



The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy for Men & Women

In This Issue:

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The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy

Journal Issue 2012.2: Aromatherapy for Men and Women

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Sex and Smell

Mindy Green, MS, RA, RH (AHG)

Unconscious as it may be, scent is a communication system and it affects us as a people and a society. I don't know a single man or woman who has not pondered this matter. We all, at times, speculate about the peripheral and subjective influences involved in the mutual attraction of two people, regardless of gender, but it is more easily explained when we look at it biologically. A clue to this age old question may be found by studying the role of human pheromones on sexual behavior, puberty, menstruation and menopause. An article in the Washington Post defined pheromones as "aromatic chemical compounds produced by one individual that affect the sexual physiology of another."

The word 'pheromone' is from the Greek "pherein," to carry, and "hormone," to excite. Pheromones are odiferous substances chemically similar to hormones (which are secreted by endocrine glands), but are manufactured by the apocrine glands (sweat glands). Apocrine glands are found in the armpit, face, chest (nipples), anal and genital regions and are activated at puberty. Prior to this, perspiration has no odor, which makes perfect sense. There is no need to "signal" a mate before we are fertile.



Scientists have known about animal pheromones for a long time but have only recently acknowledged human pheromones. They claim they do not necessarily act as sex attractants, but they do have a link between sexual behavior and the health of a women's reproductive system (much easier to study and track in women than men). Just take a look at the summarized list of studies that follows.

Reports on Scientific Findings

It has been found that the ability to smell peaks at ovulation when olfactory sensitivity increases 1000 fold. The sense of smell is lowest at menstruation, which is understandable when you consider that the fertile time is when we would need to be most aware of sexual attractants.

Studies show that women who have sex at least once a week with a male partner have more regular and normal length menstrual cycles, fewer infertility problems and a milder menopause than women who are celibate or those who have sex in a feast or famine pattern.

The male underarm scent has also been used to regulate women's cycles. Simply living together isn't enough; there must be intimate contact. Scientists are trying to isolate the chemicals responsible in order to produce nasal sprays for scent based birth control and to regulate cycles.

However, women also produce a pheromone that can cause other women's menstrual cycles to shift in synchronicity. Women who live or work together often begin to ovulate together. The signal is in the sweat and it can take up to three to four months for it to regulate the rhythms.

After menopause, women lose their ability to detect musk odors. Animal musk is very close to human testosterone and can be detected in portions as little as 0.000000000000032 of an oz. Again, this seems logical; there is no biological reason for a post menopausal woman to be attracted to the male scent after she is no longer fertile. However, the ability to detect musk odors is restored when hormone therapy is given. What wasn't made clear in this study was whether the musk used was synthetic or real. Also, younger women who were exposed to a musk odor had shorter menstrual cycles, ovulated more often and conceived easier.

A significant number of people (25%) with smell disorders lose interest in sex. Masters and Johnson have helped couples in sex therapy enjoy touching more by using scented lotion.

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Sex and Smell

Mindy Green, MS, RA, RH (AHG)

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Girls who are separated from boys (as in a boarding school situation) generally go through puberty later than do girls in a co-ed situation.

Studies have shown that females have a keener sense of smell than males, even as infants. Women could guess (more accurately than men) the sex of a person by sniffing a shirt worn after 24 hrs. Eighty percent of mothers tested could accurately identify their newborns by garment scent alone; their fathers could not. (But this specific type of aroma is not related to the sexual pheromones.)

In most published research there is relatively little information on how scent affects men sexually. One tidbit I came across was that when a man has steady interaction with a woman his facial hair grows faster.



The word "kiss" means "smell" in many languages. A kiss is a prolonged smelling of a loved one; a desire to linger where one's personal scent glows. Cats also have scent glands in their face and will rub their cheeks on people to mark them, and often wash themselves afterwards to taste your scent.

Each person has an odor print as unique as their fingerprint, which is influenced by diet, gender, heredity, health, medication, occupation, emotional state and mood. Odor is a communication system, a statement about who we are. Diane Ackerman states in her book, *A Natural History of the Senses*, "Because females have often been responsible for initiating mating, smell has been their weapon, lure and clue." Perfumes unconsciously reveal what

people may consciously aim to hide: sex appeal. There is no doubt the culture we live in influences our perception of what we consider "acceptable," "normal" or "pleasant" scents. In Elizabethan times lovers exchanged "love apples." Peeled apples were kept in a woman's armpit until it was saturated with sweat then given to her lover to inhale her fragrance when they were apart.

When members of a tribe in New Guinea say goodbye, they put a hand in each other's armpit and then coat their own body with the other's scent. Other cultures sniff each other in greeting or rub noses. It is reported that Napoleon sent a message to Josephine, "Home in 3 days, don't wash." None of these acts would be considered normal or acceptable in western society today.

Surely, no matter what the cultural norm, the fact remains that personal scent as well as perfumes added to enhance this naturally occurring aroma are a very integral part of the attraction and connection behavior between human beings.

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Mindy Green is an Esthetician, Registered Aromatherapist and Professional Member of the American Herbalists Guild. An active educator and consultant, her vast credentials and positions in botany, aromatherapy and skin care include her current role as Committee Chair for botanicals in cosmetics for the American Herbal Products Association and as an Advisory Board Member for the American Botanical Council, publishers of *HerbalGram* magazine. From 2003-2009 Mindy worked in the botanical research division of Aveda's Research and Development department as their clinical aromatherapist. She enjoys writing and is the author of three books and 55 published articles.



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Gender and the Selling of Aromatherapy

Rose Chard, RA, LMT

The most important role for aromatherapists is to educate consumers. Without proper knowledge you don't have customers and without customers you don't have a business. Basic education in aromatherapy is about the difference between pure essential oils and fragrant oils and how to use them, especially creating awareness that when used correctly essential oils can have profound health benefits. Yet confusion about this modality among consumers is still prominent. The struggle to overcome that lack of knowledge plagues aromatherapists. Sometimes we look at setting ourselves apart with a marketing tool to create more attention to knowledge in our market. One thing we might ask ourselves is this: is there a difference in response to information about essential oils for men and women? Should we sell aromatherapy to men and women differently? Do we dare suggest using 'Grandma's' lavender essential (*Lavandula angustifolia*) essential oil to a guy? In this article we will take a look at how we sell aromatherapy to our clients with specific examples of marketing to different gender demographics.

Most people now understand the benefits of proper nutrition, however, the benefits to overall health that come from switching most synthetic products used in the home to true aromatherapy equivalents remains widely overlooked. These would include, for example, eliminating artificial air fresheners, using essential oils to diffuse in home or office instead of synthetic fragrances or substituting essential oils for synthetically fragranced dishwashing liquid or laundry detergent, perfumes, face and body products, bath soaps and salts. The list goes on and on.

The above examples show how much control we actually can have over the staggering amount of potentially toxic material in our lives. And yet, many people would be astonished to learn that in order to greatly improve their health and well-being they must also look at what they apply on their skin and the air they breathe in their everyday environment. Are women more open to this than men? Would a man be more likely to create their own body product with essential oils?

The key to reaching audiences regardless of gender is consistent education of ideas that excite them. Many consumers still do not understand the positive over-all impact aromatherapy will have on their lives. They may grasp one aspect of it but not the whole picture. For example, they might use essential oils for mas-

sage blends to relax, but they would not imagine that the same oils have the power to be useful in other areas. I have had clients rave about my business and how wonderful the essential oils are and how they love everything about what we do, create and sell. Then, later on, I learn the same person is still using strong artificially scented candles and heavily scented synthetic perfumes. It is impossible for me to believe that if they could truly grasp the concept of true aromatherapy, they would continue to do so or even entertain that possibility. But without a focus on proper education, many people of both genders will simply not make the connections that will improve their lifestyle.



