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*the images in each piece are the creative property of their authors

WELCOME TO THE GROVE

Welcome to spring! And to the very first issue of The Grove: A Community Collaborative Zine. It's an honor to have you.



The intention for this project is to create both a space for sharing, and a space for receiving. Maybe your work appears within these pages, or maybe it will someday. Every voice matters. Everyone brings medicine.

The Grove is named for, and inspired by, the imagery of sacred groves as places of gathering, of connection, and of protection. In our postmodern reality where spaces and places have looser boundaries

and less necessity, here we are harkening to a time of meeting. Here we come together to hear a variety of voices in one space, to share the medicine we have to offer and receive those that we need most, and to honor our place in the wider-than-human world in which this gathering is embedded. Here is a place to give thanks and to seed new dreams. A place to support and be supported.

I am grateful to each and every contributor to this zine, for what they have offered here as well as what they offer through their work and their lives. They have gracefully and swiftly responded to an opening, a call, to offer up

for others' nutriment those seeds of spring which have been arising naturally in their own being. With the tumult which began around this time last year and through which we have all since been living, moving, and coping, it feels right for this issue in March 2021 to offer here some small reflections, actionable steps, and gentle encouragements to nourish the parts of ourselves and our lives that have perhaps become neglected.

It became apparent to me while editing these pages that my experience as a counselor is not dissociated from what is forming with this project. It is important to me that every reader feels empowered to seed their inspiration into the soil of their lives, and it is for this reason that you will find in these pages a few sections of green-colored text: little tips, tricks, and notes of encouragement. If you are someone who does not experience difficulty with motivation, confidence, planning, or taking action, you might wish to disregard these notes, and relish in your easeful ability to alchemize the words and works that speak to your soul.

My hope is that your life may be nourished by and beyond these pages—that they may journey with us and infuse our days with greater magic, greater hope, and an ever-increasing capacity to make space for, grow, and take in joy.

Wherever you are, wherever you've been, and wherever you're going, welcome to the Grove. May you find here some tool, charm, or guide to carry with you on your journey—to roots beyond remembrance, and blooms beyond your wildest dreams.

-Shannon
Editor



Snowdropgrove.com

Something Small: A Free Seed Project

Caitlyn Sheila Hatzell



Today, in some places, there are people who continue to look at seeds as beings—beings who contain a source. A source being an essence, an essence being the full spectrum, the full spectrum being life, with life being a transition towards death, and death being a foundation for again, literally, new life.

The seed, when given the right time, place, and circumstance, naturally supported with enough warmth and water, light and fertility, patience and care—when a seed is given these right conditions, that seed, by some steadfast miracle, will sprout.

Moving in both directions, the seed lets out a tiny tendril of green power that with great energy and force will break cool ground, moving towards greater warmth and light. And then, also and simultaneously, this same tiny seed will send out little white roots, seeking greater moisture and nutrients, ever pushing further down into deeper darkness.

The perfection and balance of this opposition—of moving in a multiplicity of directions at once, so naturally, and so profoundly—is grounded in a simple purpose: to actualize its own natural capacity for growth, and possibly, eventually, creating flowers, which turn into fruits, that again create and contain seeds for the future.

The entirety of this process never ceases to amaze me. What is a common reality can easily leave me lingering in awe, if—if I slow down. Slow down enough and pause.

Pause.

Pause and feel the warmth of the sun on my face and let the grandeur of this simple reality sink in.

Please, I say to myself, let this reality sink in, a little longer, a little deeper. Stay. Let this simple truth remain and permeate the expanse of my understanding, so I may live both more boldly and in a softer way: more fully whole, and holy, myself.

Today, in some places, there are human beings who still look at seeds as an essence of life, and also an unconditional friend, or even a protector, or parent, or great sage—master teacher, who shares through their full and natural expression, showing us all how to live. Live in relationship, and in perpetual presence with and within all cycles.

What does this project mean to me?

Something Small: A Free Seed Project (the first possible name that just came to mind), is a natural expression of me, Caitlyn Sheila, inheriting a whole home of seeds I have saved and purchased over the years. From heirloom medicinals, annuals and perennials, flowers and herbs, beautiful beans and greens, my past work as a garden coordinator at a special needs school has left me with the subsequent desire and purpose to provide both free seeds and support—to anyone who has even the slightest spark towards wanting to grow their own.

