

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Essential Oils – Powerful Therapeutic Agents

by Riley Alexander, M.H. - Utah



Truthfully, my first experience with essential oils wasn't very fun. I was in 5th grade and I took a bottle of Cinnamon oil to school to finish a project with some friends. None of us 5th graders knew anything about essential oils let alone essential oils high in phenols (oils like cinnamon, clove or oregano) and let's just say the situation didn't turn out very well! That was the day I learned a valuable lesson...Use oils with caution!

Essential oils have been called the spirit, soul, essence or lifeblood of a plant and have been used medicinally and therapeutically throughout history. In a nutshell, essential oils are aromatic and potent liquids extracted from various parts of plants using heat, water, pressure, chemicals, gas and/or other liquid. However, the quality and therapeutic value of an essential oil varies widely due to the extraction method(s) used, and of course the quality of plants used, which can vary with conditions like location, weather, altitude, soil and species.

Although Dr. Christopher didn't talk much about essential oils, he knew how powerful and beneficial they were. In one lecture while explaining how to make a peppermint tea, he mentioned that the lid must be left on the pan while steeping the tea or the "volatile oils" (essential oil) would escape with the steam and in this case much of the value was in the oil.

Not only do most essential oils smell good (notice I wrote most oils for those of you familiar with valerian oil), but they work for us on a subconscious level. For example, when we smell an essential oil, the olfactory nerves which are cranial nerves (nerves that originate directly from the brain) located on the roof of the nasal cavity pass along sensations as nerve impulses straight to the brain from the nose. So although we may just be thinking "this smells good" it can be benefiting us as well!

Just like any other product on the market there are variances between the qualities of these oils. So it's important to have trustworthy sources and ask questions if needed. Here are some quick tips on things I have learned over the years when it came to finding the right oils. Don't worry, you're not taking tips from the 5th-grade-Riley.

1. Avoid "food grade" essential oils if you're using oils therapeutically. Think of essential oils like olive oil, the best olive oil comes from the first pressing of the olives. Each pressing afterword leads to a decline in the quality of oil. The same goes for essential oils and distillations. Food grade oils, meant for internal use are not 1st distillations and will not yield the same results as 1st distillations. The most commonly redistilled oil is likely peppermint as it changes its smell.

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

2. Be aware of which oils are "absolute" or "concrete" essential oils like Jasmine for example, as they have been solvent extracted and usually immersed in acetone or a petroleum byproduct. Marcel Lavabre (author of aromatherapy workbook) wrote, "Unfortunately, such oils always contain some traces of solvent and are therefore not suitable for aromatherapy...they should not be used for aromatherapy."
3. Lastly, use only essential oil deriving from a single species to assure cheaper species have not been added to dilute a more expensive species that share similar smells.

To wrap it up, essential oils when used correctly are safe, effective and make perfect additions to any natural regimen for supporting better health. Plus... they smell awesome!

Riley Alexander is a Master Herbalist Graduate from the School of Natural Healing who has also received his certificate in aromatherapy and is now studying for his certificate in iridology. Riley currently works for Wholistic Botanicals (Manufacturers of all Dr. Christopher's formulas).

NOTICE: All information in this newsletter is given out as information only and is not intended to diagnose or prescribe. For our official Disclaimer, Biological Individuality, Important Notice & Terms of Use please see:

<http://www.herballegacy.com/Disclaimer.html>