

All Things Natural

Holy Basil (Tulsi) *Ocimum sanctum*

Hindus know the plant as Tulasi and Surasah in Sanskrit, and Tulsi in Hindi. Other commonly used names are Haripriya (dear to Vishnu), and Bhutagni (destroyer of demons). Tulsi is Divinity. It is regarded not merely as a utilitarian God-send, as most sacred plants are viewed to be, but as an incarnation of the Goddess Herself. Thus, when one bows before Tulsi, one bows before the Goddess.



photo: organicindia.com

Hindu families in India will keep Tulsi in a pot in front of their house. On a specific day each year known as 'Kartik Shukla Dwadashi' (usually about two weeks after Diwali) there is a tradition wherein Tulsi plants will be beautifully decorated with structures made of sugarcane, mango leaves and flowers and then a puja (form of worship) is offered.

Annette from Sheepish is currently on an extended trip to India, to Delhi and north to the Himalayas. She just witnessed the fireworks that were part of Diwali (the Festival of Lights) on November 9th. After she returns, expect a report in this newsletter.

Anne from Sheepish had two photos published in *Exchange Magazine* in November. The photo at right is of a mother and child in a small Brazilian village. Photo taken in 2007.

Sacred Plants - Sacred Times

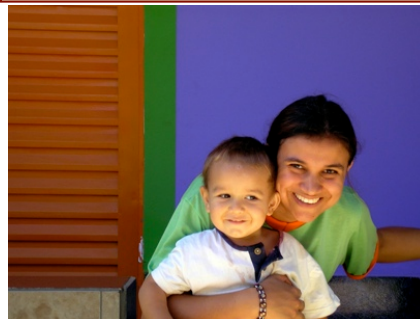
This time of year is filled with ceremonies, traditional practices, remembrance, and thanksgiving. Sacred plants and their resins have essential roles in these events. Sage, pine and spruce, frankincense and myrrh, and the poinsettia are a few of them.

Frankincense is the dried resin of any tree of the genus *Boswellia*, a family of about 20 short trees which grow in arid portions of East Africa, the Arabian peninsula, and India. Each of the species produces resin that is slightly different. At Sheepish, beside the essential oils from Aura Cacia and Wyndmere and frankincense absolute from Body of Knowledge, We also carry frankincense tears in bulk and incense from Fred Soll (6 of them!), Auroshika, and others.

Frankincense also has pain relieving and anti-inflammatory properties. It is found in creams and in capsules for use in arthritis (usually under "boswellia" in the ingredient list).

Myrrh is the dried resin of the small tree *Commiphora myrrha* (and a few other *Commiphora* species) native to East Africa. Sheepish carries essential oils from Aura Cacia and Wyndmere, incense from Fred Soll and others, and bulk resin.

Myrrh is used by Western, Ayurvedic, and Chinese medicine as a tonic, pain reliever, and in mouthwashes and toothpaste for gum infections. A related species *Commiphora wightii*, known as guggul or guggulu in Ayurvedic medicine, is used in a number of applications including arthritis and cholesterol control.



Belly Dance is the Western name for oriental dance that probably grew from folk dancing in Northern Egypt and Romani (gypsy) peoples migrating from India. There are also other influences from religious and social dances clearly seen. Sheepish imports belly dance scarfs and other objects directly from Egypt as well as DVD's and belly dance music (shown at right). We also have a one-of-a-kind belt from Afgani and Turkoman textiles and materials pictured below (Fair Trade).



A few minutes ago every tree was excited, bowing to the roaring storm, waving, swirling, tossing their branches in glorious enthusiasm like worship. But though to the outer ear these trees are now silent, their songs never cease. Every hidden cell is throbbing with music and life, every fiber thrilling like harp strings, while incense is ever flowing from the balsam bells and leaves. No wonder the hills and groves were God's first temples, and the more they are cut down and hewn into cathedrals and churches, the farther off and dimmer seems the Lord himself.

John Muir

Welcome Leah!

Sheepish is proud to announce a new employee, Leah, who is a student at the Midwest College of Oriental Medicine (in Racine). She is from Virginia and has a strong background in selling natural products, essential oils, and such. Say hi!

New Products & Favorites

Tulsi Teas from Organic India using all three varieties of Tulsi (Holy Basil).



Candles from Aloha Bay for Christmas



Omanhene Chocolate -- bars and baking chocolate in dark milk (48% cocoa) and extra dark (80%) bulk forms. This Fair Trade chocolate is one of the finest in the world - founded by Steve Wallace of Racine! See

<http://www.omanhene.com>

for the whole story.

Online Special

Free Shipping for any order over \$35 through the end of December! Use coupon code x354 at checkout.

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