

SACRED SMOKE

The burning of herbs or incense is a Sacred practice held in common by many traditions. The American Indians call this action smudging, and that is now the name most often used in modern times.

The main idea of burning herbs is to release their energy and fragrance, which is transmuted into the smoke. In ancient civilisations such as the Greeks, Egyptians and Romans, herbs were burnt to honour and give pleasure to the Gods. In the tombs of the Egyptians there are many scenes showing incense or perfumed oils being offered as a gift to the deities. The smoke from the burning herbs was also used to purify, people and places and animals. In Shamanistic societies the sacred smoke was used in healing, as a means of connection with the Spirit Helpers, or the ancestors

Herbs are either burnt sprinkled on coals or charcoal, or braided into a stick. You can buy smudge sticks or herbs for burning at most New Age shops

The herbs can be used fresh or dry, and you can gather them yourself. Whatever you choose to do there is only one way of getting the maximum benefit from smudging

When you get them home either place them on your altar, or hold them to your heart. Invite the Spirit of the Herbs to join you and guide you in your work. Whether you speak to them silently through your heart or aloud is up to you. Speak respectfully and with kindness to the Spirit of the Herbs, have in your mind the intention of being in a partnership. This is of vital importance, as any true Pagan will tell you, if you just use the herbs, they will simply stay dead and the energy will withdraw.

Part of the Spiritual work of the Plant people is to work with Human Spirits, only when we become partners will the magic manifest, and this same principle applies to whatever plant work you are doing, never just take, always ask for permission and tell the plant why you need it, and never ever take all the plant. Plants and Herbs are living things, they were here long before humans, and they have much to teach us, treat them with love and respect. The closer you work with plants the more you become aware of the nature spirits, and working with them is truly magical.

