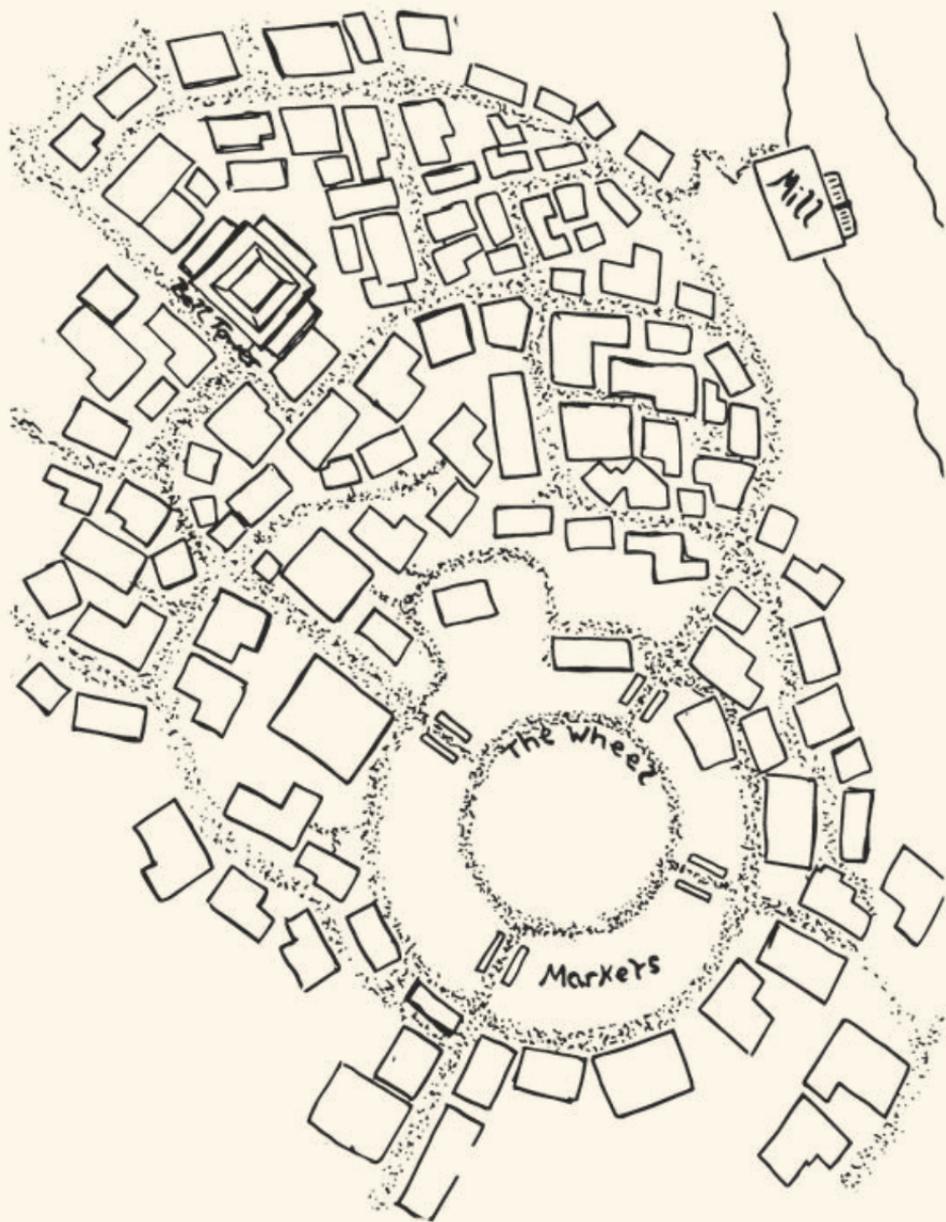




CRAFT



WITCH BOLT



The plants are not keeping to their usual habits, and I can't trust the pages I wrote in seasons past. Some grow earlier, others later, and a few no longer appear where they once did. If my records are to be of any use, they need to be written again with clearer notes and steadier order.

The people of Birchfell have relied on my memory alone for too long. I cannot always be the one tending the wounds of the valley.

I will write these entries plainly: the herb, the time it grows, how it keeps, and what it's used for. There is still much I hope to add. If the Valley remains steady, I would like to teach this work properly someday.

