THE Faerie Handbook

An Enchanting Compendium of Literature, Lore, Art, Recipes, and Projects

The Editors of Faerie Magazine
Sweet, shut your eyes,
The wild fire-flies
Dance through the fairy neem;
From the poppy-bole
For you I stole
A little lovely dream.

—Sarojini Naidu, “Cradle Song,” from The Golden Threshold, 1905
Fairy Land, Gustave Doré, 1881.
The Art Institute of Chicago, IL, USA/Clarence Buckingham Collection/Bridgeman Images
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INTRODUCTION
Folklorists say that few people in history have believed in fairies themselves, but that they have always believed in a luminous, more romantic time in which others did. But I don’t know: as editor in chief of *Faerie Magazine*, I’ve met plenty of people who believe fervently in fairies or are open to the possibility of their existence. Too many of us have felt that hypnotic hush in the forest, seen a flicker of wings beating in the periphery, followed glowing lights that lure us onto another path. Maybe it doesn’t really matter where the metaphor ends and the literal begins. What I do know is that fairies—in all their shimmering, gossamer, moonlit gorgeousness—tap into our deep longing for the world to be more than what we see.

There’s an old English story of a country midwife who’s taken to a cottage that is seemingly normal—with a cozy fireplace, lamps, and the usual appointments—until she accidentally rubs her eye with a mysterious ointment. And then the world changes. To her astonishment, the neat cottage has transformed into a massive, ancient oak tree; the fireplace, a hollow, moss-grown trunk; and the lamps, glowworms, glimmering in the dark. In the old lore, being privy to fairy glamour isn’t always the best idea, but I love the notion that there’s an enchanted shadow world of tremendous beauty, just out of our view.

*The Faerie Handbook* is for all those fairy lovers who want a delicious escape, who see that old-world oak with its moss-grown trunk, who love to read poetry and sip herbal tea on a fainting couch on a rainy afternoon in
front of a fire, or walk in long dresses over dewy lawns, feeling the wet grass on their feet and watching the light break over the landscape. This is a book that is meant to stir up childhood wonders, whether it’s picking blueberries on a hazy summer afternoon or those countless hours spent obsessively poring over a treasured storybook filled with color-saturated illustrations you’re delighted to meet again and again. This book is for all those girls (and boys). The ones who love fairy tales and full moons and who’d love nothing more than to attend an extravagant tea party in the forest.

In lore, a magical ointment rubbed on the eyelids could pierce through fairy glamour and allow a human to see past our own “dull world,” as Yeats called it in *The Land of Heart’s Desire*—to let it fade away and the fairy world come into view.

May this book be your ointment.

—CAROLYN TURGEON
I. Flora & Fauna
The Fairies—A Scene Drawn from William Shakespeare, Gustave Doré, 1873.

Art Renewal Center
WHERE FAIRIES LIVE
The best place to find fairies is in an enchanted forest, where one might spy them reclining on velvety mats of soft moss—the woodland equivalent of a chaise lounge—or darting about the silkiest, most fashionable flowers or lolling within the petals to inhale their rich perfume.

One might also discover them sprinkling dew over every blade of grass, the curved edges of foliage, and delicate blooms, as renowned fairy expert William Shakespeare noted in his revelatory report, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Shakespeare also observed that fairy queens sleep on “bank[s] where the wild thyme blows / where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,” but today, some say that practice has passed out of fashion, given the proliferation of fairy houses worldwide. Still, most fairies love the wild outdoors and are, deep down, more comfortable tucking themselves into tree boughs or knolls or finding shelter under fallen leaves than in elaborately outfitted dwellings more regularly inhabited by humans.

Nonetheless, there have been reports of fairies living in ornately decorated palaces—echoing with the enchanting melodies of singing birds—within hollow hills. At night the lights from these palaces illuminate the hillside—a dazzling display akin to the glow of countless diamonds.

There are some fairies who are attracted to water, and may be proponents of island life in locales such as the Isle of Man, Tir Nan Og, Hy Breasail, and Avalon. Others live in the water, such as pools or lakes, though these aqueous bodies may sometimes be illusions to protect the
palatial affluence therein from outsiders. More free-spirited types may cavort with frogs, who may or may not be princes in disguise, as the case may be, and make their homes upon satiny lily pads or among the velvet reeds.

Specific fairy types do prefer less froufrou dwellings. Trolls, for example, like to align themselves with bridges, especially those made of stone. Some dwarves and elves can be found in less-than-sunny caves. Hobgoblins and brownies are fond of crashing human dwellings and have been known to occasionally outstay their welcomes.

And then there are jet-setting fairies who travel light. They flit from place to place, visiting enchanted forests, lakes, and bridges all over the world, much to the extreme envy of their home-bound friends, who can’t bear to hear one more story about that “darling little toadstool I found in Paris.”

Vivid orchids and wonderful colored lichens smoldered upon the swarthy tree-trunks and where a wandering shaft of light fell full upon the golden allamanda, the scarlet star-clusters of the tacsonia, or the rich deep blue of ipomaea, the effect was as a dream of fairyland.

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World*, 1912
BACKGROUND: Sarah Chisholm; INSET: *Fairies in a Bird’s Nest*, John Fitzgerald Anster, c. 1860.

*Private Collection/Photo © Christie’s Images/Bridgeman Images*
A SELECT LIST of FAIRY WORLD INHABITANTS
FAERIE IS A VAST AND DIVERSE PLACE, FULL OF so many different kinds of unusual sentient creatures that to attempt to fully catalogue the wide variety of beings who dwell there is nearly impossible. Here is a general guide to some of the most commonly referenced denizens of the fairy world.

**BROWNIES AND BOGGARTS** Brownies are small and helpful house fairies who dwell in close proximity to humans, either in their homes or outbuildings, such as barns. These are the fairy creatures for whom it is wise to leave out some bread and honey to acknowledge their services. But never disrespect a brownie, or it may become irate and vengeful. Angry brownies, or boggarts, as they are called, bring bad luck to a home, making milk curdle and tying your hair in knots while you sleep. The danger of angering a brownie figures into the folk beliefs of Northumberland, England, which say that a brownie-turned-boggart can be appeased by placing salt outside the bedroom door or hanging a horseshoe on the door. In a Welsh story, a *bwca* (Welsh for “brownie”), got along well with a Monmouthshire family because he was well treated by a servant girl, who left him cream every night. One night she played a prank and left him stale urine instead—and screamed for help when he viciously attacked her in response. The character Thimbletack is an example of a boggart in contemporary fiction; he figures in *The Field Guide*, the first book in the Spiderwick Chronicles series by Holly Black and Tony DiTerlizzi.
Dwarves are best known from the fairy tale *Snow White*, dwarves are mountain-dwelling fairy creatures associated with mining and gem-crafting. They’re smaller than humans and known for their stocky build and beards. Dwarves hail from Norse mythology but, unlike the characters in the popular version of *Snow White*, the dwarves found in some of the earliest Norse stories were considered supernatural beings—and were never described as short; in fact, four of the dwarves in the thirteenth-century Icelandic tome *Prose Edda* are said to hold up the sky. Dwarves were a powerful people who would be appalled to know they’ve been named for their allergies, shyness, unpleasant demeanor, or lack of intelligence.

Fairy-tale illustration by John Bauer, c. 1907.
**ELVES**  In the fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien, the elves are an ancient race of tall, beautiful, ethereal, and supernaturally long-lived beings. This description makes them seem similar to the Celtic Tuatha Dé Danann (see “Sidhe”), although Tolkien also drew inspiration for his elves from figures in Old Norse mythology, namely the Ljósálfar, a race of good elves who live in the air, dance on the grass, or sit in trees and are humanlike in stature as opposed to the swarthier, smaller Dökkálfar, bad elves who live underground and inflict illness on humans.

In contemporary culture, elves are commonly portrayed as the diminutive creatures who assist the “jolly old elf” himself, Santa Claus, in the preparation of toys and gifts for children every Christmas. Then there are the Keebler™ Elves, small fairy beings with a thing for pointed shoes, who have baked cookies in a tree for decades—a seemingly dangerous proposition. Both of these depictions are based on a Victorian image of elves as small men and women with pointy ears and caps. Richard Doyle’s illustrations for Andrew Lang’s fairy tale *Princess Nobody* (1884) featured both elves and fairies; although both creatures are small, the fairies have wings, and the elves don their signature red stocking caps. The earlier Germanic and Scandinavian uses of the word “elf,” however, were considered to be much more interchangeable with the word “fairy.”

**FAUNS**  Fauns are creatures of Roman mythology, though closely associated with the satyrs of Greek myths. They are forest-dwelling half-men with horns or antlers and either goat or deer feet and legs. As folkloric representations of the wildness of nature, and the forest in particular, fauns are amoral creatures who have hindered and aided humans in seemingly equal measure. Fauns appear in C. S. Lewis’s Narnia series. Best known is the character of Mr. Tumnus, who first tries to kidnap but then helps the child Lucy when she arrives in Narnia. In his essay “It All Began with a Picture,” Lewis explains that the series stemmed from an image he’d been seeing in his mind since he was sixteen: that of a faun “carrying an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood.” When he was forty, he said to himself, “Let’s try to make a story about it.”
**Gnomes** * Most often portrayed with long white beards and jovial expressions, and clad in tall red caps, gnomes first appeared by name in the sixteenth-century writing of Swiss-German philosopher and alchemist Paracelsus, who wrote of them as earth elementals: forest dwellers who are reluctant to deal with humans. Over time, however, the gnomes of fairy lore have gained a reputation for being mostly friendly and kind to humans, though they still prefer to live in the forests or underground. Gnomes appear in numerous works of contemporary literature, notably in the Narnia books by C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, and Terry Brooks’s Shannara books.

**Goblins** * Small, malicious creatures resembling demons, goblins are known for their greed and tempers. They first appeared by the name of “goblin” around the Middle Ages in Europe, but can be found with varying details to their personalities in the tales of many countries. For example, the redcap of Anglo-Scotch folklore gets his red chapeau from dipping it in the blood of those he has killed. But there is also a rare occurrence of a friendly goblin in the thirteenth-century Latin book *Gesta Romanorum*, which has a tale titled “How, in a certain part of England, thirsty hunters were given refreshment by a benevolent goblin,” the plot of which is rather self-explanatory. Goblins vary in size and shape and are said to be easily distracted by the promise or sight of gold. They can also be terrible tempters, as in Christina Rossetti’s haunting and erotically charged poem “Goblin Market,” where they lure victims to their doom with luscious, irresistible fruit.

**Leprechauns** * Irish in origin, leprechauns do not appear often in older mythology. They’re fairy cloggers who make and repair shoes. They are solitary figures, known for their green wardrobe, buckle shoes, and pots of gold at the end of a rainbow. In literature prior to the twentieth century, though, leprechauns were usually described as wearing all red rather than green. If you catch one, he may grant you three wishes in exchange for his freedom, but be careful: leprechauns enjoy a good practical joke. An old Celtic folktale, “The Field of Boliauns,” tells of a man who found a leprechaun and convinced the cobbler to show him a bush in a field, under which a crock of gold was buried. The man had no digging utensils, so he
marked the spot with a red garter, and left to get his shovel. He made the leprechaun swear not to remove the garter, and the wily leprechaun agreed. Returning to the field, the man couldn’t find his treasure. While the marker was still there, the leprechaun had covered every neighboring bush with a red garter, too.

*An Elfin Dance*, Richard Doyle, illustration from *In Fairyland: A Series of Pictures from the Elf-World* by William Allingham and Andrew Lang, 1870.

*Art Renewal Center*
Pixies ★ Pixies are the whimsical and tiny fairy creatures often depicted in Victorian fairy paintings and the popular work of artist Cicely Mary Barker. Pixies do often have wings, and love dancing and playing games. They’re also fond of flowers and gardens. Pixies are often drawn to laughter, children, and merrymaking. Tinker Bell from J. M. Barrie’s Peter Pan is a pixie.

Sidhe ★ Sidhe are the more modern versions of the Tuatha Dé Danann, the fairy race of Old Ireland who were great masters of magic and appeared in early Celtic mythic tales such as Tochmarc Étaine. After being conquered by the Sons of Mil (ancestors of the Irish people), the Tuatha Dé Danann retreated underground and dwindled into the still unearthy beautiful (but diminished) sidhe. The word “sidhe” originally referred to the fairy mounds where these beings lived. Tad Williams’s Sithi race from his epic fantasy trilogy Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn, is akin to the sidhe.

Trolls ★ Beings of earth and stone, varying in size from massive giantlike creatures to smaller creatures hardly a foot tall, trolls originate from Norse mythology and are closely connected with a particular location, such as bridges or mountains. Trolls do not tend to be friendly to humans, but they’re not particularly antagonistic, either. Many stone landmarks are associated with trolls; some of these landmarks are said to be trolls themselves, turned to stone. Trolls appear in fairy tales such as Three Billy Goats Gruff, and in the art of Edwardian painter John Bauer and modern fairy painter Brian Froud.
Seelie and Unseelie Courts
SCOTTISH FOLKLORE DIVIDES THE REALM OF Faerie and its fairy denizens into two categories: Seelie and Unseelie.

Seelie fairies, whose name stems from the same Scottish root word as “silly,” meaning “happy,” are good-natured and generally associated with lightness, goodness, and benevolence to humans. It’s still wise to be cautious with a Seelie fairy, as some may play pranks and sometimes aren’t aware of the chaos they can cause. Unseelie fairies are more darkly inclined, appearing at night and wreaking havoc seemingly indiscriminately among mortals and their fellow fairies. They can sometimes grow fond of a human and treat him or her with kindness, but generally they are up to no good.

So be warned: The creature of moss and oak leaves that peers around a forest tree on your morning walk could be friend or foe, and the glitter-winged, dust-trailing sprite of your dreams might actually have razor-sharp teeth.
KATERINA PLOTNIKOVA’S FAIRYLAND
Deep in a magical Russian wood, where tiny flowers erupt from the wild undergrowth like little stars and leaves glimmer in the late-afternoon light, is a fairyland where one might come upon brown bears dancing with young women in shimmering taffeta dresses, drinking water out of their cupped palms, or napping with them in a field of flowers. It is not uncommon to see an owl caressing a girl’s flushed cheek with its beak, wrapping its golden wing around her shoulders, its feathers cascading along her arm. You might even see a group of young women in white dresses hold tiny fawns as if they were children, or curled around sleeping foxes on wild grass.

This is the world of photographer Katerina Plotnikova, who captures these scenes to create “another tale of wonderland.” “The world has retreated further and further from nature,” she says. “We should always remember that nature is primary, and that animals are our friends.” None of the creatures featured in her photographs are completely wild; they’re often creatures nurtured back to health by humans after unfortunate events, and some are even family pets. “If you pick up an animal, save it and care for it, then you are responsible for it until the end,” she explains. The bear, Stepan, is a bona fide Russian movie star, she says, with nearly two decades of experience in front of the camera. He also has a sweet tooth, and noshed on eclairs as well as Norwegian salmon throughout the shoot. But what is undeniably remarkable is that none of her images are altered: what one sees in one of Plotnikova’s images is a real interaction.
ON MONHEGAN ISLAND, OFF THE COAST OF Maine, the Cathedral Woods—with its proliferation of moss, ferns, and trees with plentiful gnarled bark roots—is the perfect setting for a fairy neighborhood. Locals started building tiny houses for the fairies from twigs, pine cones, driftwood, and stones in these woods nearly a century ago, although no one knows exactly when or how the first one appeared on the site. Nearby Squirrel Island, off of Boothbay Harbor, saw a similar rapid growth of mysterious tiny dwellings over the same time period. In fact, these houses made from bark, stone, and twigs were a relative secret until artist Tracy Kane came along in the mid-1990s. Kane was visiting Monhegan from New Hampshire to paint, but found time to hike through these enchanted woods, where she came across something that looked like . . . a little house. And then she saw another. And another. Just as she was marveling at the vision before her, a little girl skipped by and stopped to add shells and stones to one of the houses before continuing on her way.

Kane was astonished; as a child, she believed that fairies lived in the meadows nearby, but she had never thought to make houses for them. Her visit to Monhegan Island changed all that. She is now a master builder, with a video and series of fairy-house books to her name, conducting workshops for children and adults.

Coincidentally, around the same time, the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay built an area for kids to create fairy houses, further
accelerating their popularity. As word spread and more venues embraced the art, fairy-house enthusiasts began creating everything from traditional rustic dwellings made of bark and leaves to extravagant palaces fit for a fairy king and queen, using a mix of found objects and materials like polymer clay, plaster of Paris, cold-processed porcelain, resin, and papier-mâché. In 2004, dozens of fairy-house artists showed off their masterpieces in the first annual Portsmouth Fairy House Tour in New Hampshire.

Today there are plenty more places to view fairy houses. On Maine’s Mackworth Island, Fairy Houses Village “provides fairies with cottages during their visits to the island,” as the official sign reads, and visitors are invited to add their own houses to the mix. Fairy houses pepper forest trails, like New Jersey’s Rahway Trail in Locust Grove, where the tiny creations started appearing in 2011 and continue to multiply. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, fairy doors have magically appeared all over town for more than twenty years.
Of course, anyone can make a little fairy home and place it in the woods for someone else—human or otherwise—to find. Kane tells a story of a classroom of children in Florida who were building houses just as a storm was coming in. As they rushed to finish, an orange cloud suddenly approached them, and a group of migrating monarch butterflies came into relief—promptly taking refuge in several of the houses. When you build a fairy house, you never know what enchanted creature you’ll attract.
Contemporary Fairy House Architecture
While making fairy houses has become a popular pastime for budding architects of all ages, there are some who are so masterful, they’ve made careers of conjuring works of art for the fairies to inhabit.

Sally Smith of Greenspirit Arts has said that the forest speaks to her, that she has a “relationship with the trees, plants, mushrooms, and animals of the region.” Like many fairy aficionados, she’s been making miniature houses in the forest since she was a child. After spending more than two decades working as a watercolor artist, she started making fairy houses professionally in 2006. “It’s a calling,” she says. She builds most of her houses in her studio using only materials she’s gathered near her home in the Adirondacks, then takes the finished houses back out into the woods to photograph. Sometimes she leaves her creations on forest pathways, to spark the imaginations of the people who happen upon them.

Smith does a few commissions every year—time-intensive fine art sculptures for clients’ homes, where they become the “gateway where people’s imaginations can connect with a larger world of fantasy and magic—a hermitage for the soul.” For a client whose lifelong partner had died, she made a house using silk versions of a particular flower that had special meaning for the couple, then filled it with special mementoes from their life together. The tiny house became a miniature shrine to their life together and helped a great deal in the client’s healing process.
FAIRY HOUSE INTERIORS
KAMMY DURAN-HILL STARTED making fairy houses in an unconscious response to her younger sister’s death.

She had always loved making miniatures, but found herself taking a shoebox and creating a tiny, intricate world within it, one where she imagined her sister would be happy and safe.

Today her highly coveted miniatures—which are sold under the name of Kammy’s Creations in Walnut Creek, California, and include everything from rose-embellished teacup chandeliers and French perfume jars to skeleton-key-filled curio cabinets and stained-glass windows—pop up in fairy dwellings around the world.
The kitchen in Duran-Hill’s fairy house, Enchanted Bunny Hollow.

*Kammy Duran-Hill*

A detail from the fairy house inside a teacup.

*Kammy Duran-Hill*
The bedroom in Duran-Hill’s fairy house, Enchanted Bunny Hollow.

*Kammy Duran-Hill*

The front porch of a miniature English cottage made by Duran-Hill.

*Kammy Duran-Hill*
The outside garden of Duran-Hill’s Enchanted Bunny Hollow.

*Kammy Duran-Hill*
Craft Your Own Fairy Furniture

—Diana Heyne

French fairy furniture designer Diana Heyne loves the wonder of entering a tiny fairy world. “You pass into a different kind of consciousness,” she says of making the woodland-inspired furnishings. Here’s how to make your own miniature set of table and chairs and add a rustic, elegant charm to any fairy-inspired abode. Use anything from small bits of bark and twigs to moss, seashells, and more. Whether you live in a country or urban setting, you can find fairy-esque natural materials from your world.

Tools
The basic tools for building fairy miniatures are simple and commonly found around the house:

- Pair of garden clippers
- Small scissors (manicure scissors with a curved blade work well)
- Needle-nose pliers (for handling small pieces)
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks or quick bonding glue

Tip: Keep a bowl of cool water nearby to quench unexpected hot-glue drops on your fingers.
MATERIALS

Fairy Chair

For seat:
- Flat piece of bark (about 1½ inches wide by 1½ inches long by ¼ inch high)

For legs:
- Two 1½-inch twigs for front legs and two 4- to 5-inch twigs for back legs and backrest

For back:
- Two 1½-inch twigs

For side rungs:
- Three to four small 2-inch twigs (optional)

- Torn and shredded bits of moss (Note: have these ready in advance, as glue sets up quickly.)
Fairy Pedestal Table and Tea Set

For pedestal column:

- **Magnolia pod stem or thick twig, about 1½ inches long.** (Note: if your pedestal is too high, the table won’t be stable.)

For table base:

- **Large, flat acorn cap** (a flat seashell or oval rock will work as well)

For tabletop:

- **Horse chestnut, buckeye hull, or similarly shaped item, about 1½ to 2 inches across**

- **Torn and shredded bits of moss** (Note: have these ready in advance, as glue sets quickly.)

- **Tiny seashells to decorate table** (optional)

- **Small flat stone** (optional, to balance table base)

For teacup:

- **Small, cup-shaped acorn cap**
For teapot:
- **Whole acorn** (cap and nut)

For cup, teapot handles, and spout:
- Two tiny, C-shaped twigs or grapevine tendrils; another small section for the spout

**Materials for the Fairy Pedestal Table and Tea Set**

*Diana Heyne*

**MAKE THE FAIRY CHAIR**

1. Using the needle-nose pliers, glue the two longer twigs to the back corners of the seat. The backrest can be as long as you like, but the chair legs should all be the same length. Add a good-sized drop of glue to the first back corner. Hold the twig in place until the glue hardens—just a few seconds for hot or quick-bonding glue. Add a bit more glue around the join and a bit of moss to cover the glue and strengthen the bond. Repeat at the other back corner.
2. Using needle-nose pliers, add the two shorter twigs, one at a time, in the same manner to the front corners. Remember to keep all four chair legs at an even length, so that the chair is stable and balanced. After you’ve added the front legs, the chair will stand upright on its own. If the chair rocks or leans due to minor differences in leg length, glue a small bit of moss under the shorter leg(s) to even them out.

3. To make the ladder-back, glue two twigs horizontally to the back-rest twigs. Add moss with pliers while glue is still warm to strengthen bond and give a natural look. Trim any twigs as needed with garden clippers to even out chair back.
4. If you want to add side rungs to the chair, hold a twig up, using pliers, against the space between two legs to measure the length of the rung. Check and adjust the fit by gripping the twig with needle-nose pliers, and then trim it to size with garden clippers. Next, add a drop of glue at each twig rung end and place quickly. Repeat, as desired, to create rungs. Add decorative moss bits and your fairy chair is complete!

MAKE THE FAIRY PEDESTAL TABLE AND TEA SET

1. Join the pedestal column to the base by adding a generous drop of glue to the column base and the center of the convex side of the acorn cap. Hold secure for a few seconds and then add more glue and a circle of moss to strengthen the join and hide excess glue.
2. Add your choice of tabletop material. (The horse chestnut or buckeye hull can make an attractive, mushroom-like tabletop, but you can use any similarly sized item.) Place a dollop of glue on the top of the column and center under the tabletop piece, pressing the two together firmly. Using pliers, add more glue and some moss bits, and hold them in place for a few more moments until the glue completely hardens. The table is now complete, but you can decorate further with tiny seashells. If the table is unbalanced, glue a small, flat rock or moss bits to the underside of the base.

3. To create the acorn tea set, make a teacup by gluing a small, cup-shaped acorn cap inside a flatter acorn cap “saucer.” Add a C-shaped twig or grapevine tendril handle to the cup by using the pliers to hold the pieces in place while applying the glue. For the teapot, add another twig or
tendril handle to a whole acorn (with nut and cap), using pliers. Glue a tiny section of straight or curved tendril opposite the teapot handle to create a spout. Affix the cup and teapot to the pedestal tabletop with glue and moss. Arrange in a likely spot and let the fae tea party magic begin!

A fairy tower, created by Diana Heyne
A fairy witch’s altar table, created by Diana Heyne

Musical instruments, created by Diana Heyne
A table ready for a tea party, created by Diana Heyne

Various gathering baskets and vessels, created by Diana Heyne
A kitchen setting, created by Diana Heyne

Gothic arch chair and tea table, created by Diana Heyne
Spinning wheel, created by Diana Heyne

Dining hutch, created by Diana Heyne
Sewing table, created by Diana Heyne
A FAIRY HERB and FLOWER ALMANAC
One would be wise to consult the fairies before building dwellings for them, for while they are creatures of nature, they are not without preference when it comes to the sylvan world. Indeed, fairies covet some flowers and herbs as much as fashionable women yearn for Birkin bags and Manolo Blahnik stilettos. Others, not so much. Even so, many flowers offer wily humans protection against fairies, as well as the ability to see them or break through fairy spells and glamour.

**Bluebell (Constancy)** ★ The Scottish name for this toxic yet dizzyingly lovely flower (apart from harebell) is Dead Man’s Bells—because to hear them ring is to hear one’s own death knell. For this reason, they should never be picked.

**Warning Bells** Be wary of lingering too long in a bluebell-laden field or wood, no matter how seductive, for these are places of concentrated fairy magic and enchantment. British lore warns that children entering fields of bluebells might never come out again, while adults who do might wander
about lost and in a daze, pixie-led, unless a brave soul is sent in to rescue them.

**Clover (Think of Me)** Fairies are attracted to clover, so if you come across a field of it, be on the watch for a fluttering of wings. But you might want to pick some quickly for your own protection, lest you be subject to a fairy enchantment.

**The Gift of Sight** In his book *The Fairy Mythology* (1892), Thomas Keightley tells of a girl in Northumberland who, bearing a pail on her head, saw fairies playing in a field as she was returning from milking. Her friends could not see the sprites, even when she pointed right at them. As it happened, her *weise*, or pad, for toting the pail on her head, was made of four-leaf clover, giving her “the gift of sight,” the ability to see that which is invisible. Clover is also used to make charms or ointments for protection against fairy magic.

**Cowslip (Pensiveness)** These little yellow flowers are harbingers of spring, and much cherished by the fairies, though it’s more than the beauty of these blooms that entices them.