As professionals, our own grasp of the important aspects of aromatherapy will allow us to effectively communicate and educate both men and women without fear of losing appeal to either gender. The practice of true aromatherapy allows us to:

- 1) Remove potentially toxic air fresheners, plug-ins, candles, fragrant oils or the cleaning agents that we also breathe.
- 2) Replace potentially damaging beauty products with natural alternatives.
- 3) Avoid harsher antibacterial products for minor medical needs.

Regarding the question, should you suggest lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), a traditionally female scent, to a guy, the answer is 'yes.' In fact, we have found that the basic fundamentals of aromatherapy will have little difference regarding their application, whether for a man or a woman, most of the time.

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Gender and the Selling of Aromatherapy

Rose Chard, RA, LMT

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Dispelling the myths regarding aromatherapy held by consumers is important. In anticipation of writing this article, I spoke to some of my clients and asked them what finally made them understand the discipline of aromatherapy. One client's response was very typical of many – that he was able to get rid of the notion of aromatherapy as a term referring only to “nice smells.” This client receives weekly massages and chooses aromatherapy blends created on our premises, based on his body's needs on that given day. He very often chooses massage blends for their therapeutic properties rather than a “masculine vs. feminine” scent. His choices will run the gamut of essential oils from floral to spices and in this, he is not unusual.



Our records at Your Body Needs show that in a three month period between January and April 2012, 41% of massage clients that chose to have an essential oil blend with their massage were male. In the same period, 30% of clients that selected our Roman chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) and lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) synergy blend were male, 40% of clients that selected our clary sage (*Salvia sclarea*), frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*) and ylang ylang (*Cananga odorata*) blend called “Total Calm” were male and 60% of clients that chose our geranium (*Pelagonium graveolens*) and sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis*) synergy blend were male.

The therapists and employees at Your Body Needs are trained to convey therapeutic properties when describing the essential oils to clients. Recently, our Blend of the Month was titled May Bouquet – a complete floral mix with oils of geranium (*Pelagonium graveolens*), lavender, (*Lavandula angustifolia*), rose (*Rosa damascena*), jasmine (*Jasminum grandiflorum*) and ylang ylang (*Cananga odorata*). The description described a blend great for reducing nervous tension and lethargy and restoring balance.

We also clearly stated, “This floral blend is suited for both men and women.” We are currently running this special and to date, 46% of the consumers of this massage blend are males. Quite surprising considering most people would assume men would steer clear of floral scents.

Contrary to popular belief, for a great many male clients, it does not take long to be open to the idea of using aromatherapy in massage and at home. In fact, many are relieved to know that there is a world of true aromas out there other than cloying synthetic potpourri. Countless times I have dealt with a male client who resisted any aroma added to a massage because he detested “those feminine smells” only to discover that, once familiar with the difference between synthetic aromas and true essential oils, a new world opened up for him.

Use oils that you know will help solve a problem your client wants to resolve. Most people buy things that work. If a male requests a calming agent, don't assume he won't be drawn to lavender because of its floral notes. Sharing its therapeutic properties will help educate him. Whether it will appeal to him will be his choice, not ours. We seek to strike the balance between finding solutions that will meet a therapeutic need and also be psychologically pleasing to the recipient. A male may not be opposed to lavender's physiological properties, but may have a psychological hang up associated with it because he thinks it will come across as too feminine or some other similar reason. However, informed dialogue and aromatic experience will help the consumer decide on the best choice. Women, for the same reason, can be drawn to more traditional masculine notes.

This is not to say that stereotypes are not valid to some extent. In many cases they are. And regardless of therapeutic properties of certain oils, when selling aromatic oils to different genders, there are some things to consider. The biological make up of males and females and the psychological component should be factors in selection. Research and studies appear to show that women have more olfactory flexibility than men and current research shows that females have a larger, deeper limbic system than males which may account for women traditionally being able to connect to emotions and feelings more often than men. Our sense of smell connects directly to this part of the brain that holds emotions, learning and memories – often bypassing rational thought.

Gender and the Selling of Aromatherapy

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If this is the case, does it cause a difference between the way men and women perceive aromas? Do a lot of men hate floral smells because of biological make-up or because psychologically they are conditioned to believe they should not like florals? Scientists still have many questions regarding why humans perceive smell the way we do. The nose registers a pattern in the molecules that reach our receptors that causes recognition, but researchers still haven't been able to pinpoint the response mechanism, at least to my knowledge.

But, we can see that when selling aromatherapy to both genders it works to keep in mind the intention and stick with the basic foundations of how aromatherapy works and how to use essential oils with purpose. We as professionals can begin there, and then consider other factors such as such as people's personal preferences and current popular aromas that will appeal to a certain audience. With this modus operandi, there is a higher likelihood that your client or customer will begin to get the bigger picture about aromatherapy and also choose essential oils that are right for them regardless of pre-conceived notions of what we or they expect to like based on their gender.

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Rose Chard is the owner of Your Body Needs, a massage and aromatherapy studio in Crofton, Maryland. Rose earned a Certificate in Aromatherapy from the

American College of Health Sciences in Portland, Oregon, a leader in natural health education. Her dedication to the field earned her a nomination as outstanding Graduate of the Year.

Rose has incorporated essential oils in her personal life for more than 20 years, and now her company has its own growing line of aromatherapy products and essential oils. Your Body Needs (LLC) helps people discover the everyday benefits of aromatherapy and also offers popular aromatherapy workshops.

Rose is a staff member at Anne Arundel Community College, where she teaches the principles of aromatherapy to other health care professionals. She is a licensed massage therapist and the Regional Director in Maryland for the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy. She is a member of the Aromatherapy Registration Council and the National Certification Board of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.

To learn more about Rose, please visit her website:

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Ylang Ylang: The Divine Feminine

KG Stiles, LMT, CAT, RBT, CBT

Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*)

Keywords: Neutralizes Negative Energy

Softly sweet and warm ylang ylang (pronounced "eelang") has an intoxicating aroma with sensual overtones. Its name in the Malayan language means "flower of the flowers." A native of Madagascar and the Reunion Islands, ylang ylang's fragrant pale yellow blossoms are used to grace a new marriage bed with a blessing of love and lasting happiness.

After smelling the compelling essential oil of ylang ylang, it's hard to imagine that trees found wild in nature have blossoms with little or no scent. The tree requires care from human hands for its attractive fragrance to develop, including constant attention and trimming every two months. The ylang ylang blossoms must be picked each fall. As with jasmine (*Jasminum grandiflorum*) and rose (*Rosa damascena*) the blossoms must be harvested early in the morning and immediately prepared for steam distillation.



Ylang Ylang is often distilled in what is called "fractions" or parts. This means the distillation process is halted in different stages and the oils taken off in separate batches till the yield is complete.

As with all oils, the resulting quality of ylang ylang's essential oil depends on the quality of distillation, crop conditions for that season, as well as the moment chosen for harvesting and distillation. The distiller's art for the production of exquisite oils is rare and this is reflected in the price of the oil. Part of this includes the fact that the stages of distillation are determined according to principles not easily defined, but generally reflect how long it takes to distill the essential oil characteristic of each fraction.

At least three fractions of ylang ylang are collected during distillation. The first distillation produces the Extra which is considered the most ethereal fragrance and is the one most often prized by perfumers.

There are five categories in all: Ylang Ylang Extra (most expensive), Ylang Ylang I, II, III and Ylang Ylang Complete. The Complete is a full distillation of the flowers without interruption into fractions, or parts.

Ylang Ylang III, the last fraction collected during the last hours of distillation, is slightly thicker, earthier and less sweet. It is composed almost entirely of sesquiterpenes. Sesquiterpenes are a class of chemicals common in plants that are naturally occurring alcohols. When distilled from plant matter, sesquiterpene compounds are known to stimulate the liver and endocrine glands. They also give ylang ylang its powerfully antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory properties and its reputation for relieving tachycardia due to stress and hypertension.

Often used in massage oil lubricants, ylang ylang is good for muscular aches and pains. It is helpful for treating PMS symptoms, including mood swings, and is effective for reducing emotional blockages in the heart chakra region.