The changes in the Valley may amount to little, but if they do not, at least the next keeper of the craft will have something firm to start from.

Preparations and Mixtures

Tincture.. Herbs steeped in spirits. Pulls out what hot water cannot and keeps well.



Infusion.. Herbs steeped in hot water. Best for softer growth that release easily.



Decoction.. Herbs boiled until the liquid holds the herb's strength. Used for roots.

Elixir.. A tincture mixed with honey or wine to make it smoother and easier to drink.



Tonic.. A mixture taken in small amounts over many days to build or maintain strength.

Draught.. A single, strong measure taken at once when a quick effect is needed.



Salve.. Herbs pressed into fat or tallow and spread on the skin.

Poultice.. Warm, softened herbs laid directly on the skin to draw out heat or swelling.



Substances and Forms

Essence.. A strong extract made in small amounts. Handle carefully.



Oil.. Herbs steeped in warmed fat or tallow until their strength passes into it.

Powder.. Dried herbs ground fine for storage or mixing.



Resin.. Hardened plant gum collected from bark or stem. Softened over low flame for sealing or binding.



Collection & Storage

Linen Pouch.. Breathes enough to keep herbs cool and dry. Cut the linen, fold it double, and stitch with waxed thread. Leave the mouth loose for air.



Silk-Lined Case.. For fragile petals or spores. Line a small box or jar with silk or another soft cloth.



Bone or Obsidian Tools.. Iron weakens some herbs. Use bone, glass, or obsidian for cutting. Keep the edges clean and free of rust or blood.



Wax-Lined Birch Jar.. Birch keeps a steady cool and holds its seal. Melt beeswax and coat the inside of the jar while warm. Let it set before filling.

Wax-Sealed Glass Jar.. Best for herbs that lose strength in air. Fill and stop with a linen-wrapped cork, or seal the rim with wax.

Vinegar Jar or Barrel.. Vinegar draws oils from roots and bark. Use oak or birch with no metal rings. Rinse with hot water and fill while still warm.

Feather or Antler Tools.. Metal disturbs some spores. Scrape with shed feathers or carved antler. Keep tools dry between uses.



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Glowmoss

Season.. Mid-Newbloom

Location.. North edge of Hollow Glade, beneath ash cover. Prefers cool, unflooded soil.

Appearance.. Shallow, pale-green mats of moss with silver-edged fronds. Emits a soft glow shortly after dusk. Smells of damp stone.

Uses.. Cooling poultice for burns or heat rash. Infusion to steady tremors or persistent cough. A small mat kept near the bed provides enough glow to settle children who are uneasy in the dark.

Harvesting.. Bruises easily. Lift carefully and place directly into linen. Keep out of direct sunlight.

Warnings.. Overconsumption causes marked lethargy. Drying near open flame causes bitterness and loss of effect.

Bird calls repeated in an unfamiliar rhythm at dusk.

Whisper Petal

Season.. Late Harvest

Location.. Sunlit openings in forests with heavy cover

Appearance.. Translucent petals that move in slight air currents and produce a sound like dry parchment when touched.

Uses.. Tincture for clarity and focused thought. Salve on the temples to support memory and sustained concentration. Applied lightly, it steadies younger students before long lessons.

Harvesting.. Lift gently, store in silk.

Warnings.. Loses potency if exposed to sudden loud noise. Cannot be dried or ground. If oversteeped, may cause temporary ringing in the ears.

Wind formed the leaves into a tidy arc today before dispersing. The seasonal shift in wind patterns seems early.



Silverfern

Season-- Late Newbloom



Location-- Southern forests of Hollow Glade near stony ground. Prefers cool, moist areas.

Appearance-- Resembles a common fern but with thin, delicate silver fronds that shimmer under moonlight.

Uses-- Dried fronds used as a potion stabilizer. Infusion for mental clarity and healing support.

Harvest-- Cut with bone or obsidian. Dry over embers. Store in wax-lined birch jars.

Warnings-- Overuse causes restlessness. Loses potency if exposed to metal or extended periods of direct sunlight.



Path toward the south bend was narrower this morning. Brush grows quickly this season. First time having to turn my shoulders to pass.



Ironroot

Season.. Late Newbloom

Location.. Southern Forests in dense wooded areas with rocky subsoil.

Appearance.. Small leafy green plant with red berries. Nearly impossible to remove due to its thick taproot.