**Fairy Gold** Fairies believe that cowslip has the power to lead them to fairy gold and other hidden treasures. The blooms are called “Culver’s Keys” in the west of England, which refers to their ability to unlock secret treasures. Sadly for would-be fortune hunters, the precise details of how, why, and where are a well-kept secret.
Foxglove (Insincerity) * Also known as “fairy caps” and “little folk’s gloves” because the more style-conscious flower fairies were said to wear them as hats or gloves, the foxglove is beloved by the fae. A garden filled with foxglove is an open invitation for the fairies to dwell there. But if you plant foxglove, keep it in good shape and don’t pick it—unless you want to tempt the fairies’ ire.

Handle with Care The beautiful foxglove plant contains naturally occurring poisons that affect the heart. All parts of the foxglove are considered poisonous, so wash your hands well after you handle the flower and never put any part of it in your mouth. That said, in Irish belief, the juice from ten foxglove leaves is said to cure a fairy-struck child.

Pansy (Think of Me) * The pansy of old was a small plant with three shades of color on each heart-shaped flower, and its old country name, Love-in-Idleness, which is what Puck calls it in A Midsummer Night’s Dream,
forever links it to fairy hijinks. Only in 1813 did a gardener in Buckinghamshire start crossbreeding several wild varieties to get the larger petals and rich colors we see today.

Puck’s Pansy In Shakespeare’s play, Puck drips juice from a pansy onto the sleeping eyelids of the fairy queen Titania. The result? She will fall in love with the next being she sees. Unfortunately for her, the next creature she sees is an ass named Bottom.

Primrose (Childhood) * Primroses are considered to be fairy flowers, though whether they’re used to invite fairies in or keep them away might be a matter of location. In Ireland, one might scatter them throughout the house to keep fairies away, while in Somerset, England, they’re considered a special flower that fairies love.

Come In and Go Away Some say you can invite fairies into your home by hanging primroses on your door, but that you can also keep them away by placing them at the edges of your dwelling. That said, we do not recommend sending the fairies mixed messages.

Ragwort (I Am Humble but Proud) * Ragwort is a plant that belongs to the fairies completely, and cannot be used against them as so many other trickster blooms can.

Horse and Hattock Prior to the eighteenth century, fairies were not imagined as winged creatures, and ragwort stalks were said to be used as broomsticks or horses by fairies who wanted to fly. According to seventeenth-century English writer John Aubrey, the magic words to transform the ragwort into a vehicle for flying were “Horse and Hattock!” According to Aubrey, a Scotsman in Morayshire heard voices utter this phrase and repeated it himself—only to be whisked into the air with the fairies to the king of France’s cellar in Paris.

St. John’s Wort (Superstition) * St. John’s wort is a protective herb said to heal all illnesses brought on by the fairies, such as stitches, itches, and cramps, and to protect the wearer against fairy blight.

Night Ride On the Isle of Man, it was said that if you walked on St. John’s wort after sunset on St. John’s Eve, a fairy horse would rise out of the earth to carry you about over the night and leave you at dawn.
**WILD THYME** *(Activity)*  This herb grows in a dense matted pattern, making it the perfect camouflage for fairy abodes and for sleeping fairy queens. A patch of thyme was traditionally set aside in herb gardens for the fairies to live in, somewhat like birdhouses are placed in the garden today.

**The Power to See Fairies** While many plants are believed to enable a human to see fairies, sometimes the details are a bit hard to pin down, especially given that traditional folklore is less than scientific. Luckily, a recipe from 1600 on display in the University of Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum gives exact instructions for seeing fairies, though it does require thyme that’s gathered “near the side of a hill where fairies use to be.”

**TO ENABLE ONE TO SEE THE FAIRIES.**

A pint of sallet oyle and put it into a vial glasse; and first wash it with rose-water and marygolde water; the flowers to be gathered towards the east. Wash it till the oyle becomes white, then put into the glasse, and then put thereto the budds of hollyhocke, the flowers of marygolde, the flowers or toppes of wild thyme, the budds of young hazle, and the thyme must be gathered neare the side of a hill where fairies use to be; and take the grasse of a fairy throne; then all these put into the oyle in the glasse and sette it to dissolve three dayes in the sunne and then keep it for the use.
Pressed Flowers

—KARIMA CAMMELL

GIVEN THE UNSHAKABLE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAIRIES and flowers, it makes sense that fairy lovers yearn for exquisite, sumptuous blooms. Flower collecting can be a lovely pastime, and, with a flower press, you can preserve your fragrant findings and use them in all sorts of enchanted projects.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Be sure to match and test your hardware at the shop to keep from accidentally buying a piece that doesn’t fit the others.

- Power drill with \( \frac{5}{16} \)-inch drill bit
- 2 plywood boards (12 inches wide by 19 inches long by \( \frac{3}{8} \) inches high)
- 16 sheets of blotting paper (trimmed to 12 inches wide by 19 inches long)
- 9 pieces of corrugated cardboard, 12 inches wide by 19 inches long (recycled panels of old boxes are great to use for this purpose)
- 4 carriage bolts (4 inches long by \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch wide)
- 4 \( \frac{1}{4} \)-inch wing nuts
- 8 flat washers with \( \frac{5}{16} \)-inch hole

BUILD THE FLOWER PRESS
1. Place a washer at each corner of your boards and mark an x in its center hole to position your drill. If possible, clamp your two boards together and drill both at once. This gives your press better alignment than if you drill them independently.

2. Cut the corners off your cardboard and blotter sheets to allow room for the bolts.

**ASSEMBLE THE PRESS**

3. Build the layers of your press in this order: one board, one cardboard layer, two sheets of blotting paper, one cardboard layer, and so on. Continue to build the layers of cardboard and blotting sheets, finishing off with a cardboard layer and one board on top. The corrugations in the cardboard allow air to circulate through the press, wicking away water and drying the plants.
4. Assemble the bolts with the washers against the wood. Put one under each bolt head and one under each wing nut. Tip: Decoupage natural or fantastic imagery onto your press, such as a print from J.J. Grandville’s *Les Fleurs Animées*.

**PRESS FLOWERS**

5. Gather specimens and press by layering the plant matter between the pairs of blotting paper, reassembling the flower press, and tightening the screws.
6. Once the press is filled, stand on edge, and set in a warm, dry place where it won’t be disturbed. Allow to sit undisturbed for one to three weeks to complete drying.

7. After the drying period, carefully loosen the screws and remove the flowers. Keep them as is or incorporate them into crafts using acid-free glue.
Karima Cammell/Castle in the Air
Simple Flower-Pressing Ideas

Mount pressed plants on paper by taping down with glued paper strips. Alternatively, sew plants in place using waxed linen thread, or gently lay the dried plants on a tray coated with a thin layer of glue, lift out carefully, and press onto the page.

Create an herbarium of mounted specimens from the garden, either as framed plates or in a large journal. Note the scientific and common names for each on a card, including the date and location of the collection and other observations. Keep dried plant seeds in a glassine envelope affixed to the front or back of the plate.

Use the folklore found in the novel *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh to send secret messages on note cards or in dried flower arrangements.

Mount pressed flowers between sheets of glass or mica using small dots of glue. Frame glass with copper tape or gold Dresden trim and add a wire or thread loop in the frame to hang from a ribbon on the wall or in a window. (Tip: Fabri-tac glue dries quickly and invisibly.)
Tips for Flower Pressing

Collect only a few of any one plant. Be sure to leave some for nature and others’ enjoyment.

Know what you’re picking before you collect, and understand the risks. According to fairy folklore, the sprites protect the wild from overharvesting by making some plants irritating to the touch, either through prickles or rash-causing oils.

When pressing particularly damp or fleshy specimens, open the press to check for mold or change out the blotting papers one or more times during drying.

Living blooms are delicate things, and dried blooms even more so. Handle brittle specimens with care, using tweezers to lift particularly fragile dried plants from the paper.

Always use acid-free glue and paper when mounting dried plants, as acid can alter pigments.

Mount framed plants under UV-protective glass to retain colors.
**The POISON GARDEN**

**THOSE RED-SPOTTED FAIRY-TALE MUSHROOMS** on the forest floor, otherwise known as fly agaric, are alluring, even adorable, but they are poisonous and can induce strange visions—or, if you’re Alice visiting Wonderland, strange fluctuations in height. The forest may sparkle with delights, but those pleasures can be dangerous.

Fairy lore is full of suspicious ointments and oils that make humans lose their bearings or spend an indecipherable amount of time lost—sometimes blissfully—in fairyland while decades pass in the human world. Rubbed on eyelids, a fairy salve might allow a human to see through fairy enchantments that are meant to be invisible to humans. This can be quite disconcerting for the average human, especially when it turns out that she is in fact living in a giant oak tree with a whole family of sprites and not an upscale London apartment.

Is there some kind of poison at work? Possibly. But it’s clear that the fairies and fairy-tale enchantresses love to employ up-to-no-good herbs and flowers to their advantage as much as they love to flit among glistening, silky blooms winking up from the lushest gardens.

A poison garden can be a seductive place, glittering with a fairylike allure that is often just as pretty as a garden teeming with purely ornamental or healthful blooms. At Alnwick Castle, located in the town of Alnwick, Northumberland, England—and the site of Hogwarts in the first two Harry Potter films—Jane Percy, the Duchess of Northumberland, instituted a poison garden as part of her massive project to renovate the magnificent Alnwick Gardens, now fourteen acres of formal gardens adjacent to the castle. As beautiful as it is treacherous, the Poison Garden is open to the
public and intended to educate children on the deadly nature of certain plants.

The much-visited garden, enclosed within an ornate black wrought-iron fence and an imposing gate with skulls and crossbones and the warning “THESE PLANTS CAN KILL,” is a magical place. Home to one hundred dangerous plants—the most lethal ones flourish in specially made iron cages, and some species require government permission to grow—the garden includes belladonna, foxglove (used to make certain heart medications), the opium poppy coca (from which cocaine is derived), cannabis, psilocybin mushrooms, and tobacco. Hemlock and mandrake flourish there, bringing to mind the evil flowers cultivated in gardens past. Belladonna—also known as deadly nightshade and the devil’s cherries among other names—thrives there, too, a plant employed by Victorian women to make their pupils appear larger. Lore has it that some even dared to put a little of the pollen from its flower into their tea to incite hallucinations—not a recommended practice! The garden is under twenty-four-hour guard and signs warn visitors not to touch, smell, or eat the plants; nonetheless, there have been reports of visitors fainting from the collective fumes.
The lesson? When walking through an enchanted forest, it is best not to veer from the well-worn path, and be wary, for the most beautiful flowers may hide malicious roots, both literal and metaphorical.

Clockwise, from top left: Foxglove, larkspur, and fly agaric (*Amanita Muscaria var. Muscaria*).

*Jason Dempster (top left, right); Janne Elkeblad (bottom left)*
FAIRY TREES
IN ALMOST EVERY CULTURE, CERTAIN TREES have some magical meaning associated with them; and so it is with Faerie. The fae definitely have their favorite trees, especially if that tree grows in clusters (though in Ireland, any tree standing suspiciously alone was possibly a tree held sacred by the fairies, too). Exercise special caution when coming upon gatherings of oak, ash, and hawthorn trees; together they’re referred to as the “fairy triad” in British lore, and it’s in these spaces that more fairies than usual will be about and especially visible—and therefore dangerous.

Here is a small selection of trees that fairies favor, as well as a couple that might offer some protection if you’re ever in a tight spot.

APPLE * The fruit of the apple tree appears in several Celtic stories. In the tale of “Connla and the Fairy Maiden,” a fairy appears to the handsome prince Connla, falls in love with him, and tries to call him to her in Moy Mell, or “where the spirits dwell.” Connla’s father, the king, can hear her words, though only Connla is able to see her. To protect his son, the king calls forth a powerful Druid to cast a spell against the cunning fairy; “Then Coran the Druid stood forth and chanted his spells towards the spot where the maiden’s voice had been heard. And none heard her voice again, nor could Connla see her longer. Only as she vanished before the Druid’s mighty spell, she threw an apple to Connla.”
The prince is full of longing for the fairy maiden, refusing to eat or drink anything but the gifted apple, which magically becomes whole again every time he finishes it. After exactly one month, the fairy returns, appearing to Connla, his father, and their men and speaking to her beloved once more to entice him back to her. The father calls again to the Druid to help, but Connla says, “I love my own folk above all things; but a longing seizes me for the maiden.” She answers, “Come with me in my curragh, the gleaming, straight-gliding crystal canoe. Soon we can reach Boadag’s [ruler of the land of spirits] realm.” Before the king can stop him, Connla leaps into the canoe and glides away with her over the bright sea.

The island of Avalon from Arthurian legend, home to enchantress Morgan le Fay, was also known as the Isle of Apples due to the proliferation of magical orchards there.

**ASH** Second to the rowan in strength, the ash was second best when it came to protecting humans from fairies. In *Traces of the Elder Faiths in Ireland* (1902), W. G. Wood-Martin wrote of an ash tree in the parish of Clenor, County Cork, Ireland, that was so sacred that no one would cut its branches, though fuel was scarce and the nearest turf-bog was seven or eight miles away.

The Old Norse Yggdrasill, symbol of the universe, was a giant ash. Underneath the tree was the Urdar-Fount, which sustained it. In the Icelandic *Prose Edda* from the thirteenth century, when a character asks what cities are by the Urdar-Fount and under the Ash Yggdrasill, he’s told that the elves dwell there.

**HAWTHORN** Of all the trees in the wood, the hawthorn is perhaps the most closely associated with fairies—“Pixie Pears,” for example, is another name for hawthorn berries. The hawthorn used to be called “May,” so going “a-Maying” meant wandering out to gather the blossom-laden boughs for outside decoration. In British culture, even today, it is believed that a terrible fate awaits if you have need to cut down a hawthorn tree. Doing so will guarantee angering the fairies, whose wrath and justice would be swift, severe, and sometimes even deadly. When a hawthorn tree in County Antrim, Ireland, was cut down in the 1980s to make way for a DeLorean
Even being around a hawthorn could lead to bad luck for humans, it seems. Thomas the Rhymer, the thirteenth-century soothsayer and protagonist of the famous ballad bearing his name, was swept away to fairyland after lingering under the boughs of a hawthorn tree. And according to Arthurian legend, poor love-struck Merlin was trapped in a hawthorn by the enchantress Nimue. In Edward Burne-Jones’s painting *The Beguiling of Merlin* (1877), Nimue, now in a position of power, reads from Merlin’s powerful book of spells as a helpless Merlin looks on.

But hawthorn lore isn’t all bad. It’s a common sight to see a hawthorn tree guarding a holy well in Britain and Ireland. Seekers still tie wishes and ribbons to the boughs of the trees overlooking these portals to the Otherworld.

“Nine peahens flew towards the tree, and eight of them settled on its branches, but the ninth alighted near him and turned instantly into a beautiful girl.” —Arthur Rackham, from *The Allies Fairy Book* by Edmund Gosse, 1916.

*Arthur Rackham Society*
HAZEL * The hazel tree is associated with fairies in Ireland and Wales. The branches are often utilized to make dowsing rods, which were used as a supernatural way to detect water and are sometimes also wielded as a divination tool. The hazelnut is even more revered than the tree itself, as it is considered a source of magical wisdom. The hazel trees of Ireland were said to drop nuts into the water, which were then consumed by a fish, most commonly a salmon. To eat the salmon or other fish that has eaten the hazel of wisdom would mean to gain great knowledge and understanding of the universe, as well as inspiration in poetry or bardic arts.

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.
—W.B. YEATS
“The Song of Wandering Aengus”
From The Wind Among the Reeds, 1899

OAK * In a footnote to The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries, anthropologist W. Y. Evans-Wentz called the oak “preeminently the holy tree of Europe.” Druids conducted their religious rites in oak groves, and the oak is associated with the Green Man, the ancient nature spirit/deity found in various forms and guises throughout the world and often depicted with a face made from oak leaves.

Evans-Wentz talks about the survival of the ancient Celtic tree-cult in Carmarthen, Wales (said to be the birthplace of Merlin, famed wizard of Arthurian legend), where the decaying trunk of an old oak tree known as Merlin’s Oak was being propped up in a firm cement casing, as local prophecy declared “on Merlin’s authority” that when the oak fell the town would fall with it. Evans-Wentz wrote in 1911, “Perhaps through an unconscious desire on the part of some patriotic citizens of averting the calamity by inducing the tree-spirit to transfer its abode, or else by
otherwise hoodwinking the tree-spirit into forgetting that Merlin’s Oak is
dead, a vigorous and now flourishing young oak has been planted so
directly beside it that its foliage embraces it.” In 1978 the last bit of the tree
was removed, and, according to a 2008 piece in WalesOnline, “Carmarthen
then suffered its worst floods for many years.”

In a Store Heddinge, Denmark, churchyard, remains of an oak were said
to be the Elf King’s soldiers, transforming at night into valiant men of
service.

“Fairy folks are in old oaks.”
—OLD PROVERB

ROWAN * The rowan tree is said to offer the best protection against
witchcraft and fairy enchantments—whether in the form of a staff or a cross
or through bunches of its bright red berries—and in the Highlands it was
customary to plant one outside your house. Folklorist Katharine Briggs
quotes this old Scottish rhyme: “Rowan, lamer [amber] and red thread / Pits
witches to their speed.” In one story from the region, two brothers, Donald
and Rory, were in a fairy-filled forest late one night looking for some lost
sheep when they came upon a fairy dance. Despite Donald’s protests, Rory
could not resist and joined the dance and was lost. Some time passed, and
Donald consulted a wise man, who advised him to return to the site with a
rowan cross and rescue his brother in the divine name. When Rory returned
home, he was astonished to discover he’d been gone for a year, as it had felt
like a half hour.

In the Lowlands it was said that during a fairy rade, or grand procession,
in which splendidly adorned fairies ride upon their equally decked-out
mounts, peasant folk could watch unharmed if they placed a rowan branch
over their doorway. These rades typically took place in the summer months
and could be very dangerous to unprotected humans who might or might
not catch a passing fairy’s fancy.
The Mud Maid, an iconic sculpture created by brother and sister Pete and Sue Hill, emerges from the landscape in the popular Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall, England. Reclining on her side, she slumbers year-round.

*Insook Jun/Alamy Stock Photo*
TERRARIUMS
THE SCIENCE OF BOTANY, in consequence of the perusal of the works of the immortal Linnaeus, had been my recreation from my youth up, and the earliest object of my ambition was to possess an old wall covered with ferns and mosses. To obtain this end, I built up some rock-work in the yard at the back of my house, and placed a perforated pipe at the top, from which water trickled on the plants beneath; these consisted of *Polypodium vulgare*, *Lomaria Spicant*, *Lastraea dilitata*, *L. Filix-mas*, *Athyrium Filix-faemina*, *Asplenium Trichomanes* and a few other ferns, and several mosses procured from the woods in the neighbourhood of London, together with primroses, wood-sorrel, etc. Being, however, surrounded by numerous manufactories and enveloped in their smoke, my plants soon began to decline, and ultimately perished, all my endeavours to keep them alive proving fruitless.
Happily, this story does not have a tragic end. While it is unknown whether Dr. Ward (1791–1868) was ultimately able to cultivate his desired fern-and-moss-covered wall, an experiment demonstrated that living things—seedlings and butterflies, that is—could live in a hermetically sealed glass case. This led to the development of the Wardian Case, an early forerunner of the terrarium. Scientists used the cases to transport specimens safely from other countries. The containers were also the rage among Victorians, passionate indoor horticulturalists who were able to cultivate and display specimens in their homes, many of which boasted solariums and sunporches. The Wardian Cases kept the plants safe from smoke and “manufactories” and made them readily available for study or aesthetic appreciation.
Today, terrarium enthusiasts employ all sorts of inventive containers to preserve and display plantings artfully. José Agatep, who designs innovative terrariums under the name of The Slug and the Squirrel, uses vintage pocket watches and other found bottles to house the mosses he hand-gathers.
How to Make a Fairy Terrarium

—TWIG TERRARIUMS

FAIRIES LOVE TO FROLIC IN WOODLAND ENVIRONS. BRING the woods—and the pixies—inside with a delightful fairy terrarium, and be the benevolent creator of your own fairy terrain.

MATERIALS

- Medium-sized glass container with a lid
- Polished river rocks or pebbles
- Dried sphagnum or sheet moss
- Peat moss
- Various fresh mosses
- Organic pesticide
- Nonporous accessories
- Bowl of water
- Mister spray bottle filled with water
SET UP THE TERRARIUM

1. Treat fresh moss with an organic pesticide treatment and refrigerate it until ready for use.

2. Take polished river rocks or pebbles and gently pour into a glass container, saving a few for surface decoration. Keep layers in proportion to the container size. Height can always be added with the moss layers, so keep the rock layer low.

ADD MOSS

3. Using dried sphagnum moss, soak a handful in the water bowl for a minute to make it more pliable. Squeeze the excess water out thoroughly to limit the amount of moisture in the terrarium. This is the filtration layer and it should not be thick—approximately ½ inch. Just cover the rocks and press the moss down well, but not so hard that the soil falls into the rocks.

4. Add a layer of the peat moss on top of the sphagnum moss. Press the moss down gently to remove air pockets; you can fluff it later. Distribute and “miniscape” the peat moss as desired.

DECORATE DELIGHTFULLY
5. Add embellishment: Fresh mosses and nonporous rubber or plastic items are best. Lightly mist your terrarium and cover with the lid.

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**Terrarium Care**

Terrariums thrive best when situated between partially filtered sun and shade because the moss is a shade dweller. Avoid direct sun, which can really cook your moss, and mist the terrarium every two to four weeks. Do not water or soak, as moss does not have a root system. Rather, mist the entire surface of the moss.
A Shinto shrine (and a lovely geisha) overlook a Zen garden in this Twig Terrarium.

*Twig Terrariums and Robert Wright Photography*
ANIMAL FRIENDS and FOES
FAIRIES HAVE PLENTY OF OPINIONS ABOUT woodland creatures, since they interact with them quite regularly in forests and meadows and at the occasional moonlit soirée. Some animals have long been associated with fairies—as their pets, their steeds, their companions—while others are less . . . favored. To spare their feelings, we shall leave them unnamed.

**BIRDS** * Birds are magical creatures that can cross into fairyland and back again undetected. In William Bottrell’s *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*, vol. 2 (1873), a man encounters his former sweetheart, who, now trapped in fairyland, explains that fairies can take the shape of any birds they please. From then on he “fancied that every redbreast, yellowhammer, tinner (wagtail), or other familiar small bird that came near him, might be the fairy-form of his departed love.”

Birds appear in multiple guises in fairy lore, though not all of them are as creepily romantic as in the Bottrell tale. In Irish-Celtic mythology, for example, the Tuatha Dé Danann sometimes sneakily appeared as war goddesses and directors of battle in the form of birds, taking sides in human wars. According to W. Y. Evans-Wentz in *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, this lore endured in the common Irish belief that the fairies worked their magic in the form of the Royston crow, whose appearance often heralded some great misfortune or death.

**CATS** * There are numerous tales of cats being fairies in disguise. In the Scandinavian tale “The Troll Turned Cat,” an amorous young troll, having trysted with another troll’s wife, avoided the jealous husband’s vengeance by taking on the form of a cat. He went on to live happily in that form with
an honest poor man named Plat in a neighboring town. One day, Plat came home and said that he’d just met a troll in the woods who told him to tell his cat that “Knurremurre [the cuckolded troll husband] is dead.” To Plat’s astonishment, the cat sprung up on its hind legs and ran out the door in troll form—no doubt to make advances on the young widow.

Scottish fairy lore often refers to an unnerving creature called the Cait Sith, a black or green fairy cat with long ears, who haunts the Scottish Highlands. It’s as large as a dog and has a white spot on its breast and an arched, bristly back. Some Highlanders believe it’s a transformed witch, and know to stay well away.
Fairy king Arawn’s dogs were often described as glittering and bright white. The canine companions shown here are White Swiss Shepherds.

Lynn Theisen

Cat Among the Fairies, John Fitzgerald Anster, c. 1864.

Cows ★ In the Scottish Highlands, fairies were known to raise and care for cattle as humans do, though of course fairy cattle are thought to be of a superior breed. When the fairy bulls occasionally wandered off and mated
with earth-born cows, their valuable offspring could be distinguished from regular cattle by their rounded ears.

In *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, W. Y. Evans-Wentz tells of a fairy race called the Tylwyth Teg in Welsh folklore, a small, pretty people who loved to sing and dance and lived both in caves and lake bottoms. Near a lake close to Festiniog, a farmer found a group of fine cattle, unlike any he’d ever seen, and kept them a long time—until he committed some dishonest acts and the women of the Tylwyth Teg appeared, calling the cows by name and leading them all into the lake, where they disappeared below the surface and were never seen again.

**DEER** In Celtic folklore, deer are seen as highly magical, whether or not they are in fact enchanted humans (which tends to happen) or maidens or goddesses in disguise. In the Scottish Highlands, deer are overseen by the winter goddess Cailleach Bheur, who herds and milks them and protects them against hunters. In Tolkien’s Middle-earth, white deer (white animals are often associated with magic in Celtic myths) roam along the border between the realm of man and the realm of the wood elves in Mirkwood Forest; when white deer appear to Bilbo and the dwarves on their journey, it signals that they’re nearing the magical area of the wood elves. In Tolkien’s poem “The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun,” the korrigan (a Breton word for a fairylike creature) changes into a white hart and leads the hero to an enchanted spring.

Deer women can also be found in the mythology of southeastern Native American cultures. According to writer Carolyn Dunn, the Deer Woman is considered one of the “Little People,” who, she explains, fulfill a role in folklore similar to the fairies in European culture. The “little men” or “little people” are used as threats to children who misbehave: Be careful, or the little people will come and take you away. However, the little people are also the protectors of cultural heritage and keepers of knowledge from generation to generation. Specifically, Deer Woman in the Cherokee, Muskogee, Seminole, and Choctaw stories is associated with the magic of marriage and courtship.

**DOGS** Dogs are an integral part of the Wild Hunt, during which a supernatural group of huntsmen—elves, fairies, or the dead—race through
the woods on horses in wild pursuit of their prey. Stories of the Wild Hunt can be found throughout western European lore. The huntsmen might be flying or racing just above the ground, led by hounds most commonly described as either jet-black or white with red ears. In Wales the hounds are known as the Cŵn Annwn and are considered to be the dogs of the fairy king Arawn, lord of the Otherworld.

