

# Moon Rhythms explained with tips for the garden

You might be celebrating this time as a very joyous and exalted time or find yourself frazzled by the fact that we just have passed the longest day of the year and are all drawn out into the sphere of light and warmth, suspended in mid-air and having a hard time to focus.

Midsummer is a time to enjoy being at-one with the rhythms and the forces of nature and as some of us celebrate on the 24<sup>th</sup> June St. John's tide. I thought now is a good time to contemplate the rhythms of the moon.

Before though, just a few thoughts on this special time of the year.

## Summer Solstice (Litha)

Midsummer is one of the four solar holidays and is considered the turning point at which **summer** reaches its height and the sun shines longest. ... Modern Druids celebrate this **festival** as Alban Hefin, "Light of **Summer**." The sun in its greatest strength is greeted and celebrated on this holy day. People used to sacrifice to the sun-king to entice the sun to ripen their crops after its declining influence.

## St. John's Festival

The Christian [holy day](#) is fixed at 24<sup>th</sup> June; but in most countries festivities are mainly held the night before, on Saint John's Eve. Within [Christian theology](#), this carries significance as John the Baptist "was understood to be preparing the way for Jesus" (and the logos-Christos to incarnate in Jesus), with [John 3:30](#) stating, "**He must increase, but I must decrease**"; this is [symbolized](#) in the fact that the "sun begins to diminish at the summer solstice and eventually increases again at the winter solstice."

Can we let the inner sun in our hearts shine stronger and stronger as the outer sun diminishes?

Hopefully you have been able to integrate these traditions (and/or other ones too) in one or another way like we used to do in the community I lived in, where we gathered every evening between Summer Solstice and St. John's and celebrated with nature in "Spirit-Presence", as we say in German, being open to a listening, a sensing of what is alive in nature.

I feel this is a good time to take a look at the Moon and the major 5 rhythms we consider in biodynamic gardening and how to live more consciously with them.

You might or might not have felt affected by the moon yourself. Irrespective of this, the moon does constantly affected your energy, moods and clarity of thinking. It has always been known that with very sensitive human beings it can even cause major emotional and mental interference. Science has established a correlation between more energy and less sleep around full moon. The moon even has an influence on the menstrual cycle and, it seems, the conception of male and female babies.

Though science says also that the moon's effect on water only can be seen and measured in open water bodies as experienced in the tides, it is well known in all cultures that wood cut in the waning phase of the moon and in the winter season (January and February, Northern Hemisphere) dries better and lasts longer in buildings. In Austria it is called "Moonwood". That shows that there is an effect of moon's light on plant growth and sap flow.

The **1st rhythm** of the moon is the waxing and waning moon (also called the synodic moon). This affects plant growth and takes 29.5 days from one full moon to the other.

A major name in making the moon rhythms famous in the organic agricultural tradition was Llewellyn. Now it is very fashionable again and he basically said:

- in the 1st quarter you sow leaf crops
- in the 2nd quarter you sow legumes and flowers
- in the 3rd quarter you sow root crops
- in the 4th quarter you sow fruit vegetables and flowers

He also said, like Dr Rudolf Steiner and others, that the most propitious time for sowing any seeds was 2-3 days before the full moon.

The **2nd rhythm** is the ascending and descending moon (also called the sidereal moon) which accentuates the effects of the synodic moon in winter and runs opposite to the synodic moon in summer.

In other words, when the moon moves higher in the sky (called ascending moon) in a period of 13.75 days it enhances cell reproduction, expressed in germination, vegetative growth and healing of plants in the same way as the waxing moon does. When the moon moves down in the sky (called descending moon) it enhances rooting after transplanting and root growth, absorption of manures and composts, and is a good time to build compost piles and for applying the horn manure preparation, pruning fruit trees, shrubs and bushes.

These activities were explored and verified by Maria Thun through her diligent research over 50 years and is the predominant cycle we use in the biodynamic approach to growing food.

The **3rd rhythm** that plants and all living beings respond to are the distinct cosmic energies and forces, which stream in from the different constellations, modified by the planets.

Maria Thun conducted sowing experiments on three different soils and 3 distinct micro-climates in Germany over a period of 50 years to verify the following connections.

We can enhance the growth and yield of certain groups of vegetables, when the moon is in the appropriate constellations (distinct from the *astrological* signs of the zodiac, which are all the same size of 30 degrees and are not the actual dates of the planets passing in front of these constellations):

Root crops: Virgo (Virgin), Capricorn (Goat), Taurus (Bull)

Leaf crops: Crab (Cancer), Scorpio (Scorpion), Pisces (Fishes)

Flowers & Potatoes: Aquarius (Watercarrier), Gemini (Tins), Libra (Scales)

Fruit and Seed: Leo (Lion), Sagittarius (Archer), Aries (Ram)

The **4th rhythm** that has a strong influence on the quality of plant growth is when the moon is furthest away from the Earth (Apogee -Ag) and when the moon is closest to the Earth (Perigee – Pg).

In the first instance the vegetables sown at Apogee have a tendency to go to flower faster, just like when we sow at Midsummer. When we sow vegetables with the moon at Perigee the seeds sown barely germinate, and if they do the stem of the cotyledon will first generally just creep along the surface of the Earth or die altogether. Incidentally, this Solstice coincided with the moon being at its Apogee, which made for a very strong light impulse and encouraging our vegetables to bolt.

We also have two strong light trines coming up on the 29 & 30 June which is propitious for planting seed potatoes by cutting medium sized potatoes into triangles with a growth bud each. This is an old Austrian tradition and very effective to breed resilient potatoes as mentioned in more detail recently.

The **5th rhythm** is found in those moments of the moon crossing the ecliptic, when the likelihood of a solar or moon eclipse is strong. For a period of several hours the plants experience the lack of sun or moon energy and get distorted in one way or another. So, get practicing, and possibly experimenting, with the described phenomena and influences to find your own correlations.

We look forward to hearing about your outcomes and observations.

Happy Solstice Tide and St. John's

Hans-Günther