Uses.. Best remedy for fever when prepared as a tincture. Salve for bone-setting. Tincture to steady trembling hands.

Harvest.. Loosen soil with a chisel. Use a small spade to free the larger area, then a narrow tool to lift the remaining root.

Warnings.. Overuse may stiffen joints.

The shadows remained longer than expected this evening.

Lorian Bloom

(also called Lorian's Crown, Teller's Crown)

Season.. Mid-Lightbloom



Locations.. Sunny glades and forest edges near well-used paths. Prefers loamy soil near running water.

Appearance.. Rings of blue blossoms resembling a crown. Draws nutrients toward surrounding soil, making it difficult to spot as neighboring plants rise around it.

Uses.. Tincture to ease communication. Sweetener for certain tonics. I prepare extra during harvest, someone always ends up needing it.



Harvesting.. Gather at sunrise while dew is present or during fogstorm. Leave the central anchor flower untouched.

Handle with clean linen.

Gravemoss

Season.. Mid-Lightbloom

Location.. Edges of farms and near the ruins, grows on or near stone, often found along old gravemarkers.



Appearance.. Dark-green moss with ash-colored veins, damp, with a stringy texture

Uses.. Draught for sleep Tonic for dreams. Salve for anxiety.

Harvest.. Pull gently with damp fingers. Wrap in a damp cloth and store in a cool cellar.

Warning.. Can dull the senses. Avoid with strong drink.

Despite consuming none of it myself, I slept unusually deeply the night after gathering it.

Starfall Spores

Season.. *Late Lightbloom*

Location.. *Found in most caves and some damp hollows, believed to spore from an unidentified mushroom.*

Appearance.. *Fine silver dust that drifts upward when disturbed.*

Uses.. *Salve with pine pitch for fever or swelling. Topical use is enough in lesser cases.*



Harvesting.. *Hold breath, scrape with feather or antler, and store in sealed wax jars.*

Warnings.. *Inhaled fresh, the spores may cause dizziness or brief visions.*

The chamber felt warmer after the spores lifted, though no heat source was present.

Bristlewort

Season.. Early Lightbloom

Location.. Rocky hillsides and quarry edges on the west end of the Valley, between Birchfell and the cliffs.

More easily seen in dry seasons.

Appearance.. Muted green bristled leaves with tiny white nightbloom flowers, fibrous stems with coarse bristles.



Uses.. Poultice for inflammation. Salve for strained muscles.

Harvesting.. Gloves required. Soak in vinegar and slow dry for greatest potency.

Warnings.. Bristles irritate skin, potency varies with soil.

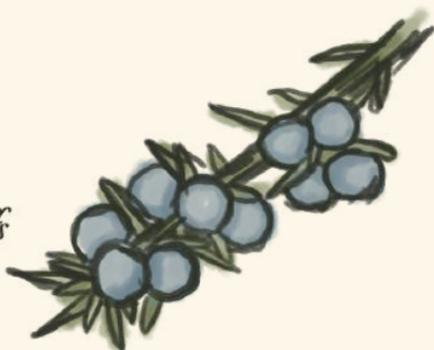


Tracks from several animals curved inward toward a bare patch of soil.

Juniper Berries

Season.. Late Harvest

*Location.. Northern cliffs
near rocky edges.*



*Appearance.. Evergreen
with blue-black berries coated in a fine wild yeast.*

*Uses . Decoction for cleaning wounds. Tonic for
easing stomach after spoiled food. Decoction for
purging internal parasites, taken in small amounts.*



*Harvesting.. Pick berries when
ripe and dry.*

*Warnings.. Avoid use during
illness, large quantities cause
dehydration.*

*A small animal moved between the stones on the
ridge. Its gait did not match any animal I know.*

Thunderroot

Season.. Lightbloom

Location.. Western cliffs, near the upper ridges. Prefers rocky soil. Clings deep in stone cracks.

Appearance.. Dull brown exterior, with a sparking blue core.



Uses.. Tincture for stabilizing volatile potions. Tonic for fatigue during sustained ritual work. Draught for brief strength.

Harvesting.. Requires hours to free from the stone, roots extend deep into cracks.