A distinctly feminine (yin) oil, ylang ylang is passionate and alive with feeling. For those needing to integrate and heal shadow elements of the Divine Feminine, ylang ylang will activate the Divine Feminine's mysterious allure and capacity for living life fully.

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Ylang Ylang: The Divine Feminine

KG Stiles, LMT, CAT, RBT, CBT

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Often used in men's fragrances, ylang ylang is a healing oil for times when the masculine nature needs to connect with and express the more feminine and intuitive side. Blending ylang with petitgrain (*Citrus aurantium var. amara*), bergamot (*Citrus aurantium var. begamia*) or a spice or wood oil will soften the aromatic presence of this sweet, floral essence.

Ylang ylang is one of the first essential oils to consider for regulating and balancing the nervous system. It can be useful to deepen respiration and produce slower more rhythmic breathing. Research studies indicate ylang ylang stimulates the central nervous system and may be helpful for alleviating depression. The aroma of ylang ylang dispels fear and anxiety and this may neutralize defensive coping strategies that can lead to violent forms of communication. Inhaling ylang ylang stimulates feelings of enjoyment and self confidence. Because it helps synchronize the mind and emotions and softens fixed opinions, mental attitudes and judgments, ylang ylang eases communications with others and soothes tense situations. It also relieves unsettled and confused mental states and quiets anger, frustration, jealousy and oversensitivity.



In Ayurvedic Medicine, an ancient system of healing practiced in India, the sweet, warm aroma of ylang ylang helps to regulate and pacify both Vata and Pitta Doshas. Symptoms of Vata imbalance are premenstrual syndrome, constipation, insomnia, restlessness, nervousness, anxiety and worry. Symptoms of Pitta imbalance include high blood pressure, anger, frustration, emotional upsets and an inability to go with the flow.

Ylang Ylang has also been traditionally used in beauty and skin care. Its plant hormones promote cellular regeneration. Because it has a moisture balancing effect on the skin's natural sebum production, ylang ylang is suitable for sensitive, oily, dry and mature skin types.

Ylang Ylang Aromatherapy Facial Blend Recipes:

Beauty Oil: To 1/2 oz of jojoba oil (in dispensing bottle), add:

- 2 drops frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*)
- 4 drops ylang ylang (*Cananga odorata*)
- 1 drop carrot seed (*Daucus carota*)

Blend ingredients together and allow a minimum of 1-3 hours for them to naturally synergize before applying. (For topical use only. If irritation occurs discontinue use. Keep out of reach of children and pets.)

Facial Massage Instructions: Give yourself a relaxing facial massage with the Beauty Oil recipe. Dispense a small amount of oil on your finger tips. Start at your décolletage area and make gentle circles with your finger tips, moving upward and covering your entire face, ending at your forehead and temples. Finish your relaxing facial massage with long, slow, even upward strokes beginning at your décolletage and moving upward to your forehead and temples. Allow the oils to saturate and nourish your facial skin cell tissue for up to one hour before rinsing thoroughly with a gentle cleanser. Or you may circle-drape a hot, wet hand towel over your face after your facial massage and rest for 10-15 minutes or until the towel cools.

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Ylang Ylang: The Divine Feminine

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Ylang Ylang can also be helpful to stimulate hair growth and smooth split ends. Add a few drops to your favorite shampoo or conditioner.

Hair loss and thinning are a great concern for many men and women. Scalp massage with essential oils is very effective for treating hair loss and hair thinning as it stimulates the scalp and the underlying hair follicles to promote hair growth.

Alopecia is the medical term for hair loss. Alopecia can be partial (*alopecia areata*) or total (*alopecia totalis*). Hair is made of keratin, a stretchable protein material manufactured by the hair follicle. Hair follicles in the scalp grow at a rate of about half an inch per month, though this rate of growth can vary.

The condition of hair is largely dependent upon a good supply of blood carrying adequate amounts of nutrition such as amino acids, vitamins and minerals to the hair follicle. In many ways hair is similar to skin as it reflects the inner state of balance and health. A poor state of health can be responsible for dullness and loss of hair.

Men and women can suffer from age-related hair loss or thinning due to hormonal fluctuations during pregnancy and menopause. Extreme stress can also play a significant role in hair loss for which the healing



power of emotionally calming essential oils like clary sage (*Salvia sclarea*), ylang ylang (*Cananga odorata*) and German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*), is highly recommended.

Most hair loss problems, not directly caused by imbalances of health, can usually be traced to maltreatment of the hair with excessive heat or chemical treatments like coloring and perming or washing with strong detergent based shampoos. These are the major causes of hair loss and can lead to dandruff and other common hair problems.

Aromatherapy massage is very effective for treating hair loss and hair thinning. Massage with essential oils stimulates the scalp and the underlying hair follicles. Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*) scalp rubs can help prevent excess oiliness and dandruff as well as revitalize hair growth, helping both alopecia and hair thinning conditions.

Invigorating Scalp Massage Aromatherapy Oil Recipe for Promoting Hair Growth

This blend can be useful for alopecia and thinning hair.

To a 1 ounce dispenser bottle of pure light coconut oil add the following amounts of pure essential oils:

- 4 drops Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*)
- 4 drops Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
- 2 drops Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris ct. linalool*)
- 2 drops Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- 2 drops Atlas Cedarwood (*Cedrus atlantica*)
- 2 drops German Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*)
- 2 drops Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*)

Shake the bottle well to blend the oils and allow them to synergize for an hour or longer as time permits.

Scalp Massage Instructions: Apply daily with an invigorating scalp massage and leave on for about one hour. Shampoo thoroughly. Use daily for 10-14 days, then take a week's break before beginning the cycle of daily scalp massage for another 10-14 days. Continue your invigorating scalp massage protocol as needed to restore your hair's natural beauty and health. (For topical use only. If irritation occurs discontinue use. Keep out of reach of children and pets.)

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Ylang Ylang: The Divine Feminine

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KG Stiles, LMT, CAT, RBT, CBT is a licensed, accredited mind body therapist, certified clinical aroma therapist and holistic health educator with licensure in Oregon and Hawaii.

Director of Health Mastery Systems®, and Pure-Plant Essentials™ organic

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As a consultant KG has developed aromatherapy and energy healing programs for individuals, the spa industry, resorts, schools, health clubs, clinics and has also helped hospitals transition to integrated health care systems that include complementary healing traditions such as aromatherapy and caring touch. KG's aromatherapy certification training courses have included health professionals, hospitals, business owners, student beginners and lay persons.

To learn more about KG, her products and services, please visit her web-site:

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The Yin and Yang of Oils

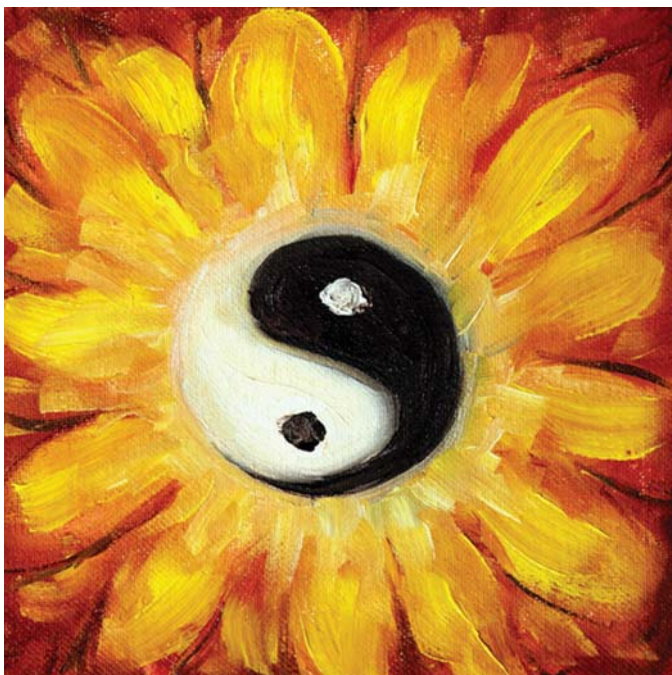
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Yin and Yang Theory: Polarity and Unity

The early theory of yin and yang was formed in the Yin and Zhou Dynasties (sixteenth century-221B.C.)¹

Yin and Yang has been an intriguing part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) which dates back thousands of years. The classic Tai Chi symbol of the black and white circle is a representation of the balance in all of nature, including man. The black part of the circle is the Yin aspect and the white part of the circle is the Yang aspect. The circle is designed to show how, while Yin and Yang are opposites, they are also dependant on each other. Yin is female, cold in nature and associated with night. Yang is hot in nature, associated with day, and male. There are many other traits for Yin and Yang, but the main point is that they are opposite but support and need each other.