I feel passionate about sharing seeds, and the direct experience of tending them, because engaging in this process has been so supportive to not only my existence (mind/ heart/body) but the entire environment—encouraging biodiversity, and creating a home for the unseen and underappreciated.



Furthermore, this work is not only a celebration of life, it is also one of the antidotes to my struggle. You see, I have always been a bit bewildered by societal norms, overwhelmed at the state of the natural world, and not quite knowing my place in it. I became disillusioned and depressed, turning to and reinforcing bad habits, which only left me further disconnected and outside myself. I was angry and frustrated, distracted by the question as to how humankind could be so short-sighted and stupid, profit driven and exploitive, of not only our shared home, but each other?

However, the natural world, I recognize—when I am open, receptive and aware; able to remember, or intentionally choose, *choose* to open my eyes; and feel, *feel* the fresh air on my face— this experience alone has the capacity to instantaneously shift my experience, and help quell my lostness with clarity.

Cultivating a more intimate relationship with the natural world is what is needed to correct my misperception. And cultivating a more intimate relationship with the natural world nourishes and provokes the realization that we are all part of something bigger than our own limited understanding. Ultimately, Cultivating a more intimate relationship with the natural world teaches us our capacity to live in more beautifully

creative and regenerative ways by starting small, and planting something small—a seed.

Through simply planting a robust calendula seed in a pot on your front stoop, this flower could easily remain even past the first hard frost, reminding you throughout the entire season to pick petals for tea or healing balms, and save the seeds for all your neighbors next year. Or, one could expand one's garden, slowly, bit by bit, year after year, so over time, you have enough excess to not only preserve some food for the winter, but provide bounty to your friends and family. Simply prioritizing going for a saunter through the nearest green space is powerful and transformative, and my aim is to support others in discovering their own experience with the natural world.

So, you see, if I truly care about my own equanimity, a thriving natural world, and want to help grow a paradigm shift which will ensure that future generations will also share this experience of astounding beauty, then my only choice (and my great pleasure) is to do whatever I can to encourage others in their process of nourishing their own particular relationship with *Ma-* Nature.

If you know anyone who has ever had a desire and needs some seeds, please reach out to caitlyn.s.hatzell@gmail.com. It is my great pleasure to support you :)

= Caitlyn Sheila Hatzell
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3 Tips for a “Successful” Season

Shannon Binford

Some of us have every good intention to make time for seasonal celebration, but before we know it another season and another year has passed us by. If this is you, here are some tips for bringing more balance to your life by making room for what matters in your heart but has not yet been reflected in your days.



Tip 1: As you go through these pages, literally mark in your calendar a day and time for any action-step that you're called to from this zine. It's best to do it now, because often "later" becomes "too late.". It's easier to make space for something when it's prioritized and planned in advance. You matter, and what matters to you is worth setting aside some time for.

Tip 2: Start keeping a list of supplies you'll need now (now!) so that the next time you happen to be out it's a breeze to pick them up. That way, when that day on your calendar arrives, you are ready!

Tip 3: Not sure about timing? Check out the gardening tab at almanac.com for planting and transplant schedules based on the temperatures in your region, and tips for nurturing and tending your new plant babies once they've sprouted

Practical Magic for Modern Times: Rituals for Aligning with the Spirit of Spring

Sondra Stone

*Spring is Air—the time of new beginnings.
Have you begun to feel the stir within yet?
Or do you feel yourself still craving the warmth and protection of winter?
Do you know what happens to seeds in the quiet darkness?
It's natural in winter to experience stagnation, decay, and being still.
Much happens in this time that deepens the soul.
In a seed- there's an entire world of possibilities.*

As I write this, it is March 2021, I live in hardiness zone 6A, and I find myself slowly emerging from the winter rest—a gentle emergence in preparation for growth, and the limitless potential of new beginnings.

We are all creatures of rhythms and cycles. The psyche is shaped by and rooted in the foundations of nature, and I have discovered that when my husband, our kids, and I



take time to pause and reflect on nature's rhythms and cycles within, our home becomes harmonious—even when we are experiencing hardships and feeling frustrated or overwhelmed with life. More than ever over this past year, we have grown grateful for the family bonding rituals that allow us to be held by something *larger* than ourselves, and can help to take us safely across the fast-flowing

river rapids of life's changes. In this bigger-better-faster-more world, defined by instant gratification and convenience, it becomes necessary to carve out time with intention in order to create meaningful pauses, and build moments of delightful anticipation.

