was the god Consus, who was the protector of the harvested grain stored in the underground grain silos.

**Lugh**

There is little doubt that Lugh (also known as Lug and Lú) is one of the most prominent gods in Irish mythology. He has been described as the god of arts, warriors, and sovereignty. Some have suggested a link to him being a type of sun god. Although he is associated with solar-like symbolism, there is no evidence of him being worshipped as a solar deity.

In mythology he is associated with the Tuatha Dé Danann. They are Celtic pre-Christian gods with supernatural ability and were of great importance to Gaelic people. The Tuatha Dé Danann are a significant feature in Irish, Scottish and Manx mythology. However, Lugh is also said to be part Fomorian, another supernatural race in Irish mythology and said to be malevolent opponents of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Lugh's mother is Eithne, daughter of Balor, a leader of the Fomorians. His father is Cian, son of Dian Cecht who was a Tuatha Dé Danann god of healing. Lugh was prophesied to kill his Fomorian grandfather Balor, and was adopted by Taltiu, a Fir Bolg queen. The Fir Bolg had been ancient rulers in Ireland before the arrival of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

It is also said that Lugh was also brought up and schooled by Manannán mac Lir. [Manannán mac Lír](https://www.transceltic.com/manx/manann-n-mac-lir-son-of-sea-celtic-sea-god-and-protector-of-mannin)was a god of the sea, ruler of the Otherworld and also keeper of the magic tools of the Tuatha Dé Danann. His home was said to be the Isle of Man, which many believe to be the place known as Emain Abhlach in Irish mythology which was seen as a mythical island paradise. Manannán was known to have been a great magician and was in possession of a number of enchanted items with astounding magical powers. Manannán taught Lugh many skills and to become a great warrior. Manannán had him trained with his own sons in the use of arms, and he learned to hunt and to fish, to run and to swim. He grew tall and strong and brave. However, the time came, with his people the Tuatha Dé engaged in war in Ireland, for him to return home. Manannán gave Lugh a number of his magical possessions to help him in this struggle, including his spear Sleá Bua ("spear of victory") and Manannan's magnificent horse [Aonbharr (‘Enbarr of the Flowing Mane’)](https://www.transceltic.com/pan-celtic/magnificent-horse-of-celtic-gods-enbarr-of-flowing-mane).

He returned to Ireland to fight on the side of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Their King at the time was Nuada Airgetlam (Nuada of the Silver Arm). Nuada had his hand struck off by evil forces and Lugh took on an important role of leadership while Nuada had a new arm and hand made of silver. Lugh led the Tuatha Dé Danann to victory over the Fomorians in the second Battle of Magh Tuireadh (Tuired). Nuada was killed by the Formorian Ballor, Lugh’s grandfather. However, during this battle, as was prophesied, Lugh went on to kill Balor. By some accounts Lugh subsequently ruled for forty years.

He features and is named in a number of cycles and traditions in Irish mythology which give various accounts of his life and deeds. They include in the Leinster cycle of poems, specifically "Lugh sceith". Lebor Gabála Érenn. Cath Maige Tuireadh. Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann. Compert Con Culainn. Táin Bó Cuailnge. "Ar an doirseoir ris an deagh laoch". In the Ulster Cycle he is said to be the father of the legendary warrior and hero Cúchulainn. When Cúchulainn lay seriously wounded after an exhausting series of battles during the Táin Bó Cuailnge (Cattle Raid of Cooley), Lugh appeared and healed his wounds over a period of three days. Lugh’s name lives on in these legends, as well as in the month of August that is named after him and in the Gaelic festival of Lughnasadh which continues to be celebrated on the hilltops of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man.

The name of the month of August in all three Gaelic languages is derived from the Celtic god Lugh (also known as Lug and in Modern Irish: Lú). In Modern Irish August is called Lúnasa, in Scottish Gaelic: Lùnastal, and in Manx: Luanistyn. At the beginning of the month Lughnasadh is celebrated. It is one of the four Gaelic seasonal festivals, along with Samhain, Imbolc and Beltane. The festival of Lughnasadh (also known as Lughnasad), is, like the month itself, named after the god Lugh. Traditionally held on the first day of August it was widely observed throughout Ireland (Éire), Scotland (Alba) and the Isle of Man (Mannin). Clearly Lughnasadh was regarded as an important pre-Christian festival and is mentioned in some of the earliest Irish literature.