With the polarity and unity of the Yin and Yang one can not be experienced without the other. Yin and Yang are opposite only when trying to define their differences yet connected because of their need for balance. Cause and effect are not separate; this is part of the cycle of life, the Yin within the Yang and the Yang within the Yin.



Some basic examples of Yin and Yang dualities: Male (Yang) and Female (Yin), Hot (Yang) and Cold (Yin), Day (Yang) and Night (Yin), Quiet (Yin) and Loud

(Yang), Summer (Yang) and Winter (Yin), and Weak (Yin) and Strong (Yang).

In Chinese Medicine Yin refers to all the body's fluids such as blood and lymph. Yang refers to the function of the different systems in the body, which includes digestion and elimination. Without strong Yang energy the Yin energy will be weak and without an abundance of Yin the Yang energy will suffer. Yin is nutritive and supplies Yang with energy/substance to do its job.

Yin and Yang can be found in the origins of Taoism and the Asian healing arts and its root system is applied within several different forms of healing modalities: acupuncture, massage, qigong, tai chi, most of which are based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory. In Chinese Medicine we can use acupuncture, herbs and diet to regulate and balance the Yin and Yang energetics of the body. And an aromatherapist can use the essential oils to do the same.

Yin and Yang theory can be included as part of your essential oil choices. This theory can be applied to the actual essential oils and their therapeutic actions, uses, aroma, part of the plant used and the energetics associated with the oils. Yin and Yang theory can also be applied to the big picture view of the issue you are working with. Do you need a Yang-type essential oil to support a depleted condition or would a Yin-type aroma be more suitable during an emotional trauma, these are things to consider when working with the energetics of essential oils and Yin and Yang theory.

Personality types, attitudes and behavior can also be assigned to Yin/Yang theory. All living creatures express different forms of their unique personality as well as their prenatal qi (the qi you were given at the time of conception). Be open to working with every individual based on their uniqueness instead of how their symptoms fall into general categories.

Creating a Yin and Yang Essential Oil Blend

There are many different options for creating essential oil blends based on Yin/Yang theory. You can choose to work with one or several different essential oils for

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application to a specific meridian or to address a blockage within an organ system's energetics. Or make a blend that contains both Yin and Yang type essential oils to apply for overall body system energy and Qi balance. Whether there is a need to increase or decrease or to tonify and strengthen the Yin or Yang energy in the body, you can use the essential oils and their individual aromas as part of your holistic healing tool kit.

Two Basic Example Blends:

A 50 year old man (Yang). His complaints are high blood pressure (diet/weight induced), muscle fatigue and lack of energy. He states he also loses his temper and finds himself easily agitated and lacking any desire to exercise.

He is about 25-30 lbs overweight. He presents with no other major health issues or prior surgeries. And his goal is to have more energy to begin an exercise program to lose weight, lower blood pressure and decrease his stress and temper flare-ups.

A useful essential oil blend for this individual based on Yin and Yang theory might be:

Ylang Ylang (high blood pressure, anger, agitation, muscle fatigue, lack of desire to move), lemon (increase mental and physical energy, support the detoxification process and for excess Liver heat/stagnation, contributing to temper/anger), and lavender (high blood pressure, muscle fatigue and

agitation, central nervous system support). His overall energy is expressed as excess Yang (Male/ Anger/ Agitation/High blood pressure) yet his inner Yin energy is out of balance due to the excess Yang contributing to his lack of energy and loss of temper, as well as additional stress on the Heart Meridian energetics with high blood pressure.

In this formula you also have the following Yin Yang theory principles: Ylang Ylang (Yin and Yang Balance), lavender (Yin and also Yin and Yang Balance), lemon (Yang within Yin).

A 35 year old female (Yin). Her complaints are: anxiety and feeling stressed and overwhelmed (symptoms are worse prior to the onset of her menstrual cycle), heavy periods with cramps and headaches, disturbed sleep, and overall lack of ability to focus during the day. She presents with no other major health issues or prior surgeries.

A useful unified essential oil blend for this individual based on Yin and Yang theory might be:

Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*) for anxiety, feeling overwhelmed and lack of focus, it also helps to clear Liver Qi stagnation which can contribute to emotional imbalance and hormonal, stress induced headaches, clary sage (*Salvia sclarea*) for hormonal support and menstrual cramping, and geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*) for hormonal support, heavy periods, fatigue and adrenal support/balance, useful for smoothing the Liver Qi and overall balance of body-mind-spirit. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) could also be added to help to support the central nervous system and overall support of balancing the Yin and Yang energetics. Her overall energetics are Yin, yet her system is not balanced due to Yin deficiency and excess Liver heat which can contribute to imbalances in other body systems.

Regarding Yin Yang Theory, this blend contains: bergamot (Yang within Yin), clary sage (Yin balance and Qi tonification), geranium (Yin and Yang balance and Qi tonification), lavender (Yin and Yin and Yang balance).



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For both of these blends, place 4-6 drops of each of the essential oils into a 2 ounce base of jojoba. Shake well before each use. For topical application. The blend can be used for a therapeutic massage session, during an acupuncture treatment and with energy work. At home, the client could apply the blend to their neck and chest area during the day and to their feet at night time.

Essential Oil Yin and Yang Categories:

In a basic overall general view of essential oils based on TCM theory, all oils could be considered 'Yin' in nature because they are a 'liquid'. Yet we can also classify the oils into Yin and Yang categories based on their biochemical components, healing properties, actions and uses.

The flower essential oils are usually classified as Yin and very useful for emotional energy balance. The more stimulating spice essential oils are usually classified as more Yang and can really help to restore



the physical body. The wood and resin oils can have both Yin and Yang properties and help to bring balance to the body-spirit connection. Essential oils derived from needles, leaves and twigs bring a balance of Yin and Yang. And most of the citrus oils also have the unique aspect of Yang within the Yin (meaning that their nature is more Yin, yet their actions/uses flow towards a more Yang nature).

Yin essential oil properties: antidepressant, anti-pruritic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, antisudorific, aphrodisiac, astringent, balsamic, carminative, cicatrisant, cytophylactic, emollient, euphoric, febrifuge, haemostatic, hypotensive, nervine, relaxant, restorative, sedative, soporific, stomachic, tonic, uterine, vasoconstrictor, vulnerary.

Yang essential oil properties: analgesic, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, aphrodisiac, decongestant, deodorant, diaphoretic, digestive, disinfectant, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, hypertensive, laxative, protective, rubefacient, stimulant, sudorific, vasodilator, vermifuge.

Yin within Yang oils: this type of essential oil has properties that are Yang in nature, yet also offer a Yin aspect that can be useful for certain issues and imbalances. Example: essential oils with aphrodisiac properties hold energies to arouse, stimulate and increase the senses. But aphrodisiac oils also hold the key to allowing someone to relax and become receptive to romance, especially if that person tends to live a high stress lifestyle and carries their stress and tension within their body, muscles and emotions.