Below, you'll find a couple of my favorite rituals that welcome into our lives and our home the spirit of this blessed invocation: "Goodbye winter, hello Spring!" With just a little bit of effort and planning, you can infuse your life and those around you with practical magic.

Part 1: Planting in Eggshells

Eostar, the Spring Equinox, takes its name from the Goddess Eostar, Eostre, or Ostara—a Germanic Goddess of fertility and Spring. We celebrate this festival at the time when night and day are equal in length. The balance of the year has shifted—Winter is on the wane and Spring officially begins. It is centered around symbols of rebirth and growth: eggs, seeds, baby animals. We can reflect on the balance we are bringing to our own lives at this time

Using eggshells as containers to sprout seeds is a powerful way to combine two ancient and ever-relevant symbols of life. In addition to being well-sized for starting vegetable, herb and flower seeds, eggshells provide nutrition for the soil once they are transplanted into the earth or a larger container.

What you'll need:

- Some small seeds (not bean or squash)
- Some eggs, cracked and rinsed
- Seed-starting mix or potting soil

It's simple:

1. With tops cut off, and a small drainage hole pierced in the bottom, fill with seed starting mix or potting soil
2. Add the seed at the recommended depth (see back of seed pack or look online)
3. Keep moist using a spray bottle
4. Watch for sprouts.

[editor's tip: check out the book [How to Grow Stuff](#) by Alice Vincent for no-fuss, no-nonsense guidance on keeping things from dying]

Aperire – To Open **Angie Follensbee-Hall**



For me, April promises transition, expansion, and opening. The days are brighter; the first flowers make their appearances, and the temperatures begin to rise. In Vermont, we may still have a spot of snow, but the robins hopping around in search of worms tell us spring is just around the corner. April comes from the latin "Aperire," meaning "to open." We may feel more open, and for many people that opening might cause them to feel vulnerable. Maybe we are not ready to come out of our winter caves where we feel safe. We have to face decisions we have made and we have to face the continuum that beckons onward.

My birthday is also in April, and each passing year is an expansion of age. This year I turn 45. Yes, I feel all of my 45 years. I am navigating the transitions of parenting teenage daughters within my perimenopausal days. I feel these changes internally as my hormones find new, unique forms of expression. I feel the shift away from my mothering phase, when I held babies at my breast and scheduled endless activities

and playdates. I accept that the tail-end of this phase is marked by the shift into mothering young adults, and all that that entails. And despite my long gray hair, I am not quite at the crone phase of woman-hood. I exist at this in-between-transition space, ripe with creative potential but not clear in direction. Like my gray hair, I accept this expansion—this growth and all of the wisdom it carries.

Spring is also the time of the equinox: days of equal dark and light. At this time of year, I like to ponder equanimity: mental calmness and composure. I believe this process helps me to embrace my age with the spirit of opening. As I move from youth to maturity, I seek to step back and approach change and new possibilities from a more calm and centered place.

It is said that stress and struggle are the resistance to what we can't avoid. We can't change what happens outside of ourselves, and we can't change the passing of time. We can only change our reaction to it — we can only change how we allow outside influences to live inside of ourselves. I welcome the expansion of each spring, and I invite the graceful progress of time.

Spring is when I lean into this opening and ask myself: What wisdom is waiting to blossom within me? Who have I become this past year? Who do I wish to be? What seeds lie dormant within me, ready to emerge with the growing light?

May we connect to this seasonal spirit of opening. May this wisdom deepen our own growing light with the ever-expansive world.



Angie Follensbee-Hall, she/her
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[Tip: to explore the openings that this spring may hold for you, try journaling with the questions in Angie's second to final paragraph above. I am always surprised by what insights are unveiled through writing freely and exploratorily]

Planting with Intention

Cheryl Rafuse

There's a certain vibe that comes along with a well-maintained garden. It's soothing, organized, comfortable. There's a totally different vibe that you get when you're in the middle of a thriving forest. It's wild, full of life, surprising. Shouldn't your garden incorporate these things? How do you encourage wild things in a cultivated space?



Even if you give it some edging and a path, the plants you choose interact with all manner of creatures beyond the humans enjoying a well-planned landscape. When I talk about planting with intention, my intentions go beyond the garden. They extend into the surrounding ecosystem.


Whether you think deeply about your planting or not, you will have changed the local flora. Why not intentionally make it better for other beings that live nearby?