As if the hounds weren’t terrifying enough, in Scottish fairy myth the Cu Sith is a massive black or dark green dog who prowls the wilds. Sound or sight of this creature was said to be a harbinger of death. Dogs could also be more benign fairy companions. In *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887), Jane Francesca Wilde, mother of Oscar and poet who published under the pen name Speranza, wrote of the black dogs kept by the Tuatha Dé Danann, who would traverse from cave to cave via a coral-paved path in the sea. Fishermen would report having seen a band of men with their black dogs passing underneath their boats.

**FOXES** * The idea that foxes are supernatural or fairylike creatures is more prevalent in Eastern culture. The Japanese Kitsune, Chinese Huli Jing, and Korean Kumiho are all shape-shifting, supernatural fox creatures with the capability to appear human. The Kitsune gains the ability to shape-shift after living for a hundred years. It can have up to nine tails, and, whether it’s male or female, it most often takes the human form of a young woman. The Huli Jing also has nine tails and a similar appearance, and its name literally means “exquisite fox.” But while the Kitsune and Huli Jing will often appear as wise and beneficial creatures, the Kumiho is almost always an evil creature, frequently with a taste for human flesh.
Foxes are often represented as sly and cunning in folklore, often employing their trickster ways to get out of difficult situations—and, here, into fair maiden arms.

*Marketa Novak*
**Horses** The more elegant fairy types, never traditionally depicted with wings, loved to move about on horses. The dazzling Tuatha Dé Danann, Sidhe, or elves of the fae did not ride ordinary horses, but sleek ones made of fire and flame, shod in silver and outfitted with golden bridles. In the story of Thomas the Rhymer, a thirteenth-century Scottish soothsayer who became the eponymous protagonist of a Child ballad, the Queen of Faerie is astride a “milk-white” horse with a mane tinkling with fifty-nine silver bells. The captured-human hero Tam Lin from the Scottish ballad of the same name tells his human love to wait for the Fairy Court to pass by on their horses, and then to pull him down from his own “milk-white steed.”

A less luminous example of a fairy horse is the kelpie, a fairy creature with the appearance of a horse who lurks by ponds waiting to lure the
unsuspecting human onto his back. He then will dive into the deep pond and drown the poor mortal.
In legend and lore, fairy horses sometimes transport humans back and forth to fairyland. But take care: dismounting a fairy horse too soon can leave a human stranded between the two worlds.

Hunter Leone/Three Nails Photography

**SEALS** In the Scottish Isles and elsewhere, seals may not always be what they appear. They could very possibly be shape-shifting selkies, or seal maidens, who can shed their seal skins to become human, then transform back as they wish. If a human manages to snatch a seal skin when a selkie is in human form, the selkie is bound to him or her—until it manages to get its skin back and return, once again, to the sea.
II. Fashion & Beauty
Titania Sleeps; A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Frank Cadogan Cowper, 1928.

Private Collection/Bridgeman Images
FAIRY QUEENS: STYLE ICONS of the FAIRY REALM
GRETA GARBO, RITA HAYWORTH, MARILYN Monroe—these stars from Hollywood’s golden age radiated an ethereal glamour, an allure that captivated the world. Yet none of them could hold a candle to the extraordinary beauty and bewitching appeal of the stars of fairy history. Fairies, after all, practically invented the word “glamour.” The modern definition of “elegance and attractiveness” pales when compared to the word’s original meaning: to cast an actual spell of enchantment over someone, so that nothing is quite as it appears but is dazzling nonetheless. Sir Walter Scott (who anglicized and popularized the word, which stemmed from the Scottish gramarye) used it in his 1805 poem “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”: “You may bethink you of the spell / Of that sly urchin page; / This to his lord he did impart / And made him seem, by glamour art, / A knight from Hermitage.”
Alfred, Lord Tennyson described Enid in “Idylls to the King,” the narrative poem that is his retelling of the story of King Arthur, as: “That maiden in the tale, / Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers.”

But the fairy queens were more than singularly glamorous; the greatest of them were powerful women who had an innate ability to mesmerize others and really own a room—or forest glade, as the case may be. When the queen spoke, all fairies—and any captive humans—listened ecstatically to their melodic voices, even if those voices were commanding them to slay dragons or the like. Their style was effortless: if they floated across dance floors at midnight masquerades wearing gowns spun out of moon and stars, then dresses made from gold and sunlight became instantly passé. Of course, they themselves were too busy defeating their enemies or luring humans to fairyland to care about courtly trends. When they weren’t leading the Wild Hunt by moonlight on horses whose manes were braided with silver bells, that is.

Here are portraits of the most beguiling ruling ladies—highlighting the beauty, sense of style, and bewitching personality that have made them iconic figures for fairies and females of the human persuasion alike.

**Morgan le Fay**

This sultry enchantress made her dazzling debut in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Vita Merlini* (c. 1150) as simply Morgan (“le Fay” was added by Malory in *Le Morte d’Arthur* three centuries later), one of nine sisters ruling the island of Avalon. She was the most alluring of the sisters, not to mention the most skilled in the healing art of herbs and able to cure illnesses. She could also change her shape whenever she wanted to and “cleave to the air on new wings,” flitting about wherever she liked. And she possessed great intelligence: in her spare time, she taught her sisters math, just for kicks.

Monmouth made le Fay a star, and his portrayal of her influenced her place in countless literary and visual portraits since. It was in Malory’s later telling and in those following it that Ms. le Fay became a difficult diva who connives to murder King Arthur (in some accounts, Arthur is her half brother) after he kills a knight she loves. But she always keeps her wits
about her. When, after learning that her beloved has died by Arthur’s hand in *Le Morte d’Arthur*, “outward she kept her countenance, and made no semblant of sorrow. But well she wist an she abode till her brother Arthur came thither, there should no gold go for her life.” She finds Arthur in an abbey of nuns, and, intending to steal Excalibur, his sword, she ends up taking his scabbard instead. Arthur wakes and, furious upon learning why his scabbard is gone, chases after her, but with no luck: “When she espied him following her, she rode a greater pace through the forest till she came to a plain, and when she saw she might not escape, she rode unto a lake thereby, and said, Whatsoever come of me, my brother shall not have this scabbard. And then she let throw the scabbard in the deepest of the water so it sank, for it was heavy of gold and precious stones.” When Arthur and his men approach, she transforms into a piece of marble, and Arthur returns to the abbey empty-handed.

Like many Arthurian characters, le Fay has appeared in various forms and guises for centuries now, and can be good or bad, an evil, scabbard-stealing sorceress or a math-loving benevolent healer. But whether engaged in good or bad deeds, she always brought fairy glamour and a ferocious intelligence to her acts.

In the renowned 1864 portrait by Anthony Frederick Augustus Sandys, the talented troublemaker is positioned in front of a loom where she’s woven an enchanted, fashion-forward robe meant to consume King Arthur in flames. Her iconic style—and love of animal prints, color, and volume—is on full display, and perhaps echoes her ever-changing but always diva-esque nature.

*TITANIA* Fairy queen Titania makes her first appearance in act 2, scene 1 of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, when she sweeps onstage with her train of fairy servants just as the fairy king Oberon enters the stage with his own.

A fairy announces her entrance: “And here my mistress. Would that [Oberon] were gone!” before Oberon himself speaks: “Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.”

“What, jealous Oberon!” she says. “Fairies, skip hence: I have forsworn his bed and company.”

“Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?” Oberon asks.

“Then I must be my lady,” she responds.
Titania is a queen with attitude and a heart of gold under her tougher facade. At the play’s opening she and her king are fighting over a changeling child, but, despite all this bluster, it’s not a human child they’ve stolen but one that Titania’s watching over out of loyalty for the child’s dead mother. (Clearly, she’s much nicer than your typical child-stealing fairy of lore.) To retaliate, Oberon commands his servant Puck to drop the juice of a pansy on her eyes, so that she’ll awake and fall in love with the next being she looks upon—who happens to be the ass-headed Bottom. Titania then dotes on the ridiculous creature for much of the play. When, finally, Oberon gives her the antidote and she’s able to see things as they are again, she’s pretty even-tempered about it, and seems to be able to take a joke: “My Oberon! what visions have I seen! Methought I was enamour’d of an ass.” She asks Oberon to explain what’s happened, and the next time we see them, at the end of the play, they’re singing and dancing.
One of the play’s most luxurious images, though, is of Titania sleeping on “a bank where the wild thyme blows.” Arthur Rackham captures that moment in his 1908 illustration *Titania lying asleep* of the effortlessly elegant, loose-haired queen asleep on a forest floor, bathed in moonlight. Even in her gossamer pajamas she looks like royalty.
Galadriel ✷ The elven queen from *Lord of the Rings* is not only a bombshell, but as Tolkien writes, “the mightiest and fairest of all Elves that remained in Middle-earth.” In the Tolkien collection *Silmarillion*, he describes Galadriel as the “most beautiful of all the house of Finwë, her hair was lit with gold as though it had caught in a mesh the radiance of Laurelin.” Her elven tresses were, indeed, spectacular: “Even among the Eldar she was accounted beautiful, and her hair was held a marvel unmatched. It was golden like the hair of her father and of her foremother Indis, but richer and more radiant, for its gold was touched by some memory of the starlike silver of her mother; and the Eldar say that the light of the Two Trees, Laurelin and Telperion, had been snared in her tresses.”

Not every bombshell is able to snare tree light in her tresses, but Galadriel had numerous other powers and wasn’t afraid to get a bit dirty. As a young elf she was known as Nerwen, or “manchild,” for her boyish behavior and grew into an Amazon-like warrior queen. When her father’s people, the Noldor, attacked her mother’s people, the Teleri, Galadriel led a rebellion and fought ferociously on the side of the Teleri. “Even after the merciless assault upon the Teleri and the rape of their ships,” we read in *Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle-earth*, “. . . she fought fiercely against Fëanor in defence of her mother’s kin.” And during a battle to take Sauron’s fortress, recounted in the appendices of *Lord of the Rings*, she “threw down its walls and laid bare its pits.”
In the scene above, painted by chronicler Alan Lee, she’s a bit more subdued but no less powerful: it’s her magical fountain that reveals the past, present, and “yet to be” to Frodo and Sam, as she looks casually on, dressed simply, in all white, understated yet radiating with power.

Gloriana * In Edmund Spenser’s sixteenth-century epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*, Gloriana, the titular character, never actually appears, although many of the main characters are on a quest to her castle. Employing Gloriana as an allegory for Elizabeth I, Spenser savvily portrayed her allure by giving her great political power without disclosing any telling details of her personal life or physical self. While he had her seduce King Arthur (who, at the time, was only a prince), Spenser preserved her mystique by placing the tryst within the context of a dream—and it is Arthur’s dream, not hers.

In Book I, smitten Arthur tells the Redcrosse Night (who himself has slain a dragon for Gloriana) of his vision of their rapturous night and his dismay at her elusiveness:
When I awoke, and found her place devoyd,
And nought but pressed gras, where she had lyen,
I sorrowed all so much as earst I joyd,
And washed all her place with watry eyen.
From that day forth I lov’d that face divine;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mind,
To seeke her out with labour, and long tyne,
And never vow to rest till her I find,
Nine monethes I seeke in vain yet ni’ll that vow unbind.
This dream was also depicted by Henry Fuseli in his painting *Prince Arthur and the Fairy Queen* (1788), in which Gloriana is clad in fashionable eighteenth-century garb—silky and bare, with a long thick ribbon around her waist—and surrounded by a spirit entourage. She is, indeed, the quintessential girl that got away.

**Thomas the Rhymer’s Queen of Elfland** Thomas of Ercildoune was a real man from the thirteenth century, a Scottish soothsayer who was said to have received his knowledge from the elusive “Queen of Elfland.” From the next century on, he became the star of an oft-retold ballad “Thomas the Rhymer.” In the ballad, he’s lounging under a hawthorn tree (an act that *does* make such queens less elusive, according to lore, though in some versions he’s on a riverbank) when the unnamed “queen of fair Elfland” appears to him, “brisk and bold”:

Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantel of the velvet fine,
At ilka tett of her horse’s mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine.
True Thomas he took off his hat,
And bowed him low down till his knee:
“All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For your peer on earth I never did see.”
“O no, O no, True Thomas,” she says,
“That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
And I’m come here for to visit thee.”

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She’s not at all moved by his effusive greeting or his mistake, and identifies herself and her purpose in a straightforward manner. This is not a lady who needs to be coy. She continues, commanding Thomas to come with her. And then she “turned about her milk-white steed / And took True Thomas up behind.” No doubt she’s done this before! During the ride, she’s equally straightforward—and in charge. When Thomas asks to pick some fruit from a passing garden, she forbids it, explaining that the fruit is no good and that instead she has “a loaf here in my lap” and “a bottle of claret wine”; they’ll have those instead. Of course he does not argue. After they eat, she shows Thomas three roads: the narrow road to heaven, the wide road to hell, and a third one, “which winds about the fernie brae.” This, she explains, is the road to her place, fair Elfland, where they will go.

For seven years, Thomas is her guest, and at the end of this time, she lets him go, apparently having had her fill (though in some versions, she does so to save him, when the fairies’ tithe to Satan is due). But not until she gives him “a coat of the even cloth / And a pair of shoes of velvet green.”

Not much is known about this irresistible, dominating enchantress, who flies through forests, taking whatever she wants, without a thought about decorum. The poor soothsayer doesn’t even attempt to resist her charms. At least she gifts him with stylish clothing and the inability to tell a lie for his service (clearly she likes her men as honest as herself, not to mention well dressed).

Contemporary painter, illustrator, and fantasy artist Kinuko Y. Craft captures the queen’s irresistible allure. Not only does the queen love bold colors—and is unafraid to mix lime green with yellow, not to mention has a penchant for silk, lace, flowing capes, and what may or may not be leather straps—but she literally glows. A regular man-stealing ride through the forest is enough reason for her to deck herself, and her horse, in jewels—and to bring along some bread and wine, just in case.

*La Belle Dame sans Merci* In John Keats’s ballad “La Belle Dame sans Merci” (1819), which may have been inspired by “Thomas the Rhymer,” a knight meets a fairy woman of unearthly beauty. He says:

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery’s child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

The knight is instantly besotted, and woos her with a “garland for her head, and bracelets too,” knowing that no fairy can resist a fashionable flower accessory. Enraptured, he carries her off on his horse, but La Belle Dame Sans Merci has other plans, thank you very much. As they ride, she hypnotizes him with her songs, causing him to head to her bower, where she lulls him to sleep and then disappears, leaving him mad with longing. Unfortunately for him, he also dreams of all the “pale kings and princes too” that the lady has enchanted—and pilfered more jewelry from, no doubt. She won’t be tied down, she takes what she wants without regret—alas, she’s a ravishing, grifting, heart-shredding siren.

In his painting La Belle Dame sans Merci (c. 1901), English Victorian painter and illustrator Sir Frank Dicksee presents a beautiful, soft portrait that masks the vixen within, except for her long red hair. La Belle Dame enchanted many other painters, too, including Pre-Raphaelites Frank Cadogan Cowper, John William Waterhouse, Arthur Hughes, Henry Meynell Rheim, and Walter Crane—none of whom were dissuaded by the lesson of Keats’s sad tale.
La Belle Dame sans Merci, Frank Dicksee, c. 1901.

Wikimedia Commons: 1913: given by Mrs. Yda Richardson
MODERN FAIRY COUTURE
**ROBE SOMNIFÈRE** This purple poppy dress is made of patterned and brown paper with tassels made from the *papaver somniferum*, or opium poppy, the seeds of which have the power to make all those around the wearer fall into a deep but fashionable slumber.

*Dieter Krehbiel*

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**ROBE COULEUR DU SOLEIL** This distressed dress, which mimics the color of the rising sun, is spun from craft paper and patterned paper painted with gouache and gold, and accented with cardboard jewels.

*Dieter Krehbiel*
**Modern Fairies Have a Taste for Haute Couture**

Modern fairies have a taste for haute couture, collecting miniature replications of the latest clothing and accessories, whether frocks made from the freshest blooms harvested under the full moon or silvery, intricate dew-dazzled crowns constructed of the tiniest, lightest, flight-friendliest diamonds and pearls.

They have been spotted now and again at Paris Fashion Week, whether crashing the runway shows of the most revered ateliers, using their enviable size to stake out prime front-row spots, or occasionally appearing on the runway itself, stowing themselves in the brim of an outrageous Stephen Jones hat or resting in the swirl of a pinned blossom. One high-profile front-row denizen related to *Women’s Wear Daily* that when Alexander McQueen debuted his Sarabande collection for spring/summer 2007, which featured entire gowns made of fresh blooms, a phalanx of fairies erupted into bell-like squeals and had to be escorted out.

Fortunately, some enterprising couturiers have started to design wholly botanical collections for the fairies, often using enormous magnifying glasses and minuscule tweezers to achieve the perfect petal curve. Others have found inspiration in more basic materials like paper, which can transform into the most charming silks and laces in an alchemist’s hands.

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*Robe de Fenaison* A dress for hay making, this stunner is made of light patterned paper and simple brown paper, with tassels of dried poppy seeds.

*Dieter Krehbiel*
Fairy couturier par excellence, Miss Clara, works from her atelier in Bordeaux, France, where she established her eponymous label in 2000. Her exquisite frocks, made almost entirely from paper, quickly became de rigueur among fashionable fae and have remained so ever since.

Miss Clara made her first paper dresses as a child, developing awe-inspiring expertise in crafting ordinary paper into the most delicate, swoon-worthy garments. In her deft hands, chocolate wrappers become diamonds; cigarette paper, lace; tissue paper, tulle; and tiny confetti balls, glimmering pearls. She often saves packing materials from parcels she receives in the mail or even uses ordinary papers and cardboard found at office supply stores. She says that it is the transformation of mundane, basic material into something delicate and precious that inspires her: “I’m not interested in making a beautiful dress out of a beautiful fabric; I’m interested in the world of magic and metamorphosis.”

Miss Clara begins by hand-painting her papers in rich, dusty colors in gouache, then treats them with a protective coating—a delicate, intensive process. Once the paper has been prepared, she constructs the garment, starting with a corset fashioned out of cardboard on a miniature mannequin, and building from there, adding layers and flourishes. She loves the intricate, feminine designs of eighteenth-century France, with their highly fitted corsets and full skirts lavishly detailed with flowers, ribbons, and lace, and often incorporates those elements into her one-of-a-kind couture that makes any fashion-forward fairy feel like a storybook princess. “I like to imagine that these are damaged dresses from another age,” she says, “and that I found them in an attic or a house long forgotten in a deep forest.”

In 2015, she began collaborating with Valerie Mille on more ambitious couture collections under the name Mille et Une. She sells postcards of her work throughout France, and also uses her stunning dresses and paper-crafted scenes mostly as a form of illustration for published fairy tale books, including *The Snow Queen* (2011), *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (2013), and *Princess and the Pea* (2013).
ROBE BLANCHE This airy peony dress made of cigarette and tissue paper, with threads of cotton, is as light as a feather and as fresh as a cloud.

Dieter Krehbiel

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Designer Sandra Alcorn fashioned her first couture fairy gown in 2011, after spying a dress shape in the ruffle-mad aquilegia in her garden outside her vintage studio in Tasmania, Australia, which now serves as a base for her luxury fashion house petal & pins.

In Alcorn’s hands, rose petals become lustrous silk, iris petals, velvet; peonies, floaty chiffon layers. She is constantly creating new looks, which the fairies are wild for and which humans can enjoy in swoon-worthy collections of cards and prints. She draws inspiration from vintage Dior, with cinched waists and full skirts with petal layers, ruffles and flourishes, or sultry body-hugging silhouettes with sweeping trains, foliage embroidery, and intricate, décolletage-revealing bodices. There are also flirty geranium sundresses for summers on the Côte d’Azur, a boho tunic from a patchwork of lilac, japonica, and roses for scouring Paris flea markets, and a camellia wedding dress collection if the fashionista fairy ever decides to accept a proposal from one of her many suitors. “I think of my work as fleeting botanical architecture,” Alcorn says, “devoted to the beauty of the fairy body.” After each piece is done and photographed, she scatters the petals back into her garden. People have suggested she press the frocks, she says, but “the ephemeral nature of them is an intrinsic part of my design practice!”
Sandra Alcorn fashions her fairy couture from cream hydrangea.

*Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins*
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: pink hellebore.

Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: waratah.

*Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins*
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: pink roses.

*Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins*
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: grape hyacinth.

*Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins*
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: crimson hellebore.

*Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins*
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: red roses.

*Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins*
Another example of Alcorn’s stunning couture crafted from flowers: pansies.

_Sandra Alcorn/petal & pins_
LES FLEURS ANIMÉES
LES
FLEURS

I. Grandville

Planches et Epilogie

Alphonse Marie de Tassy

ARTS
Published just months after his death in 1847, Parisian illustrator J. J. Grandville’s decadent gift book, *Les Fleurs Animées* (“Flowers Personified”), features a dizzying array of stylish ladies showing off the latest in courtly flower fashions (or stylish flowers taking on the form of ladies, if you will).

There are voluminous tulip-petal skirts, décolletage-revealing rosebud bodices, violet headdresses, and sharp-edged thistle dresses for the more avant-garde, each appearing in a hand-colored illustration. The text by Taxile Delord reflects on the fleetingness of the world of floral fashion in statements like these:

*Yesterday it was the syringa; to-morrow it will be the liverwort. The jessamine, the honeysuckle, the mint, the hawthorn, the hollyhock, and the gilliflower, have had each its turn.*

*Eight days since, the magnolia was in the height of fashion. I could not name all the flowers which have reigned during the intervening period.*

*Its power does not last a season, a month, a week, or a day, — but only an evening, or while the ball continues.*

*We are in the mid-sea of eclecticism. Each one makes his own gods, and worships them. Each chooses his own flower.*
The flowers themselves are sick of being subject to the flights of human fancy, as it happens, and visit the Flower Fairy to complain:

For thousands of years we have supplied mankind with their themes of comparison; we alone have given them all their metaphors; indeed, without us poetry could not exist . . . . We are tired of this flower-life. We wish for permission to assume the human form, and to judge, for ourselves, whether that which they say above, of our character, is agreeable to truth.

Though the exasperated Flower Fairy makes inarguable points like “Have you not, for your adornment, diamonds of dew,” the flowers will not be dissuaded. “The dew makes me take cold,” the Belle de Nuit answers, with a yawn. The wild rose longs to be an author; the corn poppy, a shepherdess. And so the fairy changes them all to ladies—but takes her revenge. The next morning, her garden is a desert, with only one flower, the “Heath-plant,” remaining.

Grandville published several other collections of work that featured flora and fauna in human situations, like his Les métamorphoses du jour (1828–29), in which men with animal faces cavort, but it was in Les Fleurs Animées that his penchant for fairy fashion took bloom.
Page from J.J. Grandville’s *Les Fleurs Animées*, 1847.
Page from J.J. Grandville’s Les Fleurs Animées, 1847.
COBBLENS of the FAIRY REALM

FAIRY SHOES

The little shoes that fairies wear
Are very small indeed;
No larger than a violet bud,
As tiny as a seed.

The little shoes that fairies wear
Are very trim and neat;
They leave no tracks behind for those
Who search along the street.

The little shoes of fairies are
So light and soft and small
That though a million passed you by
You would not hear at all.

—ANNETTE WYNNE
All Through the Year: Three Hundred and Sixty-Five New Poems for Holidays and Every Day, 1932

MICHEL TCHEREVKOFF
Four glamorous shoe fleurs by Michel Tcherevkoff. *Clockwise, from top left:* the Salvatore, made from carnation flowers and stems; the Lily White, from white lily flowers, stems, and pistils; the Sakura, from white and pink cherry blossoms and their branches; and the BowPeep, from eustoma petals and leaves as well as tulip leaves and stems.

When French photographer Michel Tcherevkoff reviewed an image of a leaf he’d shot for a client, he thought it looked just like a shoe. He scanned the image and added a heel—and his first *shoe fleur* was born. He then began creating shoes from real flowers and leaves, scouring the flower markets next to his New York studio for the lushest, most fairy-eseque blooms and letting their forms, colors, and textures dictate “what they want to become.” He hand-assembles and photographs each creation from every angle and in various lighting. While the shoes themselves have fleeting lives, his studio smells wonderful for weeks after, he says. While not the first artist to be obsessed with the notion of utilizing flowers to craft fantasy shoes, Tcherevkoff’s work is exceptional. He published a book of his work, *Shoe Fleur: A Footwear Fantasy*, in 2008 and exhibits his *shoe fleur* images in
galleries and museums worldwide—where special precautions are taken to prevent fairy stampedes.

MISS CLARA

Dieter Krehbiel

Dieter Krehbiel
Miss Clara’s **Cinderella Shoe** is made from paper fur, diamonds made of chocolate wrapper, and flowers constructed from old book pages and cardboard. Her **Summer Fairy Shoes**, made of paper and paper straw, are decorated with the most exquisite paper roses.
The Australian company Pendragon makes fairy and elven footwear for female and male humans, lashing together leaves and vines to form elemental boots and shoes. Sometimes they weave in pieces of gorgeous brocades, tapestries, and lace for royal or special occasions.
How to Make a Fairy Flower Crown

—Tricia Saroya

Wearing a flower crown is not a fashion statement reserved exclusively for the young, although it has long been associated with spring rites, maidenhood, and purity. Fairies love to pretend they’re innocent, even if they’re full of mischief. Here are instructions to make a beguiling crown for yourself.

Tools

- Hardy flowers and foliage (see Gather Materials)
- Wire cutter
- Spool of 24- or 26-gauge paddle wire
- Mister spray bottle filled with water

Gather Materials

Flowers and leaves must be hardy to handle being out of water for many hours. Wise choices include rosemary, roses, geranium, lavender, sage, alstroemeria, willow leaves, eucalyptus leaves and berries, waxflower, heather, salal leaves, jasmine flowers and vines, ivy, yarrow, mini carnations, leptospermum, fall leaves, bittersweet, or anything that is not paper thin.

Take a walk through a garden or nearby meadow and pick blossoms and foliage that catch your eye or make a trip to your favorite florist.

Set out your tools and materials on a workbench or table.
ASSEMBLE HEADPIECE

1. Cut a piece of wire about 1 inch larger than the circumference of your head, to have room to weave in flowers. Twist ends closed to make a complete circle.

Portada de Eleanor, Countess of Lauderdale, Angelica Kauffmann, c. 1780–1781.

Wikimedia Commons: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, The Rienzi Collection, museum purchase funded by the Rienzi Society

Tricia Saroya
2. Pull another length of paddle wire, about 4 to 5 inches long. Place a sprig of rosemary on the wire circle and attach with wire length, leaving about 2 inches to secure the end. Wrap the wire tightly over itself to secure to the wire circle. Do not cut; pass the paddle around the foliage and floral stems, letting out wire length as needed.