Yang within Yin oils: this type of essential oil has properties that are Yin in nature, yet also offer a Yang aspect that can be useful for certain issues and imbalances. Example: essential oils with anti-inflammatory properties can be very useful to calm and soothe inflammation, allowing the body to heal. When there is inflammation it can be acute or chronic. When there is acute inflammation you may want to try an essential oil such as peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) to quickly cool and calm the inflammation.

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Yin and Yang Balance oils: Peppermint has a range of healing properties and also offers the benefit of balancing Yin and Yang. An example of this property would be using peppermint for a bad headache with some nausea, which is contributing to the person not sleeping well. Would you avoid using a drop of peppermint for fear of being stimulated by the aroma before bed, yet continue to suffer with the throbbing headache? Or would you try a drop of peppermint diluted in jojoba applied with acupressure to your temples, neck and ears to help calm and sooth the throbbing pain, decrease the nausea and clear the excess heat and stagnation, allowing the body a chance to fall asleep where continued healing can take place? The answer is up to you. If you are already not sleeping due to pain, why not give a drop of peppermint a try. You might be pleasantly surprised by the results.

A lot of people also suffer from indigestion, especially when they eat late at night, causing difficulty falling asleep due to discomfort. Again, here is where our friend peppermint essential oil can be of great use. It can even be diluted with one drop of lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) to help soothe the gas cramps, unblock the Qi stagnation and decrease discomfort, allowing one to rest more comfortably.

For the purposes of this article we have included most of the common essential oils and have chosen to leave out the oils that are listed as endangered and threatened botanical species (i.e.: Resin oil: frankincense (*Boswellia carteri*), Wood oils: rosewood (*Aniba rosaeodora*) and sandalwood (*Santalum album*). Please consider other alternative oils from a sustainable resource. Possible alternative oils to consider: Australian sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*), frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*) and elemi (*Canarium luzonicum*).

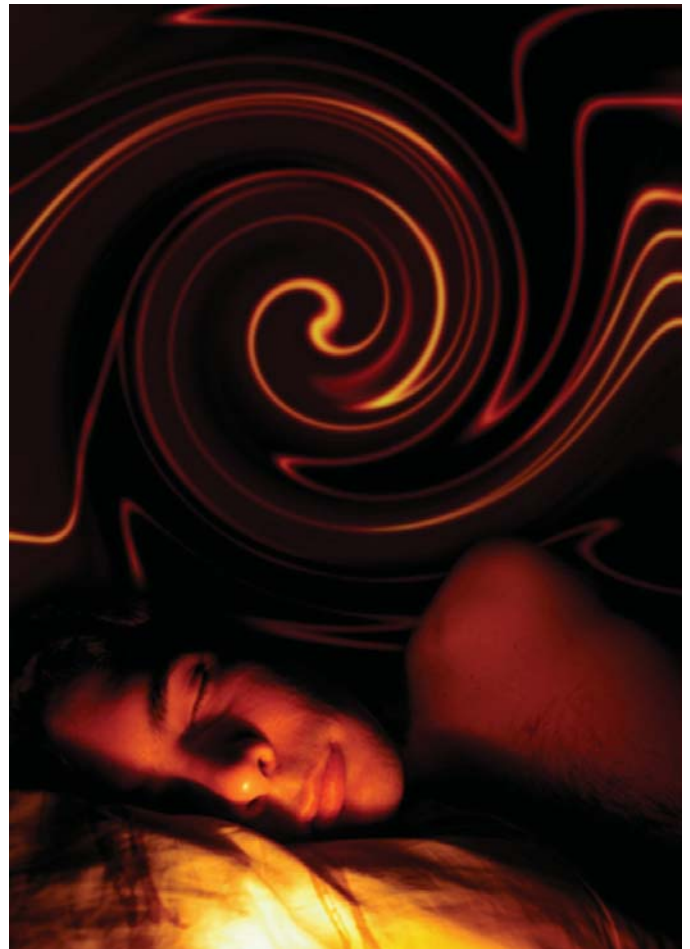
Bergamot (*Citrus aurantium bergamia*):

TCM: Yang within Yin

Actions: Cool and uplift Qi energy

Aroma: support clear thought and calm emotions

Main Meridians: Liver/Gall Bladder Meridians and Qi stagnation



Useful for: poor digestion, loss of appetite, nausea, anxiety, nervousness, agitation, anger, mood swings, eye strain related headaches/tension, motion sickness and fatigue

Safety: phototoxic properties; avoid use with exposure to direct sunlight or tanning beds

Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*):

TCM: Yang

Actions: Warm and increase Qi energy flow

Aroma: instill confidence and strength

Main Meridians: Lung/Large Intestine, Stomach/Spleen Meridians, Governing Vessel

Useful for: helps to dispel blockages, increase circulation, warm and protect the meridian channels. Digestive complaints: gas, bloating and diarrhea, immune support, arthritis, joint and muscle warming

Safety: avoid use with pregnancy and epilepsy. Use caution with skin and mucous membranes as irritation can occur with strong concentrations. Be sure to always dilute properly for topical use

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Chamomile Roman (*Chamaemelum nobile*):

TCM: Yin and also Yin/Yang Balance

Actions: Soothing and healing for body-mind-spirit.

Aroma: aids in calm and relaxed energy

Main Meridians: Liver/Gall Bladder, Stomach/Spleen Meridians, Triple Warmer

Useful for: aromatic first aid, skin and minor wound care, headaches, cramps (digestive and menstrual), PMS, PTSD, fever, tooth and ear aches, insomnia, stress, tension, moodiness and frustration

Safety: avoid use during pregnancy. Check to make sure there is not an allergic response due to ragweed type allergies. Some people that have seasonal allergies to ragweed can also be sensitive to the chamomiles (German and Roman), yet, some can tolerate the use of the essential oil but not the actual herb, tea or extract formulas

Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*):

TCM: Yin

Actions: Revitalize and smoothen the Qi

Aroma: euphoric and transforming.

Main Meridians: Lung/Large Intestine, Liver/Gall Bladder Meridians, Conception Vessel



Useful for: helpful for hormonal support: PMS, cramps, headaches, hot flashes, moodiness, anxiety, stress and tension. Muscle cramps and spasm, asthma and wheezing

Safety: avoid use during pregnancy

Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus radiata*):

TCM: Yang

Actions: Protect and untangle the Qi

Aroma: open and free the breath, allow the Qi to flow

Main Meridians: Lung/Large Intestine, Stomach/Spleen, Triple Warmer Meridian and Governing Vessel

Useful for: immune and upper respiratory system support: colds, flu, fever, phlegm, shingles and viral infections, joint and muscle pain/stiffness

Safety: no known issues

Geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*):

TCM: Yin and also Yin/Yang Balance

Actions: Restore, balance and tonify the Qi

Aroma: instill stability of body-mind and restore calm to Spirit/Shen

Main Meridians: Liver/Gall Bladder and Heart/Small Intestine, Conception Vessel

Useful for: hormonal support, cramps, edema, bloating, headaches, moodiness, low back stress with heavy menstrual periods. Skin and minor wound care, adrenal fatigue/support, anxiety, stress, tension, anger, frustration, PMS and PTSD, travel fatigue and jet lag

Safety: no known issues

Ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*):

TCM: Yang

Actions: Stimulate and move the Qi, disperse blockages, protect the channels

Aroma: clear the mind and warm the body and spirit

Main Meridians: Stomach/Spleen, Kidney/Bladder, Triple Warmer and Governing Vessel

Useful for: digestive support, immune support, joint and muscle pain/stiffness and fatigue, travel and motion sickness, nausea, jet lag, food sickness related headaches, warming for cold hands and feet, increase circulation

Safety: can cause sensitization for some clients. Be sure to always use fresh ginger oil and to dilute well before topical use

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Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*):

TCM: Yin and Yang Balance

Actions: Calm, smooth and tonify Qi energy

Aroma: calming for body-mind-spirit

Main Meridians: All

Uses: the most versatile and universal oil with hundreds of uses including: aromatic first aid, skin and minor wound healing, anxiety, stress, tension, insomnia, muscle cramps/spasms, headaches, fever, colds, cough, flu, sinus inflammation, anger, frustration and irritability, hyper nervous energy

