

THIS ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM THE SUMMER 2025

# GreenSpirit *magazine*

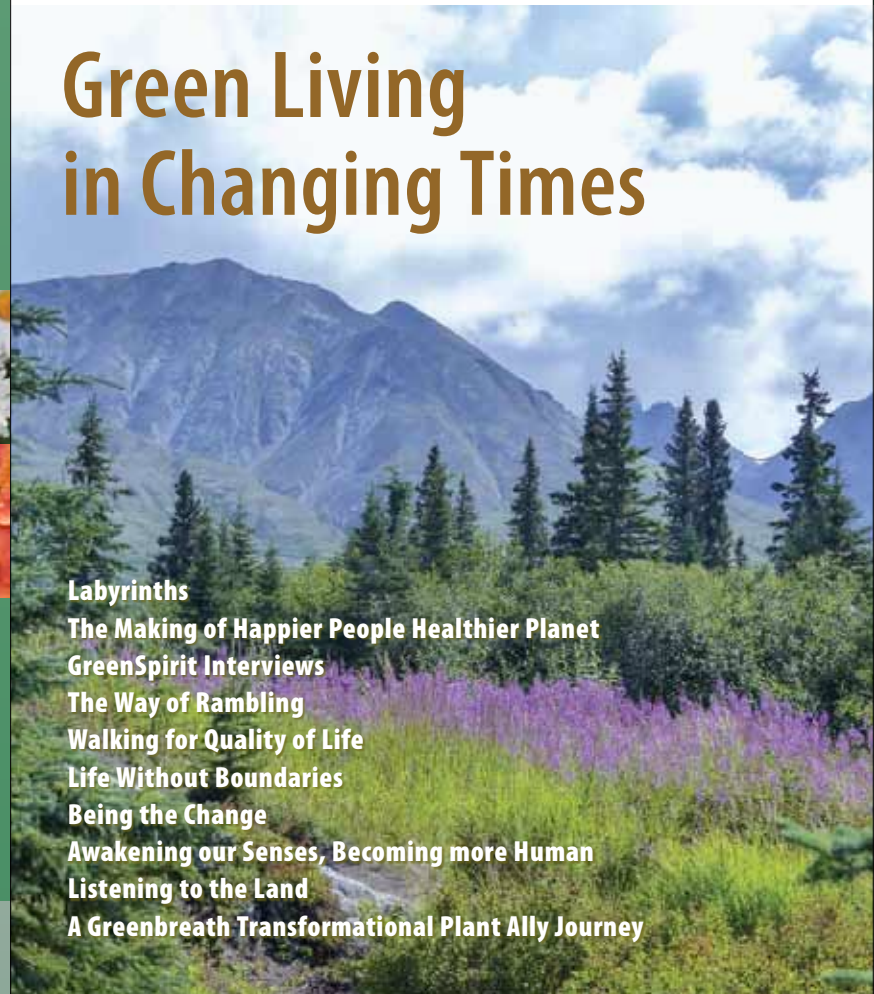
Engaged spirituality for a living Earth

## GreenSpirit

Engaged spirituality for a living Earth

Volume 27:2 £3.50

### Green Living in Changing Times



**Labyrinths**  
**The Making of Happier People Healthier Planet**  
**GreenSpirit Interviews**  
**The Way of Rambling**  
**Walking for Quality of Life**  
**Life Without Boundaries**  
**Being the Change**  
**Awakening our Senses, Becoming more Human**  
**Listening to the Land**  
**A Greenbreath Transformational Plant Ally Journey**

[www.greenspirit.org.uk](http://www.greenspirit.org.uk)

# Awakening our Senses, Becoming more Human

SUSAN MEEKER-LOWRY



*“I doubt if there is any sensation arising from sight more delightful than the odors which filter through sun-warmed, wind-tossed branches, or the tide of scents which swells, subsides, rises again wave on wave, filling the wide world with sweetness. A whiff of the universe makes us dream of worlds we have never seen, recalls in a flash entire epochs of our dearest experience.”*

~ Helen Keller

As a natural perfumer (and someone who relies on scent for so much in my life), losing it for about a year (well before Covid), was devastating. We aren't tested as children for how well we smell like we are for sight and hearing, so the possibility wasn't even on my radar. Luckily my issue was treatable, though I need to take care so it doesn't return. The recovery felt miraculous – like being reborn, and I became acutely aware of all the nuances my nose was picking up. At the same time, I noticed how paying close attention to scent, also stimulated my curiosity about what I was seeing and hearing. Everything (everyone) seemed more alive and vital.

While my main focus is scent, all of our senses are gateways or portals to different modes of perception, connecting us to all life, stimulating our brains, opening neural pathways that might otherwise be ignored. Of all our senses, smell is the most connected to memory – we breathe and the

fragrance information is immediately transmitted to the cerebral cortex and then to the limbic system, the part of the brain that deals with memory, feelings, emotions. Within an instant we can be in the woods as a child, or sitting at our grandmother's dinner table, or reading an old book found in the attic. The scent alone transports us in time and plops us in a memory that would have stayed in our subconscious if it hadn't been for a whiff of fragrance.