GET CREATIVE

3. Add more greens and flowers, allowing the new sprig or flower head to hide the wired stem of the previous one. Wrap the paddle of wire around each stem, anchoring it to the wire circle and pulling tightly each time.

4. Keep some sections green and add in a grouping of bright flowers. With some flowers and foliage, like lavender, you can wire an entire cluster at a time instead of one by one, thus saving a lot of energy. Soft-stemmed
flowers can also be wired as a group, while woody stems must be wired one by one to keep stems from slipping out.

5. Adjust the flowers as you go, adding some to the side and some on the bottom to make sure there are no gaps or any wire is showing from the side view. The only visible wire should be on the inside.

**FINISHING TOUCHES**

6. Keep going until almost to the end, then wire a couple of sprigs of rosemary headed the other way to cover the ending stems. You can also add in a few long strands of ivy or other trailing foliage to cascade down the back.
7. After the last flower is in place and you are back at the beginning of the circle, cut the wire and twist the ending piece together with the 2 inches of length from the beginning. Tuck the last bit of wire into the flowers and foliage so that it doesn’t poke your head.

8. Once you complete the crown, give it a good mist and place it in the refrigerator (not the freezer!) until you’re ready to play. Once you put it on, the crown will stay fresh for several hours.
Take the Fair Face of Woman, and Gently Suspending, with Butterflies, Flowers, and Jewels Attending, Thus Your Fairy Is Made of Most Beautiful Things, Sophie Gengembre, c. 1880.

Art Renewal Center
GARBED in the GARDEN
Alexander McQueen’s Sarabande dress from his spring/summer 2007 collection was made of nude silk organza and embroidered with both fresh and silk flowers.

*Anthea Simms*

A profusion of thriving blooms spill from the waist of her gown to the grass at her feet, scattering petals on the grass behind her. Moss erupts across the bodice and shoulder. And the fragrance is redolent of an enchanted bower in a moon-drenched forest grove. It’s a frock fit for a fairy queen, yet, however impossible it may seem, it fits the human form.

Some florists and the occasional fairy-mad couturier have experimented in concocting extraordinary, fairy-tale-worthy dresses made entirely from live plants for humans. These scented gowns might fade by the time the clock strikes midnight, but they look and smell terribly fetching beforehand. Some designers are creating frocks for the garden, too, using metal dress forms as trellises from which to cultivate a stunning floral gown topiary. You can even try making one yourself; then no fairy would be able to resist paying a visit.

*The Floral Embroidery of Zita Elze* Designer Zita Elze was teaching a concept and design class at her design school in Kew, England, when she discovered how to translate her method of utilizing fresh flowers, berries, and other natural materials to adorn objects to a piece of material. That revelation quickly led to the launch of her collection of floral embroidery designs at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2009. Since then, she has inspired numerous other young florists to do the same. Mostly a creator of bridal gowns, she works with a refinement and level of intricacy that rivals the best petites mains of Paris’s esteemed couturiers.
Elze uses a range of delicate plant material for the gowns—rosebuds, tiny flower heads, seed heads, seeds, delicate foliage, shells, and more. “It’s the blend of textures and the attention to detail that create a magic effect,” she says. She starts work months before a wedding, sketching the dress and making up the material base before sourcing the materials and putting it all together. About a week before, she works with a team of up to five florists to assemble a skirt of either skeletonized leaves or Stipa grass. A couple of days before the wedding itself, she adds the fresh floral embroidery bodice to the dress.
Zita Elze’s Sleeping Beauty dress is made of fresh roses, hyacinths, delphiniums, hydrangeas, and wax flowers.

James Merrell

Zita Elze’s Stipa dress is stitched by hand using thousands of tiny bundles of stipa grass. The bodice is adorned with hundreds of tiny roses interspersed with berries and other fresh flowers.
A detail of Elze’s Sleeping Beauty dress, which is crafted from fresh roses, hyacinths, delphiniums, hydrangeas, and wax flowers.

James Merrell

LADIES OF THE GARDEN ♦ Pam Yokoyama of 4 Seasons Painting and Landscaping in Chicago created her first living dress when she repurposed a Christmas tree too lovely to throw away, using a dress form she’d seen on
sale at a local craft store. She’s gone on to create seasonal, flirty gowns from pansies, chrysanthemums, autumn leaves and, most stunningly, a host of succulent plants—all on dress forms that she puts in the garden.
Pansy Lady by Pam Yokoyama, who fashions her creation from fresh flowers applied to a wire dress form.

*Phillip Tawanchaya*
Pam Yokoyama’s Succulent Lady.

Kristi Yokoyama
DEWDROPS: The FIRST ALL-NATURAL BEAUTY ELIXIR

— Paul Himmelein

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT A GARDEN IN THE FIRST light of morning and admire the fairies’ handiwork. Dew drops, “gems of morning,” as Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge called them in his poem “Youth and Age” (1834), are as clear as any diamond topping Marie Antoinette’s tiara and as luminous as any pearl perched upon Catherine the Great’s crown. In Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Puck greets a passing fairy and asks her whither she goes.

The fairy tells him exactly what she’s up to:

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire.
I do wander everywhere
Swifter than the moon’s sphere.
And I serve the Fairy Queen
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be.
In their gold coats spots you see.
Those be rubies, fairy favors.
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip’s ear.

This pixie that speaks to Puck is a special breed of fairy—a dew fairy. Her responsibility is to decorate the Fairy Queen’s flowers with pearls of dew, which can transform a mere blade of grass into a jewel-encrusted sword or a spider’s web into a festooned bib necklace. In a fairy tale written during the American Civil War—“The Dew-Fairies” by Margaret T. Canby, from Birdie and His Fairy Friends: A Book for Little Children—the fairies are as light as thistledown and wear thin floating dresses of silvery green and tiny crowns made of dew and are very merry and busy. As the dew fairies dance, dew showers down from their hands and hair like shiny silver beads to cool the grass and flowers after the heat of the day. They chase away a spider with a maelstrom of dew while stringing his web with glistening droplets as fine as lace.

Perhaps because of its enchanted qualities, dew has also been a sought-after health and beauty aid for centuries. From ancient Roman times well into the twentieth century, pure morning dew was rubbed into the skin to improve the complexion, fade freckles, and remove warts. While dew from the hawthorn tree was said to preserve one’s looks, there were devotees who believed that when dew was collected from other sources, such as ivy leaves or the grass beneath an oak tree, its benefits were different, thus addressing other beauty issues.

Elisabeth Pepys (1640–1669), the wife of Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), a member of British Parliament, was obsessed with incorporating dew into her beauty regimen. Her husband’s diaries even cite her repeated nighttime excursions to collect May dew specifically as it was believed to be the best of the year. Though concerned about her safety gallivanting through dew-soaked fields in the wee morning hours, Pepys refused to interfere with his wife’s beauty routine. He wrote:

28 May 1667—After dinner my wife away down with Jane and W. Hewer to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre, and to lie there tonight, and so gather May-dew to-morrow morning, which
Mrs. Turner hath taught her as the only thing in the world to wash her face with; and I am contented with it.

10 May 1669—Troubled, about three in the morning, with my wife’s calling her maid up, and rising herself, to go with her coach abroad, to gather May-dew—which she did; and I troubled for it, for fear of any hurt, going abroad so betimes, happening to her; but I to sleep again, and she came home about six, and to bed again, all well.

In his *Natural History of Ireland* (1652), Dr. Gerard Boate gives instructions on how “English women, and gentlewomen in Ireland” collected and preserved dew. He wrote:

In the month of May especially, and also in part of the month of June, they would go forth betimes in the morning, and before Sun-rising, into a green field, and there either with their hands strike off the Dew from the tops of the herbs into a dish, or else throwing clean linnen clothes upon the ground, take off the Dew from the herbs into them, and afterwards wring it out into dishes; and thus they continue their work untill they have got a sufficient quantity of Dew according to their intentions. That which is gotten from the grass will serve, but they chuse rather to have it from the green corn, especially Wheat, if they can have the conueniency to do so, as being perswaded that this Dew hath more vertues, and is better for all purposes, than that which hath been collected from the grass or other herbs. The Dew thus gathered they put into a glass bottle, and so set it in a place where it may have the warm Sun-shine all day long, keeping it there all the summer; after some dayes rest some dregs and dirt will settle to the bottom; the which when they perceive, they pour off all the clear Dew into another vessel, and fling away those settlings . . . doing this all summer long, untill it be clear to the bottom. The dew thus thoroughly purified looketh whitish, and keepeth good for a year or two after.
The potent May dew, particularly that which was collected on May 1 itself, was practically considered a magical potion, bringing immunity to freckles, sunburn, peeling, and wrinkles for an entire year. In Ireland, it was thought to have the power to transform a plain Jane into a beauty, especially if she rolled around in it naked at sunrise.
FAIRY DUST

Everyone knows that fairies shimmer and glitter and blow up clouds of twinkly dust wherever they go. Tinker Bell is especially famous for being heavy-handed when it comes to sparkle, much to the chagrin of fashion editors everywhere. But she’s not stingy with the substance, and has been known to fling it onto children so that they can fly alongside her in the night sky. The most famous episode of this sort occurred in 1911, when she was spotted hovering about a London bedroom out of which four children (including one green-clad boy claiming he would never grow up) flew out after her, according to witnesses.

Other magical creatures occasionally make use of the substance; rumor has it that Cinderella’s fairy godmother was no stranger to fairy dust and went through several vats of it to transform the waif’s dirty rags into a dreamy ball gown. The fairy-dust trend continues today among the showier of magic-loving witches, fairies, mermaids, and elves.

In truth, the dust itself was an invention of Peter Pan scribe J. M. Barrie, who added it into the stage version of his 1904 play after reports of impressionable children who—after seeing the play or hearing about it—attempted to fly from their beds, too. In his dedication to the play, first published in 1928, he explains: “After the first production I had to add something to the play at the request of parents (who thus showed that they thought me the responsible person) about no one being able to fly until the fairy dust had been blown on him; so many children having gone home and tried it from their beds and needed surgical attention.”

In popular culture, fairy dust has been in and out of fashion. It most notably had a resurgence during the age of disco in the late 1970s, when clouds of the glimmering substance, a combination of glitter and powder and imagined fairy glamour, illuminated revelers at clubs like New York City’s Studio 54, often setting off smoke alarms. Urban legend has it that an
innocent passerby went blind after spotting a group of dancers bedazzled with the dust emerging from the club at dawn; reports of UFO sightings reportedly skyrocketed as well. Contemporary pop stars and glam rockers, including Freddie Mercury, Gary Glitter, David Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust, Stevie Nicks’s Gold Dust Woman, and Katy Perry, have stirred up some love for the dust now and again. True fairy lovers have continued to sport the glimmering look no matter the prevailing fashion of the day. For them, fairy dust is always in style.
No true fairy lover should be without a bottle of fairy dust. Here’s one way to make the magical,
sparkly stuff.

**Materials**

- A small glass bottle (the older, the better) and a small piece of cork
- Colored glitter
- One wish written on a scrap of parchment paper
- Collection of trinkets, vintage keys, dried flowers or herbs (optional)
- A piece of thin crystal, ribbon, and label (optional)

**Make the Dust**

1. Fill your bottle to the halfway point with glitter.
2. Add dried herbs and flowers or sentimental trinkets, if desired.
3. Write your wish on a bit of parchment paper, roll up into a scroll, and place into the bottle.
4. Cork the bottle or cap with your chosen crystal to make it extra special. For added detail, write a little label to attach to the bottle, or thread it onto a piece of ribbon and tie it round the neck of the bottle.
5. Repeat the wish to yourself—and believe!
Twilight Dreams, Arthur Rackham, 1913.

University of Liverpool Art Gallery & Collections, UK/Bridgeman Images
ON FAIRY FRAGRANCES

—Lord Whimsy

Smell is the most powerful sense we have, particularly in terms of its ability to jog and preserve memory. No song or sight can match the potency of the perfume of a long-lost love or the aroma of our grandmother’s recipe for scones. A single whiff of a long-forgotten fragrance can invite a torrent of memory. Fragrance is the mind’s escape artist: just as that officious jailer Time nearly convinces us that a chapter of our previous life never actually happened, a scent skulks through the window and unlocks that very part of our lives. And because memory is linked to reverie and dreams, it should come as no surprise that fairies are nature’s greatest lovers of fragrance: it’s common knowledge that the fairies’ sense of smell is far more acute than our own.

Thus, fragrances have a far more powerful effect on their memories; in fact, some fragrances can have a mind-altering effect on fairies, and are often sought out for this purpose. If you have ever swooned upon inhaling a particular scent, you can understand why this might be.

So which fragrances do fairies seek? Well, I’ve conducted some interviews, and as one might imagine, their preferences will vary depending on region: fairies in cooler, darker climates will most often seek out the refreshing local “comfort scents” like wet mosses or the bark of cedars, while those in sunnier, warmer regions will seek out floral, fruity profiles. Of course like humans, it’s also common for fairies to seek out olfactory
novelties and rarities, whether it be a spice from the Far East or the drowsy aroma of a flowering vine that is in bloom only one night of the year. I’ve also found that one’s rather pedestrian scents about the house will send fairies into paroxysms of ecstasy. Recently I’ve found that the smell of toasting waffles is irresistible to fairies. (If you don’t believe me, try making yourself breakfast around a nearby colony of fairies. Be sure to have extra place settings ready.)

Now, this isn’t to say that there isn’t a cognoscenti among faeriedom. There are without question a few connoisseurs of scent who are frequent fliers, so to speak. You can tell by their drowsy expression and deliberate gait that these are explorers of the fairy consciousness: shamans, for lack of a better term. Just as some human oenophiles are blessed with an extremely acute sense of taste, there seems to be a class of fairy for whom the most spectral of senses are nothing less than a vehicle into the inner recesses of existence. These fairies are seeking the ultimate whiff.

The younger scent-seekers will start with your spice rack, so it’s best to keep it under lock and key, particularly the cinnamon. (One cannot overstate how much fairies love cinnamon: it’s been well documented that the urge to partake is wildly uncontrollable, sending some into hopeless addictions that can only be cured by dew fasts.) The more advanced, older Whiffers are far more subtle, and are sufficiently sophisticated in their tastes to eschew the merely pretty for the perverse: motor oil, glass cleaner, dirty socks, you name it. It’s been said that some of these voyagers have developed a predilection for the musky notes in the dander of German
shepherds. (It’s best not to ask how I know this: there is a shadowy, sordid side to this business that is perhaps best left unseen.)

All that aside, most fairies tend to be of a more wholesome bent, and will satisfy themselves with the scents found in your garden and home. If you wish to exchange fragrances with fairykind, you can leave out a tray of perfumes, soaps, and spices in the hopes that they might in turn share their own favorite scents with you.

There are rumors about fairy ointments derived from the ancient seeds of extinct woodland trees that had passed through the alimentary canals of giant sloths. A medieval Franciscan monk named Anthony of Parma was said to have been given a drop of this concoction, and was in a coma for twelve days—only to awake to find himself writing the last line of an indecipherable codex we now call the Voynich manuscript. He also discovered that he’d transformed into a woman, so be careful what you whiff for.
BATHING *in* FAIRY STYLE
Steam filled the bathroom. I stared and stared into the water, as if it were fire. With the potion suffusing it, the water was the color of a river, a deep yellowish green. I breathed in. The scent curled around me.

I stepped into the tub, lowered myself in. Instantly I felt better.

All my old loves will be returned to me, I thought.

I relaxed and lifted my arms out of the water, one at a time, to watch it drip down my skin. I moved my palms across the surface and over my stomach, up my breastbone and to my neck. Everything seemed to slow down. The water pressed into me, filled every pore.

I was alone, finally, completely free, I leaned forward and unclenched my back. A pure feeling of bliss moved through me.

My wings unfurled. White feather by white feather, curving out and up toward the ceiling, spreading to their full span, like two halves to one heart, until they tapped the walls.

—CAROLYN TURGEON, from Godmother, 2009

Fairies themselves aren’t known for bathing, other than the occasional frolic in dew, but they love pools of water, have a sincere fondness for milk and cream, and spend the bulk of their time in the presence of dreamy, fragrant flowers and herbs. So fairy-aspiring humans might sometimes indulge in a fairy-inspired bath, which is the perfect place to lean back and dream of a more enchanted world—or to pay attention to this real one and the enchantment, sometimes hidden, therein.
**THE PERFECT FAIRY BATH** Set the scene with low lights and candles, favorite music or even a soundtrack of forest sounds or rain.

Pour a few cups of whole milk, cream, or almond milk into the bathwater (Cleopatra used to bathe in only milk, by the way), and perhaps a few tablespoons of honey.

Add a few drops of your favorite essential oil—or relaxing lavender, bergamot, or rose.

Scatter in fresh herbs and organic flower petals with healing properties and make sure the plants you choose are not toxic or nonorganic. Good choices include lavender and chamomile flowers (for relaxation, good sleep), rosemary (for tired muscles and to improve energy), fresh rose petals (for general systemic healing and alleviating depression), and white sage (cleansing, reducing negativity).

How clear she shines! How quietly

I lie beneath her guardian light;

While heaven and earth are whispering me,

“Tomorrow, wake, but, dream to-night.”

Yes, Fancy, come, my Fairy love!

These throbbing temples softly kiss;

And bend my lonely couch above

And bring me rest, and bring me bliss.

—**EMILY BRONTË**, “How Clear She Shines,” 1846
Iris, John Atkinson Grimshaw, 1886.

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery) UK/Bridgeman Images
FAIRY WINGS
Modern-day fairies tend to be delicate creatures with shimmering, gossamer wings that flutter behind them. This statement doesn’t apply to all fairy types, however, as your typical troll wouldn’t be caught dead in wings.

Fairies in traditional folklore didn’t have wings, and were wingless in medieval romances and in Elizabethan drama as well, even if they could occasionally fly. It wasn’t until Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* (1714) that fairies were described as having pretty wings:

Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,  
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold.  
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,  
Their fluid bodies half dissolv’d in light,  
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,  
Thin glitt’ring textures of the filmy dew;  
Dipp’d in the richest tincture of the skies,  
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,  
While ev’ry beam new transient colours flings,  
Colours that change whene’r they wave their wings.

Thomas Stothard’s illustrations for the poem later in the century included the same kind of ultraglamorous iridescent insect wings described here and set the tone for fairy art—and fairy fashion—afterward.
**Under the Ivy** Helen Nevett of Under the Ivy is known for her delicate wing jewelry that appears to be made from cicada or dragonfly wings covered in a beautiful layer of glitter. Although she makes wings for headpieces, earrings, necklaces, and hairpins, perhaps her most striking wings are the wearable ones, small and delicately spreading out from the center of the wearer’s back. Nevett has also collaborated with fairy sculptor Wendy Froud, creating the wings for some of Froud’s breathtaking creations.

**The Fancy Fairy** Angela Enos Jarman, aka the Fancy Fairy, is one of the foremost wing artists at work today. If you’ve seen large, iridescent fairy wings that seem to be made from material as thin as the skin of a soap bubble, you’ve likely seen her work. Her creations are worn on runways and featured in the music videos of some of today’s top artists. Many other wing artists have duplicated her technique of stretching an iridescent film over a metal wing skeleton, but none have mastered it like she has.
Dramatic fairy wings by Angela Enos Jarman, aka the Fancy Fairy.

McDua Photography and Sanda Zikic; © Sanda Zikic
FAIRY BEAUTY
Fairy beauty standards are quite different from human beauty standards. In the realm of Faerie, there is no such thing as a woman who is too curvy, too old, or too much or too little of anything to be beautiful, and for that we should admire them. Diversity is not just accepted, but appreciated. After all, this is a society where the same fairy court can have denizens ranging from two inches tall to twenty feet or more, and ranging in shape from the short, squat goblin to the tall and ethereal sidhe. To judge anyone based on some singular standard of attractiveness is not only silly but very gauche.

This same sort of diversity can be seen and celebrated in those who love and embrace fairy culture today. Attend a fairy festival and you’ll see a wide variety of sexes, ways of life, ages, ethnicities, and sizes represented and indeed, embraced. The magic of Faerie is for everyone to enjoy and appreciate.

This is not, however, to say that fairies don’t appreciate using natural cosmetics to shimmer up their appearance. Some fairies also have the advantage of using a magic known as a “glamour” to make themselves more pleasing to the human eye. We mortals may not have that advantage, but we can use cosmetics to create our own sort of glamour.

The closer to nature, the closer to Faerie. That’s a good rule of thumb to follow when choosing cosmetics. Try to choose brands with organic and natural ingredients as well as biodegradable packaging. Beyond that, the whimsy of the fairies would encourage you to play. Don’t go by the rules
presented in the fashion magazines, which change according to trends and cosmetic company marketing. Follow what you feel is beautiful for you.

In Faerie, there are no rules about cutting your hair once you reach a certain age. Ancient wise-women fairies wear their hair snow-white and pooling around their feet in luxurious piles. Each wrinkle on a woman’s face is revered as the sign of a memory, just as the beads and baubles collected on trolls’ tails tell stories of where they have been and what they’ve learned.

In Faerie—as it should be in the human world as well—all skin colors glow with equal beauty. Signs of ethnic difference are celebrated, and diverse heritages are embraced as different experiences in the same global fairy community.

Fairies, and a celebration of fairy culture, are all about the magic that can shine through in everyone. It’s about the glowing smile that can turn any face radiant, the shimmer of a beautiful fairy wing that can be worn by someone of any size.
MORI GIRLS, CHILDREN of the FOREST

JAPAN IS THE CULTURE OF BOTH MIYAZAKI’S mythic forests and trendsetting Tokyo. It’s a land of creative expression, and one very visible outlet for this expression is fashion. Over the last few decades, Japanese street fashion has developed a number of distinct and unique styles: Lolita, Dolly Kei, Ganguro, to name a few.

Mori Girl style, or Mori Kei, developed in the late 2000s, and is of particular interest to a forest-loving fairy-minded man or woman. Mori is the Japanese word for forest and Kei, the word for style—so the name of the fashion is literally “forest style.” A Mori Girl might have just walked out of a woodland fairy tale.

The Mori Girl basks in the beauty of nature and the bounty it brings.
The Mori Girl movement started on a Japanese social site called mixi. Inspired by a friend’s comment that she looked like a forest girl, a site user named Choco founded an official Mori Girl community in 2006, then wrote a list of sixty-two “rules” for a Mori Girl to follow. The list includes lovely, whimsical items like: “you like ponchos and boleros,” “you like pocket watches,” “you like necklaces with magnifying glasses or large designs,” “instead of regular buttons you like hand-made buttons,” “you like designs featuring animals,” “finding cute books at the bookstore makes you happy,” and “you like fluffy hats.” Since then, Choco has literally written the book on Mori style, *Mori Kei fashion & style book*, featuring photo shoots and additional wardrobe suggestions.

The Mori Girl wears loose, smocklike dresses and skirts in natural colors. She dresses for comfort and to blend in with the forest to which she belongs. But Mori is not only a type of fashion; it’s a lifestyle, with an idealized persona at its center. The Mori Girl lives on the edge of or in a forest, nestling down for the night in a cozy cottage or cabin. The forest animals are all very dear to her. You can find her picnicking among the shadowy trees or looking for flowers in a meadow to weave in a wreath for her long, wild hair. She loves creative pursuits and hobbies, and takes a camera with her on her jaunts to the woods as well as her forays to the city for its bookstores, vintage shops, or cafes. She also loves anything antique, and is fascinated by history.
The Mori Girl basks in the beauty of nature and the bounty it brings.

_Hakaryo with Amaris Photography_

She prefers the colder months of the year, because she gets to bundle up in even more layers and warm and cozy scarves. She enjoys going on adventures on her own, and she loves to notice the small things in life. Imagine a girl who has taken so many walks in her forest that she has lost all sense of time or urgency. She exudes the sweet naiveté of a fairy-tale princess. Eventually her love for the forest can make her transform into a part of it, and more enchanting elements enter her wardrobe, like antlers or faux fur. She loves fairy tales and dreams of becoming part of one.

Though Mori is associated with the Kōuenji district in Tokyo—largely due to its clusters of vintage and secondhand shops—Yuniya Kawamura, professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, and author of _Fashioning Japanese Subcultures_, visited Tokyo a few years ago and did not see any Mori Girls at all. Mori is a marginal culture, she says, compared to other fashion trends that have taken up the spotlight. And it’s one that has developed and thrived online, spreading to other parts of the world.
The Mori Girl may in truth actually live in the middle of a busy city, and never have a chance to visit the countryside. She may never actually manage to live up to every single one of the ideals her style embodies. If, however, in her deepest heart of hearts, the above descriptions sound like what she truly wants to be, then she is indeed a Mori Girl. And perhaps so are you.
How to Know If You’re a Fairy Girl

**CHOCO’S LIST OF “RULES” FOR MORI GIRLS INSPIRED** woodland-loving fashionistas everywhere. But fairy-loving girls seem to have a common set of attributes as well. Which of these describe you?

- You wish on every star you see.
- You love glitter, or anything shiny or iridescent.
- You fully embrace seasonal holidays, decorating from rafters to floorboards for Christmas, Halloween, Spring Equinox, and so on.
- You choose your fashion by the style, but also by the materials you wear: velvet, silk, chiffon!
- You want to make your mark on the world in a creative way, whether writing, painting, crocheting, or making sculpture.
- You dream of flying.
- The words “Once upon a time” still make you giddy.
- You reach into your pocket and find . . . pebbles, feathers, glass beads, totems.
- You love jewel tones. Or earth tones. Being harmonious with nature is vital.
- You still remember how to make a snow angel.
- Finding a unique old treasure at a thrift store, antique store, or garage sale gives you a thrill.
If you find a spider in your house, you carefully take it outside and then make a wish.

You wake up and think you feel the flutter of wings at your back.

You wear your hair long and wild. Or short and spiked with a thousand colors.

You tend to nest and you love to have the beautiful things you adore near you at all times.

You always want to learn new things.

You love animals and talk to them as if they were human.

The feeling of your skirt swishing around your ankles makes you feel like a princess.

You love to explore the world around you, whether it’s traveling to other countries or strolling in the woods at the end of your lane.

You leave little biodegradable treasures as gifts for the fairies when you’re in nature.

You love to make gifts for all your friends.

Your favorite perfumes come from nature—no chemical-laden mixed scents for you.

You love to get your hands in the dirt.

Everyone asks you what shapes you see in the clouds.

You come alive at the golden hour of twilight, or at night.

Myths and fairy tales somehow seem familiar to you.

You talk to plants and love to garden.