August was seen as a time that marked the beginning of the harvest season. The Celtic year appears to have been driven mainly by agrarian concerns. The festival day is called Lá Lúnasa (Day of Lúnasa) in Irish or either Laa Luanistyn or Laa Luanys in Manx. There were a number of traditions associated with Lughnasadh in times gone by including ritual ceremonies, feasts and athletic competitions. These festivities were said to have been originated by Lugh himself and to have celebrated his deeds and those of members of his family, in particular his mother. Some festivals continue to be held specifically in celebration of Lughnasadh and others, including the Puck Fair, held in early August in the town of Killorglin, County Kerry (Irish: Cill Orglan, Contae Chiarraí) is believed to be a survival of a Lughnasadh festival.

Often the ceremonies to pay homage to Lugh took place on top of hills and mountains. They could also involve visits to holy wells or sacred springs, revered either in a Christian or pagan context; many of these wells can still be found throughout the Celtic lands and often now bear the name of Christian saints. Rituals, which have their origin with the celebration of Lugh, are still followed in many places. Over the years, with the arrival of Christianity, and in common with other Celtic festivals, attempts were often made to Christianise these events. An example of this is the Reek Sunday pilgrimage at Croagh Patrick which was eventually re-cast as a Christian pilgrimage. However, others in the Celtic countries still ascend to high ground to pay homage to the god Lugh Lamhfada (Lugh of the Long Arm).[[1]](#footnote-0)

At this turn of the Wheel of the Year, the bounty and energy of Lugh, of the Sun, is now beginning to wane. It is a time of change and shift. Active growth is slowing down and the darker days of winter and reflection are beckoning.

**The Feast of Bread**

An important aspect of the Lammas sabbat is the age-old Saxon Feast of Bread, at which the first of the grain harvest is consumed in ritual loaves.

One of the old traditions for Lughnassadh was that the King of Tara hosted a feast containing one product of the land from each province of his kingdom. This not only showed that his reign was prosperous, but also his thanksgiving for the upcoming harvest. This is a festival giving thanks for the goodness that we are about to receive.

As part of this thanksgiving process, the first sheaves of ripe grain were hand-ground and baked into a loaf of bread and shared by all members of the community. The loaves were shaped into forms symbolizing things like the God of the Harvest, the Goddess, the wheel of the year, or simply left round with the shape of a stalk or sheaf of wheat etched into the top.

In early Ireland, it was a bad idea to [harvest your grain](https://www.learnreligions.com/celebrating-lammas-or-lughnasadh-in-august-2562156) any time before Lammas; it meant that the previous year's harvest had run out early, and that was a serious failing in agricultural communities. However, on August 1, the first sheaves of grain were cut by the farmer, and by nightfall his wife had made the first loaves of bread of the season.

There are many customs throughout Europe around the cutting of the grain or corn and they applied to all cereal crops including wheat, barley, rye and oats. Both the cutting of the first gain and the last grain are significant.

The first sheaf would often be ceremonially cut at dawn, winnowed, ground and baked into the Harvest Bread which was then shared by the community in thanks. The first barley stalks would be made into the first beer of the season. The first sheaf guarantees the seed and thus continuity.

The last sheaf was also ceremonially cut, often made into a 'corn dolly', carried to the village with festivity and was central to the Harvest Supper. The corn dolly was made into a Corn Maiden (after a good harvest) or a cailleach, hag or cone (after a bad harvest). She could be dressed with ribbons, even clothed.

This last sheaf would live in the home, often above the fireplace or hearth of the home, until the next harvest. Or it might be placed in the branches of a tree or mixed with the seed for the next year's sowing. In some way it eventually needed to return to the earth from whence it came so that the fertilizing spirit of John Barleycorn, of the Harvest God, could pass from harvest to harvest. It could be ploughed back, returned to decay and rot, or burnt and the ashes scattered.

In some parts of Europe the tradition was to weave the last sheaf into a large Corn Mother with a smaller 'baby' inside it, representing the harvest to come the following year. Once the harvest was completed, safely gathered in, the festivities would begin. Bread was made from the new grain and thanks given to the Sun's life-giving energy reborn as life-giving bread.

