

November comes between the fall and winter months. The leaves are almost completely gone from the trees, and the rest have lost most of their color.

Acceptance – Rites and Rituals of November

This month of November we can finally see the end drawing near. The year is moving rapidly to completion. Our period of great activity is over; we are resigned and ready for a change, something new; and the cycle to continue.

Modern Ritual: Remembering the Dead and Fallen

One cold and dark day in November, our women's group gathered to honor the spirits of the month and the natural cycle. Though departure and death is not easy to talk about for many of us, this was the chosen and appropriate theme for the month. This was a solemn time and not a gay and festive celebration, yet one so powerful, essential, and natural.

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We came together to share memories of those whom we have loved and who have departed this life. One by one we placed a long thin black veil over our heads envisioning the fearful descent of Orpheus into the darkened underworld. Here, we shared thoughts of beloved ones, visiting again those deeply personal memories and evoking love bonds that never died.

When all was over, we said a final "Farewell" much like Eurydice. And we moved a step closer to resolution and acceptance of the death of our loved ones and to our own mortality.

November 8, Mundus Opened



In the early Roman calendar, it was the ninth month. The Roman Senate elected to name the eleventh month for Tiberus Caesar, and since Augustus time, it has had only 30 days. Originally, there were 30 days, then 29, then 31.

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The Mundus; the door to the Underworld, was opened for the third time in the year and the dead spirits could roam the streets.

The Mundus is again opened and dead spirits can roam the streets of Rome free to return home. At this time of year, with Halloween and the Day of the Dead just past, we are forced to face the ultimate fate head on. In November, we look death right in the eye, and there is no denying, no avoiding the final outcome. By dealing with the themes of loss, separation, and death so prevalent in the rituals of September, we prepare ourselves. By symbolically experiencing death and rebirth with Isis and Osiris in October we do the same. Most important, by evaluating and recommitting to our faith, we learn to accept the inevitable. In the yearly agrarian and natural cycle, November is indeed the autumn of our lives; we are growing old. These are the issues of November.

The Greeks and Romans tended to divide the years of the aging process into groups or spans, yet there was no general agreement on the length of these spans. For practical purposes it is easier to view the life span in three phases of youth, maturity, and old age, marked in women by the onset of menstruation, years of fertility, and menopause.

Menstruation was believed to occur in the fourteenth year for young girls, as their bodies were sufficiently developed to allow the collection and evacuation of blood.



This little basket is a perfect expression of the good old country harvest and comes complete with its very own scarecrow. The fun and festive container will be used for years to come and can make any room just feel like fall. Great for a friend that decorates for all the seasons. The basket holds cheese straws, cookies, gummy candy, harvest candy mix and chocolate covered pretzel.

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The first sign of puberty and the cause for a coming-of-age dedication was not menstruation, but instead the development of breasts. Some Romans believed that menstrual blood had magical powers that it could cure diseases and that agricultural fertility increased if a menstruating woman ritually walked the fields.

Mature women were thought to be both wetter and softer than men and that they absorbed more liquid in their diets and less physical lifestyle. The buildup of excess fluid in the woman's body was evacuated during the monthly cycle, menstruation. As they aged, it was assumed that women just "dried up," thus ending the need to relieve themselves of excess fluid in menstruation, resulting in menopause. Yes, physically our bodies may crave moisture as we age, but we certainly do not "dry up" in body, spirit, or outlook. Menopause connotes an end of one phase of our lives and the beginning of another, one that can be both rewarding and exciting.

Older women were often seen as wise women in antiquity. The Sibyl of Cumae,

for example, was usually portrayed as an old woman who spoke very wise words. Wisdom and old age were valued in Rome; in fact, mental ability was seen as a function of the aging process.

It seems that everywhere we turn today; we confront the stereotypic youthful models daily paraded across the TV screen or staring at us from magazines. Though these are young, vibrant, and beautiful faces, are these the faces of wise women, those whose years of learning and living reflect intelligence and understanding? It is the wise women, the crones, the older women who retain their knowledge and share the wisdom that we must honor and value throughout the year. We are only reminded of their inherent worth in November, when Mother Nature herself shows a few frosty white hairs.

Learn to accept the aging process and, for sure, learn to enjoy life in the autumn. The aging process is sacred, but can be very playful in spirit.