Safety: no known issues

Lemon (*Citrus limon*):

TCM: Yang within Yin

Actions: Clear and cleanse the channels/heat, increase Qi circulation, remove blockages

Aroma: clear the mind/body and free the Spirit/Shen

Main Meridians: Liver/Gall Bladder and Stomach/Spleen, Governing Vessel

Uses: immune support, bacterial infections, nausea, travel and motion sickness, vertigo, improve appetite, mental fatigue and over-thinking, headaches from travel/jet lag, lymphatic support, arthritic joints, frustration, anger, irritability

Safety: phototoxic properties; avoid use with exposure to direct sunlight or tanning beds

Neroli (*Citrus aurantium var. amara*):

TCM: Yin and Yin/Yang Balance

Actions: soften the Qi and calm the Spirit/Shen

Aroma: release and clear emotions, calm and free the Spirit/Shen

Main Meridians: Heart/Small Intestine and Kidney/Bladder, Conception Vessel

Uses: anxiety, panic attacks, palpitations, nervous energy, disturbed sleep, diarrhea, anger, frustration, depression, stress, PTSD, skin care (all types), lymphatic support, overall body tension and hypersensitivity to touch

Safety: no known issues

Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*):

TCM: Yin and Yang Balance

Actions: protect the skin and restore the Spirit/Shen

Aroma: balance and ground emotions

Main Meridians: Stomach/Spleen, Heart/Small Intestine, Conception and Governing Vessels

Uses: anxiety, worrisome thoughts, mental tension/over thinking, stress, disturbed sleep, diarrhea, hemorrhoids, lymphatic massage, skin and hair care, natural body deodorant and skin protection

Safety: no known issues

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*):

TCM: Yin within Yang

Actions: cool excess heat, stimulates Qi, and disperse blockages

Aroma: invigorate body-mind-spirit

Main Meridians: Stomach/Spleen, Lung/Large Intestine, Triple Warmer

Uses: digestive support, nausea, travel and motion sickness, headaches, fever, heat stroke, hot flashes, bug bites, liver flank pain, muscle spasms and fatigue

Safety: avoid use with pregnancy and epilepsy. Do not use in high dosages because menthol content can be too strong of a scent and too cooling to the body for some individuals



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Rose (*Rosa damascena*):

TCM: Yin and also Yin/Yang Balance

Actions: cool excess Liver heat, calm and strengthen the Shen/Spirit

Aroma: heal body-mind-spirit, healing for emotional and physical scars

Main Meridians: Heart/Small Intestine, Kidney/Bladder, Liver/Gall Bladder

Uses: skin and wound care, skin ulcers, scar tissue healing, shingles, herpes, cold sores, headaches, menstrual cramps, palpitations, anxiety, depression, anger, frustration, nervousness, stress, tension

Safety: no known issues

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

TCM: Yang and also Yin/Yang Balance

Actions: cool excess Liver/Gall Bladder heat, tonify Heart Qi, support and protect Governing Vessel

Aroma: strengthen mind/spirit

Main Meridians: Liver/Gall Bladder, Lung, Heart, Governing Vessel



Uses: topical massage for Liver and Gall Bladder energetics, physical and mental fatigue, upper respiratory support, sinus blockages, headaches, increase circulation for cold hands and feet, anger, frustration, depression, scalp and hair care, study aid

Safety: avoid use with pregnancy and epilepsy

Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*):

TCM: Yin and Yang Balance

Actions: calm the Heart/Mind energetics, free the Spirit/Shen

Aroma: free emotional and physical restrictions

Main Meridians: Heart/Small Intestine, Liver/Gall Bladder, Kidney/Bladder, Conception Vessel

Uses: aphrodisiac, anger, frustration, anxiety, depression, pent up energy, hypersensitive to touch due to excess energy/stress, PTSD, PMS, mood swings, high blood pressure, hair and scalp care

Safety: use in a well ventilated area. Ylang Ylang's strong aroma can cause headache for some individuals

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(Footnotes)

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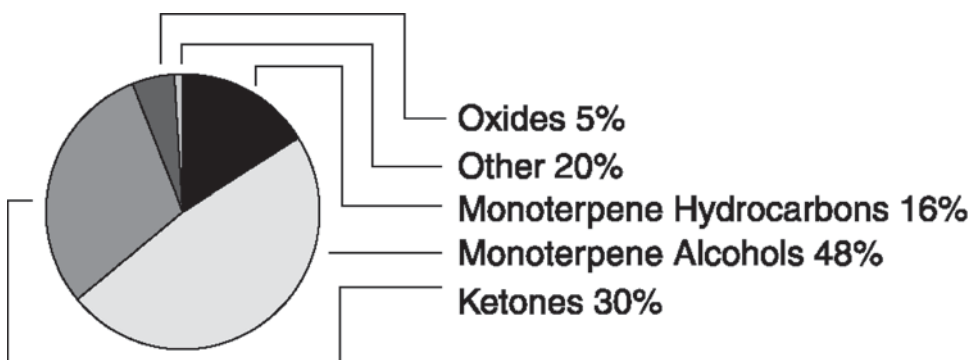
Essential Oil Profile: Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)

Dennis Willmont, L.Ac.

This is an excerpt from Dennis Willmont's book, **Aromatherapy with Chinese Medicine; Healing the Body/Mind/Spirit with Essential Oils.**

Contents

Monoterpene Hydrocarbons (more than 16%): α - and β -pinenes, (-)-limonene, Phellandrene, camphene; Monoterpene Alcohols: menthol (up to 48%), piperitol, piperitenol; Sesquiterpene Hydrocarbons: β -caryophyllene; Ketones: menthone (up to 30%), piperitone, carvone, jasmone; Oxides: 1.8 cineole (5%); Esters: menthyl acetate; Coumarins.



The unusual Yin within Yang character of peppermint (initially Hot but ultimately Cool) is chemically derived from its equally unusual combination of the Yang stimulating and tonic Monoterpene Hydrocarbons and Monoterpene Alcohols and the even more Yang stimulating Oxides with the Yin calming and sedating properties of the relatively large portion of Ketones, which hold the otherwise Yang expression of peppermint in check. The Yang aspect of peppermint Rectifies the Brain, Moves the Qi, Rectifies Liver Qi, and Fortifies the Stomach and Spleen. Its Yin within Yang aspect Clears Heat, Reduces Inflammation, Stops Pain, Stops Lactation, and Quells the Liver.

Properties

Pungent and slightly sweet. Warm and Cool, Dry. Generates Warmth for Damp Cold (in smaller doses); Cools the Exterior for Wind Heat (in larger doses).

Functions

Rectifies the Brain; Rectifies the Spirit; Normalizes the Yi/Intention; Develops Tolerance: mental fatigue, fainting, absent-mindedness; convalescents with chronic exhaustion; excessive

pride, feelings of inferiority.

Moves Qi; Opens the Exterior; Rids Wind; and Clears Hot Mucous: colds and flu with fever, sore throat and headache; chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, sinus congestion; dyspepsia.

Clears Heat; Reduces Inflammation: burns, scalds, acne, boils, poison ivy/poison oak.

Stops Pain: rheumatic pain, toothache.

Stops Lactation: excessive breast milk (weans), curdled or congested breast milk.

Rectifies Liver Qi; Quells the Liver: general asthenia, frontal or occipital headache due to Liver congestion, acute cholelithiasis, hepatitis, dizziness, vertigo, tremors, coma, menstrual pain before onset, PMS.

Fortifies the Stomach and Spleen: indigestion, nausea, epigastric distention, flatulence, gurgling abdomen, loss of appetite, intestinal colic, gastrointestinal ulcers, colitis.

Rids Insects: mosquito and gnat repellent.



