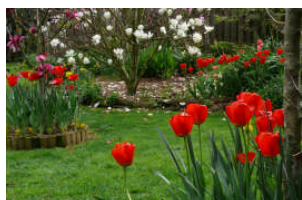


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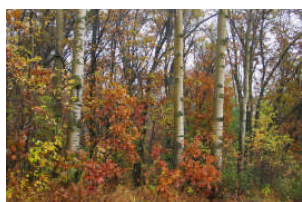
## Depths of Winter

Midwinter is when we expect the weather to be cold, cloudy, and about to reach its greatest depths. So the passage of the shortest day of the year, the Winter Solstice, and thereafter is indeed a time of celebration. As we mark the passage of winters darkest gloom we know that for the next six months, days get longer and brighter; bringing the spring growing season and bountiful glory of summer.



Most Cultures since ancient times have marked this yearly passage with ritual ceremonies and celebrations as we witness these classic Natural moments of death and rebirth that so deeply reflect the essence of our Cultures here on Earth.

It doesn't show at first but in only a few weeks from now the extra day length will become apparent to us. While the Sun's position in the sky only subtly begins to shift, Nature will already be adjusting to the improving seasonal change. Then as the Southern Hemisphere swings upward toward the Sun, increased radiant warmth will sweep over the cold, shaded Southern Lands, Islands and Oceans creating whirlwinds of shifting turbulence that percolate winter cold into a rich spring bouquet.



Right away for most of us, that means more persistent cloud, rain, and squalls, alternating with wintry frost followed by spring-like days. May we all be blessed with frequent 'spring-like' days! So maybe this forecast doesn't sound like anything worth celebrating but in life, just like in the garden, we often have to face adversity and meet the challenge before we receive our reward. And it is often the certain hope of better times to come that fuels our strength to endure.

In the garden these wintry extremes may indeed prove challenging. But the gardener who endures and continues to find agreeable work outdoors through this period will

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