

## INTRODUCTION

In the interest of promoting clarity concerning the Traditional Gardnerian Wica declaration attached, this introduction aims to provide proper perspective and context.

First and foremost, it must be conveyed that the recent schism in our Tradition began several years ago. Particularly, in the US, a stream of inappropriate and bullying behavior began to manifest at Gathers and on social media. Slander, purposeful misrepresentations, false accusations, rumor-mongering, and gatekeeping became the norm, and with time it became clear that many of those engaging in such activities had specific motives related to power and control over the Wica.

Central to their true purpose is an argument against one of the foundational tenets of Gardnerian Craft, namely the male/female binary and how it influences Gardnerian practice as passed down for the past 80+ years. Gardnerian Wica is and has always been rooted in Nature. It celebrates the cycles and seasons of LIFE which focuses not only on the agrarian, but also emphasizes the FERTILITY cycle of humankind exemplified through the relationship between the Goddess and God. The focus of Gardnerian Witchcraft, then, is aligned with the power of Creation. Gerald B. Gardner is quoted in Jack Braclín's book *Gerald Gardner - Witch* as stating, "These people lived close to the Earth and their livelihood depended on the fertility of animals and crops. Hence they continued to do what they had been doing from time immemorial – namely, to follow a religion of nature and the fertility thereof, and to hold regular festivals at which the concept of cosmic fertility was worshiped, and the attempt was made to induce it by ritual to manifest upon Earth." (p. 201) A further quote from the same text states, "The fertility cult represented by the group in which Gardner had now been enrolled is one of these religions, [which] claims to be the oldest, [and] is called by its members the Wica. These then, are the witches of today." (p. 166) Per Gardner and Bracelin, to negate or reduce the importance of fertility in Gardnerian Craft is to remove the very essence of our mysteries.

In the past, when individuals or independently-minded factions of Gardnerians thought to change the Tradition, they instead started new groups that now thrive today under different names. These include but are not limited to Alexandrian, Protean, Minoan Brotherhood/Sisterhood and many others. They took their Gardnerian BOS's with them and adapted freely, enabling many such groups to prosper as they filled a need for change that was not possible to achieve within the boundaries of Gardnerian Craft.

Those of us who embrace the traditional tenets, philosophies, and praxis of Gardnerian Witchcraft take exception to any who would dare to change the foundational principles of it. We fully intend to remain true to its original teachings and praxis. Furthermore, we seek to be honest with the seeker regarding the true nature of our tradition, as received from Gerald B. Gardner. **Ultimately, the tradition is not altered to suit the Seeker. The Seeker is informed of the structure and tenets of the Tradition and decides whether or not they are a suitable match.**

Traditional Gardnerian Witches firmly believe that there is plenty of room in the Craft for all peoples regardless of sex, gender, orientation, culture, age, ethnicity, and spiritual backgrounds, but we reserve the right to accept as Gardnerian only those who can abide by its principles.

All signatures on the document below were given freely and voluntarily, and were not coerced in any way. Additionally, this declaration is not line-specific, but rather has signatures from a variety of lines within Gardnerian Craft. Rest assured, the signatures below represent only a small portion of the many Gardnerians who label themselves Traditional Gardnerian Witches, and who are dedicated to the preservation of our Craft.

**The attached document, *A Declaration of the Traditional Gardnerian Wica* has been read, signed, sealed and approved by 47 Gardnerians of the 3° and autonomous 2°, as of July 18th, 2022.**

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## A Declaration of the Traditional Gardnerian Wica

As we enter a challenging time for the greater Gardnerian community, it has become necessary to make clear the principles relating to Traditional Gardnerian practice. We, as a community, wish to clarify our beliefs, duties, practices, and vision to the esoteric community as a whole.

In the late 1930s, Gerald Gardner came upon the remnants of a dying faith. He and a small group of dedicated witches preserved what they could during very difficult times. The Craft they preserved is a living, breathing religion – it survives through us, and through our work. It is not only composed of the knowledge we have written in our books, but also the practices that guide us to the mysteries unfolding themselves within our rituals. Our Craft is many things – a religion, a mystery tradition, and a magical system -- which provide comfort and a home to those souls called back to it in this lifetime. It is our duty to preserve the knowledge contained within it, for those who seek it now and in the future. Our Craft is inclusive and is open to anyone who is called to it and who is willing to work within traditional guidelines. Traditional guidelines within Gardnerian Wica are established beliefs and practices as set forth by Gerald Gardner, and are pervasive themes woven throughout our rituals.

It has been long established that our initiatory rites lead us through the mysteries of our tradition, and they represent the basic core of our tradition. Traditional Gardnerian Wica recognize that if one changes the core of our Tradition, the Tradition itself changes into something else and it ceases to be Gardnerian.

Our core is not just words on a page. Our core represents the fundamental principles, qualities and energies that lead us to the mysteries and to our Goddess and God. One such principle that is inextricably woven into the foundations of our Tradition is that of working with male/female polarity. Male/female polarity is an overarching theme. It is present in every Gardnerian circle, through Esbats and Sabbats to initiations and elevations. It is a cornerstone of our foundation, as represented by our Great Mother who gives birth to all living things, and our Lord of Death and Resurrection.

We recognize that male/female polarity is present in both the physical and metaphysical, and we set forth that the physical is inseparable from the metaphysical while incarnate. It is therefore necessary to practice biological female to biological male and vice versa, within a Traditional Gardnerian circle. We acknowledge that anything other than this is not Traditional Gardnerian practice, and will lead to different currents of power and different mysteries.

To those who seek to explore those pathways, we wish you well. May you find your footing and provide meaningful experiences to your seekers. We hope that the Gods guide you to the mysteries you are looking for. We, however, cannot follow you on that path.

We establish that we are Traditional Gardnerian Witches, and that we will pass on the Tradition as handed down to us by Gerald Gardner to the best of our ability. We will be here to guide seekers into the future, and we will preserve our inherited knowledge and mysteries so that we may come to know each other and love each other again. May we all be guided by the wisdom of the Goddess and God in these matters, and may the Gods preserve the Craft.