You try to see the beauty in everyone.

Dancing. You love dancing.

You go barefoot as soon as you can in the spring, and don’t put on shoes unless you must.
Imagination is more important to you than facts.

When the moon is full, you feel it call to you.

You are drawn to old things.

If you cook, you like to make comfort food, and things that smell delicious, like cinnamon, apples, butterscotch, fruit jam . . .

You see things that no one else seems to see.

You know not to tell anyone your name if you ever end up in Faerie.

Animals seem drawn to you, like they can trust you.

You always tear up when watching a production of *Peter Pan*, when Peter asks you to clap if you believe in fairies. And then you clap until your hands tingle.

You would rather wear a crown made of flowers than gemstones.

You celebrate the differences in people and find their uniqueness beautiful.

You like to take long bubble baths with aromatic essences in the water.

You’ve always just felt a little bit different from everyone else around you.

You believe you’re a fairy girl no matter how old you are.

Private Collection/Roy Miles Fine Paintings/Bridgeman Images
III. Arts & Culture
The Fairy Queen's Carriage, Richard Doyle, illustration from In Fairyland: A Series of Pictures from the Elf-World by William Allingham and Andrew Lang, 1870.

Private Collection/The Stapleton Collection/Bridgeman Images
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull’d in these flowers with dances and delight;

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
A Midsummer Night’s Dream, act 2, scene 1

WRITTEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 1590 AND 1597, A Midsummer Night’s Dream might be the quintessential fairy text, at least when it comes to romance and woodland enchantment. It’s hard to imagine a more luxuriant, dreamy setting than the silvery moonlit forest glade where the fairy king and queen and their servants frolic, dance and sing, quarrel, and play tricks on each other as well as the foolish mortals who stumble into their realm. Though the play itself focuses on three groups of characters—Theseus and his court in Athens, a group of actors hoping to perform at court, and the fairy folk in the forest—it’s the fairies who drive the plot and who’ve captured artists’ and fairy lovers’ imaginations ever since.

The play’s main character is arguably the mischief-making Puck, who is tasked by the fairy king Oberon with spreading love juice on the sleeping
eyelids of one of the human characters as well as on Titania, the fairy queen, with whom Oberon is quarreling over the fate of a changeling she’s taken. The juice will cause the sleeper to fall in love with the first person he or she sees upon waking. It’s Puck’s mistake with the human characters (he puts the love juice on the wrong person’s eyelids and madness ensues) and Titania’s casting her eyes on the ass-headed Bottom (another of Puck’s doings) that give the play its main plot points, humor, and magic. The character of Puck is drawn from old folklore—a classic hobgoblin and/or Robin Goodfellow, as he’s called in the play—that exists worldwide (the Old Norse *puki*, Irish *puca*, and Welsh *pwca*, are just a few examples).

As one fairy says:

    Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
    Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
    Call’d Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
    That frights the maidens of the villagery;
    Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
    And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
    And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
    Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
    Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
    You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
    Are not you he?
Poster advertising *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* performed by F.R. Benson’s Shakespearean Company at the Globe Theatre, c. 1890.

*Private Collection/Bridgeman Images*

A costume design by C. Wilhelm for fairies from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, produced by Robert Courtenidge at the Prince’s Theatre, Manchester, 1901.

*Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK/Bridgeman Images*
Like Puck, and often synonymous with Puck, Robin Goodfellow is an archetypal trickster figure who was always up to no good (though that all depended on his mood), who was especially popular in seventeenth-century British literature.

While Shakespeare drew from multiple sources for the play, mainly folk beliefs and medieval romance, most of the main plot was wholly imagined, which was unusual for him. And his romantic, diminutive fairies almost immediately became a convention of literature. As Alfred Nutt says in *The Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare* (1900), “Shakespeare’s vision stood by itself, and was accepted as the ideal presentment of fairydom which, for two centuries at least, has signified to the average Englishman of culture the world depicted in the *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.” The play’s subject matter was a special favorite of the nineteenth-century fairy painters, who loved its otherworldly yet deeply sensual imagery, especially of Titania sleeping on her flower-strewn bank, the argument between Titania and Oberon as they’re surrounded by their retinues, and the scenes of love-struck Titania weaving flowers in the ass-headed Bottom’s hair. Of course, the lavish setting itself inspired artists as much as anything else. The play was also wildly popular on the stage—and still is—inspiring opulent sets with gauzy curtains, misty lighting effects, giant panoramas, toadstools that spring onto the stage, and dozens of goblins and fairies with flashing lamps on their wands and in their hair that look like fireflies.
Titania and Bottom, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, John Fitzgerald Anster, 1882.

*Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images*
TAKEN BY *the* FAIRIES
While *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* might be the fairy story par excellence, the real dirt can be found in Robert Kirk’s 1691 exposé *The Secret Commonwealth: An Essay on the Nature and Actions of the Subterranean (and for the Most Part) Invisible People, Heretofore Going under the Name of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies*. The title might be a mouthful, but this Episcopalian minister preached the church’s teachings by day and, by night, rounded up the latest gossip from his parishioners who believed in the “middle” people as feverishly as they did the Bible. For Kirk, the two belief systems were not at odds, which was unusual not only for his own time but for almost any time. He was a seventh son—and therefore had the “second sight” that allows humans to see fairies—and was said to have communed with fairies himself on the Fairy Knowe (also known as Doon Hill) in his parish of Aberfoyle, Scotland.

In the essay, Kirk discusses all manner of fairy life, waxing romantic on their substance: “somewhat of the nature of a condensed cloud and best seen in twilight.” He describes eating habits (they love funeral banquets, for one), forms of travel (“their chameleon bodies swim in the air; near the earth with bag and baggage”), dwellings (in which they use “continual lamps and fires, often seen without fuel to sustain them”), rulers and laws (aristocratic), weapons (made of stone and with the nature of thunderbolts), vices (envy, spite, hypocrisy, lying, and dissimulation), and more. Fairy society more or less seems to mimic human society—with a lot of magic thrown in. Fairy women, for example, “are said to spin very fine, to dye, to tissue and embroider,” though whether they do this work with “apt and solid instruments,” or only “curious cobwebs, impalpable rainbows, and a fantastic imitation of the actions of the more terrestrial mortals,” he does not know, as such distinctions transcend the talents of human seers.

*The Secret Commonwealth* was not published until 124 years after it was written, in 1815, when novelist, playwright, poet, and fairy lover Sir
Walter Scott sponsored its printing. In 1893, it was then reprinted with a long introduction by folklorist and writer Andrew Lang, by which time the manuscript itself had mysteriously disappeared from the Advocate’s Library of Scotland.

According to legend, spying on the fairies came with a price. When Kirk was found dead on the Fairy Knowe in Aberfoyle in 1692, rumor quickly spread that the body was only a fairy trick; Kirk himself had been taken by the fairies and now resided with them under the hill. Sir Walter Scott tells the story more dramatically in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830). He writes of how Kirk sunk down in a fit of apoplexy that the “unenlightened took for death” but was in actuality produced by the “supernatural influence of the people whose precincts he had violated.” After Kirk’s funeral, his apparition appeared to a relative, commanding him to go to their cousin Grahame of Duchray and let him know that Kirk was not dead but a captive in fairyland—with only one chance of escape. Kirk would appear at his own child’s baptism, at which point Duchray had to throw a dagger over Kirk’s head to restore him to the human world. Duchray agreed, but when the apparition actually appeared as promised at said baptism, Duchray was so astonished he failed to throw the dagger—and so Kirk was “lost forever” to the fairies.

These days, people visit Kirk’s empty grave and leave tokens for him, and for the fairies, on the hill where he was taken.
How to Avoid Being Taken by the Fairies
There’s a long, widespread tradition in fairy lore whereby the fae whisk away humans to fairyland. Humans also run the risk of accidentally wandering into fairyland, which is why one might want to stay away from bluebell fields and other fairy-rich environments, and avoid consuming fairy food or drink, which could leave one vulnerable to being tricked into making a little visit there. The fairies don’t really need a reason to do so, but they might take a young man or woman who’s especially desirable to be the husband or bride of a fairy ruler; there are stories of fairies using humans as slaves in their palaces, and young mothers were desirable for their milk, which apparently is of better quality than the fairies’. And of course if you betray or upset the fairies, all bets are off.

Here are a few tips to help you avoid this tragic fate.

* Do not step in mushroom rings.
* If you hear music from an unidentifiable source, try not to listen.
* Take off your coat or shirt and turn it inside out if you think fairies may be near. It sounds odd, but it works. It doesn’t so much repel them, but it does confuse them long enough for you to escape.
* Fairies hate iron, which is like poison to them. Carry some with you—a nail or small object—just in case.
To avoid being taken by fairies, keep on their good side. Show them
respect. Leave them a bowl of milk (or bread, cream, butter, or ale)
outside your door.
As you walk by a natural body of water, throw in a piece of silver as a
gift for them.
By all means, if you ever take anything from nature, leave a small
biodegradable gift in token.
Never, ever say thank-you to fairies for anything they’ve done. A human
thank-you offends them, because they feel it trivializes their
contribution and effort.
Do not accept fairy gifts. If you do so, you owe them. And they can ask
for anything in return.
Never tell a fairy your name. Names have great power. If a fairy ever
gives you his or her true name, it’s a huge sign of trust and not to be
misused.
Always be polite.
If you do find yourself trapped in fairyland, do not eat or drink anything,
no matter how alluring and delectable. You may still be able to escape as
long as you follow this rule.
Be prepared for time to have passed differently in fairyland if you ever
have need to go there. You can never visit the fairies and leave
unchanged.


THE FAIRIES WILL FROM TIME TO TIME DECIDE to steal a human child and replace it with one of their own, a changeling that has taken the form of the stolen child and connives to live among the humans in its place. That’s one version of the story, but there are many around the world. From the Brothers Grimm to Iceland to Africa, the tale of the changed child is widespread.

In some cases, the thieves are goblins or trolls or malicious spirits. Martin Luther thought that the devil himself left a child without a soul in place of the stolen child. And in some places, it can happen for older children, even the elderly or a spouse who has suddenly changed. Think of poor Bridget Cleary in nineteenth-century Ireland, who was killed by her husband who believed her to be a changeling.

These fairy changelings provide a way of explaining otherness. They are odd. They can be easily spooked by putting iron in their beds, setting them afire, or cooking a meal in an eggshell. So alarmed and amused by the latter method, the changeling will give itself away by endless laughter. If not confronted, the changeling may simply grow up in the stolen child’s place. Or wither away quickly, if the fairy is an old one.

This folklore has roots in a sad reality. In medieval Europe, parents who gave birth to a sickly child made a conscious decision to “reclassify” their infant as something other than human. They could claim that demons or “goblins” had come in the middle of the night and stolen their true baby and
left behind one of their own sickly, misshapen, or crippled offspring, forcing the parents to abandon or raise the devil.

Called “fairy children” in England, Scotland, and Ireland, *enfants changés* in France, and *Wechselbalgen* in Germany, these changelings were fictions and rationalizations for a baby’s failure to thrive or some other physical or mental birth defect. If one had a changeling in the home, one would not be expected to keep and raise it as one’s own. Parents would have the right to be rid of the deformed creature, and they could take the child and leave it outside in the forest overnight. If the goblins refused to retrieve it, then the poor unfortunate would die from exposure or might be carried off by a wild thing.

Changelings show up everywhere in literature and pop culture. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Titania and Oberon get into a horrible row over a changeling boy. Selma Lagerlöf, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1909, wrote a Bergmanesque story called “The Changeling” (1992). Maurice Sendak’s *Outside over There* (1981) is about a young girl who rescues her baby sister after the child has been stolen by goblins by blowing her wonder horn until the goblins dance wildly and fall into a stream. And, of course, William Butler Yeats toyed with the romance of going to live the carefree life among the fairies in his haunting poem “The Stolen Child” (1886).
The Changeling, Arthur Rackham, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, 1908.
Chris Beetles Ltd, London/Bridgeman Images
Fairies have steadily captured people’s imaginations for hundreds of years, but from the end of the eighteenth century through the Victorian age, there was such a surge in their popularity that it bordered on obsessiveness. The dazzling, delicate creatures with gossamer wings appeared everywhere—in novels and poems, advertisements, stage plays, ballets and operas, treatises, and even in alluring, made-up words like “fairyology.”

Fairy stories were beloved not only in the nursery, but in sophisticated salons, parlors, and galleries. Real life was stark and challenging for most Victorians, who faced a rapidly changing and increasingly less romantic world due to urbanization and industrialization, and many felt like the world of old—and all the magic that went with it—was gone for good. In *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (2001), scholar Nicola Bown talks of the “small enchantments” Victorians received from the fairies: “Confronted with a vast, even overwhelming, power of modernity, they escaped into the past and took comfort by dreaming of fairies . . .”
It’s no wonder, then, that this enchanted world appeared so prominently in the paintings of the time, such as shimmering, diaphanous dream images of goblins surrounding a sleeping girl; tiny glowing fairies trooping through the dense foliage of forest floors; teeming fairy courts gathered among oversize daisies and chestnuts; ethereal, winged figures hovering over nighttime waters; elves leaping over circles of toadstools; glamorous queens floating on water lilies; pastel creatures dancing hand in hand in the wood; and endless sumptuous, moonlit scenes from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and other fae-filled literary works. These scenes seemed to bubble up from deep longing and nostalgia. As Bown points out, few Victorians believed in fairies; what they believed was that, once upon a time, other people did.

The years 1840–1870 comprised the golden age of Victorian fairy painting. During those years, fairy paintings were tremendously popular and displayed in major art galleries. Nearly every British painter of the period dabbled in the subject, even the great “painter of light” J. M. W. Turner, who included tiny fairies in his melancholic *Queen Mab’s Cave* (1846). Artists like Richard Dadd, the quintessential and probably best-known fairy painter, built their reputations by presenting luminous fairy scenes. Dadd received early acclaim when he exhibited his two paintings, *Puck* and *Titania Sleeping*, at the Society of British Artists in 1841; both pieces would influence up-and-coming painters like John Fitzgerald Anster and Robert Huskisson.

Dadd produced his most intense visions, however, while confined in a psychiatric institution. Dadd murdered his father in 1843 because he believed he was fulfilling a mission for an Egyptian god; he spent the rest of his life incarcerated, first in Bethlam Hospital (also known as Bedlam) in London and later in the high-security Broadmoor Hospital in Crowthorne. Luckily, his doctors at Bedlam encouraged Dadd to make art and supplied him with materials. His meticulous, incredibly detailed *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke* (1864) took nine years to complete and is probably the most original of all the genre’s paintings, with its mostly imagined fairy court (Titania and Oberon do make an appearance, though) surrounding an ax-wielding fairy woodsman about to halve a chestnut.

While Fitzgerald, another famous artist of the movement, was not mentally ill, he was said to have a fondness for the opium tincture laudanum to stimulate his imagination and fuel his dark, goblin- and fairy-
filled visions such as *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of* (1858), just one of the many “dream” paintings he completed in the 1850s in which we see a sleeping figure and the visions haunting him or her in sleep. In this painting, a slumbering woman is surrounded by enchanted creatures, hazy and dreamlike; in an earlier version of it, a goblin is carrying a tray of foaming drinks while jars of medicine sit on a table, suggesting the source of the woman’s visions.

*Queen Mab’s Cave*, J. M. W. Turner, after 1846. 
*Tate Images, London*
Sir Joseph Noel Paton was another artist of the time who achieved great acclaim for his fairy art. He was not only elected to the Royal Scottish Academy but had a major fan in Queen Victoria herself, who knighted him. His *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania* (1849) and *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* (1849) are rich, incredibly detailed tapestries of those opulent scenes in the moonlit glade of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Other prominent fairy painters of the period included Daniel Maclise, Richard Doyle, Jon Summons, John G. Naish, and John Atkinson Grimshaw, among others. While some of these artists depicted a sweet, joyful world and others, a fantastical but more frightening one, fairy paintings of all kinds enchanted the Victorian public through the 1870s.

By the 1880s fairy painting was on the wane, as book illustrators like Arthur Rackham became more popular and painters turned to new subject matter. But artists have continued to paint fairies, of course, and, with the art of Brian Froud, Alan Lee, Charles Vess, and others, fairy art saw a revival in the 1970s that continues today. Artists like Amy Brown, Jasmine
Beckett Griffith, Linda Ravenscroft, Stephanie Law, and David Delamare, to name just a few, have emerged in the last couple of decades to carry on the tradition.
The Stuff That Dreams Are Made of, John Fitzgerald Anster, 1858.
Private Collection/Photo © The Maas Gallery, London/Bridgeman Images
The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania, Joseph Noel Paton, 1849.
National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh/Bridgeman Images
The LADY of SHALOTT
The Lady of Shalott, John William Waterhouse, 1888.

Art Renewal Center
“THE LADY OF SHALOTT,” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson inspired numerous Victorian artists to create paintings based on the romantic imagery suggested within its verses.

The Pre-Raphaelites in particular were taken with the notion of the lady trapped by a spell in her castle tower as well as the lovely yet macabre image of her dying beautifully as she lies in a wood boat floating upon the river toward Camelot.

One of the most rapturous of these paintings is John William Waterhouse’s *Lady of Shalott* (1888), a melancholy, sentimental depiction of the cursed maiden floating to her death. The dark woods and messy reeds, the sputtering candles about to go out, the rich tapestry hanging over the boat and toward the water, the lady’s filmy dress—the effect is luxurious and sorrowful yet bewitching.

Whether the lady is an enchanted creature with wings and/or has magical powers of any sort, Tennyson is ambiguous, writing only, “‘Tis the fairy / Lady of Shalott.” While there are similarities to *Rapunzel* (locked in a tower) and to both *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White* (sleeping spells), Tennyson said that the poem is based on the story “Donna di Scalotta,” from the anonymous late thirteenth-century Italian collection *Cento Novelle Antiche*, which retells the Arthurian legend of Elaine of Astolat and her death from unrequited love for Sir Lancelot. Per her instructions, her family places her on a barge upon her passing and sets the vessel on the river down to Camelot. Elaine appears later in Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur* (1485).

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro’ the field the road runs by
To many-tower’d Camelot;
The yellow-leaved waterlily
The green-sheathed daffodilly
Tremble in the water chilly
Round about Shalott.
Willows whiten, aspens shiver.
The sunbeam showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever
By the island in the river
   Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
   The Lady of Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
   O’er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers,‘Tis the fairy,
   Lady of Shalott.’

—ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, From “The Lady of Shalott,” 1832
A modern-day Lady of Shalott, styled by floral designer Tricia Saroya.

*Shirlie Kemp*
ARTHUR RACKHAM and CHARLES VESS
Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) must have had personal experience with fairies; this is the only reasonable explanation for how he was able to draw them so exquisitely, balancing the soft pastels prevalent in Victorian fairy painting with his dark and intricate pen lines.

Renowned for his children’s book illustrations, which enjoyed enormous popularity from about 1890 to World War I, Rackham’s art appeared in numerous works including Rip van Winkle (1905), Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens (1906), Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1907), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (1908), Undine (1909), The Rhinegold and the Valkyrie (1910), and Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods (1911). Children raised on Rackham learned early that fairies are charming, but not always; gentle, but sometimes rough and abrupt; not quite foes, but not always friends, either.

Rackham’s work continues to be popular today, appearing in fairy books, calendars, note cards, and posters. His influence can be seen in the work of contemporary artists like Charles Vess, one of the most prominent artists carrying on the English fairy tradition, creating art for numerous books and graphic novels and collaborating with writers like Neil Gaiman and Charles de Lint. In 1988, Vess illustrated A Midsummer Night’s Dream in a mesmerizing graphic novel, a dream project for him; it’s this work, shown here alongside Rackham’s, in which Rackham’s influence is most evident. Here, Vess takes on the fairy painter’s favorite subject matter.

To follow are Charles Vess’s thoughts on Rackham.
“I first discovered Arthur Rackham’s art in 1970 while I was still a young man attending art school. I was struck then (as I am now) by his prodigious imagination and his ability to draw immensely appealing characters who, even though they might inhabit strange, ominous lands, still seemed to gently invite me to come for a visit or perhaps share a cup of tea. His depictions of these worlds woven from primal fairy tales and myth were exactly the inspiration I had unknowingly been looking for since I’d begun to put pencil to paper. Immediately he leapt to the top of my burgeoning list of inspirational ‘art gods.’ Yet unlike the work of so many others in that early pantheon, Rackham’s work has never dimmed with the passing of time. Now, more than forty-five years later, I still find myself paging through reproductions of his work—and the one small original on my wall —looking for fresh inspiration.

“I never fail to find it. Rackham was a master of applying a very limited palette of color over finely drawn pen and ink outlines, producing a subtle yet vibrant image peopled most often by ethereal fairies, grotesque dwarves, or wizened trees that sometimes sported charming human features.

“His is a style that has had many imitators over the years, although none but a very few to equal it. His is an iconic style that more than one hundred years later still resonates among all contemporary artists that carry on the English fairy tradition.

“Historically, Rackham was the most popular of a long list of gifted illustrators whose work graced the pages of lavishly produced illustrated gift books published during the Edwardian era in Great Britain. Beginning with Washington Irving’s Rip Van Winkle (1905), Rackham’s unique style began to have a well-deserved impact on the growing audience for this type of book.

“Then, with the publication of his illustrated Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens (1906) followed by a new edition of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1907) and a superb rendition of A Midsummer Night’s Dream (1908)—the first of three separate editions he was to work on—Rackham’s reputation as a distinctive delineator of the inhabitants of the fairy world was fixed once and for all. His depictions of Titania, Oberon, and the fairyland court became so iconic that most of his contemporaries followed directly in his footsteps when given the same subject matter to depict. Even Walt Disney made a futile attempt to entice the artist to work at his studio.
“Happily, for those of us who love beautifully illustrated books, Rackham chose to continue to produce work for the same gift book market. His art proved so popular that with each new publication, there was also a gallery exhibition of the work done for the book, each show always selling briskly.

“Subsequently, each year brought with it a new book carefully chosen by his publishers and eagerly anticipated by an adoring public. That popularity continued throughout his long career right up to his final book,
The Wind in the Willows, which was published posthumously in 1940 after his death in 1939.


“One of the delights of being a member of the Arthur Rackham Society has been the pleasure and the privilege of viewing any number of his magnificent originals. No matter how faithful the reproduction of his illustrations in any given book may be, seeing the actual shine of his deep black ink lines or the delicate wash of color from mere inches away brings you that much closer to the artist himself, a communion well worth the extra effort expended in order to achieve it.”
The Meeting of Oberon and Titania, Arthur Rackham, 1908. This watercolor was intended for the 1908 edition of A Midsummer Night's Dream, but was never used.

Private Collection/Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images
The COTTINGLEY FAIRY HOAX
Occasionally humans are so desperate to see fairies that they claim to have seen them or be in communication with them when they have not.

Seeing fairies or wishing to see fairies so much that it comes true is an understandable impulse, inspired by J. M. Barrie’s novel *Peter Pan* (1911), in which Peter, upon discovering Tinker Bell is dying from poison, urges those who believe in fairies to clap their hands as the antidote.

The most famous instance of a fairy hoax began in July 1917, when ten-year-old Frances Griffiths and her cousin, thirteen-year-old Elsie Wright, first borrowed a camera from Elsie’s father in order to capture on film the fairies they’d claimed to see behind the garden of the Wrights’ home in Cottingley, England. They’d been playing with the fairies all morning, the girls explained. When Elsie’s father developed the film later that day, he had an astonishing image in hand: Frances staring at the camera, a cluster of tiny butterfly-winged fairies dancing in front of her. Elsie’s father suspected that the figures were cut-out bits of paper pasted on cardboard and propped up with hatpins, but could find no evidence. A few months later, in September, the girls borrowed the camera again, and this time produced a shot of Elsie sitting on the grass, playing with a winged gnome that appears to be leaping up to her just as the shot was taken. Annoyed at the girls’ prank-playing, Mr. Wright banned them from using the camera again.

The story might have ended here, except that Elsie’s mother believed that the photographs might be real and, in 1919, mentioned them at a meeting of the occult- and magic-loving Theosophical Society in nearby Bradford, after a lecture about fairies. According to Edward L. Gardner’s
firsthand account, *Pictures of Fairies* (1966), Mrs. Wright approached the lecturer to ask if fairies were real, because, if so, perhaps the two photographs her daughter and her friend had taken “might be true after all.” The next day she brought the prints to the lecturer, who sent them to Gardner, a noted writer and theosophist with an interest in “abnormal photography.”

At first, the prints struck Gardner as likely fakes, but he asked for the negatives nonetheless. A few days later he received a box with two quarter-plate negatives on glass, which he took to a photographer, Mr. Snelling, who examined them on a glass-topped desk and, after a week of study, declared that they were authentic, untouched photos; “I don’t know anything about fairies,” he told Gardner, “but these photographs are straight, open-air, single-exposure shots.”

*Alice and the Fairies*, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, July 1917.

*Science & Society Picture Library*

Emboldened by this news, Gardner showed the slides to a London audience at the end of a lecture on lanterns he was giving, and soon after he received a letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, famed author and creator of Sherlock Holmes, asking if it was true that Gardner had “fairy photographs” and if he could see them. Before long, the two met. As it happened, Doyle had already agreed to do a story for the *Strand Magazine* on fairy lore, and
had a special interest in fairy photographs. The two decided that if a second expert, preferably one at Kodak, pronounced that the images were authentic as Mr. Snelling had, they’d work together and make the photographs central to the *Strand* story. They went to Kodak the next week and met with the manager, studio chief, and two more expert photographers, all of whom examined the negatives. The conclusion: there was no definitive proof that the photographs had been faked, but they were not willing to certify them as definitely authentic. “After all,” one of them said to Gardner as he and Doyle were leaving, “as fairies couldn’t be true, the photographs must have been faked somehow.”

Excited by the findings thus far but in search of more proof to convince others the fairies were real, Gardner and Doyle decided that they had enough to run the piece with the two photographs in the *Strand*’s December 1920 issue as planned. In July of that year Gardner went to Cottingley to interview the Wright family himself. He spoke to Elsie and her parents at length, walked to the spots where the images had been taken, and left convinced that there had been no deception at work in their making. He also noted that the girls were “good simple clairvoyants” who played with fairies regularly.

