

What is Sacred Sexuality?

Your Definition:

Our Definition:

Sacred Sexuality is a combination of worldviews, traditions, mindsets, and skills that honor and acknowledge our erotic energy as creative, healthy and life-giving.

A sacred sexual practice allows the expression of our sexuality to inspire awe and transformation. It creates moments of reverence and bonds us to the spirit and meaning of life.

The purpose of a sacred sexual practice is to deepen our connection to ourselves, humanity, and the greater consciousness of all of life with more presence and purpose.

Nettle as an Ally for Sacred Sexuality:

As with all herbal work, resourcing sexuality with herbs is a process of building and supporting the entirety of each individual's mind, body, and spirit. Sacred sexuality is an emergent property of the ecosystem of the human being, and nettles are a resource to help build a container in which it can thrive.

.. Nettles deeply nourish and source the body and soul

Nettles are abundant with the green, vital life force of the Earth. They are simple, gentle, slow, and powerful in their ability to restore and replenish the body, mind, and spirit. Nettles ask us to drop back into connection with the ways of living on the Earth that our ancestors know, and to make space within our lives to give ourselves the resources we crave. Nettles are calming and balancing to the nervous system, and support resilience in times of stress. Nettles are active on every level of the body, from cell to spirit, and they are capable of transforming our experience of how it feels to live as an embodied human on the Earth. Connecting with these energies of life calls in a flow of deep green sensuality, sourced directly from the soil, sun, water, and tissues of the plants. Fully nourishing and resourcing the body opens up space to devote energy to pleasure, connection, and expression.

.. Nettles for sensation

Working with live or fresh nettles is a pathway to encountering sensation. Perhaps you met them unexpectedly in the woods, reacting to the pain of their sting, or perhaps you were warned about them as a child. Urtification, the practice of flogging with nettles for the medicine of their sting, is an ancient practice that has existed across cultures for millennia. This practice delivers pain, but also relief. The sting can reduce inflammation and soothe the pain and stiffness of arthritis. Different people experience the sting in different ways, so approach this practice with caution. Some may feel stinging, burning, itching, numbness, tingling, or other sensations. The sting stimulates circulation and blood flow and can be used to move energies throughout the body, drawing attention to the places it touches. Playing and working

with nettles sting can be a way to explore sensation, dropping into the body, and stimulating the physical being.

.. Nettles for developing healthy boundaries

Healthy boundaries are essential for sacred and empowered sexuality. Nettle has much to teach about boundaries. Working with this plant on a physical and energetic level can aid in the formation of safe, supportive, appropriate boundaries. The sting of the nettle is a strong boundary, a protection for the gifts that the plant holds. At the same time, nettle has much to give, and willingly provides to those who ask with respect and care. Working with nettles on an energetic level can help people develop strong internal boundaries, which then provide the support to create supportive boundaries between the self and others.

.. Nettles and consent

Nettles teach us about consent, whether or not we are paying attention. If we want to work with nettles, they demand our focus and intention. Harvesting nettles must be done slowly, in attunement with the plant, and with careful, cautious selection. This is, of course, the ways that all plants desire to be harvested, but not all plants make their needs felt as strongly as the nettles do. Let nettles be a model for requiring consent and mindful communication so that the full gifts of connection may be safely realized.

.. Working with nettles

To most effectively call in the supportive properties of nettles, work with them regularly. Brew a daily infusion, letting the plant material steep for 4-8 hours in water to fully extract their nutrients. Pour hot water over dried leaf, stem, and/or flower, then let sit. Simmer fresh plant material in water for 5-10 minutes, then let sit. Drink this tea intentionally throughout the day, calling on the spirit of the plant, welcoming their gifts into your body. Add nettles to your food, and relish the gifts of the leaves. Get to know a living nettle plant in the wild, grow them in containers in your garden, place them by the threshold of your home or room, give them space on your altar. Drop into relationship with the plant, noticing any shifts you experience in their presence, and asking the plant for what you wish to receive. Working with the plant each day is an opportunity to weave mindful practice into your life and develop a deep relationship with a plant ally as you provide your body with the nourishment it craves to thrive.

The Lineage of Sacred Sexuality:

If you take a look at just about every ancient religion and culture, you'll find rituals, texts, and practices that honor the power of sexual expression. Often times, sexuality was sacred simply because it was an integral part of life and was honored as such.

