

Enchanted Wildwood Healing Arts Oasis



ESSENTIAL OILS FAQ

What are Essential Oils?

Essential Oils are a volatile and aromatic liquid, which constitutes the odorous principles of a plant. It is obtained through the process of expression or distillation. Essential Oils are used as part of Aromatherapy and Holistic treatments and care. Plants produce essential oils to survive in this evolving environment. They attract insects such as butterflies and beetles for pollination. Plants can potentially draw in birds and insects through their scent, color and genetic make-up. This helps the pollination process, which in turn produces reproduction. We may not even realize it, but even in our own gardening, we help plants pollinate and reproduce, as we are attracted to certain aromas and colors, therefore we plant more of that species or protect the ones that already exist in our yards and gardens. We have learned how to place certain plants together so they pollinate and such. While, it is all so very beautiful and fascinating, in the plant world, there are dangers. It's kind of a do or die system. For example, if you are not the alpha in plants species, then you might get wiped out! Plants produce chemicals that stop other plants from growing in their turf. They know how to survive from being stomped out by other plants and how to protect themselves from falling prey to animals and insects that will cause harm. To do this, they use terpenoid compounds to keep these predators, as well as fungus and bacterial organisms away. Everything in this world contributes to a plant's ability to produce essential oils, from pollution and litter, to animals and humans.

Just as plants strive to survive, we do as well. We attract, reproduce, protect, grow and crave the rains, winds, shade and sunshine. We also adapt to the evolving environment. We produce our own chemicals and pheromones to maintain our living body. I believe we benefit from plant life in a way most people can't imagine. If you really stop and look around you, you will see just how involved plants and humans are. Without plants, we would be null and void. We depend on plants for food, medicine, clean air, happiness and pleasure, as well as mental health and many more things. Using the essential oils, we can experience a whole new world of natural health benefits. We can enter a world of pleasure, relaxation, comforting memories, or perhaps become energized and alert. We can find the benefit of headache relief, fight cold symptoms, reduce scars and even have a beautiful aroma while bringing cleansing to our homes. Like plants, we are ever evolving the use of essential oils. What a joy and a blessing to have such a complex and precious life form to help us in our everyday living.



Who is able to use Essential Oils?

Generally speaking, young children to adults, can use essential oils. There are precautions to take and as with any form of product labeling, there should be safety warnings and instructions on the label to guide you for safe usage and age appropriate handling.

What is the history of essential oils?

For thousands of years essential oils have been used for perfumes and cosmetic purposes, as well as for spiritual, and emotional support. This ancient tradition has come to modern recognition with the help of several individuals. First, Rene-Maurice Gattefosse. Gattefosse was a famous perfumer who had a love and passion for aromas. By 1918, he became serious about the study of medicinal uses of essential oils. Throughout the 1930's he wrote articles and worked with hospitals to test the medicinal purposes of essential oils, while adopting a more holistic approach to the oils. Dr. Jean Valnet, a traditional medical doctor from the University of Lyon in 1945. His focus was to find the best methods of application and finding most appropriate dosage levels. Valnet used essential oils as antiseptic wound treatments of World War II soldiers. Marguerite Maury (1989) brought us holistic aromatherapy practice, using essential oils. She explored many healing therapies, like homeopathy, naturopathy, yoga and more. She pioneered the dermal application of essential oils and the psychological and physiological benefits of using the oils.

What should I expect to happen when taking Essential Oils?

To be perfectly honest, the more you are in tuned with your body, your feelings and emotions, the more likely you will see immediate and profound results. Most people see or feel immediate results, depending on what method they are using to take the essential oils. If you are using the method of dermal application, for example, then you may start to see your skin become more supple, as moisture and healing is returned to the skin. If you are using a room spray, you may feel immediate results where, (depending on the essential oil you use), you may feel joy and energizing, uplifting feelings, or you may feel calm and peaceful and ready for rest. If you use essential oils for cleaning, you will not only get to indulge in the wonderful aroma, but you will be able to leave your home clean and fresh! As you can see, there are endless possibilities, from bathing, to aromatherapy candles, house cleaning and so much more that you can benefit from while using essential oils.



How are Essential Oils made?

There are 5 methods of distillation. Distillation, Expression, Solvent extraction, Enfleurage and CO₂ extraction.

The **Distillation extraction** method produces essential oils and hydrosols (hydrolats). Hydrosol is the water by-product of distillation; it contains the water soluble principles of the essential oil. (Aromatherapy for Bodyworkers p.28) There are three types of distillation. **Water distillation** is a method used most often with flowers as direct contact with water. **Water and steam** is a method used for indirect steaming with herb and leaf material, by placing the plant material on a grate above the water. **Steam distillation** is the most common method used. Steam is injected into the still at higher pressures and temperatures than the other 2 methods. Because we can use lower temperatures than boiling points for distillation, we have the advantage of higher quality essential oils being produced, and they can be separated from the condensed water much easier. The drawback of distillation is the preparation of plant material. In order to access the essences stored in a plant, we need to crush or open the plant material in preparation for distillation.