You begin building an ecosystem from the ground, the literal dirt, up into the trees and the canopy that (hopefully) surrounds you if you're in New England like I am. And if not? It's time to plant some trees!

So be sure to think about these things when planting new plants, shrubs, or trees:

1. Is this plant native, invasive, or a non-invasive exotic plant?
2. Is this plant meant for this location? In this dirt? In this light? With this moisture?
3. Does this plant provide for me, the local birds, bugs, and/or animals?
4. How will this plant's growth affect other plants and structures around it?
5. Does this plant make "sense" with the plants around it? Will they live happily together?

And ruminate on any other questions that come up when interacting with a new plant in a new space. Planting intentionally takes research, time, and Effort with a capital E. It's worth it to see how the wildlife will thank you by giving you a show year after year.

Think before you plant. 

- Cheryl

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Practical Magic Part 2: Dyeing Eggs Naturally

Sondra Stone

Eggs are possibly our oldest symbol of birth and renewal. Using natural ingredients to create dyes is a fun way to spend an afternoon, and will result in some gorgeous, natural, and compostable decorations to bring the spirit of the Spring into your home.

(Melted beeswax or white crayons used gently on the eggs act as a resist. You can use them to create images or to spell out words on your eggs while your dye is brewing)

We like to hollow out our chicken eggs the old-fashioned way:

1. Pierce both ends with a pin, making the holes very gently and slowly. (Sometimes chipping away lightly at first works best).
2. Hold the egg over a bowl, place your lips over one hole, and blow hard. Eventually the insides will be forced out the other end. The thick white often clogs the opening; blow harder or longer. If the blowing is too difficult, enlarge the exit hole a bit. After removing the yolk and white, rinse the insides, and let dry.[they do sell handy little pumps with egg hole punchers in our modern world]

We also like to use natural dyes, as they help us reduce waste and we love the gentle colors and game of kitchen chemistry. Natural dyes take some time to prep beforehand, so start gathering or saving materials now once you've decided which colors you'll go for:

purple cabbage- blue on white eggs, green on brown
red onion skin- lavender on white eggs, red on brown
yellow onion skin- orange on white, rusty red on brown
shredded beets- pink on white, maroon on brown
2 tablespoons turmeric= yellow on both
1 bag red zinger tea= lavender on both

1. Chop up about 1 cup of materials and boil with 1 cup of water for at least 20 minutes (unless a different amount is stated above). This will be enough dye for 3 eggs.
2. Strain liquid and compost leftover dye material
3. Add 1 tablespoon white vinegar to every cup of strained dye liquid.

For every dozen eggs, plan on using at least 4 cups of dye liquid. With the white vinegar as a preservative, you could prepare some colors in advance and keep them in the fridge until you're ready

Where Soil Meets Sky: An Alchemical Image for these Times

Shannon Binford

Winter is often written about as a time to go within, a time to be quiet and still. We call it a period for rest, recuperation, and replenishment in the comforts of cozy inner worlds, and for a moment we may even feel a loosening of the binds of FOMO (fear of missing out) as we acknowledge that the weather is not so hospitable, and there will be time enough for work and play in summer. It can be common in our culture, and especially for those of us who at some point have forgotten how to relax, to feel as though there is always something that we “should” be doing other than what we’d like to do. Even if we’re not actually “doing things” most of the time, we might opt for powerful distractions— tv, social media, or hyper-rewarding snacks—in order to drown out the niggling voice of “should.” To read about the shift from winter to the more action-oriented seasons of spring and summer can feel like a chipping away of the tiniest permission we may have granted ourselves in winter to just be.

In winter, plants die back and most of the energy and activity that’s going on in nature is happening underground or not at all—the embryos within seeds enter a period of dormancy, to withstand the cold and drought; trees’ energy shifts from the flashy production of nut and fruits to roots hidden below the surface, where they seek and gather nutrients from the soil. For those who have experienced trauma or prolonged stress, who tends towards flight, or the extra fun frozen-on-the-outside-while-panicked-on-the-inside, winter’s permission to be held by the grounding, nourishing, slowness of the earth can be comforting. The forthcoming seasonal shift toward greater activity can inspire both hope and anxiety as we wonder if we, and our nervous systems, are up to task.

But the truth is, plants don’t leave the still shelter of the underground as the sun’s position changes in the sky. While fire rises, roots remain an important part of a plant’s structure and health. They continue to be held and supported by the womb of the earth, and to take, unselfconsciously, the nutrients she has to offer. Plants are not shy about being supported and taking what they need— how would they ever come to flower and fruit if they didn’t?