As religious institutions grew in power, sexual expression became a tool for control, shame, and corruption. Religious beliefs bled into cultural conditioning and lead to thousands of years of sexual shaming, erotic oppression, sexual manipulation and victimization, colonization, imperialism, capitalism, and globalization. Generation upon generation of demonized, disconnected and commodified sexual experiences.

While some sacred sexual practices survived the decades of sex-negativity, a majority were lost or devalued. In the last 60 years, there has been a resurgence of wisdom and teachings specific to sacred

sexuality. Most of the sacred sexual practices in circulation today are a combination of resurrected practices and philosophies from times when sexuality was valued as a path toward spiritual expansion, and new sex-positive, conscious sexual skills that intend to fill our cultural sexual void with connection, permission, and freedom that the western world desperately needs.

What blocks/challenges/beliefs keep you from experiencing your full sexual potential:

Beyond the Orgasm:

At its core, sacred sexuality invites us to expand our idea of sex beyond the physical goal-based experience of genital orgasm.

With your permission, you can invite our sexual energy out of the bedroom and into your everyday life, allow yourselves to be enlivened by the sensual experience of nature, turned on by your creative process, and engaged in creating more vibrancy and authentic expression.

In doing so, you open to the possibilities of pleasure beyond the ordinary, creating more pathways to ecstasy, connection, and intimacy.

Nature, plants and the Earth are an amazing ally in creating expanded sensual experiences. Spending time in nature is one of the easiest ways to tune into the possibilities of expanded sexual energy. There is an infallible way that being in the presence of natural elements (the sun, rain, soil, plants, or simply a gust of fresh air) harkens us to take in our environment with more consciousness, presence, and aliveness.

The natural world invites us to a place of vibrant sensual experiencing, providing to be one of the most powerful resources for sacred sexuality.

What are the places/experiences/conditions that you find the most pleasurable?

Practices and Resources to Cultivate Sacred Sexuality:

Herbal baths ☆ Self-Massage ☆ Pleasure journaling ☆ Meditation ☆ Enjoying fresh food or Cooking a delicious meal ☆ Immersion in beautiful landscapes ☆ Making or Viewing Art ☆ Music & Singing ☆ Masturbation & Self-Touch ☆ Dance ☆ Flower Essences ☆ Covering the body in soil, water, clay, Earth ☆ Body Painting ☆ Crystals ☆ Dressing up ☆ Spending time unclothed ☆ Positive Body Affirmations ☆ Talk Therapy & Shame Resilience ☆ Connecting to Ancestors ☆ Connecting to Spirit Guides ☆ Ecstatic Breathwork ☆ Intention Setting & Sex Magic ☆ Releasing Emotion (Gigglegasm, Angergasm, Crygasm) ☆ Altar Building ☆ Stretching & Using Your Body ☆ Movement ☆ Setting Healthy Boundaries ☆ Heart Opening & Connection ☆ Prayer ☆ Connecting to the elements ☆ Eye Gazing ☆ Erotic Touch ☆

ABOUT THE FACILITATORS:

Anna Booth Cohen has been studying herbalism for the past 7 years, completing a three-year apprenticeship at the Gaia School in Putney, VT, an advanced program at the Boston School of Herbal Studies, and a year-long apprenticeship at the Ohlone Center in Berkeley, CA. She offers individual herbal consults and herbal education, including classes, workshops, and programs. Find out about Anna at <https://www.herbalistuprising.com/>

Elise Bish is a workshop facilitator, conscious sexuality educator, and Desire Catalyst. She believes that the purpose of life is to walk through the world with our desire leading the way and to breathe in the fullness of existence with all of our senses. As a Desire Catalyst, Elise combines systemic family constellations, embodiment practices, and conscious sexual skill building to support her clients in cultivating an inspired relationship to their desire. Find out about Elise at <http://elisebish.com/>

Ready for more?

Join Anna and Elise for their upcoming retreat Earth Eros Embodied. This 4-day experiential retreat is designed for women and queer folks to learn about and connect to their bodies, desires, plant allies, and spiritual and ancestral resources. Receive conscious sexual education, grounded and nourished by herbal medicine. If you'd like more sexual freedom, creative inspiration, deep connection with the Earth, check out Earth Eros Embodied.

August 8-11th in Plainfield, MA: <http://elisebish.com/eartheros/>