



Late Summer: Returning to Earth

The season of nourishment, digestion and finding our centre.

As I write this, I'm beginning to notice a subtle shift. This summer has offered so much richness - the warmth of the radiant sun on my skin, feeling it sink deeply into my bones, long days outdoors, river swims, gatherings, picnics, retreats and evenings around campfires. There has been a beautiful sense of expansion and connection, of saying yes to experiences and allowing myself to be fully immersed in the season. It has been utterly joyful, and I have experienced true moments of feeling carefree and at peace in myself. The days have seemed less measured by the clock and more by the weather, the river and the people around me.

Summer and the (energy of Fire) invites us outwards. It encourages movement, creativity, connection and expression. We naturally spend more time beyond our front doors, turning our faces towards the warmth, sharing food, stories and laughter. We are nourished by light, by relationship and by the simple pleasure of being alive.

Yet after all this fullness, I'm beginning to notice a quieter invitation. Not a forced stopping, nor a sudden retreat from the joy of summer, but a gentle awareness that even abundance needs time to be received, digested and integrated. I find myself wanting to linger a little longer over these moments, allowing them to settle into my body and memory to continue to warm my soul as the world continues to turn.

I notice it in myself as a little more tiredness after months of activity, a desire for quieter moments and a need to restore rather than simply keep going. I notice it in the landscape too. This year the plants and forests around us seem to be asking for moisture. The vibrant greens of early summer are already softening into deeper, older shades. The exuberance of fresh growth is giving way to something quieter, steadier and more mature.

Nature does not continue expanding endlessly. It knows when to gather, absorb and prepare. Perhaps we can listen to that wisdom too.

Earth: The Art of Receiving and Transforming

In Five Element theory, Late Summer belongs to the Earth element. It is a distinct season in its own right, resting between the expansive energy of summer and the inward movement of autumn. Rather than rushing from one season to the next, Earth offers us a pause — a chance to gather ourselves before life begins to turn again.

Earth is the place of nourishment, steadiness and belonging. It reminds us that we all need somewhere to return to; somewhere within ourselves that feels grounded, supported and enough.

Just as the earth beneath our feet quietly holds every tree, every wildflower and every harvest, our own Earth energy supports our capacity to care, create, connect and thrive. It is the centre from which we meet life.

Perhaps this season quietly asks:

What has truly nourished me?

What am I ready to receive?

What experiences from this summer need time to settle before I move on?



Earth Energy Within us

The Stomach and Spleen meridians are the energetic expression of the Earth element within Shiatsu and Traditional East Asian Medicine. Together they remind us that nourishment is about far more than food. Every day we are taking in experiences, conversations, emotions, relationships and moments that shape us. Like a good meal, these too require time to be digested.

The Stomach

The Stomach is sometimes described as the Sea of Nourishment — the place where we receive what comes towards us. It reflects our ability to take life in, whether that is food, pleasure, support, creativity or love. Many of us become highly practised at giving our time, our energy and our care. Receiving, however, can feel far less familiar. The Stomach reminds us that we cannot continually pour out without allowing ourselves to be filled.

The Spleen is associated with transformation — patiently turning what we receive into vitality and usable energy. I often think of it as a gardener tending fertile soil. A gardener does not rush the seasons or force growth. They prepare the ground, nurture what has been planted and trust the quiet work taking place beneath the surface.

There is something deeply reassuring about that image. Much of what sustains life happens unseen. Seeds transform in darkness. Roots spread long before new growth appears. The earth patiently holds and supports the process.

Perhaps we are not so different.

When our own Earth energy is supported we often feel grounded, centred and able to meet life with steadiness. When we become overextended or constantly focused on the next task, we can lose touch with that centre, feeling scattered or depleted, unable to fully receive the nourishment already around us.

Growth requires nourishment, but nourishment also requires time.

The Spleen

Supporting our Stomach and Spleen energy does not necessarily mean adding more things to our already busy lives. Often, it is about returning to simplicity and noticing the quiet forms of nourishment that are already available to us.

It may be allowing ourselves time to truly enjoy a meal rather than rushing through it. It may be creating space after experiences so that we have time to process and integrate what has happened, rather than immediately moving on to the next thing.

It may be reconnecting with the natural world — walking, gardening, sitting outdoors, feeling the support of the earth beneath our feet. It may be choosing warmth, kindness and consistency in our daily rhythms.

And perhaps most importantly, it may be remembering that receiving care is also a form of nourishment.



Wisdom of the Earth Element

Perhaps supporting our Earth element is not about adding more to our lives, but about returning to the quiet forms of nourishment that already surround us. Sharing food with people we love. Sitting outside long enough to notice the changing quality of the light. Walking through woodland without needing to arrive anywhere. Allowing a meaningful conversation, a beautiful view or a joyful afternoon to settle before rushing into the next thing.

These are not grand gestures. They are simple reminders that nourishment is often found in the ordinary moments we are inclined to overlook.

In Shiatsu, working with the Earth element is about helping someone return to their centre. Through touch, pressure and presence, there is an opportunity to soften, settle and reconnect with the body's own innate wisdom. Sometimes the most profound thing we can do is simply allow ourselves to receive.

Late Summer reminds us that there is wisdom in gathering ourselves after periods of expansion. The harvest is not only found in orchards and gardens. It is found in friendships deepened, confidence quietly grown, moments remembered and the countless small experiences that have nourished us along the way.

Before rushing towards the next season, perhaps we can pause long enough to recognise what has already been given. The Earth beneath us is always holding and perhaps we can allow ourselves to be held too.

Three gentle Earth practices

1. **Savour your nourishment:** Choose one meal this week to eat without distraction. Notice the colours, textures, flavours and aromas. Allow yourself to slow down and receive the nourishment, rather than simply consuming it.
2. **Return to the ground:** Spend a little time outdoors each day. Sit beneath a tree, walk slowly through woodland or simply stand with your feet firmly on the earth. Notice the support beneath you and the changing quality of the season around you.
3. **Pause before moving on:** After a meaningful conversation, a walk, a gathering or even a busy day, resist the urge to rush straight into the next task. Allow a few quiet moments for the experience to settle, asking yourself what you have received before turning your attention elsewhere.

Three reflective Earth questions

1. Where in my life does connection feel nourishing right now?
2. What am I ready to receive as the seasons begin to change?
3. Where do I feel most grounded, supported and at home in myself?

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Offered in the spirit of seasonal care.