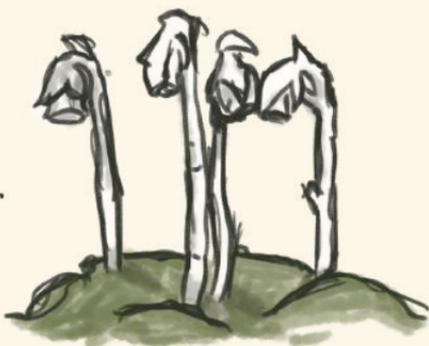
Warnings.. The root loses spark quickly, overuse causes exhaustion.

Figure passed between the trees on the ridge. The figure's outline shifted while it was moving.

Ghostpipe

Season--Early Harvest

Location-- Woods north of Birchfell in beech and pine shade. Prefers damp, undisturbed soil.



Appearance-- White stalks with drooping, bell shaped blooms. Requires no sunlight and feeds from fungi.

Uses-- Tincture for pain and fever. Tincture to calm panic or quell grief. A small amount steadies mourners during funerals and softens the first hours of grief.



Harvesting-- Cut low with bone before stalks lift. Store in wax-lined birch jars away from sunlight. Do not collect entire patches, they may not return the following season.

Warnings-- Overuse halts both pain and emotion. Mixing with Gravemoss causes dangerous stillness of heart.

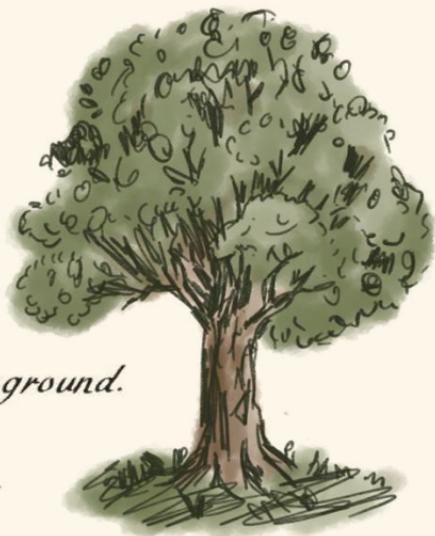
Sounds in the grove were muted while I collected it, as though distance had increased slightly.

Ironbark Resin

Season.. Late Harvest

Location.. West end of the Valley between Birchfell and the cliffs. Prefers stony ground.

Appearance.. Thick amber droplets



Uses.. Tincture to stabilize potions. Tonic for strength. Direct use of resin for waterproofing mixtures.

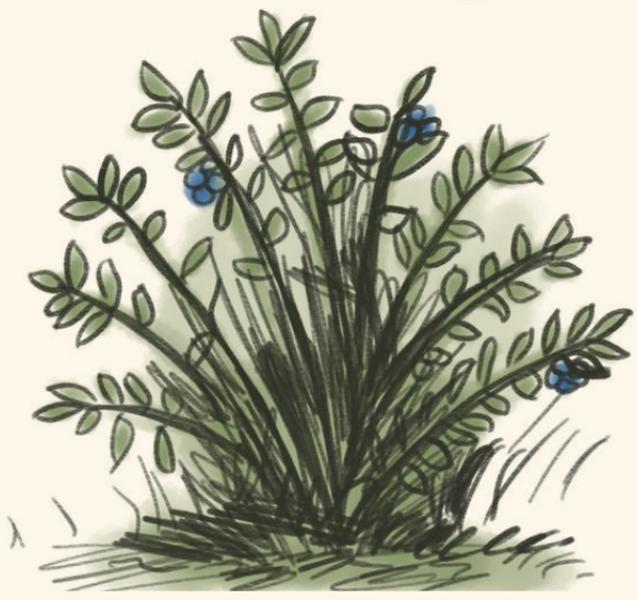
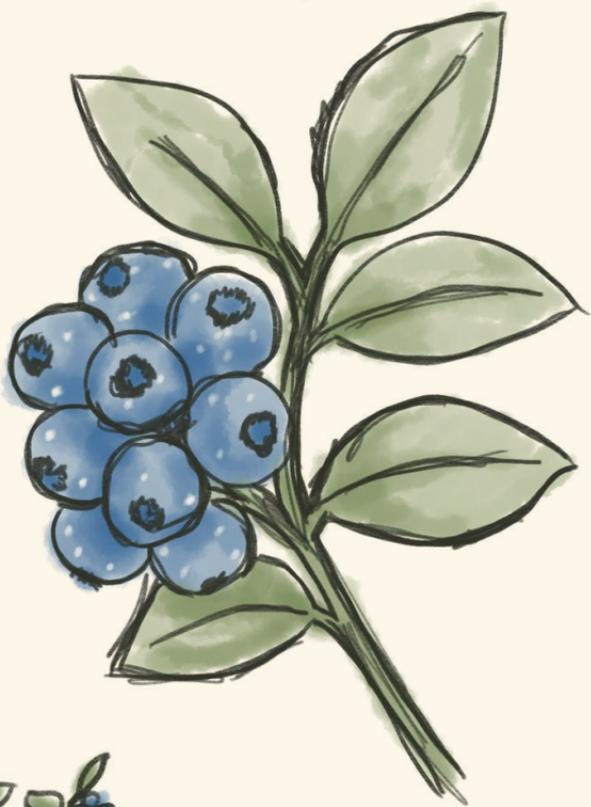