The **Expression extraction** method produces citrus oils, also known as essential oils. Expression is also known as cold pressing and is a method used specifically for citrus oils. Some examples of citrus oils are tangerine, bergamot, lime and sweet orange. In this method practice, prodding, pricking and sticking action releases the essential oil of the rind of fruit that is placed in a container that has spikes, puncturing the rind or peel. The essential oil that is released during this practice is collected in a container below. The advantage of using the Expression extraction method is that we are able to produce a “true essential oil”. This is a very simple and natural process. No boiling and hardly any preparation of plant material and a lot less labor. Also, the expressed oils are more stable and better quality than distilled extraction for the citrus oils. I imagine the drawback to this method would only be that the modern expression techniques use machines to accomplish the extraction. Machines require upkeep and maintenance. However, the use of the machines sure beats the old way of extraction, which was by hand with sponge pressing!

The **Solvent extraction** method produces absolutes. Absolutes are aromatic extracts produced via solvent extraction. (Aromatherapy for Bodyworkers Glossary of Terms p.359) Petroleum ether, methanol, ethanol and hexane are examples of solvents used to extract the aromatic fatty material from the plant. There are different grades of absolutes. Some are less expensive than others. The benefits of Solvent extraction methods are that there is a therapeutic value which serves as a great asset to practitioners for their psychological purposes. They resemble the natural aroma of plants and for this, they act as a leading pioneer in the cosmetic world. The drawback of this method is that many aromatherapists will not use this method for individuals with a compromised immune system. Though it uses such a small residue of less than .0001%, absolutes can still produce potentially poor effects on the individual.



The **Enfleurage** method produces absolutes. This is a cold-fat extraction process based on the principles that fat has a high absorption. This method is now considered an ancient method of extraction. The advantages of Enfleurage is that it serves as a great method to extracting many flower scents from flowers that continue to give off aroma even after harvesting. The drawback of this method, is that it is rare to find in the aromatherapy market because it is so expensive.

The **CO₂** method produces CO₂ extracts. Frankincense and ginger are two of the most common essential oils produced from CO₂ extraction. CO₂ under pressure turns from gas to liquid and can be used as a liquid solvent. This makes it possible to extract the aromatic qualities of plant material. There are some elements in the CO₂ extracts that are not found in the essential oils, however, this is a great advantage, as it brings out potential benefits of these essential oils. For example, frankincense had anti-inflammatory activity and enhances the immune system. There are three major drawbacks to this method however; as commented by Ron Guba, “carbon dioxide extraction has been demonstrated to concentrate from 7 to 53 times more pesticide residues in the final extract.” (Aromatherapy for Bodyworkers p.30), thus giving you one of the drawbacks; pesticide residue. Another few drawbacks are cost and lack of information. We don’t have enough information to support the potential harm and therapeutic benefits.

The two methods that are considered to produce “true essential oils” are Distillation and Expression methods. These methods draw out the volatile substances of plant material, giving a high quality and pure essential oil.

What are essential oils used for?

If I were to write a book about essential oils, then I would have enough time to tell you what essential oils can be used for. For your own piece of mind and exploration of examples, I will give a short version of a few ways you can receive the benefits of essential oils.

Essential Oils are a big part of holistic medicine. Treatments with the oils include, healing touch, aromatherapy which includes creams, lotions, bathing salts, body or room sprays and so much more. Essential oils are wonderful for all kinds of skin care, cold treatments, foot soaks, athletic care (sore muscles etc.), arthritis, emotional cleansing, cramps, coughs, cuts and grazes, exfoliation, hair care, sacred rituals, meditation, headaches and migraines, clearing the mind, relaxation, respiratory issues, stress relief and so much more. In short, there is probably not much that you cannot use essential oils for. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me. Please also understand that essential oils are not to replace the care of your doctor, but prevent illness and ailments and enhance the care of your doctor with the goal of using natural medicine. You should not stop taking medicine unless directed by your health care provider.



I have been training to be a Healing Arts and Integrative Medicine Practitioner, (Holistic Practitioner). I am an Aromatherapist, (which includes modalities such as Auriculotherapy, Essential Oil Care, Body Care and Flower Essences). I am a licensed Hypnotherapist and licensed Transpersonal Hypnotherapist. I am currently studying many more classes that are geared around human anatomy, life coaching, stress management, psychology, ordained ministry and more, with a graduating date of September 17th, 2017, so please take my information and advice seriously, with the understanding that I am still in school and training, so you should not disregard the care of your doctor and please feel free to ask your doctor questions about my line of care if you like, before you try any of my line of treatment. If you or your doctor need further information, please contact me at Enchantedwildwoodhealingarts@yahoo.com. If you would like to participate in aromatherapy massage and treatment or hypnotherapy to help you with anything at all, please contact me and I will give you further information, as well as help you design a personal treatment plan that will suit your individual needs. *Please note- I also make creams, lotions, shampoos, conditioners and other skin care treatment for pain, arthritis, acne, skin and beauty, as well as herbal teas to help with any of your needs.