Protection Against Black Witches

Brass

In folklore, brass is used to repel evil spirits and witches. Bells crafted from brass were hung on the necks of livestock to prevent them from falling to the evil eye.

# Candles

From about the 12th century on, candles were placed on church altars. Holy candles were used by priests in the ritual of exorcism, and by farmers to protect their livestock from bewitchment. The Malleus Maleficarum instructs inquisitors to used holy candles "for preserving oneself from the injury of witches."

# Charms

Charms are magical phrases, words, chants, incantations, or prayers, which protect against or cure disease, and ward off witchcraft, disaster, and evil. Although witches were believed to make use of charms, common people weren't above using them for themselves as protection against witchcraft. The most common charms concert witchcraft, illness, and health. In the 17th century, copies of St. John's Gospel were sold as a charm against witchcraft. To break witches' spells, herbs were prescribed along with the recitation of one Creed, five Aves, and five Paternosters.

# Garlic

Garlic is best known for its properties of averting vampires. However, it was considered equally effective in warding off the evil eye, demons, and witches. Many healing remedies contained garlic, and garlands of garlic worn around the neck or hung inside a house were used to repel evil spirits, spells, and creatures.

# Gemstone

Many gemstones were believed to protect against witchcraft and the evil eye. These stones were often worn in rings or amulets. Amber and coral protected against the evil eye, and cats eye, saronyx, and ruby protected against witchcraft. Small stones and pebbles scattered on a floor were also considered effective in keeping witches at bay.

# Hagstone

A hagstone is a stone with a hole in it hung in stables and homes to keep away witches or hags at night. If hung on the bedpost, it protected the sleeper from having a hag ride one's chest and causing a nightmare. Hung in the stable, it prevented witches from riding horses all night to exhaustion.

**Hazel**

Although hazel was purported to have been used by witch’s witch hazel, it was also used to protect against witches. Hazelnuts and hazel wood were believed to offer protection against fairy bewitchment, demons, and witchcraft. Horses were protected by wearing hazel breastbands on their harnesses. In Scotland, double hazelnuts were hurled at witches, and cattle were singed with hazel rods at Midsummer and Beltane fires to keep fairies away.

# Iron

Iron is believed to be one of the top charms against evil spirits, demons, sorcerers, and witches. European folklore says witches cannot pass over cold iron, and that burying an iron knife under your doorstep will ensure no witches will ever enter your house. In some areas, iron was used to protect entire villages. Iron was also considered a choice ward against malicious fairies. In some areas, it also repelled ghosts. Iron was a popular metal for the creation of amulets, which protect against the evil eye, bad luck, danger, evil spirits, and witches.

**Pins**

According to English folklore, a witch's power can be destroyed by sticking pins in the heart of a stolen hen or by pricking a pigeon with pins. Witch hunters often used pins to prick suspected witches when looking for Devil's marks.

# Salt

Salt has been long considered anathema to evil and demons. In folklore, salt provides protection against witches, witchcraft, demons, and the evil eye. Salt also was used to break evil spells.

During the Middle Ages, it was a common belief that witches and the animals they bewitched could not eat anything salted. "Inquisitors who interrogated accused witches were advised by demonologists first to protect themselves by wearing a sacramental amulet that consisted of salt consecrated on Palm Sunday and blessed herbs, pressed into a disk of blessed wax." A common torture method was to force?feed an accused witch heavily salted food and then deny them water.

# Water

Since antiquity, water has had associations with all that is pure and holy. From the Middle Ages until the 19th century, accused witches were bound and thrown into water to see if they would sink or float. Since water is the medium of holy baptism, it was believed that it would reject an agent of the Devil: witches would float. According to folklore, demons, vampires, and witches were unable to cross running water. The safest thing to do if you were being chased by one was to ford a stream. One of the Catholic Church's most powerful weapons against the supernatural was holy water. Holy water is a mixture of salt and water that has been blessed by a priest. Witches, vampires, and other nasty evil creatures were considered violently allergic to holy water.

# Witch Boxes

In the 16th and 17 centuries, witch boxes were popular wards against witches. They were made up of small wooden boxes full of pieces of human bone, herbs, bits of rowan, and other odds and ends over which a spell of protection had been cast. Witch?hunters frequently sold witch boxes as they journeyed from village to village, whipping up witch hysteria.

# Wolf's Head

According to Reginald Scot's 1665 work The Discovery of Witchcraft, "in some countries they nail a wolf's head to the door, to prevent and cure all mischief’s by charms and witchcraft’s."