

MAKING SCENTS OF ESSENTIAL OILS

Sheena Hendon discovers why it makes scents to include essential oils in your medicine kit

For most people essential oils conjure up memories of a favourite perfume or smell, yet the field of aromatherapy –the use of oils extracted from aromatic plants also use essential oils in the treatment of many physical and emotional health complaints. For instance, Melaleuca (tea tree) acts as a natural germ fighter, Wintergreen essential oil is a potent anti-inflammatory and Lavender has a multitude of uses from anxiety and skin conditions to insomnia and insect bite relief. And, as pure, high quality oils become more readily available we are beginning to understand the power of essential oils in the realms of holistic health care.

In fact pure, therapeutic grade essential oils, which are the natural aromatic compounds found in the seeds, bark, stems, roots, flowers and other parts of plants can be antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antiviral, antiseptic, antioxidant, antifungal, detoxifying and purifying. Aromatherapy has been described as the "life force" as these compounds are essential to the plants' biological processes, as well as being the substance which gives them their scent.

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The health benefits of an oil depends not only on its purity but also on the diversity and amount of its chemical constituents. An essential oil is made up of between 200 to 800 different chemical components which are grouped in a number of distinct families such as monoterpenes, sesquiterpenes, alcohols, esters, aldehydes, ketones, phenols, oxides each with a number of dominant health benefits.

Essential oils vs modern medicines

Many of our modern medicines are a result of analysing the natural chemical constituents of raw botanicals and distilled essential oils. Common aspirin is one example. White Willow Bark used over 2,000 years ago by Hippocrates to ease headaches and other muscular pains, contains a natural anti-inflammatory identified in the nineteenth century as salicin. Salicin is a cousin to salicylic/acetylsalicylic acid, more commonly known as aspirin. White Willow Bark is still routinely used by herbalists to more naturally relieve pain and inflammation.

After the analysis and discovery of the benefits of the effective components in essential oils or raw botanicals, chemists isolate these constituents for use in modern medicines. Chemists then derive ways to more inexpensively synthesise these constituents. Unfortunately synthetic oils, even if chemically similar, will lack all the natural elements, and that vital life-force, that make essential oils so valuable therapeutically.

Tips for buying and using essential oils

- To obtain the optimal therapeutic benefit of the products that you use, it is important to pay attention to ingredient and product labeling, product descriptions and marketing claims. Read labels and familiarize yourself with the names of healthy natural ingredients and also of synthetic and toxic ingredients that you need to avoid. Only purchase 100% therapeutic grade oils for the best results.
- Learn about the Company that you are purchasing from. Spend a little time exploring the websites of the companies that you are interested in purchasing from. Most reputable essential oil suppliers provide details about their company history and the educational background of those that formulate their products. Detailed product descriptions that include ingredient lists and descriptions of the benefits of each ingredient and extremely helpful.
- Want to find out more about the health benefits of essential oils then check out www.pubmed.com

Using essential oils

To get the most out of your oils think about the various ways you can use them –

Massage: An effective method of using the oils, combining their properties with the therapeutic power of touch. The oils can be used undiluted, or diluted with an odourless carrier oil such as fractionated coconut oil or sweet almond or peach kernel. Use approximately 6 drops of essential oil to two teaspoons of carrier oil. Always use dilute for babies and young children

In the bath. Add 6 to 10 drops of essential oil, (or a blend), to the surface of the water which has already been run, add no other substances, e.g. foam or bath oil, then immerse yourself for about 20 minutes, whilst you inhale the vapour. (Again reduce the amount of oils used in baths for babies).

As a compress: Add 5 to 10 drops of essential oil to 100ml of warm water then soak a piece of clean cotton in the water, wring out the excess and place the cloth on the affected part.

Inhalations: Add 5 to 10 drops of essential oil into a bowl of steaming water, then place a towel over your head and the bowl and inhale the vapour for a few minutes.

Vaporisations: Different oils create different atmospheres, so experiment! For example, relaxing Sandalwood or Clary Sage are good for parties; or Peppermint clears your mind when you need to work. There are many vaporisers on the market, from the simple bowl of water on the radiator with a few drops of oil on the surface, to vaporiser light bulb rings and diffusers

Perfumes. Make your own distinctive "Natural" perfume by blending different oils

Use internally. Some oils may even be taken internally but use **only** pure essential oils and ask the advice of a qualified health professional

Top 10 oils to keep in your home

- 1. Clove Bud:** Historically used for toothache as it has analgesic properties. Also aids memory function. It has antimicrobial properties and can be diffused into a sick room to cleanse the air.
- 2. Eucalyptus radiata:** Great for respiratory infections and clearing congestion.
- 3. Ginger:** Most notable for its ability to ease indigestion.
- 4. Grapefruit:** This balancing, uplifting and refreshing oil can be used as an antidepressant, antiseptic and diuretic, supporting natural waste processes that eliminate undesirable fluids and toxin from the body.
- 5. Lavender augustifolia:** Has a number of uses from healing of the skin, encouraging restful deep sleep and dispelling emotional conflict and nervous tension.
- 6. Lemon:** Promotes purification and healing as well as being antiviral and an antiseptic. Can be used to detoxify, uplift emotions and as a disinfectant
- 7. Lemongrass and or Citronella:** Strong insect repellent and insecticidal
- 8. Melaleuca (tea tree):** Effective antiseptic and boosts immune function
- 9. Peppermint:** Beneficial for digestive complaints, nausea, cooling and pain relief, especially headaches
- 10. Wintergreen:** This oil is indispensable for sports people as it can relieve muscle tension and tightness, soothe inflammation and reduce soreness

So next time you reach for an over the counter medicine think twice and grab a pure essential oils instead.

Go to www.elementadirect.co.nz – BRAND Doterra and check out some of the purest therapeutic oils and wellness products around

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General Safety Information: *Do not take any oils internally without consultation from a qualified health practitioner. If you are pregnant, epileptic, have liver damage, have cancer, or have any other medical problem, use oils only under the proper guidance of a qualified aromatherapy practitioner. Use extreme caution when using oils with children and give children only the gentlest oils at extremely low doses. It is safest to consult a qualified aromatherapy practitioner before using oils with children. A skin patch test should be conducted prior to using an oil that you've never used before. Instructions on conducting a skin patch test.*