Gardner proposed that Frances return to Cottingley in August so that the two girls could take some additional photographs. He supplied them with two cameras and several plates, and the visit produced three new images: Frances and a leaping fairy, a fairy offering a flower to Elsie, and a few fairies taking a sunbath (“The Fairy Bower”). These new photographs were subject to the same rigorous analysis the first two had been, this time at the photography studio Illingworth’s, and “nothing whatever came of all this that indicated anything amiss,” according to Gardner. He relayed everything to Doyle, who was on an Australian tour, and arrangements were made: the original *Strand* story with the first two pictures would come out in the December issue as planned, with the three new photos appearing in a follow-up piece in March 1921. All of this was put into play despite warnings from Doyle’s friends, like the magician Houdini, who warned him that the photographs were a hoax and that this episode of curiosity would ruin his reputation.

In its December 1920 issue, the *Strand* published “An Epoch-making Event—Fairies Photographed” and sold out in three days. The follow-up
piece appeared in March 1921. The response was enormous, of course, and the story spread around the world. Experts and non-experts from all over weighed in, with some verifying and some doubting the photographs’ authenticity. People were astonished that a man like Doyle, a person whose name was nearly synonymous with common sense, would write such a piece. But he had—and would follow it up with his own book, *The Coming of the Fairies*, the next year. In it he said: “The series of incidents set forth in this little volume represent either the most elaborate and ingenious hoax ever played upon the public, or else they constitute an event in human history which may in the future appear to have been epoch-making in its character.”

Though many were incredulous that Doyle had so obviously been duped, he went to his death in 1930 convinced the photographs were real. It was only decades later, in the 1980s, that Elsie and Frances both admitted, finally, that the images had been faked—that they’d cut the figures out of a popular book at the time, *Princess Mary’s Gift Book* (1914), and propped them up with hatpins. They admitted that regarding four of the pictures, anyway, for Frances maintained to her death that the fifth shot, “The Fairy Bower,” was real. And both women insisted that no matter what, they really *had* seen fairies as children in Cottingley, even if those fairies eluded the lens and stayed, delicately, out of view.
The Fairy Bower, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, August 1920.

Science & Society Picture Library
The ART of CICELY MARY BARKER

The Privet Fairy, Cicely Mary Barker, from Flower Fairies of the Summer, 1925.
The Estate of Cicely Mary Barker; reproduced by permission of Frederick Warne & Co.
www.flowerfairies.com
I F YOU’VE EVER ASSOCIATED A TYPE OF FLOWER with a certain kind of ruffle-skirted, beautiful, and childlike fairy—and really, who hasn’t?—you can most likely attribute it to the influence of the early twentieth-century artist Cicely Mary Barker (1895–1973).

What Beatrix Potter did for vegetables and farm animals, Cicely Mary Barker did for fairies: she fully embraced their delicate, innocent beauty, creating charming pictures that for many are still the primary images that come to mind when hearing the word “fairy.”

In Barker’s paintings, there is no twinge of subtle adult irony or looming darkness: her work is an earnest celebration of childhood purity and wonder. Most of her pieces consist of a single child figure standing, sitting, or lounging near either a wild or cultivated variety of bloom, with
his or her ensemble mimicking or matching the colors of the flowers nearby.

Her first book, *Flower Fairies of the Spring*, published in 1923, became emblematic of the style she was known for throughout her career. While her subjects were children, rather than adults, and her models were children from her sister’s kindergarten class held in a back room of their home, she was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, with its attention to lush, realistic detail and preoccupation with mythic subject matter. Every stitch of ruffled, petal-skirted, and pastel-colored clothing from her paintings was an actual garment she sewed by hand. She whipped up wings from gauze and twigs, and meticulously rendered every flower from a botanical example. All in all, she published eight volumes of the Flower Fairies books, which became and remain enormously popular, and are regularly reprinted for new generations of fans. Along with new editions and compilations, there are Cicely Mary Barker gift books, chapter books, and books for young readers—all based on the world of the Flower Fairies—as well as a host of merchandise.

Perhaps what is most charming about Cicely Mary Barker, however, is the fact that she tried to live her life with the kindness and benevolence she expressed in her work. A pillar of her church, she often gave her artwork to the families of her subjects or donated them to charity auctions. As legacies go, hers will forever be a life associated with wonder, magic, generosity, and selflessness.
BRIAN FROUD and ALAN LEE’S
FAERIES
When artists Brian Froud and Alan Lee’s *Faeries* first debuted in 1978, it was something of a shock, as it presented fairies from the darker side of the imagination—not always beautiful, sometimes eerie, occasionally downright frightening. The fairy lore presented in the book went back centuries, but had been visually lost for almost as long, as artists preferred to draw pretty little winged pixies and tall glamorous elves.

Victorian fairy paintings, Tolkien’s ethereal elves, and Louisa May Alcott’s *Flower Fables*, for example, tended to present fairies in their most alluring form. By showing something far older, Froud and Lee introduced a modern audience to something that seemed very new.

The book came about when publisher Ian Ballantine, inspired by the success of the 1976 Dutch book *Gnomes*, looked to friends and ex-roommates Froud and Lee—both British illustrators and both thirty-one at the time—to do something similar with the world of Faerie. The two spent nine months researching, writing, and drawing the book, and in a March 19,
1979, *People* magazine interview, Froud explained how the two would trade off between nasty and pretty creatures: “Alan would give me a nasty goblin if I’d sacrifice a noseless brownie. We tried to fix it so each of us would have his share of nasty and pretty ones. The nasty ones, of course, are always much more fun.” The dark tinge to this “children’s book” did not stop it from being a success, and it became an instant bestseller. People of all ages bought the book and shared it with their children, grandchildren, spouses, and friends.

Due to the success of *Faeries*, and the original vision of Froud’s art, puppeteer Jim Henson contacted the artist about providing the visual inspiration for his upcoming film *Dark Crystal*. Thanks to *Faeries*, the world received the visual gifts of *Dark Crystal* as well as *Labyrinth*, another Henson production inspired by Froud’s art and design. Lee went on to act as the conceptual artist for all of Peter Jackson’s Tolkien films; his art inspired the entire look of the series and several of his artworks show up in various scenes.

Today, countless artists, writers, and other visionaries who read *Faeries* in their formative years are creating their own visions of Faerie, and the book continues to spread enchantment to new generations.
Untitled image collage by Brian and Wendy Froud, 2016.
Mushroom Men, Brian Froud, 2009.
In a studio near England’s Yorkshire Dales, self-taught textile artist Mister Finch fashions exquisite flora and fauna from recycled vintage fabrics that have their own stories and
histories woven in. He has an affection for odd creatures that seem to be cavorting in an enchanted wood—otherworldly insects, animals, birds, plants, and flowers—and it’s no surprise that British folklore is at the heart of everything he makes.

He always comes back to that lore, he says, because “when I make something I want it to look like it has a backstory or is a character from a film.” This is why he loves humanizing animals, dressing them in clothing and shoes and hats, imagining them coming alive each night to help an old shoemaker and his wife.

Mr. Finch worked in several mediums in the past, from painting canvas to papier-mâché and jewelry, until, nearly a decade ago, he turned to sewing, which he taught himself. He worked very hard and began to create his own patterns and techniques and “went from there.”

His process is always changing, he says. “Sometimes an idea comes from something I have seen or read; other times I can be hugely inspired by the fabric that I’m using. I tend to do most of the work in my head; while I would love to say that I fill endless books with sketches, the truth is I don’t. If it’s a new creature or form then I work on the pattern which is made over and over again and sewn up until I arrive at one I’m happy with.”

The best part for him is working on a piece itself. “My work is fluid and so often changes,” he says. “It’s not that uncommon for me to start off making a bird but then end up making an insect.” He does have a special

*Textile Hares from a Midnight Meeting*, Mister Finch, 2016.
affection for moths and spiders, who “get a tough time. If I can make them seem more approachable or make others take note of how incredibly beautiful they are, then that’s always great.”
KIRSTY MITCHELL’S WONDERLAND
Wonderland, Kirsty Mitchell’s photography series, feels something like a new mythology, with its dramatic tableaux and otherworldly models draped in hundreds of live flowers or leaves or wooden fans. Fairies and fairy-tale creatures—often mournful, melancholic—inhabit landscapes saturated in brilliant, otherworldly hues, with an incredible amount of detail in each painstakingly composed image.

And it’s all real—and made and arranged by Mitchell herself: the flowers, the ethereal landscapes, the elaborate costumes made by hand (Mitchell worked as a fashion designer for the likes of Hussein Chalayan and Alexander McQueen), whether a cloak made of yellow leaves, an enormous bluebell headdress, or a foxglove umbrella. Every image is rich and luxurious, so it’s even more astonishing that Mitchell did the work on a shoestring budget, with nearly every flower coming from the wild rather than a florist. “I simply use what I can find responsibly in my local woodlands,” she says.

Wonderland did not begin as the larger-than-life project it is now, but rather as something small, quiet, and born of grief. In the wake of her mother’s death in 2008, Mitchell wanted to pay homage to the remarkable woman who’d been a beloved English teacher, voracious reader, and diarist with a penchant for fairy tales. Because of her, Mitchell had been steeped in lore and fantasy from the time she was a child, and now, as a way to ensure her mother not be forgotten, she planned a storybook without words, full of imagery that echoed those old tales, the result of a few shoots over a few months. What Mitchell didn’t expect was for the project to take on a life of
its own. But after partnering with hair and makeup artist Elbie van Eeden, the two started exploring the dream-laden, fairy-tale subject matter more deeply, and experimenting in the woods near Mitchell’s house in Surrey, England, with their “forgotten magic and beauty.”

Five years and seventy-four photographs later, she completed the project. In September 2015, she published the book through the crowdfunding website Kickstarter. The first edition sold out completely in just a few months, making *Wonderland* the most successful photography book in Kickstarter’s history.
While Nightingales Wept, 2012.
Kirsty Mitchell/The Wonderland Series

*Kirsty Mitchell/The Wonderland Series*
IV. Home, Food, & Entertaining
The Fairie’s Banquet, John Fitzgerald Anster, 1859.

Private Collection/Photo © The Maas Gallery, London/Bridgeman Images
Fairies: we’ve all seen them. In wintertime they’re all over the house, nesting behind the couch, grabbing a bite in the kitchen cupboards, and even sleeping in the sock drawer. But fairies, like humans, yearn for warm, sunny days, and so it follows that on the first pretty spring morning they will flit from their hiding places, slip through the cat door, and dart into the dense greenery of the trees and shrubs beyond. In mid-spring one can often hear the vegetation of leafy neighborhoods rustling with gossamer wings and tittering voices. It’s as much an emblem of spring’s arrival as the golden corolla of the daffodil, or the rusty-gate call of the robin.

If your yard is bereft of fairies, don’t despair: with a few simple remedies, the hedges will soon be aglint with tiny wings. You need only address the basic needs of fairies, namely food, safety, and shelter.

One good way to attract fairies is to customize birdhouses for their use. Adding a small door is often all that is needed, although adding a few creature comforts inside, such as silk or materials for fairies to build their own amenities will make your grounds a much sought-after property. Such lavish fairy pads are regularly published in the real estate listings of fairy publications, so you may find more fairies alighting than you can handle. Expect plenty of fly-bys.
Spring-flowering trees like magnolia and cherry are time-tested fairy attractors, as they are a wonderful nutritional source for fairies at a time of year when food is scarce. Another supplemental food source for fairies in times of scarcity are hummingbird feeders, so be sure to start topping them off as soon as the ground thaws. But perhaps the most attractive springtime food source for the fae is the redbud tree (*Cercis canadensis*), whose lavender blooms are a staple—and they are an excellent source of nutrition for humans, too. Once known as “salad tree,” the redbud tree’s blooms are delicious, their taste bringing to mind fresh snow peas. Later in the season, honeysuckle and red trumpet vine become the flowers of choice for many fairies.

Possibly the most alluring of all gardens for fairies is the evening garden. Such gardens are designed to be at their best during the long twilights of summer, with flowering plants selected accordingly. There is a chromatic choreography to evening gardens: red and purple blooming plants are rarely used, since these colors fade to black almost immediately in low light. White flowers are most commonly employed, since they tend to hold their own in the dark. White blooms with powerful scents, such as angel’s trumpet or moonflower, are as alluring to fairies as red blooms are for hummingbirds. Add to this the luminous green glow of jack-o’-lantern mushrooms, and fairies are all but guaranteed to set up residence in your garden.
A word about pets: unless you own a large, sweet old dog or a tired old tomcat who would doze if their tails were on fire, pets and fairies are not only a bad mix, but it is extremely bad manners to permit a pet to roam in any area fairies frequent regularly. Keep the two as separate as possible: no fairy is amused by your cat’s attempts at murdering his wife and children by swatting them out of the air, nor is any fairy charmed by your terrier’s constant barking and harassment. Those who disregard basic consideration to fairies in this way may well find themselves with shortened bedsheets or vinegar in their coffee for the next fifty years. Fairies never forget a kindness, but they also never forget abuse. Do not retaliate: you will never prevail. They have far more time on their hands than you ever will. Like bees, fairies are wonderful pollinators, and their presence in any garden should be encouraged. In fact, fairies will very often collect enough pollen to create that most rare of victuals, fairy honey. The recipe is a closely guarded secret, but it is one of the most delicious substances known to humankind. It’s made in very small amounts, so those who have tasted it are truly privileged; only the most trusted of human hosts will ever have such an opportunity. If you should ever find a small, pea-sized parcel on your windowsill, congratulations: you have arrived! Having met the approval of fairykind with your neighborliness, you are now one of the select few: a fairy friend. Wear this badge of trust and affection with pride.

Image from Fairy Mary’s Dream by A. F. L., 1870.
The British Library on Flickr Commons
WHERE the VEIL IS THIN: FAIRY PORTALS and PATHWAYS

IF YOU WALK A SYLVAN PATH WHEN THE MOON is full, you may sense that you are not alone, that you are being observed closely, and you very well may be, as this is a time when fairies emerge to gather moss, branches, and bits of woodland ephemera for their homes.

Or you may notice a strange circle of mushrooms or clover in a particular spot in your yard that even when you dig up the plants or cut them down, they grow back again and again. Known as a fairy ring, this spot is a portal to fairyland. Any step you make to remove it will prove futile, and any nonorganic attempt to do away with it will outrage the fairies and make you rue the day you went to the local home supply center.

There are many paths to places of significance in the fairy world and many portals, too, locations where the veil between the human world and the realm of Faerie grows thin. Take care where you step: there are tales of many unwitting travelers who have accidentally stumbled into a world they could never imagine, remaining there for as long as the fairies deign. For your education we offer here an annotated listing of the most common portals.

BRIDGES ★ Bridges are enticing to fairies, who are fascinated by the “in-between.” Existing neither on land nor on water, bridges are spaces in and of themselves as well as places of transition. Though trolls are notorious for living beneath bridges, all sorts of fairies can be found near them, too. The older a bridge is and the more elemental the material from which it is
constructed, the more attractive the bridge is to fairies. For example, the ancient clapper bridges in Devon, England, are known by locals to be gathering spots for witch hares, will-o’-the-wisps, and piskies. Fairy revels take place at Fingle Bridge near Drewsteignton, and undines swim under the bridge over the River Dart near Holne.

**CROSSROADS** *A prime spot of transition and uncertainty, a crossroads is a common place for a fairy sighting, but it is also considered a common place to meet the devil. As the practice of Christianity spread throughout Europe, fairies and other spirits—any entity not aligned with Christian teachings—became increasingly associated with demonology. One of the more notable crossroads meetings is presented in the English Child ballad “The False Knight on the Road,” in which a shadowy character (seen by some readers as a devil, and by others, a fairy) stops a boy on his way to school, asking him a series of questions. The child prevails through his clever answers and is then able to continue on his way.*

*If you see a fairy ring*

*In a field of grass,*

*Very lightly step around,*

*Tiptoe as you pass;*

*Last night fairies frolicked there,*

*And they’re sleeping somewhere near.*

—UNKNOWN
FAIRY MOUNDS  * In Ireland, sidhe are grass-covered earthen mounds, possibly dating from the Iron Age. They are often considered to be fairy homes, with secret doors and openings into the hillside in which the fairy folk dwell. Sidhe is also one of the older Irish names for the race that dwells within the hills, too. When stories tell of a human being taken “under the hill,” this is the fairy home they’re describing. Raths, or remains of ancient fortresses, can be found on some of these fairy hills, and were considered to be the visual proof that a fairy lived there. Today these forts and hills are
still left untouched in Ireland by farmers who may use modern farming technology on the rest of their farmland. In fact, the destruction of fairy raths has such a reputation for bad luck in Ireland, it carries a name: the Curse of Tara.

**Fairy Paths**  
Fairy paths are routes, usually linear, that fairies take to travel between sacred sites. Similar to ley lines, which are said to link places of geographical interest, these paths of energy are not visible. Nonetheless, their imperceptibility does not mean that one can ignore them, particularly when one is traveling or building a dwelling. Stories abound of individuals who suffered dire consequences because they constructed their homes on a fairy path in ignorance or in spite of knowing that it was there.

Irish storyteller Eddie Lenihan’s orally gathered folktales are steeped in the lore of his country. One such story, “The Fairy House,” from his book *Meeting the Other Crowd*, tells of an elderly couple who built a new home despite a warning from an old beggar man that they would never want for company if they built there. Ignoring his admonition, they went ahead with their plans. When the man and his wife moved into their new home, they never got a full night’s sleep due to the deafening din of crashing crockery and thrown furniture, yet whenever they got up to see what was going on, nothing had been damaged or destroyed. One day, seeing the beggar man pass by, they stopped him to ask for help. The problem was, the man explained, they had built their home on a fairy path.

To remedy the situation, the husband created an opening in the back wall and installed a door parallel to the front entrance to the house so that the fairies could pass through—a historically common practice, which also includes leaving the doors open at night as an invitation to them. That was the end of the trouble—mostly. Every three years or so, the couple would detect a phantom scent of cooking meat in the kitchen, and three days later one of their cattle would die. The fairies, after all, still had to collect a toll for building on their path.

There are tales of homeowners who have altered construction plans to avoid building on the area that is reportedly in the straight line of a fairy path out of respect for the fae. There are also stories about unlucky homeowners who, having estimated the fairy path correctly, had to tear down and rebuild the part of their home that accidentally overlapped the
path. Tales of sickness, bad luck, and sometimes even death coming to those who didn’t show respect for fairy paths or who ignored all remedies for building on them were common, too.

**Fairy Rings** A fairy ring most often describes a naturally occurring perfect circle of mushrooms—although they may be comprised of clover, flowers, or other natural elements like moss or a darker color of grass—that suddenly appear in an area overnight. If you discover a fairy ring, treat it with respect and step carefully. Folktales throughout the British Isles and Europe tell of men stumbling into fairy rings and being forced into a fairy dance, losing years in what seems like an instant, and sometimes even dying from exhaustion in the revels. These magic circles are associated with tiny spirits in the Philippines as well.

In a local story from Carmarthenshire, recorded by Welsh folklore author Wirt Sikes in *British Goblins: Welsh Folklore, Fairy Mythology, Legends and Traditions* (1880), a farmer stepped into a fairy ring to greet the fairies dancing there. He was trapped in a fairy reel for years, only being rescued when another man happened by, exclaiming, “God save us, but this is a merry one!” His invocation of God’s name broke the spell, but the poor farmer was instantly reduced to dust when he left the circle. Apparently, this is not an unusual experience after a human is released from a fairy curse.

**Holy Stones** Holy stones are portable rocks of varying sizes through which a hole has been bored by a natural element—it must be a natural element—such as water. These small holed stones allow humans peering through them to see into the fairy kingdom. Holy stones are well-known in Italian folklore, where they are considered a key to the doorway into the fairy world. Practitioners of Italian folk magic also believe that the holy stone can bind a fairy to one’s service. In Russian folklore, these stones could sometimes act as the home of a creature called the Kurinyi Bog, guardian of chickens. Farmers would place the stones around their farmyard as it was believed that the spirits in the stones protected their chickens from the Kikimora, the wives of the Domovoi house fairies. The Kikimora are associated with the domestic folklore of chickens, and would harm the birds
if they were angry with a household. Holy stones are also generally known as hag stones or adder stones.

**Natural Portals** Ocean cliffs with a naturally formed hole in the center of the rock, branches that tangle together to form a natural opening at the center: such places often become the stuff of legends that claim they are access points for an otherworld, sometimes the realm of Faerie. In a story from *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, a Welsh boy who was picked on at school by his schoolmaster ran away to a river, where fairies came to him as he was crying on the riverbank and asked why he was upset. He explained that his schoolteacher had punished him. They assured him that they could take him away to a place where there was no school.

The boy agreed, and the fairies took him “under the water and over the water into a cave” where the Tylwyth Teg (the Welsh name for the sidhe, or elves) lived. There, he played games with the fairy children, throwing golden balls about and dancing and singing. Eventually, he decided he wanted to show one of the golden balls to his mother. He left with the ball, but was stopped by two fairies, who took the lovely object away and pushed him out of the cave into the water of the river. He went home, thinking he had been gone two weeks, and was shocked when his mother told him he had been away two years.

**Standing Stones** The ancient stone monoliths of the British Isles, such as Stonehenge, Avebury, and the Callanish Stones, have been fodder for legend and lore for centuries. In Athgreany, Scotland, there is a stone circle known as the Piper’s Stones. Christian-based folklore holds that the stones got their name from bagpipers who refused to stop playing on the Sabbath,
but some say an older folk belief holds that the name comes from the sound of fairy music traveling from the circle. The fact that there is an old fairy hawthorn tree growing along the edge of the circle doesn’t discourage this belief.

Some of these standing stones have holes in them—the most famous of which is the Mên-an-Tol (the “hole stone”) in Cornwall, England, which a guardian pixie is said to watch over—and are considered an access point to Faerie. According to another story by Evans-Wentz, a woman who lived near the Mên-an-Tol had a changeling and passed it “through the stone” in order to get the original child back. Evans-Wentz explains, “It seems that evil pixies changed children, and that the pixy at the Mên-an-Tol being good, could, in opposition, undo their work.”

In the British Isles, a profusion of standing stones or stone circles are associated with legends portraying them as gateways to other realms or having healing properties related to the fairies.
MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM GARDEN PARTY

—Tricia Saroya
WELCOME THE FAIRIES TO YOUR HOME WITH A mossy, fairy-lit *Midsummer Night’s Dream* garden party, and dazzle all your human friends, along with the fae folk.

**GETTING STARTED** * A great garden party is all about the location. Pick a spot in your garden that is at its most lush, even overgrown, and if possible, near electrical outlets. Make sure the soil is both soft and sturdy enough to dig and support an arbor (see “How to Construct an Arbor”). If your yard is not large enough for an arbor, choose a spot under a tree or near a fence, so that you can string lights and drape decorations. Check to see how the table fits in whatever space you choose. Make sure that it’s comfortably wide and long enough to seat all your guests, both fae and human.

**LIGHT UP** * After making your arbor, or something similar, take clear twinkle lights and cover the branches with them. Use dozens of strands of lights, varying in length (you can find them at thrift stores, online, or even at post-holiday sales). Some light strands connect end to end, and some will become part of a cluster at the base of the branches that disappear into the ground. Don’t worry about how the lights look on the bare branches—just keep piling them on (there are about fifty strands pictured here). You can even have some of the lights dangling down from the top or use holiday icicle lights so that you get several mini strands dangling. Spread the electrical load among several outlets, using heavy-duty extension cords, and consider using surge protectors as well.

If you have a small yard without room for an arbor, try hanging multiple strands of lights from the branches of a tree to create the look of a sparkling...
weeping willow. Or drape your fence in lights, and string lights from roofline to fence top as well.

**Fantastic Decorations** ★ Think of your creation both as a fairy bower and magpie’s nest. Hang Spanish and green moss everywhere to camouflage exposed wood, zip ties, and electrical cords. Try cutting vines, leafy branches, or shrubbery in your yard, and add anything else to make the setting more abundant and hide unsightly equipment. Dangle crystals from the top of the arbor or tree branches to add sparkle in the daytime and enhance the bling effect at night, or string paper butterflies on a fishing line. They will move in the breeze as if in flight and provide glorious spots of color.

**Finishing Touches** ★ Finally, pack as many candles on the table as possible: tall pillars in clear glass cylinders, small votives in mercury glass holders, drippy leftover candles, tall tapers. Get drip-free candles if you are concerned about wax staining your linens. To add more sparkle, use silver, mercury glass, and clear glass candleholders. You can find a myriad of candleholders at thrift shops, and plain drinking glasses also look lovely with a votive in each. Let your fairy inspirations guide you, and think lavish, green, sparkle, flowers, candles, and magical lighting. Get in touch with your childlike imagination and fairy godmother, and see what spritely magic happens!
Dangling crystals and paper butterflies help create a fairy setting.

Vince Chafin
How to Construct an Arbor

To create an enchanting outdoor soirée, construct an arbor that arches over a long table, using tall branches from eucalyptus and birch trees (or whatever else is available—and bendable).

First, gather together several bunches made up of five or more tall branches each, secure bundles with zip ties or wire, and bury the blunt end of each bundle about a foot deep in the ground at five-foot intervals, making two rows approximately ten feet across from each other.

Next, stand on a ladder, bend the branches together in the middle at the top, and connect them with zip ties. (Zip ties are handy plastic closure devices used by electricians; you can find them in multiple sizes and colors at any home improvement center.) At the top of the arbor, cross-connect several more branches to create an X-shaped pattern, to make more of a canopy for dangling decorations.

Then, take some of the shorter branches and tuck them in higher up, zip-tying them to the existing taller branches. Don’t worry about seeing the bottom of the branches that you place higher up, as they will be hidden with moss.
Candles provide extra romance at an outdoor evening party.

Vince Chafin

**No Outdoor Space? No Problem!**

 afirm a spectacular garden party doesn’t necessarily have to be in a garden. If you are short on outdoor space, try a balcony or a local park (just confirm use with your parks department). Alternatively, if stuck indoors, you can fill your space with potted trees and hanging plants. Lace branches through the chandeliers, turn off all electrical lights, and use only candles for light—but be wary of fire hazards.

In a park, try candelabras instead; the combination of elegance in a picnic setting is stunning. Don’t worry about the location: you can create a beautiful, midnight garden party mood anywhere.
EDIBLE FLOWERS
Lavender’s fragrant scent has been used for centuries to calm and soothe, and is said to cure a host of other ills.

*Sara Ghedina*

**As far as fairies are concerned, the more flowers, the merrier.** If you want to attract these special beings, grow flowers in your garden or inside your home.

Display freshly cut blooms in vases on every surface. Scatter them over your table and let them spill from bowls and platters. Sprinkle blossoms in your bathwater and wear a floral perfume. And you can cook with certain flowers, too, concocting all kinds of delightful confections. Candied violets make exquisite edible decorations; aromatic lavender can be infused into all manner of baked goods; petals and whole blooms can be embedded in fanciful lollipops. In fact, hard candy, chocolate, cakes, creams, and gelatin can all be enhanced with the elusive and unmistakable taste of flowers. Just be sure you eat only those varieties you can positively identify. Always use pesticide-free plants from nurseries, online purveyors, trusted gardens, or wild sources.