In addition to our physical senses, we also have “spirit senses”, which are interconnected. By paying close attention to the information given to us in the physical realm, we are able to access these inner, spirit senses. When we connect with a tree visually, for example, our “spirit eyes” allow us to go deeper, to “see” the life energy, and sense the vibrations emanating from the tree. The same with hearing ... our spirit ears make it possible to participate/communicate with (to use the same example) trees, who don't speak “human”. Our skin and our hair perceive vibrations, and help us recognize the presence of spirit, and also of danger before we are conscious of it. I've often thought of my body as a tuning fork, precisely designed to enable us to perceive the world, move within it, and participate with it on every dimension. Our senses are how we participate with Earth. Opening to this awareness, we may be given a sign that's just what we need in that moment. Every living being communicates, relates to, is perceived by, and open

to participation with all the life around them. As our senses become more enlivened, we become more complete as humans, and more active participants.

Our ancient ancestors utilized their senses as a matter of course, and relied on them for specific information. For hundreds if not thousands of years we have been sold a false myth of who we are. The true nature of our intimacy with all life, as well as our knowledge of spirit, consciousness, and how to participate, were literally stolen from us! This can be traced at least as far back as the Christian hierarchy's consolidation of power, land, and riches by persecuting land-based peoples – my ancient ancestors – destroying sacred groves, wells, caves, and other places of power. We know this history. And we know, though many have forgotten, that no matter where our ancestors came from or how long ago, we are all descendants of Earth-based peoples.

When our ancestors were killed, or driven off their lands and forced into serfdom, or herded onto ships to be sold into slavery, we lost more than we ever realized, more than conventional history has taught. We forgot the truth of who we are, our oneness and intimacy with the life of the land and our own deepest knowings. Over the centuries we forgot the real power of our senses – not because they are gone, as tonsils are removed with surgery, but through denial and neglect; and even fear for our safety. Our ears lost the ability to hear other-than-human voices, our eyes no longer saw the life force in all beings. We could no longer perceive the deep sonorous tones of rocks, or the intelligence of healing plants. The living world became just so much material stuff – minerals, dirt, water – resources to be commodified.

But our spirit senses have not disappeared – we still have them! Even their keenest intuitive perceptions are still available to us. They're simply hibernating, waiting to be awakened. How do we do this? There are skills we need, and wisdom, and we won't discover them in books or even by listening to human voices. Rather: ask the wind when it's wild and when it's calm. Listen with your ears, your heart, and even your skin. Sit with rocks and boulders. Lie on them. Let go of the boundary of your body so you sense a real connection. Can you feel the calm, quiet of the boulder ease your anxiety? Is there a message in this for you? Marvel at the life in soil, the myriad varieties of moss and lichens and fungi. Break one open under your nose and breathe in the musk, funk, and deep earthy fragrance. Let it nourish your spirit. What images, memories, longings emerge? Delve deep. Feel. Listen. Keep an open heart. Let the energy flow in and through and out. Do this over and over, in different places at different times until it becomes second nature – and it will.

The key, the magic spell, that opens these inner senses and gives us entree into the nonhuman realm is Love. Love is the

language all life recognizes. And gratitude is appreciated and remembered. Always give thanks for whatever you hear, feel, see, intuit. Journalling can be helpful, and sharing your stories with others is essential as experiences with the more-than-human beings we share Earth with are often denigrated as figments of our imagination. They certainly are not valued or taught. Children are born with this intuitive sight, hearing, knowing, and will retain these abilities if they are acknowledged and respected. Instead, our culture teaches well-meaning parents to slam the door on this aspect of being human, ultimately teaching our children they cannot trust themselves.

Though these are very dark times, please remember the greedy, power-hungry elite want us to feel hopeless and powerless. This was true thousands of years ago, and it's true today. An awakened human being, one who nurtures and honors their senses, is a potentially dangerous person to the status quo. Awakened to who we are and why we are here, we are strong. We are resilient. We have access to the Wisdom and the Love of all who have preceded us, and to the very life and intelligence of the Universe! We are more than our physical bodies, as Earth is more than inert elements. Every living being is present in this moment with us. We need to remember this, because the more-than-human voices have much to tell us, and we cannot do this without them.

*“When we unexpectedly come across a great rock formation or an elder tree, we feel the presence of something alive and strong and old. Something outside the human... And very quickly, there is that intake of breath, that inspiration. We breathe them into us and they breathe us into them. This is not a river, it does not travel in only one direction. They need us just as we need them. We are all in this together. We are not alone here.*

~ Stephen Harrod Buhner, *Earth Grief*



**Susan Meeker-Lowry is a long time activist and writer. She currently creates natural perfumes and aromatherapy blends that are sold on Etsy (Gaia's Garden Herbals). Unfortunately she only ships within the US. Her work over the decades has encompassed a diverse range of issues with a focus on creating an economy for a living Earth. Falling in love with Earth, she believes, is essential for the future of all life. You can subscribe to her free Substack, *The Magic is Real*. She lives in Duanesburg, NY with her cat, Maxwell. <https://gaisvoices.substack.com>**