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Essential Oil Profile: Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)

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Five Phase Association

Wood • Fire • Metal

Chakra Association

Chakra Number 3 primarily, but also Chakra Number 1, due to its secondary association with Wood in keeping the Yin and Yang Qi in harmony.

Discussion

According to ancient Greek mythology, the story of mint is closely woven with the mysteries of sexuality and passion. Its contradictory actions are at once strengthening to the Reproductive Qi, contraceptive, and even abortifacient. According to ancient French proverbs, girls who drink mint will fall in love, while bulls that eat mint will become enraged with passion. The Latin name for mint, *Mentha*, *mentalis* or *mens*, means “mind” or “spirit”. Paradoxically, mint can also signify sexual sublimation and the development of a discriminatory mind capable of granting those who exercise it freedom of choice and the awareness of self.

In Greek mythology, the nymph Mintha was the lover of Hades (the Roman Pluto), god of the Underworld and lived with him in his underground kingdom. However, Hades eventually abducted Persephone, the daughter of Zeus (the king of the gods) and Demeter (the goddess of the harvest and fertility). According to the myth, two things occurred after this abduction that help to elucidate the different properties of mint. The first was that Mintha flew into such a rage that Persephone trod her into the ground

with her heel and turned her into Mint. This part of the story signifies the burning passion of Mintha, as well as the anger that comes about, when passion is not transformed. The meaning of this legend is that peppermint (*Mintha*) enables one to transform anger in order to more accurately perceive one's place in life. Peppermint both stimulates and soothes the Liver. In Chinese acupuncture, the Liver transforms anger through Perspective (a version of the Liver Spirit) to Compassion (a version of the Liver virtue), thus enabling one to see the bigger picture. In this case, the bigger picture is that Divine Will did not sanction Mintha's personal needs. After all, Mintha was only a nymph while Persephone was a goddess and not just any old goddess but the daughter of the king of the gods himself. Because of its correlation to spring, the Liver also relates to one's ability to extend boundaries and has to do with stepping on others or being stepped on by them. Peppermint cools the steam of anger created by the encroachment of others and allows a more cool-headed approach to take root. The legend of Mintha dramatizes the importance of the Liver Spirit to place the events of one's life into a proper perspective through the ability to visualize and understand how one best fits into a harmonious relationship with others. In fact, this idea clearly describes the virtue of the Liver (Compassion). In Chinese, the word for “compassion” is 仁 (*rén*), and depicts two people occupying the same space and time harmoniously, both understanding the needs of the other. Confucius talked about Ren/Compassion at length and considered it to be the most important of the Five Virtues.

The second thing that occurred after the abduction in the Mintha/Persephone myth has to do with the contraceptive aspect of mint. In ancient times, mint was thought to coagulate the sperm and obstruct generation by killing the fetus. These ideas are symbolized by the reaction of Demeter to the abduction of her daughter Persephone after which she grieved so inconsolably that the earth became “barren” from her neglect. Later in Athens a fertility festival held exclusively for women called the Thesmophoria was held in her honor. These dual aspects of fertility and contraception are further symbolized at a rare temple in the Peloponnese dedicated to Hades at the foot of Mount Minth (*Mintha* → *Mint*) on the edge of a sacred wood consecrated to Demeter. The message symbolized in this juxtaposition is that passion for life will be eternally transmuted to fit the occasion. The relationships through which it manifests may change form in order to accommodate the players involved, but the passion



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Essential Oil Profile: Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)

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itself will resurrect itself and find a more fitting expression. One of the common names for mint, “Herb of Death”, comes from the ancient French countryside where mint was burned in rooms where the dead were laid. While the more obvious use was possibly to conceal the smell of death, the symbolism relates more to the passion of the life spirit that will always spring forth again in newer and more vital situations as time goes on. Anger concerning the loss of a loved one would, therefore, be a good use for peppermint on this level, which could then transmute base emotion into a higher perspective more suitable for the Good of All.

The alternating play between the physical and psycho-emotional, hot and cold, nature of peppermint is also reflected in the growth of the plant, especially its flowers. Flowers in general represent the maximum outward expression of the plant before it turns its energy inward to form the seed. In this way, the flower embodies the plant’s Yang force that generally manifests through heat and color. For this reason, the flowers of most plants place themselves at the outermost position of the plant—the top of the stem.

In peppermint, however, the flowering occurs in a series of globe-shaped clusters at the junction of the stem and branches. This juxtaposition gives one the



impression that the peppermint flowers are climbing up the stem as if they were rungs of a ladder and that, rather than manifesting their Yang force in one single explosion at the top of the stem, the peppermint flowers organize this expression into small sequential bursts. This pattern demonstrates the restraining signature of Yin upon Yang, the Cold upon the Heat, and symbolizes the restraining of unmitigated passion—passion that seeks the personal good at the expense of the Good of All. This unique Yin-Yang pattern perfectly represents the spring season, which corresponds to the Liver and the Wood Phase. At this time, the Yin forces must carefully temper the outward Yang expansion of the plant so that it will not expand so rapidly that it will be killed by the next frost. This Yin tempering force places the Yang growth factors of the plant into proper perspective, a perspective that includes not only the immediacy of the daily weather, but the context of the season the daily weather is in. These ideas fit perfectly with the psycho-spiritual effects of the Liver that peppermint is able to instill in those who use it—the ability to apply the big picture to daily life.

Essential Oil Blend Combinations

Peppermint can be blended with most oils although it tends to dominate ones that are most fragile.

Blend peppermint with *rosemary cineole* for debility caused by prolonged allopathic treatments.

Blend with lemon (*Citrus limonum*) to purify the blood.

Blend with *raventsara*, *Eucalyptus citriadora* and *Lavendula vera* in a carrier oil of St John’s Wort for shingles.

Blend with cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), pine needles (*Pinus sylvestris*) and *rosemary bornyl* for psycho-emotional blockages.

Blend with *Lavendula vera* in a carrier oil of St John’s Wort for stomach pains, toothache and muscular pains.

Blend with *Rosemary bornyl*, lemon (*Citrus limonum*) to drain a tired liver.

Blend with carrot seed (*Daucus carota*) to build up liver cells.

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Essential Oil Profile: Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)

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Blend with lemon (*Citrus limonum*), basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), and rosemary *bornyl* for hepatitis and after the acute stage with carrot seed (*Daucus carota*).

Blend with thyme (*Thymus vulgaris ct: linalool*) and aniseed (*Pimpinella anisum*) to stimulate digestion.

Blend with lemon (*Citrus limonum*) to prevent nausea and vomiting in travel sickness.

***Editor's note:** avoid the use of aniseed, basil, peppermint, rosemary, thyme with epilepsy and pregnancy and avoid use of carrot seed with pregnancy.

Precautions

Large amounts or extensive use may cause epilepsy or excitation to the point of stupefaction, or hypertension. Use cautiously with high blood pressure. Contraindicated in dry or Yin-deficient conditions or gastric hyperacidity. Do not use on infants younger than thirty months. Avoid use in pregnancy and lactation. Keep away from the nostrils of infants because of the risk of spasm of the glottis.

The limonene contained in peppermint is potentially allergenic, as tests on the chemical isolate have shown. The menthol contained in peppermint can be an irritant in high concentration especially if evaporation from the skin is prevented. Also, the menthol can possibly build up to a toxic concentration in those individuals with liver enzyme deficiencies.¹ Limit topical applications to small areas.

(Endnotes)

¹ Barber and Gagnon-Warr 2002.



Dennis Willmont has been practicing acupuncture, Taijiquan and Daoist meditation since 1971. He has published numerous articles in academic journals on acupuncture and natural healing and has published four books on these topics, which can be found on his web-site: www.willmountain.com.

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Sending Messages with Essential Oils

Shellie Enteen, RA, BA, LMT

When I was at an airport bookstore recently, a title caught my eye: *The Language of Flowers*. Written by Vanessa Diffenbaugh, it promised an interesting tale interspersed with information on how floral bouquets were used by both men and women to send a message to the intended recipient. Of course, I bought it. I found it so fascinating that I had it almost finished by the time the plane landed. And there was enough information on flower lore to whet my appetite for more. At my destination, I quickly researched and ordered several more books that focus specifically on this subject.