Balance

The equinox is a time when the balance between day and night is exact. But just like the ouroboros whose consumption never destroys, neither light nor dark ever entirely subsumes the other: even on our longest night, there is day; the longest day is likewise rewarded her night. There is a nuanced lesson here for followers of seasonal rhythms and metaphors—we are not required to leave the womb to be born. I truly believe this to be one of the world’s most ancient mysteries, and it’s continual

uncovering is one of the ways that we can experience the numinous and legendary truths of grace, faith, and love.

Polyvagal theory tells us that health and relationships thrive when we find the balance-point of activation—neither over nor under aroused, a balance of Earth and Fire. While responses to stress and trauma can encourage distance from the body through escape to airy, mental worlds or fiery over-activity, visualization that includes the body is like a bridge that mends that break: reweaving the connection between a beautiful imagination, and your deserving and tender animal being. You are all parts; all parts are you. We experience integration when we build bridges and weave connections between parts that have become disassociated from one another.

Below I will introduce a very short, very simple visualization that will help your body familiarize itself with a felt-sense of the womb, even as our sun rises, days increase, and shoots inch upward toward their destiny. There is no doing this wrong, and here is a brief introductory exercise to show that it requires no belief in the magical in order to work: with all your senses, imagine yourself holding, smelling, and cutting a lemon; as you picture yourself holding that slice up to your mouth and having a taste of its sour juice, notice what happens to the glands and muscles around your mouth. What we imagine becomes real in the body.

The main visualization is this: let your imagination journey to a place in the ground where your favorite flower grows. You do not need to have all the details, simply picture or think about that very small patch of soil where it emerges from the earth. You might even imagine this as if you are the plant itself. Be here, becoming very tiny in order to become more intimate with this threshold: feeling the place where the green of your stem emerges into light, and tasting through your roots the abundance of minerals and nutrients in your surroundings. After you have tasted the richness of your dirt, you can begin to familiarize yourself with the exact place where under and above-ground meet—where your roots turn to stem, and soil meets sky. Picture this exact place of emergence, feeling the surface of the soil here as it is warmed by the sun. This is where your center lies, and you can stay here even as your roots extend deeper, and your leaves stretch upward and outward. You are a being of earth and sky; day and night; body, soul, and spirit. You are a being of the threshold, a weaver, multi-faceted and whole. Take one last drink of rich, earthy nutriment, and feel the warmth of the sunlight reaching through your skin, to melt any hardness that is ready to dissolve. When you are complete, you can bring your awareness back to the present moment, and know that you can return to this place and this image any time.

Visit www.snowdropgrove.com/audio
for an audio recording of this visualization

The Astrological Moment

Mystic Megan



Welcome to Spring! On March 20th we celebrate the official astronomical moment when the sun is positioned above our equator. On this day, the Spring Equinox, the sun crosses from the southern to the northern hemisphere, bringing those of us in the north her gifts of warmth and light, while the south tips toward fall and winter.

The Equinox is the birth of spring, and the official new year of the zodiac. We welcome in Aries energy, and the rebirth of the astrological year and our journey through the signs.

Aries is fiery—full of fresh starts and new hot energy. An energetic initiator, Aries ignites the growth of spring into our lives. Also the god of war, Aries can be quick to temper and ready for battle: an energy that serves us when we need to be brave and confident, quick thinking and full of a strong sense of self and our values.

Quickly joining the party, Venus, comes into the sign of Aries from March 21 through April 14. Venus, the planet of love represented by the goddess Aphrodite, rejoices in Aries—the sign of her lover. There is an intensity to this position—in mythology, Aries and Venus are recognized as passionate lovers, and this intense passion heats our lives as well during this placement. Expect steamy engagements, new romance, or, less fortunately, the twinges of unrequited love. Harness your passion, wherever it lies, to infuse the life-giving energy of spring into your creative life, your home, or your bedroom.

The full moon follows the equinox in the sign of Libra, on March 28th. The full moon is a powerful time, and marks the beginning of the end of the lunar cycle. The energy will be high but Libra will help tip the scales toward balance. Calming and energizing, Libra is ruled by Venus, who will be with the sun in Aries. With the sky igniting passionate love coinciding with the birth of spring, we will be feeling all kinds of loving vibes. With the help of Libra, we will feel the energy of calm and balance entering our high vibing initiation. Soon after on the 29th, Mercury will conjunct Neptune in Pisces: this is going to be a very powerful time for dreamy and poetic communication. It may also make things feel a bit foggy, as if you are talking through clouds. Use this time to really be creative and communicate outside the box.

