



## wassail math

Posted by [Michael Phillips](#)

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[Michael Phillips](#)

[wassail math](#)

January 01, 2018 08:19PM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

A guy who gets up in the middle of the night to patrol for deer in the deep cold air thinks about many things. This has to do with dates and tradition behind the orchard wassail ceremony.

What's now known as the twelve days of Christmas centers on the darkest period of the year. The bit that gets us from the solstice to the religious holiday aside . . . it was on the very last night that festivities would conclude in the fruit orchards. Which brings us to a first ambiguity: "The Twelfth Night is January 5th, the last day of the Christmas Season before Epiphany (January 6th). In some church traditions, January 5th is considered the eleventh Day of Christmas, while the evening of January 5th is still counted as the Twelfth Night, the beginning of the Twelfth day of Christmas the following day."

Now let's roll in the year 1582 when the new Gregorian calendar was put in use. Equinox and solstice dates were no longer in sync with the sun. "The error accumulated in the thirteen centuries since the Council of Nicaea was corrected by a deletion of 10 days. The Julian calendar day Thursday, 4 October 1582 was followed by the first day of the Gregorian calendar, Friday, 15 October 1582 (the cycle of weekdays was not affected)."

In some places, particularly southwest England, what's called *Olde Twelfth Night* is still celebrated on January 17. This continues the custom on the date determined by the Julian calendar. In other words, Twelfth Night on what was once January 5 is now Olde Twelfth Night on January 17.

However your planet turns, be sure to get out to those venerable trees and give thanks. **Was hál!**

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/03/2018 05:28AM by Michael Phillips.

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[Liz Griffith](#)

[Re: wassail math](#)

January 05, 2018 06:24PM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 46

Thanks, Michael! Our annual staff party/wassail will be tomorrow, so we are closer to the first math this year. We might have to go out again on the 17th for good measure. The more the merrier.

Happy New Year everyone! Here's too a wonderful growing and harvest season in 2018!

Door Creek Orchard

Zone 5a in Wisconsin

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[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: wassail math](#)

January 11, 2022 06:50PM

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 211

I was just checking my wassail math and some other wassail tradition factoids ahead of reminding our orchard newsletter readers to get their wassail on, if they haven't done so already, and happened upon a fun website that is hawking a five-volume compendium of all things wassail . . .

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Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

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