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Candied Violets
FAIRY-LOVING VICTORIANS-WHO ASSOCIATED edible flowers with elegance—were mad about candied violets. These subtly flavored sugared blossoms can be used to decorate baked goods, to top ice cream or sorbet, or eaten on their own. Try making them for yourself with this simple recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 40 fresh violets, pesticide-free, with stems intact
- 1 egg white
- 1 cup superfine sugar

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Fine-tipped paintbrush, preferably new
- Small sharp scissors

1. Place a wire rack over a parchment-lined baking sheet and set aside.

2. In a small bowl, whisk the egg white until frothy.

3. Holding a violet by the stem, dip the paintbrush in the egg white and carefully coat each petal, front and back.

4. Sprinkle the superfine sugar over the violet and shake off any excess. Sprinkle again until the whole flower is lightly coated.
5. Gently place the violet on the drying rack. Repeat with the remaining flowers.

6. Allow the violets to dry for 24 hours, then use the scissors to cut off the stems. Candied violets may be stored in an airtight container for up to eight weeks.
Flower Lollipops

—Vanessa Beller

It’s easier to use dried flowers in candy making, because the moisture in fresh flowers makes it more difficult for the candy to set. Dry fresh flowers in a dehydrator.

Steve Parke
Vanessa Beller of A Secret Forest makes extraordinary lollipops using a wide variety of flowers, including cherry blossoms ordered from Japan, candied violets, rose petals imported from France, and orchids from a local gourmet market. Edible flowers look gorgeous inside her gleaming lollipops, which she also flavors with floral extracts.

Makes 8 to 10 lollipops

Ingredients

- Vegetable oil spray
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup water
- ½ teaspoon flavoring
- 10 edible flowers

Special Equipment

- 8 to 10 two-inch hard candy lollipop molds
- Candy thermometer
- Pastry brush
- Latex gloves
- Candy coloring oils, optional
- Candy flavoring oils (LorAnn is a reliable source)
- 2-cup Pyrex measuring cup
- Wood or paper lollipop sticks
- Wooden skewer
Dried edible flowers (pesticide free)

1. Prep your work space, making sure all your tools and ingredients are easily accessible. You’ll be cooking with molten sugar, so it’s important to work safely and have everything within reach.

2. Set out a Silpat or an upside-down baking sheet covered with parchment on which to rest your pot of sugar and lollipop molds. Lightly spray the molds with vegetable oil, blotting excess with a paper towel.

3. In a medium heavy-bottomed pot, combine the sugar, corn syrup, and water. Place over medium-high heat and attach a candy thermometer. Make sure the bottom of the candy thermometer isn’t touching the bottom of the pot as this will give you a false read.

4. Stir until sugar dissolves, using a pastry brush dipped in water to wipe down any sugar crystals that stick to the side of the pot. Cook, without stirring, until the thermometer reads 260º F, at which point you can add a drop of coloring oil if desired (don’t stir it in).

5. When the temperature reaches 300º F (hard crack stage), remove from the heat and put on your gloves. Add 2 teaspoons of your desired flavoring oil, lightly stirring with a metal spoon. The mixture will steam, so protect your eyes and nose. Now, carefully pour the hot candy into the Pyrex measuring cup.

6. Once the candy stops bubbling, quickly but carefully pour the mixture into the molds, adding just enough to fill the bottom. Use a wooden skewer to pop any bubbles. Wait about one minute, then place your edible flower(s) facedown into each mold. Use the skewer to gently submerge the flower and set it in place. Now place the lollipop stick in the mold and pour in candy mixture to fill the molds. Do not overfill!

7. The lollipops take 15 to 20 minutes to set. Once they’re cool to the touch, gently pop them out of the molds. Wrap each in a candy wrapper and secure with a twist tie, adding a fabric bow on top if you like. Store the lollipops in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight; they should last about a month. No refrigeration necessary.
Lavender Shortbread Cookies

—SARA GHEDINA
Lavender sugar, used here as a cookie topping, can also be added to hot or iced tea.

Sara Ghedina

THE BUTTERY RICHNESS OF THIS CLASSIC shortbread is the perfect showcase for the delicately spicy fragrance and flavor of dried lavender. If you can find fresh lavender, substitute a tablespoon of the chopped flowers. This is the ideal cookie to serve with tea; a dollop of lemon curd would be a wonderful accompaniment, too.

Makes 25 cookies

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender, pesticide-free
- 1 stick plus 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons whole milk (optional)
- ½ cup sanding sugar (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Electric hand mixer
- Cookie cutters in desired shapes
- **Pastry brush** (optional)
- **Sanding sugar, colored or plain** (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. Place the sugar and lavender in a food processor and pulse to achieve a fine texture.
4. In a large bowl, combine the lavender sugar, butter, and salt. Use the electric hand mixer to cream the ingredients until light and fluffy.
5. Gradually add the flour, mixing until the dough comes together. If it’s too crumbly, lightly wet your hands with water and knead the dough in the bowl until the flour is completely absorbed and the dough is smooth.
6. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface. With a rolling pin, roll out the dough to a ½-inch thickness.
7. Use a cookie cutter to cut out the dough. Transfer the cookies to the parchment-lined baking sheet.
8. If desired, use the pastry brush to lightly coat each cookie with milk, then sprinkle with sanding sugar.
9. Transfer cookies to the oven and bake for approximately 25 minutes, rotating the pan once, until the cookies are golden brown.
10. The cookies will be very soft when you remove them from the oven, but will set once cool. Allow them to cool completely on the baking sheet before transferring them to a plate.
Honey Ricotta Tart

*with Lavender-scented Crust*

—Sara Ghedina
Garnish this tart with toasted almonds and sanding sugar—and fairy-approved berries and flowers.

*Sara Ghedina*

**THIS SOPHISTICATED TART HAS THE SATISFYING**

creaminess of a cheesecake but with a light fluffiness from the ricotta. The crust, imbued with a subtle but unmistakable whiff of
lavender, adds an unexpected layer of complexity to this sweet treat.

Makes 1 nine-inch tart

**INGREDIENTS**

*For the dough:*
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender, pesticide-free
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 stick unsalted butter, cold
- 1 egg
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

*For the filling:*
- ¾ pound fresh whole milk ricotta cheese
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 eggs
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 3 tablespoons toasted slivered almonds (optional)
- ½ cup sanding sugar (optional)

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**
- Cheesecloth
- 9-inch tart pan
**Day 1**

The night before you want to make this recipe, drain the ricotta. Line a colander with cheesecloth or a clean cotton dish towel and set the colander in a bowl. Scoop the ricotta into the lined colander and lightly cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight or for at least eight hours.

**Day 2**

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. To make the dough, combine the sugar and the lavender and pulse to achieve a fine texture.
3. In a large bowl, sift together the flour and baking powder.
4. Cut the butter into small pieces, then add it to the flour and blend it in quickly with your fingers, or cut it in with two knives, to make a crumbly dough.
5. Make a well in the middle and place the sugar mixture, egg, and salt into it. Using a fork, lightly beat these ingredients together, then mix them into the flour. Blend the dough until smooth, working as quickly as possible so it doesn’t get too warm.
6. Shape the dough into a ball, wrap it in plastic wrap, and refrigerate it for at least two hours. The dough can be prepared up to two days in advance and kept in the refrigerator until ready to use.
7. For the filling, combine the drained ricotta in a bowl with the honey, eggs, and lemon zest. Mix with a wooden spoon until the filling is smooth and has no lumps.
8. When you are ready to bake, roll the dough into an approximately 12-inch round and fit it into the pan. Line it with parchment paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans.
9. Transfer crust to the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the weights and parchment paper, then fill the crust with the honey-ricotta mixture. Sprinkle the surface with toasted almonds and sanding sugar,
if desired. Return the tart to the oven and bake for another 25 to 30 minutes, until the crust turns golden brown. The filling will be very soft but will set as it cools.

10. Allow the tart to cool completely, then refrigerate until serving.
Frosted Cranberries

—Sara Ghedina
Don’t leave this unusual and tasty snack around, as fairies will be sure to stop by and sample quite a few of the berries when you’re not looking. Raw cranberries are notoriously astringent, but this recipe melds the fruit’s natural tartness with sugar to create a sweet snack. Serve the cranberries on their own or as a garnish for cakes, ice cream, and other desserts.

Makes about 2 cups

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar, plus 1 cup for dusting
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 whole cloves
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
1. In a small saucepan, combine the water, sugar, cinnamon, and cloves. Cook over low heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved.

2. Remove from heat and cool for 15 minutes before stirring in the cranberries. Transfer to a bowl, cover, and refrigerate overnight.

3. The next day, set a wire rack over a parchment-lined baking sheet. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the berries onto the rack and set aside for 1 hour. Meanwhile, line another baking sheet with parchment paper.

4. Place the remaining 1 cup sugar in a shallow dish. Working in small batches, roll the cranberries in the sugar until they are completely coated, then transfer to the clean parchment-lined baking sheet. Make sure berries are in a single layer and not touching each other.

5. Allow to stand at room temperature for about 1 hour or until dry. Frosted cranberries may be stored in an airtight container for several days.

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A broad-leaved plantain grew at the rose-tree’s root, and there [the fairies] spread their dainty meals;—little loaves of flower-dust and honey, fresh dew in red-brimmed mosscups, a single berry prettily sliced on a lesser leaf, and eaten in acorn-cups, with cream from the milk-weed, and sugar from the red-clover blossom....

—LOUISA MAY ALCOCK

“The Rose Family,” from *Morning-Glories, and Other Stories*, 1871
FAIRY DRINKS
Fairy liqueurs are notoriously potent. Just a single drop of brewed elixir from fairyland can set a mortal’s head to reeling and feet to tapping out a rhythm. The highly potent alcoholic beverage absinthe originated in late eighteenth-century Switzerland, but it became hugely popular in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France among artists and other creative types. The verdant drink quickly gained a reputation for its hallucinatory effects as well as its nickname, the Green Fairy, who, according to lore, would appear when one had drunk his or her fill. The Green Fairy became a symbol of artistic inspiration, the muse who would appear when inebriation brought on a clarity of creative vision.

There’s an old Danish belief that says anyone who stands under an elder tree on Midsummer’s Eve will see the King of Fairyland and all his retinue ride past.

So it’s not surprising that elderberry wine is another drink that is said to be fairy-touched. These tiny berries, which are a dark purple that is almost black, can be made into a delicious fermented beverage that supposedly allows the imbiber to see fairies. A rival to the Green Fairy muse, perhaps?

Similarly intoxicating, but not alcoholic, honeysuckle nectar is a liquid sugar sought after by children of all ages—and it’s like sipping summer through a straw. To access it, simply pull off the bottom green part that holds the petals of the honeysuckle flower together. A tail of a “string” emerges; pull it out slowly from the petals. At the end of the “string” is the
nectar. Suck at the base of the bloom to taste the fairy nectar inside. Honeysuckle fairies protect these flowers to ensure their bounty is available for all they deem worthy of sampling it.

Of course there are many other alcoholic distillations of flower essences and fruits—including blackberry, dandelion, elderflower, gooseberry, hawthorn blossoms, quince, rhubarb, strawberry, or violet wines and spirits—fit for a fairy picnic or midsummer night gathering. There are no rules; the best choice is the liquid enchantment that works good magic for you. Just don’t ever take a drink offered to you by a fairy directly—lest you be trapped in fairyland.
In the late 1600s, Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Baroness d’Aulnoy—a patron of the arts and a writer of fairy tales for adults—made fairies and the fairy-tale genre fashionable among the social and cultural elite.

Madame d’Aulnoy, or “Queen of the Fairies” (La Reine des Fées), as she was called, actually coined the term “fairy tales” (contes de fées), for this is how she referred to her stories. For the time, she led a controversial life, having had an unsuccessful arranged marriage at the early age of sixteen and several love affairs, three of which produced children, causing her to withdraw from the social scene for almost twenty years. She began writing fairy tales as a way to express these struggles. She also wrote several other works over her lifetime, including religious and historical novels. She was one of the leaders of women’s salons in Paris, holding regular gatherings, or salons, at her home, where female members of high society and the literati—bedecked in their finest silks and brocades, their hair ornately styled and perfumed—met to discuss literature and the philosophy of the day.

Before Madame d’Aulnoy, fairy tales and folktales about fairies were considered a rural tradition not worthy of consideration by the moneyed and intellectual set. In 1697 she began publishing in the genre for which she is best known. Her four-volume Tales of the Fairies (Les Contes de Fées) was at the forefront in a surge of popularity in France of fairy tales for adults.

Although few details are known about the logistics and details of d’Aulnoy’s gatherings, she would no doubt be delighted if a modern-day
hostess were to host a fairy-tale salon inspired by her elegant events. Here are a few suggestions for transforming her seventeenth-century salon into your own modern-day shindig.

- Encourage all attendees to come attired in their seventeenth-century best. This could be as simple as a corset and voluminous skirt or as elaborate as a ball gown with elbow-length gloves. Any nod to the era in fashion will add to the ambiance and the idea of entering another moment in time.
- Ask each guest to bring a beloved childhood fairy-tale book and to read aloud a passage from their favorite tale, then explain its personal significance.
- In the seventeenth century, the wealthy began to have access to exotic fruits like pineapple and bananas, and champagne became the drink of kings (Louis XIV was said to drink it almost exclusively). Hot chocolate also became popular at this time. Chocolate fondue with fruit to dip might be an appropriate treat. Fairies adore chocolate, so this keeps the theme in more than one way. And no fairy can resist a glass of sparkling champagne with bright berries.
Don’t use electric lighting if you can help it in order to create an ambiance in keeping with the era. If you hold your party in the evening, use candlelight as much as possible, taking care to place all flames safely and/or within glass lanterns to avoid a visiting goblin shifting a guest’s skirts too close to the flame in mischievous merriment.

Fans were de rigueur in seventeenth-century society, and a room full of fluttering paper fans might resemble a room of fairy wings. A modern hostess might purchase or make a few paper fans and then invite her guests to decorate them with pages from fairy coloring books, vintage magazines, fabric scraps, and other materials.

Play a game of “fairy ring,” an adaptation of musical chairs. Just place the chairs in a circle and tape drawings of mushrooms or flowers to the front of the chair backs. Play appropriate music—a jaunty Baroque tune should work well—and remove one chair less than the number of players so one person goes “out” at each round.
Have a list of conversation topics related to fairies and fairy tales at the ready. It’s surprising what sort of things you can learn about your friends and loved ones by asking them what sort of magical things they might believe!
A FAIRY TEA PARTY

—Tricia Saroya
In 1840, Anna, the Seventh Duchess of Bedford, introduced the custom of afternoon tea to British high society after finding herself in need of nourishment during the long stretch between luncheon and dinner. She requested trays of tea, bread and butter, and cake be brought to her around 4 p.m.—and began inviting her fashionable and hungry friends to these miniature meals. Afternoon tea soon became all the rage, and by the 1880s highborn ladies would dress up for these delicious drawing-room affairs.

When Lewis Carroll mocked this formal tradition in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, in which Alice sits down for “A Mad Tea-Party” with the March Hare, the Mad Hatter, and the Dormouse, the tradition of the fairy-tale tea party was born. A tea party can be as buttoned-up or as whimsical as you like. With herbal and floral brews in fancy cups, perhaps an array of pretty sweets and finger sandwiches, a luxurious garden setting, and plenty of flitting friends—what is not to love about a fairy tea?

The trick to hosting a fae tea party is to tap into your inner pixie. Think like the fairies do and create a tea party that is as luscious to gaze at as it is to nibble and sip. Here is an Alice-in-Wonderland-worthy tea party to throw on your own.

Set the Story * Any slightly overgrown or very green natural setting is the best choice for a fairy-inspired tea party. A forest is perfect, but your backyard also will do just fine, especially if you can find a spot under a
lovely tree. Consider an ivy patch (the English, not the poison, kind), a field or orchard, or by a stream. The wilder the location, the better.

**DECORATING JITTERS** * If you are shy about using color or not sure about what looks quite right, do not fret. Stay within a specific color palette or story. You can try out paint-chip color combinations at a paint or hardware store until you find a color you love. Or pick a beloved accessory, like a set of etched pink glass plates, and take your color cue from that. As long as you stay with a particular color story, you can keep adding details until there’s no more room on the table.

To keep things interesting, use lots of texture as well. Add several layers of fabric, with each one showing. Toss fabrics on the table, swirling them around haphazardly. Think in layers—imagine lavish petticoats—or go for a more tailored look, using different square sizes, each one showing beneath the other. The tabletop design shown here features a vintage tea set as well as old silver and found bits from thrift stores. As long as you’re working in a particular color story, you can use almost anything. Keep thinking in layers, such as stacking different dishes, one upon the other.

*Alice at the Mad Hatter’s Tea Party*, illustrated by John Tenniel, from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, 1865.
For flowers, use a lot of live plants, like petunias and hydrangeas, in addition to cut flowers, and, again, stay within your color palette. Having different height levels is also a way to keep a setting interesting. You can combine flowers and fruit in one container, but keep in mind that the fruit will make your flowers’ life span shorter, and the flowers will make your fruit ripen faster. You might use vintage teacups and creamers as containers for flowers, or even tall cake platters. Put clusters of flowers and fruit on the table without a container, or tip a pretty bowl over so it looks like the contents have spilled out in abundance—like a magical feast literally overflowing with flowers, fruit, and goodies!

**Feast on This** *The food you serve doesn’t have to be elaborate or fancy, it just has to be gorgeous. For the edible nibbles, make or find the most beautiful desserts and candy you can muster. Sugar frosting always gives a wonderful, magical effect. For the drinks, fruit juices or flower teas are beautiful and tasty, and champagne is lovely for grown-ups, especially with raspberries bobbing in the bubbles. And any glass ringed with colored sugar looks extra festive.

Whatever decorations, tabletop settings, and food you pick, creating a luscious setting out in nature will have a magic and beautiful ambiance that you and your guests won’t soon forget.
Fairy Tea Cakes

—Courtney Petteruti

WITH A WHOLE-GRAIN BATTER ENRICHED WITH sour cream, a fluffy frosting scented with rosewater, and colorful edible flowers for decoration, these tea cakes make a lovely presentation.

Makes 12 cakes

For the cakes

- 2 cups spelt flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup organic cane sugar
3 eggs, room temperature
½ teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup cream or whole milk
½ cup sour cream
Zest of 1 lemon
½ teaspoon nutmeg

For the frosting
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
3 cups confectioner’s sugar
2½ tablespoons rosewater
1 tablespoon whipping cream
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
Dash of fine sea salt
1 whole vanilla bean
Edible flowers (pesticide-free) for garnish

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
Electric hand mixer
Muffin tin
Small offset spatula

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. To make the cakes, combine the flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. In a large bowl, use an electric hand mixer to cream
together the butter and sugar. Beat in eggs one at a time, then add the almond and vanilla extracts.

3. Slowly mix in the dry ingredients, alternating with the cream or milk, then add the sour cream, lemon zest, and nutmeg.

4. Spoon the batter into a greased muffin tin and bake for 20 to 24 minutes, until golden. The cakes are done when an inserted toothpick or knife comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack.

5. To make the frosting, use the electric hand mixer to whip the butter until smooth, then slowly incorporate the confectioner’s sugar, alternating with the rosewater and cream.


7. Using a sharp paring knife, split the vanilla bean in half lengthwise. Slide the knife down the bean to collect the tiny seeds and stir these into the frosting.

8. Use the offset spatula to spread the frosting over the tea cakes. Garnish them with edible flowers.
Fairy Party Tips

—Tricia Saroya

- Details matter! Issue an invitation in the form of a scroll.
- Take items that might belong inside your home and bring them outside. Chandeliers, candelabras, and formal chairs bring a sense of romance to an outdoor party.
- Use objects in novel ways. An ornate candlestick makes a beautiful display with flowers bursting forth from the top.
- Twigs can be spray-painted all kinds of colors, covered with glitter, and used in centerpieces, to bracket candle lanterns in trees, or to hold signs to keep your guests from being led away from the festivities by fairies.
- Ask your local florist to see if they’ll give you a discount on flowers that are faded past the point of use for their purposes. This way you can decorate your table with an explosion of flowers and color!
- Fairies love to play hide-and-seek in nooks and crannies, so place pretty, decorative boxes or stacks of books on the table and then cover them with fabric or moss. Tuck in little flowers or sparkly baubles here and there; fairies love shiny things.
- Use fun, whimsical items on the tabletop. If you love to sew, put an antique sewing machine on your table and have it “sewing” flowers. A beautiful old typewriter spewing forth flowery prose is charming. Stacks of old books, especially fairy tales, are lovely touches.
- Add sparkle with rhinestone jewelry, vintage perfume bottles, and crystals.
Almost anything can be incorporated into the tablescape, if you have flowers, plants, moss, or pretty fabric to add a fairy touch. Thrift stores are a great source for inexpensive jewelry and other fun goodies that fairies love.

Sheet moss makes a beautiful tablecloth or runner. Be sure to use clean moss from a crafts store or florist so that you don’t invite unwanted creatures to your fête! To protect the table, set down a dark color trash bag or other plastic first. Leather-leaf fern or other hardy greenery add to the woodsy feel.

Hang birdcages—adding a few flowers inside—from trees, set a beautiful small flower or plant under an old glass cloche on the table, and add a crown to the cloche for good measure.
Kirsten Ellis (top row, left; top row, right; bottom row, right); Elizabeth Messina (top row, center); Tatiana Chekryzhova/Shutterstock.com (middle row, left); Vince Chafin (second row, right; bottom row, left); Caroline Tran (third row, right); Braedon Flynn (bottom row, center)
FAIRY-TALE HOUSES in CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

—JILL GLEESON

Open up any illustrated fairy-tale book and you’ll see enchanting small homes, whether it’s a cottage with a thatched roof and roses growing in abundance up the side, or a crooked little house with a chimney to match, a garden jammed with pansies, and a cobblestone path. In California there’s an oceanside town, Carmel-by-the-Sea, that’s so full of these storybook houses the fairies who visit sometimes erupt in appreciative applause. Here, the air is fragrant with the clean, crisp scent of the pine and cypress trees that dot the landscape, many as gnarled and wise as a long-lived wizard. Flowers are in bloom everywhere, magically sprouting simultaneously from window boxes in the jewel-like downtown to the landscapes around the tiny houses.

Sprinkled throughout Carmel-by-the-Sea are handfuls of Tudor-style buildings with flared eaves, hand-hewn trim, and wavy, wood-shingled roofs. Visitors come from around the world to see them, to immerse themselves in a landscape that appears to have materialized straight from the pages of a fable. They have a besotted visionary named Hugh Comstock to thank for their delight.
Hugh Comstock came to Carmel in 1924 from the cornfields of Illinois, a farmer’s kid who loved to draw and design, even if it was only the outbuildings on his family’s property. He was in town visiting his sister, but in a moment that must have shimmered with the glimpse of a previously unimagined future, while out walking one day he happened upon a young woman at work in her backyard. Intent on her task, unaware of the enchanting tableau she made, Mayotta Brown was painting the faces of little felt dolls she’d fastened onto her clothesline.

Two months later, Comstock and Brown wed. Four months after that, Hugh began to build a 244-square-foot cottage to house the growing assortment of his wife’s increasingly popular Otsy-Totsy dolls. The cottage sits in the small, sweet heart of downtown Carmel, half-timbered and bright with whimsy, its roofline pitched toward the heavens, the stone chimney haphazardly stacked as if by mischievous elves. Its name is Hansel.
Soon townsfolk were lining up, begging Comstock to design homes fit for a fairy for them, too. And so he did—some eighteen of them—establishing an architectural movement that continues today. Hansel is not the only edifice in this fabled Northern California settlement that appears to have been inspired by the capricious, chimerical world of the fae—or perhaps even designed by the magical creatures.

By all accounts, Hugh and Mayotta spent twenty-six years, from their wedding until Hugh’s death in 1950, as smitten with each other as they were on the day they met. Throughout Carmel-by-the-Sea, other fairy-inspired buildings have risen over the years, some private residences, and some businesses, such as the Lamp Lighter and Happy Landings inns. No doubt inspired by the fairy-tale buildings that line its tranquil streets, this little town, with a population under four thousand, has fought to retain its idyllic beauty. Sage city officials have made sure that no tacky boardwalks, fast-food restaurants, unsightly parking meters, or even sidewalks mar its perfection. Even streetlights have been nixed, all the better to spy the stars glittering diamondlike in the night sky. Yes, even today Carmel-by-the-Sea remains a real-life Brigadoon, a much-needed bit of magic in this weary modern world.
TASHA TUDOR: BELOVED of the FAIRIES
A MILE DOWN A DIRT PATHWAY IN MARLBORO, Vermont, a farm cottage is nestled into the landscape among a multicolor proliferation of seemingly a thousand types of flowers. The garden and the house both look like something directly out of a fairy tale, and indeed they are: this was the home of storybook artist and author Tasha Tudor, and even though not everyone may see them, fairies flock here, there is no doubt.

Tudor passed on in 2008 at the age of ninety-two. An artist and writer of great talent who preferred to go without the vast majority of modern conveniences to live a more romantic existence by fire and candlelight, she was a woman who cooked her turkey in a roaster in the fireplace and her pies in a woodstove, and who brought home her groceries in a willow basket she wove herself when her homegrown foods needed to be supplemented. More often than not, she walked around her farm and garden barefoot, her long skirts swishing against ever-present nearby blooms. And she talked to everything: to the flowers, to her drawings, and to the animals of the farm who were always nearby.

Tudor grew up on the north shore of Boston in Marblehead, Massachusetts, with a mother who was a reputable artist and independent spirit, and a father who was considered a local eccentric. Tudor recalled how childhood neighbors described him as having a “fey and mystical quality,” and he was quite the storyteller. When she was a child, her father kept a tame seal as a pet; he was convinced that the animal was a maiden
trapped in seal form. This unusual family pet lived in a water tank by the house and would sit in the car with her father when he made trips into town.

This enchanted childhood informed the rest of Tudor’s life, and she in turn did everything she could to give her four children a whimsical and magical upbringing. Many of her best-known books, such as *A Time to Keep* or *The Doll’s Christmas*, were written for them or about them and the enchanted family traditions and rituals she created. The family had a detailed dollhouse, and all of her children had small mailboxes on their bedroom doors, where the dolls could send the children “Sparrow Post” letters: minuscule and intricate paper greetings painted with artworks celebrating both special occasions and the everyday.