The main aspect influencing us in 2021 is Saturn in Aquarius squaring Uranus in Taurus. While the exact square dates are February 17, June 14, and December 24, they never get very far out of an exact square, so the theme remains with us the entire year. Squares are characterized by tense energy that creates a sort of productive conflict. Through their 90 degree relationship within the astrological chart, there is a sense of their energy causing a productive friction. This square is pretty intense, with Uranus desiring to shake things up in the realm of Taurus. Saturn, or Chronos, in Aquarius is the son of Uranus. In mythology, Chronos castrated his father and dethroned him—they have never had the smoothest relationship.

Uranus represents change, innovation and electricity. Saturn wants order, discipline and for things to stay the same. When they come together for this meeting, they are both causing massive disruption and creating new rules for the future. Uranus is changing our sense of stability, financial materiality, and the way we view the earth itself. Saturn is reordering Aquarius—our internet systems, our networks, our humanitarian sense of self, and how we connect with large groups and communities.

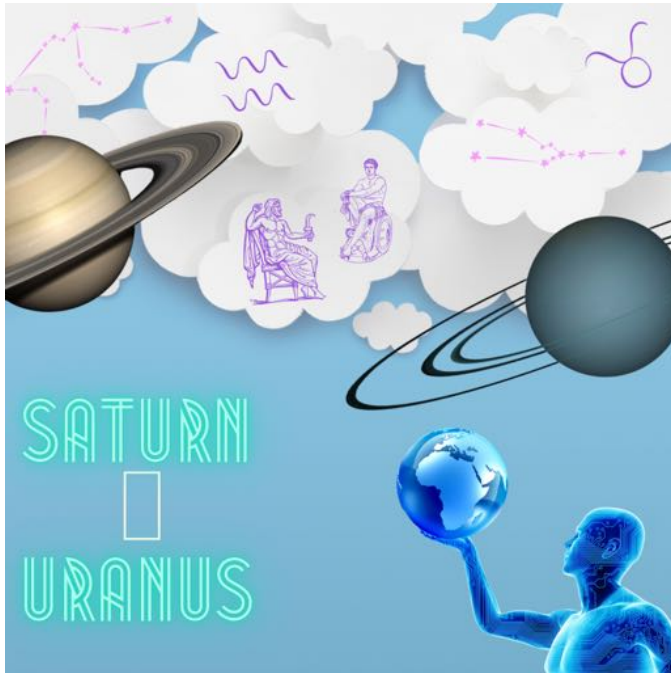
This square has the potential to illuminate a collective path toward using networks to address challenges related to climate change or the financial system—but don't expect to be without some disruptions.

As we play with the full moon on the 28th, still basking in the glory of the Spring Equinox, let's lean into our ability to find

balance within the world. Let us be the voice of equality and justice. Take deep breaths and do the yoga of life. Embrace the subtle shifts within your being that are being awakened.

Many Blessings!

-Meg



A few of our Contributors



Caitlyn Sheila Hatzell is devoted to remembering to consciously breathe deeper. She is also immersed in learning/practicing/teaching environmental advocacy, yoga, gardening and adores Argentine tango. Connect with her on Instagram or Facebook @caitlyn_sheila



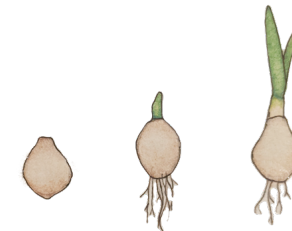
Angie Follensbee-Hall is a professional artist, yoga teacher, Reiki Master Teacher, and Creativity Mentor. She has been exhibiting her handmade-paper tapestries for over 20 years. Visit her website at www.angiefollensbeehall.com



Mystic Megan is an astrologer, artist, writer and educator living in southern Vermont. She homeschools her 3 young children and uses astrology to empower her clients towards greater realizations of their own strengths. More at mysticmegan.com or @mysticmegan



Mysticmegan.com



Thank you for connecting with us here.

May your melting, seeding, rooting, and growing this spring be blessed. If you would like to be considered as a future contributor, please reach out to shannon@snowdropgrove.com.