It is not just the wheat that is important. Bread is elemental. Earth, Air, Fire, and Water combine in a substance that has nourished people since the beginning of time. Bread combines seeds from the Earth (flour), with Water, the substance that makes up most of our being. Add in salt, the purifier, and yeast, the sacred changer of the gods - the secret, airborne traveler who changes rotten grapes into wine. Mix all of these together, kneading the dough to shape and form. Finally, add Fire to bake. Suddenly, from those four ancient, basic elements, you have bread. This may very well be the reason it is called the “staff of life.”

Here is a sample recipe for making your Harvest Bread:

**Buttermilk Bread Charm for Lammas**

3 cups of bread flour

500 ml of Buttermilk (available from the supermarket)

I teaspoonful of baking soda

Lammas ribbon in your choice of colour - gold, orange, yellow

Sprouted seeds (these represent regeneration and can even be bought in wholefood shops - or sprout your own!)

Place the flour in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre. Sieve in the blended salt and soda and pour in the buttermilk. Mix well with a wooden spoon until the dough feels springy and then mix in the sprouted seeds. If it feels too sloppy just add a little more flour. Turn it onto a board and cover with a fine dusting of flour. Pat it with your hands until you have a round shape. Take a sharp knife and score lightly into eight sections, one for each festival.

Place onto a greased baking tray and pop your buttermilk bread into a moderate oven for about 20-25 minutes. Keep an eye on it. When the bread is ready it will change colour and it will sound hollow when you tap the bottom. Cool completely on a wire rack. When it is cool, tie it with a Lammas ribbon.

Take time to concentrate on the bread you have created and turn the loaf three times saying:

***"From the fields and through the stones, into fire, Lammas Bread, as the Wheel turns may all be fed. Goddess Bless."[[2]](#footnote-1)***

**Corn Dollies**

Corn Dollies are as old as agriculture. The name comes from “Idol” or “Image”, and we know that in some cultures the figure of a woman was made from straw at harvest time. Other peoples made symbols of fertility and abundance in the shape of mares, goats and cornucopias. Possibly the traditional cigar-shaped dolly was based on the ‘horn of plenty’.

Straw is an impermanent material and nothing physical has come down to us from ancient times, but we know that wheat was cultivated in Egypt at least 6000 years B.C., and carvings exist on old tombs looking very much like plaited straw work. The oldest known designs are the Aruseh, or Corn Bride, a design found in Egypt and the Mediterranean area. It was made from the best ears of wheat and was hung in the larder as a charm to ensure against hardship.

The basic idea behind the corn dolly is that the Spirit of the Corn resided in the last sheaf gathered at harvest time, and special ceremonies attended its cutting. Often a figure or a traditional design would be made from this sheaf that would be preserved in the farmhouse until the following year, in the belief that the Spirit would ensure that the seed corn would germinate in the following spring. In early times this Spirit or Goddess was known as Demeter to the Greeks and Ceres to the Romans. The idea of a Corn Spirit is found in communities all over the world, and features prominently in Native American mythology.

In the majority of places across Western Europe, cutting the last sheaf was seen as an honour, but in some areas people were fearful of being held responsible for making the Corn Spirit homeless. To prevent being cursed with bad luck, groups of reapers would often take turns in throwing their sickles at the sheaf. To be even safer, the reapers would sometimes sweep their scythes back and forward across the sheaf whilst blindfolded. In this way the potential blame was shared.

The techniques of corn dolly making have been handed down through generations of farmers and their workers, and although the original beliefs behind them have been long forgotten many designs have survived for us to recreate today, together with newer and more up-to-date ideas. British dollies vary from county to county. For example, the bell and the umbrella come from Cambridgeshire, the horseshoe is from Suffolk and Essex has the terret, a shape copied from a horse brass. Mordiford, a village near Hereford, gives us the heart-shaped design that bears its name. Ireland produced crosses and favours, the latter being a simple 2-straw plait that a young country lad might have made for his girlfriend on an evening walk. The ribbons that usually accompany corn dollies are a traditional embellishment. Modern varieties of wheat are bred for the combine harvester, and being short and stiff are useless for straw work. Most dollies are made from older types of wheat which have been specially grown for the purpose and often cut by hand.[[3]](#footnote-2)

**Celebrating Lammas**

There are many traditional ways to celebrate this sabbat. The most obvious is to harvest what you can from your own gardens and prepare a family or community celebration and feast! These work best when each guest contributes from their own bounty, with the emphasis on sharing the best we have to offer, just as Mother Earth shares Her best with us.

