

Imbolc Plant Lore

Nettle

Gaelic Name: *Deanntag* (from the root word 'twist'; nettles have been twisted into cloth since the Bronze Age)

Latin Name: *Urtica dioica*



Character

I am Nettle – I'll wake you up with my sting and fiery power.

I grow in big families and have been here since before the last two great ice ages. Your ancestors knew me well for my many gifts: food, medicine, cloth and dye.

I am strong and resilient. I grow upright and bold, my fibres long and strong for twisting into cord or cloth.

My zigzag-shaped leaves bring great strength and energy to those who eat me. So rich and tasty am I that I need my sting to defend myself, or I would not survive.

I am a plant of activation: if you receive my sting, feel the fiery tingle of my touch awakening your senses and know that it is good medicine, and that I command respect.

My companion the dock will cool its touch, though the juice from my leaf can also relieve the sting.

A strong nettle tea, when cooled, will soothe a burn or fever, or a stinging rash.