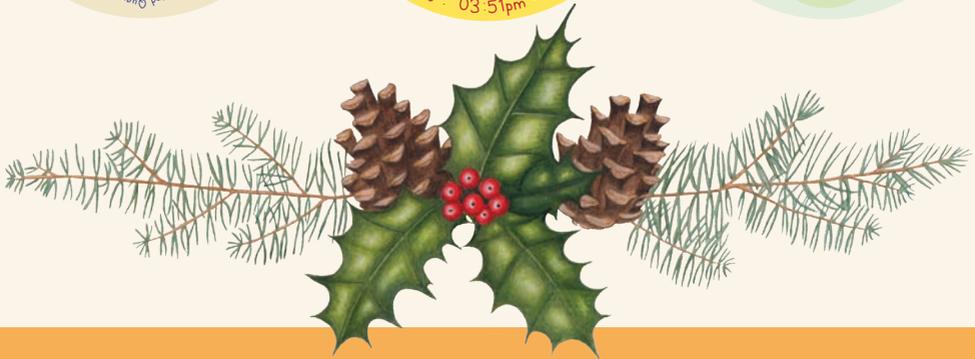
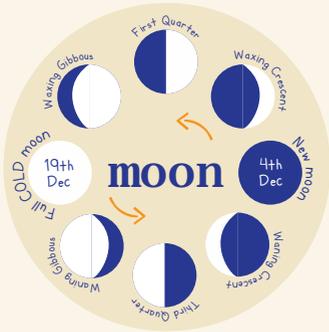




THE FOODINI ALMANAC

DECEMBER 21

A MONTHLY GUIDE TO FIELD, FLORA AND FORAGING



DECEMBER brings with it the start of winter and a period of quiet as plants and creatures big and small enter hibernation for the coldest months of the year. This gives us the chance to slow down and celebrate winter coming by wrapping up warm and gathering for feasts, fires and candlelight - especially on the shortest day of the year, December 21st!



FIELD & FARM

This month's guide to what's going on in our fields and farms!



Harvested this month...



What's the strongest vegetable?



Muscle sprouts!

December sees farmers harvesting new winter crops that have reached their best. One of the most familiar new crops this month is something we see a lot of this time of year, the brussel sprout! It's in season for much of the colder months and is a great vegetable to use in January as there are often a LOT of spare sprouts going after Christmas. Try thinly slicing your sprouts and layering with buttery swede (another overlooked winter veg) and potato along with a creamy garlic sauce... top with cheese and breadcrumbs and bake for 1hr into a decadent gratin!

Alongside the plants in the picture fruits like dates, pomegranates and zingy clementines are imported now and at peak ripeness - enjoy alongside more usual apples and pears...

A FARMER'S LIFE...

This month as the temperature drops the farmers are busy either harvesting the winter crops or ploughing the fields and preparing the soil for the winter months ahead and sowing new crops. Fields are ploughed after the crops have been harvested to bring nutrients up to the surface and prepare the soil into rows called furrows to sow seeds in.

This is also a month to make repairs to walls and fences around the farm, setting everything up for next year



GROW YOUR OWN:

- * Herbs like Basil, Dill and parsley can be grown in pots on a windowsill
- * Plant rhubarb crowns now to grow ready for picking in May
- * Plant strawberry plants and raspberry canes now for picking in the Summer





FLORA & FORAGE

Flowers and herbs to look out for this month in the hedgrows...

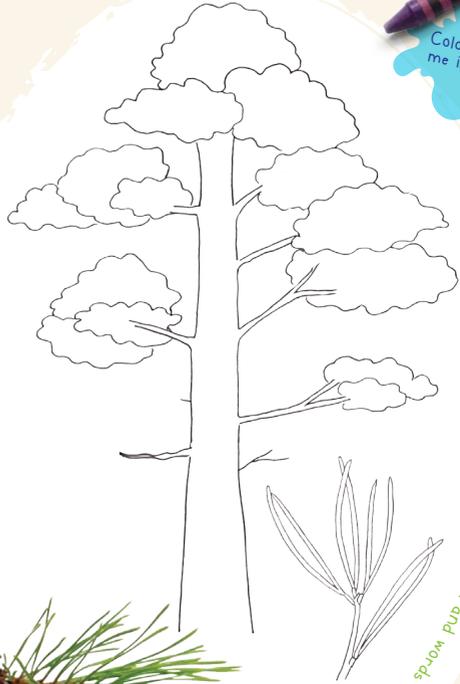


Scots Pine

Scot's pine is a stately evergreen tree that gives us lots of gifts; from wood for building to wonderful medicine in its leaves, pollen and resin.

At this time of year we can forage pine needles to make a lovely tea with honey. Pine needles are rich in vitamin C (great to have over the winter) and they are also good for the respiratory system, helping us breathe more easily when we are feeling congested.

ID TIP: Pine needles grow in twos from each bud. Be careful not to confuse them with other conifers as some are toxic!



Colour me in!



Illustration and words by Lucinda Warner



How to make Pine needle tea

- You will need
- Small bunch of pine needles
 - A kettle/pan
 - Water
 - Honey
 - Mug
 - Teaspoon

1. Wash the needles well and place in a mug.
2. Cover with boiling water and leave to infuse for at least 5 minutes.
3. Add a little honey, mix and enjoy!

Be sure to breathe in the rich scent of the pine as you drink.

Great for:
Colds
Asthma
Chesty coughs



NATURE HUNT

Take this on a walk in a park or the countryside and tick off what you find!



PINE

Look for pine trees for the pine cones and needles for tea or craft projects!



MISTLETOE

Mistletoe grows as a clump on trees like apple, hawthorn and lime. It prefers open space to woodland



SWEET CHESTNUT

These delicious nuts can be found on the ground in woods from Oct until mid Dec



HOPS

Commonly used in beer making, papery hop flowers are ready to find in hedgerows now!



ROBIN

A solitary bird, the robin may be small but he's mighty! Leave out seeds or a fatball to feed him



HOLLY

One of the only plants that looks happy in December is Holly which makes a festive Xmas decoration!



For more resources on foraging and exploring the natural world head to:
woodlandtrust.org.uk

wildfooduk.com | plantlife.org.uk

Always consult a good guide book and be 100% sure of your identification before using any plant.

Illustrations by Lucinda Warner - whisperingearth.co.uk

www.foodinclub.co.uk