

## A Nature-Wrapped Yule Log

“Long ago in England, Pagan people gathered in the woods on the night of the Solstice - December 21st. They brought a sacred log - a Yule log - to start a great fire.

They sang and celebrated to wake up the sun so its warm light would return to them.”

~ *Lights of Winter, Winter Celebrations Around the World*

Each year, on the day of the Solstice, my family prepares a Yule log for the evening's fire. First, we gather all of the nature items we have collected through the fall from our nature table (it is customary for us to clear our nature table on the solstice/equinox each season).

Then, we select a fire log to serve as our yule log. Sometimes this log has been set aside from our firewood pile for its unique shape, hefty size, or interesting bark pattern. Other times, it's simply a nondescript log... but not for long.

Now, the fun part. We sit down (outside if it's nice) with our nature items, the chosen log, and some twine or cotton string. Everyone in the family - and sometimes friends too - takes turns tying bits of nature onto the log.

Dried leaves, pine cones, seed pods, acorns, pine needles, pieces of moss and straw, nuts, and even an occasional snakeskin, have all been wrapped on our Yule log!

When the sky goes dark and the fire is good and hot, we ceremoniously add our log to the flames. It snaps and sizzles and sparks as our nature items catch fire and burn - we love to watch that part! Then, together by the fire, we sing and celebrate to welcome winter and wake up the sun!