Harvesting.. Lift resin beads with a shaped obsidian blade onto waxed linen, and seal in jars.

Avoid heat and metal.

Warnings.. Volatile if heated too quickly, must be cleaned before use.

Ironbark Tree's shadow did not fall with its trunk when I approached from the east.



Wendellberry

Season-- Late Harvest

Location-- Hedgerows near Birchfell and fallow farmland.

Appearance-- Low bush with dusky blue berries that shimmer slightly. The fruit smells of honey.

Habitat-- Loamy soil near abandoned gardens, and old fields.

Uses-- Tonic for weariness. Tonic for melancholy, when brewed with Silverfern.

Harvesting-- Pick at dawn while dew is fresh. Crush gently in wooden bowls.

Warnings-- Overuse may cause persistent dreams of home and sentimental fixation.

The hedgerow where I gather wendellberry seemed shifted from last season, the path curved differently than I remembered.

Valerian Root

Season.. Mid-Lightbloom

Location.. Moist meadows in partial shade.

Appearance.. Tall stems with clusters of pink flowers, the roots carry a strong earthy scent.

Uses.. Tincture for sleep.
Tincture for menstrual cramping
and to ease tension during childbirth.

Harvesting.. Dig carefully,
dry roots in shade.

Warnings.. Overuse dulls reflexes.
The odor clings to the hands



While collecting it, sound from the meadow seemed faint
and further away than it should have been.

Mugwort

Season.. Mid-Harvest

Location.. Old paths and ruins with dry soil and strong sunlight.

Appearance.. Dark green lobed leaves, silver beneath. Small yellow and purple flowers with a sage-like scent.

*Uses.. Infusion for digestion.
Infusion to stimulate appetite.
Salve to warm joints.
Strong infusion for cramping
and severe digestive distress.*



*Harvesting.. Cut near sunset. Hang upside down to dry.
Patches near the ruins grow hardier — older foragers say the
stone foundations reflect heat.*

*Warnings.. Overuse halts both pain and emotion. Mixing
with Travemoss may cause dangerous stillness of heart.*

*The ruin stones were warm to the touch long after sunset,
the heat should have faded by then.*

Bonebloom Cap

(Copied from book found in the ruins)

Season.. Only "late bloom" is readable from the damaged text.

Location.. Manuscript

"unnatural persistence near...,"

but the rest is lost.

Appearance.. The readable portion states "pale fungus."



Uses.. The text claims "unparalleled healing," though details are missing.

Harvesting.. No instructions remain.

Warnings.. The only legible word is "imbalance."

Soil beneath the vault shifted once.

Had to stop working until my hands steadied.

Foxglove

Season.. Late Lightbloom

Location.. Moist shaded soil near forest edges.

Appearance.. Tall spikes of white or pink bell shaped flower heads.

Uses.. Heart Tonics

Harvesting.. Gloves required, store separately from food and other herbs.



Warnings.. Mismeasurement can cause death. Small doses stimulate the heart, large doses are fatal.



Crimson Mushroom

Season.. Mid-Harvest

Location.. Amberwind's forest.

Appearance.. Crimson cap

I was searching near the edge of Amberwind's forest. I told her of the changes I've seen. She only listened. I asked if she had noticed the same. She held out the crimson mushroom.

I asked its name and how best to keep it. She only watched me.

"Eat this."

"Why?"

"Here, the answer will not wound."

"Will it hurt?"

"Not for long."

"Will it kill me?"

"That is not the danger."

I ate.