Although the main subjects of the books she wrote were her dolls and her beloved pet corgi dogs (regarded in Welsh folklore as a gift of woodland fairies, with markings on their flanks from fairy saddles), the curious blending of the natural and supernatural worlds in her life seeped into her writing and illustrations. Corgiville, the dog-inhabited setting of many of her stories, was populated not only by the cheerful small dogs, but also by cats, goats, geese, other farm animals, and boggarts, the fairy creatures often associated with soured milk, lost clothes, and other household problems. In Tudor’s books, however, the boggarts are roly-poly men akin to Swedish trolls, wild and mischievous, but child-friendly.
“I believe in lots of things people think are odd.” Tudor said in a 1999 documentary interview. “You can’t see certain fairies and things, but I’m sure they’re there . . . something mysterious is always more magical.” Her certainty that fairies existed and surrounded her seems quite well founded, for she led a highly enchanted life.
Cinderella, from the *Tasha Tudor Book of Fairy Tales*, 1961.
*Tasha Tudor and Family, Inc.*
SEEKING FAIRIES

—SIGNE PIKE

IT IS TWILIGHT IN MY BACKYARD IN CHARLESTON. In a moment, the chimes that hang from my gutter will tinkle in a breeze that stirs only for me; I have pushed back the screen door to say good night to the fairies. If I listen, if I watch, they never fail to say good night in return.

I wasn’t always this way, a grown woman communing with her backyard fairies. I was once a book editor, living in New York. I went to work when it was dark and came home when it was dark. But when my father died unexpectedly, I decided there had to be another way to live. Shattered by loss, I took off on a journey that would change my life forever. I boarded a plane in search of fairies.

They say losing people you love will make you do strange things. But to me, a skeptic, this journey couldn’t make more sense. Everyone knew there was no such thing as fairies. So if I could find proof of something as magical as fairies, didn’t that mean there was the possibility of everything else?

Celtic legends tell of the day the fairies left us. Retreating beyond the human veil, they traveled deep into ancient barrows and forests, mountains and glens, where they continued to exist, invisible to human sight. And so I traveled the old pathways, searching for believers. My journey took me to the Fairy Pools of Glenbrittle on the Isle of Skye, clear as crystal and cold as ice, rushing down from the heart of the Black Cuillin Mountains. I walked the eerie green mounds of Fairy Glen, where pink foxgloves swayed
and many a fairy had been sought. There were the dark pine forests on Isle of Man, where fairy music once echoed, making passersby dizzy, and mothers tucked scissors under the bedding of cradles to keep fairies at bay in days gone by. Beneath the moss-covered dim of Fairy Bridge I unknowingly captured a photo of a golden globe of light. Inside it were what looked like a delicate pair of wings. In the south, fairies were still spoken of in the crystal shops of Glastonbury and in the wilds of Devon, where authors Brian and Wendy Froud offered wise words to guide me. In County Sligo on Ben Bulben there were tales of fairies who appeared in human form, renowned shape shifters far cleverer than we; one storyteller told me I’d better steer clear of them.

But in the viridian hills of Ireland, there is a sense of fear when people come around asking about fairies. Build on a fairy path, people will get sick. Cut down a sacred tree, and you might lose your head.

“The fairies will have their way, one way or another. Because what chance have you against a people who can only be seen if they want to be seen, and can take whatever shape that they’d like?” the storyteller warned.

By the end of my journey, I’d see sparkling lights that were anything but fireflies. I’d record music in a midnight garden where no instruments could be found. Feathers would turn up wherever I roamed. As my unexplained experiences began to mount, I became a believer.

But the most important thing I came to believe was that we needn’t strike out on any grand adventures to find fairies, because the fairies have never needed to be found. We tell ourselves a story of abandonment, but it is we who have abandoned the fairies. We become so blinded by daily life that we forget how to see.

Once we remember, we can encounter fairies everywhere we go.

Amid the stone circles and wind-twisted thorns of Dartmoor, I met a middle-aged woman who claimed to communicate with fairies.

“They’re curious about you. They’re wondering why you want to know about them,” she said.

I thought for a moment.

“I want to know about them because they’re magical. And if magical beings exist, then there is hope for us all.”

“Well,” she said, in a way that sums it all up. “They think that’s pretty funny.”
**HOW TO SEE FAIRIES**

As an integral part of the natural world, fairies surround us nearly every minute of every day. You need only learn how to see them. With a little effort and an open heart, you’ll find it’s easier to connect with these magical beings than you might imagine.

Those who believe in the possibility of seeing nature spirits understand two things: first, that doing so isn’t typically a literal, physical event, and second, that spirits reveal themselves to us in their own way, in their own time. If you hope to make a connection, practice sitting outside, taking in and appreciating the beauty around you. The fairies know when your efforts are in earnest—and it may take time to develop your practice so that it is truly selfless.

Pick a location that feels special to you and visit it regularly, whether it be in a city park, the woods, or your own backyard, and bring with you biodegradable gifts such as honey, rocks, acorns, birdseed, or flowers. Offerings are an ancient way of showing respect to nature spirits and are a gesture of friendship.

Sit quietly and breathe until you feel yourself relax. Open your heart and say—either out loud or in your mind—that you’d like to connect with the spirits of nature around you. If the fairies wish to approach, there will be a sign of their presence.

Celtic lore tells us that fairies can shape-shift as well as influence the weather, so be on the lookout for communication to come in a myriad of ways. A fairy may be present if the wind suddenly picks up, or a bird calls. You may receive an image in your mind’s eye, “hear” a thought that is not your own, or an animal or insect may settle close by. If you are out at night, you may even be able to spot sparkling fairy lights in trees, bushes, flower beds, and hedgerows on or approaching a full moon. The less city or ambient light the better.

Most importantly, try to relax and enjoy the process. Those who communicate with nature spirits warn that if you have specific expectations about how and when an interaction with a spirit should take place, it will only serve to block communication.

You’ll know you’ve caught the attention of the fairies if natural objects like feathers, seashells, or special rocks appear in your path as you move about your day. Believers know such objects are a gift from the faeries.
If you’re lucky enough to have an encounter or receive a fairy gift, rejoice! But out of respect to your fairy friends, be careful not to speak too much about such things. You may find if you share too much, the fairies will back away, for the world of Faerie is ancient, wise, and tricksy, and it prefers to remain clothed in secrets.
TITANIA.—Come, now a roundel, and a fairy song . . . .
Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG.

1 FAIRY.—You spotted snakes, with double tongue,
    Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
    Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong:
    Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS. Philomel, with melody,
    Sing in our sweet lullaby;
    Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
    Never harm,
    Nor spell nor charm,
    Come our lovely lady nigh;
    So, good-night, with lullaby.

2 FAIRY.—Weaving spiders, come not here,
    Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence!
    Beetles black, approach not near;
    Worm, nor snail, do no offence.
CHORUS. Philomel, with melody,
    Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
    Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
    Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good-night, with lullaby.

1 FAIRY.—Hence away; now all is well:
    One, aloof, stand sentinel.

Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, act 2, scene 2
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank Elizabeth Sullivan at HarperCollins for finding our magazine and suggesting this beautiful book—and then going above and beyond to make it something to be treasured. I’d also like to thank the team at Harper Design: art director Lynne Yeamans, designer Raphael Geroni, and production director Susan Kosko.

I want to thank Kim Cross, who founded *Faerie Magazine* and has brought enchantment to so many—including me—because of it. This book wouldn’t have happened without her wise input, or if she hadn’t decided, more than a decade ago, to take a leap of faith and start a magazine about wonder and fairies. Grace Nuth spent countless hours with me, dipping into old and new lore to put this book together, and I’m incredibly grateful for her help on this project as well as on *Faerie Magazine*, where she’s indispensable (that is, when she’s not out playing with foxes or painting murals of the twelve dancing princesses in her house).

Thank you to the rest of the *Faerie Magazine* family—Paul Himmelein and Jill Gleeson, for your lovely contributions to this book and every magazine issue, as well as Charles Vess, Lisa Gill, Steve Parke, Tricia Saroya, Anna Vorgul, Allen Crawford, Laren Stover, Mary McMyne, Sara Ghedina, Vanessa Beller, Karima Cammell, Robert Horning, Brian and Wendy Froud, Timothy Schaffert, Jason Dempster, Bridget M. Richards, and Crystal Chandler. Special thanks to Steve for helping with some of the photography for this book—and for spending an October afternoon hunched over a bathtub filled with flower petals and milk.

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Thank you, too, to my father, mother, and sister.

And, of course, to everyone who believes in a world just past what we can see.
FAIRY FESTIVALS

There are fairy festivals worldwide that feature all of the pleasures—and none of the accompanying dangers—of a traditional fairy celebration: dancing and singing, long processions, all sorts of fantastical costumes, and the fluttering of wings in every direction. Vendors sell everything from fairy wings to headdresses, handmade clothing, jewelry made of shiny baubles and beads, pointy hats, and other finery. Here are a few festivals that take place every year, although new fairy events pop up in a haze of glitter all the time. Check for an event in your area, or, if you have access to a little plot of land, consider starting one yourself.

There are also hundreds of medieval, fantasy, and Renaissance fairs and conventions all over the world that often include a fairy element and/or will be open to your bringing it!

**Asia**

**Japan**

**Fairy-Tale Festival**

KUSU DISTRICT, OITA, KYUSHU

EN.VISIT-OITA.JP/EVENT

Since 1949, this two-day festival has taken place every May at the time Children’s Day is celebrated. Adults and children dress up as characters from their favorite fairy tales and children’s stories and march in a parade through town—and through a giant *koinobori*, or carp streamer (or streamer
shaped like a carp fish). The town is the birthplace of Kurushima Takehiko, or “the Japanese Hans Christian Andersen.”

AUSTRALIA

Fairies and Fantasy Festival

MCENTRE, GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY
MINCHINBURY, NEW SOUTH WALES
9625 7257
CREATIVESPIRITCENTRE.COM.AU/ANNUAL-EVENTS

Hosted by the Creative Spirit Centre, the Fairies and Fantasy Festival has been held on a Sunday in September since it began in 2012 and has plenty of children’s activities on offer, including a jumping castle, fairy face painting, crafts, pony rides, and go-karts.

The Gnome and Fairy Festival

PETER SCULLIN RESERVE
MORDIALLOC, VICTORIA
403 065 640
MORDIALLOCROTARY.ORG.AU/PROJECTS/GNOME-FESTIVAL

After the first Gnome Festival on Australia Day 2013, this event was renamed the Gnome and Fairy Festival in 2014 and is held every year on a spring Sunday for families with children up to ten years old. Attendees dress in their gnome and fairy best to compete for prizes and march in the Grand Parade along the beach.

EUROPE

Belgium

Trolls et Légendes

LOTTO MONS EXPO
AVENUE THOMAS EDISON
7000 MONS, BELGIUM
This three-day spring fantasy festival features concerts, games, a children’s area, special guests—authors, designers, and illustrators—and a huge “magic market” teeming with costumes, leather work, accessories, jewelry, and other fae-friendly goods.

**England**

**3 Wishes Faery Fest**

**Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park**

Cornwall PL10 1HZ

01736 330201

FairyFestival.co.uk

Founded in 2007, England’s first outdoor fairy festival takes place every June and features live music stages and a fairy school where attendees make crafts, attend talks, and more. Each year, founder Karen Kay attempts to gather the largest group of fairies in the world to attain the Guinness World Record; while the festival won in 2012 with 277 fairies (all of whom must be wearing wings and a tutu and holding a wand to count), the current record is held by St. Giles Hospice. The festival is held in the former Celtic kingdom of Dumnonia at Mount Edgcumbe, a sprawling location in Cornwall’s most ancient protected woodland, and visitors are free to camp there.

**Avalon Faery Fayre**

Glastonbury Town Hall

Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9EL

01736 330201

FaeryEvents.com

The two-day Faery Fayres and Faery Balls are held twice a year, in March and October, with special themes for each event and camping nearby (there are also local guesthouses available, with fairy-themed décor). Both events feature special guests—well-known artists, writers, and musicians—plus
live music. Crafters come from all over to lead workshops and sell their wares. Glastonbury is an enchanting spot (it’s said to be the resting place of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, to start) and is known for the Tor, the Chalice Well, and healing waters—all within walking distance of the festival. Gwyn ap Nudd, or king of the fairy folk, is said to reside within the hill where the Tor is situated.

**Sussex Faerie Festival**

PLEASANT RISE FARM  
ALFRISTON, EAST SUSSEX BN26 5TN  
07845 438340  
MAGICALFESTIVALS.CO.UK

This event, hosted by *Magical Times Magazine*, is an outdoor festival with a large music tent and several workshop tents for adults and children.

**Germany**

**Feenfest**

FEENGROTTEN, THURINGEN, GERMANY  
3671 55040  
en.feengrotten.de/feenwelten/ events/fairy-festival

Founded in 2007, this June festival features the Feengrotten Olympics (“a variety of games of skill”), dance workshops, fairy face painting, storytelling, crafting, and more. A fairy fashion contest and prizes encourage attendees to come in their finest fairy and elf attire.

**Ireland**

**Kilflynn Enchanted Fairy Festival**

KILFLYNN VILLAGE TRALEE, CO. KERRY  
NO TELEPHONE; GENERAL  
EMAIL: ENCHANTEDFAIRYFESTIVAL@GMAIL.COM  
KILFLYNNENCHANTEDFAIRYFESTIVAL.COM

The fairy council of the village of Kilflynn near Tralee has hosted this weekend event every June since 2014. The festival kicks off with a parade
and celebrates all things fairy for children and adults alike, who can wander along a fairy and elf trail and interact with magical characters.

**NORTH AMERICA**

**Canada**

*Bon Accord, Alberta*

**Fairy Berry Festival**

PRAIRIE GARDENS  
56311 LILY LAKE ROAD, BON ACCORD,  
AB T0A 0K0  
(780) 921-2272  
PRAIRIEGARDENS.ORG/FESTIVAL-EVENTS/FAIRY-BERRY-FESTIVAL

This working thirty-five-acre farm just north of Edmonton hosts an annual festival over a three-day weekend at the end of July to celebrate the small, dainty “fairy berries” (or the tiniest sweetest strawberries from the farm) just ripening then. The event includes homemade berry shortcake, folk music, a corn maze, face painting, and fairy and pirate crafts. And berry picking, of course. There’s also a costume contest for all fairies, pirates, and knights.

**United States**

*Illinois*

**The World of Faeries Festival**

VASA PARK  
35 W 217 ROUTE 31  
SOUTH ELGIN, ILLINOIS, 60177  
(815) 788-1630  
THEWORLDOFFAERIES.COM

Twin harpists, world musicians, falcon shows, and a mermaid who sings when asked: these are some of the happenings at this magical festival that has been running strong for more than a decade. Kids of all ages are
encouraged to come to the event, shop, attend around-the-clock tea parties, and participate in scavenger hunts on the grounds.

Maryland

The Maryland Faerie Festival

2564 Silver Road
Darlington, Maryland 21034 (443) 356-2383;
MEDIA@MARYLANDFAERIEFESTIVAL.ORG
MARYLANDFAERIEFESTIVAL.ORG

Since 2002, the Maryland Faerie Festival has been held for a full weekend every June, with a different theme every year, including flower fairies, and Neverland, and even mermaids, to name a few. Visitors can learn to build fairy houses, watch live music, and peruse fairy crafts. On Saturday night a Faerie Masquerade Ball is held on-site, under a covered pavilion. There is on-site camping, too.

FaerieCon

Wyndham Hunt Valley Inn
245 Shawan Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21031
No telephone; general email: info@faerieworlds.com
faeriecon.com

FaerieCon and Faerieworlds are two of the larger fairy festivals/events in the United States. FaerieCon was started in 2005 to bring the experience of Faerieworlds to the East Coast. Costumed guests spend a three-day weekend shopping, taking part in panels and workshops, meeting famous artists and writers, and attending the Good Faeries and Bad Faeries Masquerade Balls, where internationally acclaimed bands and musicians perform. FaerieCon West brought the experience to Seattle in 2012, and in 2015 that festival successfully evolved into Mythicworlds, which takes place every March.

New York

The New York Faerie Festival
233 Doolittle Road
Harpursville, New York 13787 (607) 655-1376
nyfaeriefest.com

Held since 2009, this three-day event describes itself as “magical Renaissance Fair meets circus in the woods.” Jousting, entertainers performing on four stages, and wandering jugglers, stilt walkers, and trolls all combine to create a unique experience at this June festival.

Oregon

Faerieworlds

Horning’s Hideout
21277 NW Brunswick Canyon Road
North Plains, Oregon 97133
No telephone; general email: info@faerieworlds.com
faerieworlds.com

Founded in 2001, Faerieworlds is the largest gathering of its kind on the West Coast. For three days thousands of costumed guests camp on-site or stay at nearby hotels, and enjoy a nearly continuous stream of international bands on two stages. Visitors can participate in the festival ritual opening Spiral Dance, and there are opportunities to meet fairy and fantasy artists and writers, too. Fairy-related workshops, a children’s activity area, an extensive vendors’ village, an international food court, and plenty of local beer and wine make this a popular destination.

Pennsylvania

The May Day Fairie Festival at Spoutwood Farm

4255 Pierceville Road
Glen Rock, Pennsylvania 17327
(717) 235-6610
spoutwood.org/fairie-festival

The May Day Fairie Festival has been held at Spoutwood Farm in early May since 1991. And its popularity is enormous: attendance numbers more than twelve thousand guests over the course of the three-day event. Well-
known fairy artists, authors, and speakers come from all over the world to attend and give various presentations as well as lead workshops.

**Rosemary House Fairy Festival**

**HERB GARDENS OF THE ROSEMARY HOUSE AND SWEET REMEMBRANCES**  
118–120 S. MARKET STREET  
MECHANICSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17055  
(717) 697-5111  
ROSEMARYHOUSEFAIRYFESTIVAL.BLOGSPOT.COM

Every autumn for a quarter century now, fairy lovers have gathered in these sweet herb gardens to play games, participate in trinket trading swaps, and try their hand at fairy crafts—making wands, wings, garlands, and other sought-after fairy accessories.

**SOUTH AMERICA**

**Argentina**

**FERIA MÁGICA**  
**LA OPERA**  
**BAIGORRIA 567**  
**S2005MXI ROSARIO, ARGENTINA**  
**NO PHONE; GENERAL EMAIL:TUHADAMAGICASOUVENIRS@GMAIL.COM**  
FACEBOOK.COM/FERIA-MAGICA-157011500983670

Started by one woman in 2010, this annual outdoor festival celebrates all that’s magical on an August Sunday. There are more than fifty vendors, plus music, performances, tarot card reading, and fairy face painting and crafts.

**FAIRY HOUSE FESTIVALS**

Step into a smaller world by visiting one of these fairy house events, most of which were inspired by Tracy Kane’s Fairy House book series. Kane keeps a running event list on her website fairyhouses.com, which you may want to consult for the latest details.
The fairy house festival seems to be an American phenomenon, but keep your eyes peeled because you never know! (And you can build your own fairy house nearly anywhere.)

**NORTH AMERICA**

**United States**

**Connecticut**

**Wee Faerie Village**

**THE FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM**

96 LYMÉ STREET

OLD LYMÉ, CONNECTICUT 06371 (860) 434-5542

FLORENCEGRISWOLDMUSEUM.ORG/PROGRAMS-EVENTS/WEE-FAERIE-VILLAGE

Every year since 2009, hundreds of artists have come together to create a magical, monthlong autumn wonderland in Old Lyme, Connecticut: the Florence Griswold Museum’s Wee Faerie Village, a collection of thirty-plus themed scenes along a path on the museum’s eleven-acre campus. A typical scene could be made by an individual artist or an entire elementary school. Traditional cottage-style homes mingle with caves, pyramids, temples, and Victorian mansions.

**Nature’s Open House Tour**

**WINDING TRAILS RECREATION CENTER**

50 WINDING TRAILS DRIVE

FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

(860) 677-8458

WINDINGTRAILS.ORG/PROGRAMS/SPECIAL-EVENTS

Since 2009, visitors have been enjoying a half-mile walk along wooded trails and on the way viewing more than one hundred fairy and gnome dwellings, all built by community members months beforehand (after, people take the dwellings home or recycle the materials). Following the trek, families enter the Recreation Center’s permanent Nature’s Open House Village and build a house of their own.
Florida

Historic Spanish Point Fairy House Festival

337 N. TAMIAI TRAIL
OSPREY, FLORIDA 34229
(941) 966-5214
HISTORICSPANISHPOINT.ORG/ANNUAL-EVENTS/FAIRYHOUSEFESTIVAL

This family-friendly, early spring festival takes place on the museum’s sprawling thirty acres. Visitors can enjoy a fairyhouse competition, live music, storytelling, enchanted garden walks, crafts, vendors, and more.

Maine

Maine Fairy Houses Festival

COASTAL MAINE BOTANICAL GARDENS
132 BOTANICAL GARDENS DRIVE
BOOTHBAY, MAINE 04537
(207) 633-8000
MAINEGARDENS.ORG

This botanical garden has a permanent area where children can make their own fairy houses. Every Friday in July and August is “Fairy Friday,” when children can participate in special fairy activities—fairy games, crafts, stories, music, and bubble blowing—in the children’s garden.

Massachusetts

Fairy Gnome Discovery Walk

PETTENGILL FARM
45 FERRY ROAD
SALISBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01952
NO TELEPHONE; EMAIL: SALISBURYPTA@GMAIL.COM
FAIRYGNOMEWALK.WEEBLY.COM

Visitors spend a whimsical May afternoon at Pettengill Farm, strolling past more than a hundred fairy and gnome homes—created each year by professionals, families, schoolchildren, and local businesses—that pepper a
wooded, one-mile path leading to the marsh and back. The event, which began in 2015, also features fairy-tale readings, live music and performances, and children’s crafts.

New Hampshire

Portsmouth Fairy House Tour

Grounds of the Governor John Langdon House, Strawberry Banke Museum, Prescott Park, and Peirce Island
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03802
No telephone; email: president@foenh.com
portsmouthfairyhousetour.com

Billed as the world’s largest fairy-house tour, this event takes place for one weekend only in September in Portsmouth’s South End (hometown of Tracy Kane, who inspired the fairy-house tour) and is spread across four different locations. More than two hundred fairy houses are on display, and range from simple child-made dwellings to incredibly elaborate homes that took months to create. Families can gather on Peirce Island to make their own structures, while a troupe of fairy ballerinas perform in Prescott Park. Even the local police get in the spirit—sporting fairy wings as they keep an eye on the festivities.

New York

Fairy House Festival

450 S. 4th Street
Lewiston, New York 14092
(716) 754-4375
artpark.net

Since 2011, this annual two-day June celebration offers an exhibit of fairy houses and a craft-your-own-house workshop, along with theatrical performances, storytellers, and art activities, as part of the annual summer arts festival Artpark. Each year families, school groups, scout troops, and various organizations build creative fairy houses to be put on display during the festival.
Corn Hill Arts Festival Fairy Houses Tour

133 S. FITZHUGH STREET
ROCHESTER, NY 14608
(585) 262-3142
CORNHILLARTSFESTIVAL.COM

Since 2013, the Rochester community has built more than sixty fairy houses for this event and tour, which take place every July as part of the long-running Corn Hill Arts Festival. More than seven thousand visitors vote for their favorite houses in categories such as “Best Use of Natural Materials,” “Most Whimsical,” and “Most Unique.” The winners are then put on display at the nearby Strong National Museum of Play.

North Carolina

Latta Plantation Fairy House Festival

6211 SAMPLE ROAD
HUNTERSVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28078
(704) 947-3069
FAIRYHOUSES.COM/EVENTS/FAIRY-HOUSE-FESTIVAL-LATTA-PLANTATION-NC

At the Latta Plantation Nature Center, families have brought their children out every second Saturday in February since 2007 to build fairy houses in the woods (using whatever natural materials they can find) and compete for prizes. The event is mainly geared toward families with children ages three to ten, who dress up for the occasion.

Vermont

Nature Museum Fairy House Festival

186 TOWNSHEND ROAD
GRAFTON, VERMONT 05146
(802) 843-2111
NATURE-MUSEUM.ORG/FAIRY-HOUSE-FESTIVAL

Founded in 2008 and held over the last full weekend of September, this event invites visitors to take a walk on the Fairy House Trail, a half-mile-
long nature path that meanders through field and forest and is lined with dozens of charming community-made fairy structures. After the walk, guests return to the Nature Museum gardens to make fairy dwellings of their own, get their faces painted, and blow soap bubbles.
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MEDIA


WEBSITES


ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Vanessa Beller graduated from pastry school and began her career building French pastries, various sweet treats, and fancy cakes before finding her true love: hard candy lollipops. She sells her unique, handmade confections at her shop, A Secret Forest.

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Kim Cross, publisher of Faerie Magazine, sold her hand-sculpted porcelain fairies to avid collectors through more than two hundred art galleries worldwide for nearly a decade, gaining her renown as the “fairy lady.” She founded Faerie Magazine in 2004.

Keith Donohue is the author of five novels, most recently The Motion of Puppets. His first novel, The Stolen Child, was a New York Times bestseller translated into twenty languages.

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DIANA HEYNE is a multimedia artist and writer known for her Pandora Jane line of natural materials, fairy furniture, houses, and accessories. She has worked with Applied Imagination, Ltd., to create botanical architecture for venues such as the New York Botanical Garden.

PAUL HIMMELEIN, editorial director of Faerie Magazine, is the coauthor of Bohemian Manifesto: A Field Guide to Living on the Edge. He is the recipient of a Hawthornden Fellowship for fiction and is completing his first novel.

HELEN NEVETT is a textile and surface designer with a love for fairy folk and all things magical. She sells her fairy wing jewelry and other pieces in her shop, Under the Ivy.

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SIGNORE PIKE is the author of the travel memoir Faery Tale: One Woman’s Search for Enchantment in a Modern World as well as an upcoming historical fiction trilogy.

TRICIA SAROYA is a fine artist whose work is represented by several galleries. She is also a floral and event designer.

TWIG TERRARIUMS was created by Brooklyn-bred floral artists Michelle Inciaranno and Katy Maslows in 2009. Their Twig creations have been featured in the New York Times, Country Living, and other publications.
CHARLES VESS’s long list of accomplishments includes illustrating Neil Gaiman’s novel *Stardust* as well as creating cover art for Marvel, DC, Tor, and Subterranean Press. He has illustrated many other award-winning books and graphic novels, and his art has been featured in gallery and museum exhibitions worldwide.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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