Other Lammas activities include:

**Lammas Charm For Gathering In Abundance**

You will need a broom or besom (a broom made of twigs tied around a stick); a ribbon; and a sprig of mint.

Don't worry if it isn't a traditional besom, any broom will do as it is always the intent that is important. If you have no broom, collect a bundle of twigs and tie them at the top with a Lammas ribbon to make a hand broom shape. The besom/broom is a potent symbol of hearth and home, found in some form in almost every household. It is a traditional magical tool useful for everyday charms as it has the imprint of its owner firmly on it. Sweeping is a natural gathering gesture.

As for the ribbon, use a piece of green ribbon (for abundance), a piece of gold ribbon (for prosperity and gathering) or ribbon in Lammas harvest colours would be equally suitable.

Ideally the sprig of mint would come from your garden (but you can get this from any supermarket), or dried mint - put it in a pouch. The mint represents abundance and plenty and is easily accessible to the urban hedgewitch.

Take your broom and tie your ribbon around the stave or top. Tie in your sprig of mint or securely fasten your pouch. Take your broom outside, place both hands on the stave and focus on your intention - gathering in your harvest for winter. Turn slowly three times in a clockwise direction then start to sweep towards your door saying:

***"By one, two, three and four, sweep Lammas gifts to my door. May abundance be a constant friend, by my hearth till Winter's end."***

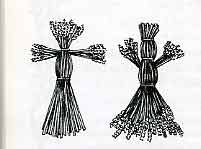
Repeat this three times, then take your besom/broom back into your house and put it in its usual place. You can leave the ribbon on for as long as you want to, for a lunar month, or until winter is done. If you have made your own broom you can place it where you consider the heart of your home to be. The mint can be returned to the earth with thanks.

If you do not have an outside space you can sweep from your front door inwards to either your kitchen or hearth using the same charm.

**Make A Grain Mother/Corn Dolly**

Go for a walk and see what you can find - stalks of wheat, oats, barley, or rye often left growing on the edges of fields after harvesting. Or, you could also use any grasses and/or reeds you can find.

Let your creativity out - if you feel confident, weave your Grain Mother into being, but equally you can just lace and tie her into being with Lammas coloured ribbons. As you do so, give thanks for the gifts of Harvest. Place your Grain Mother on your altar or at the centre of celebrations. At Samhain, return the grain stalks to the earth, they contain the seeds of future harvest.

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**Collect The Seeds Of Future Harvest**

Involve children if you can. Collect and dry them in the sun, ready for next year's planting. Consider giving them as gifts at Samhain or Yule. Seeds are such amazing and mysterious things - each tiny seed contains within it the blueprint for the whole plant it will become. It will mirror its mother plant, the mother that raised the seed and returned it to the earth with the help of the light of the sun. It's a miracle every time.

**Herbs and Plants of Lammas**

Choose from these herbs and plants when working your Lammas magic: wheat, barley, oats, rye,

meadowsweet**,** mint, sunflower and calendula.[[4]](#footnote-3)

**Sharing the Wisdom: Preparing Your Ritual**

Use this space to consider how you would honor this sabbat in a ritual way, whether for yourself or for others. This is meant to be a loose guide to inspire you, and to build confidence in your own intuition, vision, and abilities to incorporate more ritual in your life.

1. **What would your ritual space look like/what environment do you envision?**
2. **What items would you include on your altar? What do they represent to you?**
3. **What Elements would you include? How will you include them? And why?**
4. **What words do you feel should be spoken or sung? You might jot down your ideas, and create a loose outline to follow.**
5. **What is the best way for you, personally, to connect with this sabbat? How will you demonstrate that through ritual action?**

**Reflections and Integration**

Going back through your life in increments of 5 years, reflect upon this season/sabbat in the Wheel of the Year and what it has meant to you in those various stages of life. Use these questions as a guide:

* **What memories stand out to me the most about this season in each stage of life?**
* **How did this season/sabbat make me feel emotionally? Physically?**
* **How do my past experiences of the season/sabbat correlate to the present?**
* **In my highest vision, how would I best connect with this season/sabbat?**
* **From this year forward, what changes might I make to align myself more with the energies of this season/sabbat?**

1. From “Celtic God Lugh and Gaelic Festival of Lughnasadh” by Alastair Kneale [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. From The Goddess & The Green Man [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. From “History of the Corn Dolly,” published by South Holland Heritage [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. From The Goddess & The Green Man [↑](#footnote-ref-3)