Reading those lovely volumes I learned that, although the custom of assigning meaning to certain flowers (floriography) and creating bouquets or using them as ornaments and arrangements was very popular in Victorian England, plants had long been associated with certain attributes in many other cultures and for thousands of years. These

meanings could have to do with appearance, length or location of the blossom, or even a specific mythology surrounding their creation. Some flowers and plants have more than one meaning and sometimes those meanings are conflicting in nature. This allows the intention of the person choosing ingredients for the bouquet to have free reign.

Far from being merely an exercise in totally whimsical information, I also discovered that certain plants I already had in my garden, those I had always had a fondness for, and even flowers I was attracted to in the moment and chose to decorate my dining table held clues to what I was experiencing emotionally and aspects of my own nature. Looking at the list of meanings while thinking of the favorite plants of close friends, I also found total validation.

I found this intriguing but since, as an aromatherapist, I am familiar with the fact that we are attracted to

aromas that will be useful for different needs on the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels, it wasn't completely surprising. In flower language, even those plants and flowers that hold no scent convey their own Doctrine of Signatures with color and shape and other less apparent associations. A bit more surprising, though, was realizing that, even if the mythology aspect was unknown, it could still create an attraction or dislike of a certain plant.

It also seemed that, with Feng Shui in mind, one could use specific plant meanings to empower the 8 different 'Bagua'* areas of a garden. For example roses are generally associated with love and so are a natural choice for the relationship area, but one needs to know they must be pink, red or white because yellow roses are sometimes about jealousy and infidelity! The azalea blossom can mean romance, true to the end, 'take care of yourself for me' and is a Chinese symbol of femininity, but since it carries the idea of fragile, temporary passion it might not be as desirable in the relationship section. One wouldn't want a hydrangea plant in this area, as its meaning is 'dispassion,' boasting and cold-heartedness. But certainly loads of buttercups -- 'you are radiant with charms'-- could be a happy addition to both relationship and public image sections!

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Sending Messages with Essential Oils

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On a different note, the children/creativity section could include a collection of mosses for Mother's love, some angelica for inspiration, freesia for innocence and some scarlet geranium for comfort (another indication is silliness, which could also be childlike). And the money section? Agrimony, for thankfulness, bells of Ireland and pink heather for good luck, a beech tree for prosperity (if room permits), celandine or red dahlias for joy, or if in a large yard or a more 'country or rustic' area, corn or wheat stalks for wealth.

Of course, a flower language that includes many plants without aroma doesn't appear to relate much to our use of essential oils. However, some of the meanings from flower lore could be combined with or already reflected in what we already know as the Subtle qualities of essential oils. And we might also choose to look at subtle meanings of essential oils to create a blend with a certain message and choose to give it for that purpose. Why not? Perfumes have always sent messages about attraction and availability. Could essential oils be used send other messages as well?

Based just upon the information from volumes on the language of flowers, you might make these four different essential oil blends that could be given as a small air spray to deliver very different messages. The number of drops can be left to personal taste. Even one drop in a blend assures the energy message will be present.

The first blend for someone you have loved from afar but have not been able to tell:

Clove (*Eugenia caryophyllata*): I have loved you but you have not known it

Fir (*Abies siberica*): elevation (to be elevated in their eyes and vice versa)

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*): devotion, but also may signal failure

Sweet Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*): blushes (as when you have a 'crush')

Verbena (*Lippia citriodora*): enchantment

White Rose (*Rosa damascena*): I am worthy of you

If given for topical use, it could be diluted in some gardenia infused oil...secret love.

The second might be given to or used when there is someone you have to be around but have some difficulty with and can never express your true feelings. This might be an in-law, co-worker or authority figure perhaps? It carries a message about the situation but also hope for mitigation of the negativity.

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*): hatred

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*): distrust and failure

Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*): energy in adversity

Juniper (*Juniperus communis*): protection

Verbena (*Lippia citriodora*): protection from evil

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*): strength

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Sending Messages with Essential Oils

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A thank you gift:

Peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*): warmth of feeling
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*): remembrance
Sweet Orange (*Citrus sinensis var. dulcis*): generosity
Bay (*Laurus nobilis*): unchanging faithfulness
Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*): bonds of affection

And for a message of deep and abiding love:

Indian Jasmine (*Jasminum grandiflorum*):
I attach myself to you
Linden (*Tilia vulgaris*): conjugal love and matrimony
Rose, red (*Rosa centifolia*): deep love
Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*): faithfulness
Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*): everlasting love
Helichrysum (*Helichrysum italicum*): never ceasing remembrance

Of course, we have wonderful aromatherapy authors who have given us a wealth of information on subtle aspects of the essences, including Patricia Davis, Valerie Worwood, Gabriel Mojay, Salvatore Battaglia and Robbi Zeck. Their information would add great meaning to any desired essential oil message and happily present you with many more essences from which to choose.

For those interested in learning more about the many plants that carry non-aromatic meanings, here are the books I have consulted:

A Victorian Flower Dictionary (the Language of Flowers companion), Mandy Kirkby, 2011, Ballantine Books.

The Language and Sentiment of Flowers, James D. McCabe, 2003, Applewood Books. (This is a reprint of a Victorian manuscript with many flower names not in current use.)

The Secret Language of Flowers, Samantha Gray, 2011, CICO Books, an imprint of Ryland Peters and Small, Ltd.

Although a Google search will turn up a list for free on Wikipedia, because there are some differing meanings, more clarity and understanding comes from consulting the works of all the authors above. If you are interested in the 'New York Times bestseller' that inspired my investigations, The Language of Flowers by Vanessa Diffenbaugh is now in paperback through Ballantine Books. The original hardcover was published by Random House. The contemporary story line concerns the healing of a young woman who was abandoned at birth and brought up in foster homes and institutions. Her connection to the plant kingdom is the road to her salvation.

For more information about Feng Shui and the Bagua map, [click here](#).

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Shellie Enteen, RA, BA, LMT, has been a licensed massage therapist and educator for over 25 years. She is also a Registered Aromatherapist and current Vice President of the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA). Shellie has taught nationally approved

continuing education classes in Aromatherapy and Jin Shin Jyutsu since 1993. She has trained the Spa staff of prestigious resorts such as the Marriott World Center in Orlando, Florida and the "W" Hotel, Times Square and Montreal. Her regular column, "The Aromatic Message," appears in Massage Today magazine and her other articles on Aromatherapy have been published in various trade magazines such as The Aromatherapy Journal and Massage Magazine. Shellie provides classes in Professional Aromatherapy that are recognized by NAHA and the Aromatherapy Registration Council, for students who wish to attain a deeper understanding of this subject or obtain the designation of Registered Aromatherapist (currently, the standard recognized qualification in the U.S. that is obtainable in this field).

Shellie also provides pure essential oils and blends and can be reached through her website www.astralescence.com.

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Aging Gracefully with the Help of Aromatic Plants

Mindy Green, MS, RA, RH (AHG)

I am a proud member of the Baby Boomer generation and among those who once proclaimed that “30 is old.” These days I find myself facing 60 and longing for the youthful skin appearance that my “old” 30 year old self once had. Though thankfully we have all grown wiser with the years, chronological time brings inevitable changes to our once youthful, plump and wrinkle free skin. Aging is largely a process of genetics and those blessed with youthful genes have much to be grateful for, as they age more gracefully than others. The rest of us not so sanctified with youthful DNA can mercifully rely on the help of the rejuvenating power of aromatic plants to stave off the aging process. Aging is nothing to be ashamed of, in fact it is to be revered; my great aunt is still gorgeous at 102. But who doesn’t want to be 60 and looking as though you could pass for 50? After all, they now say that 50 is the new 40, so that makes it even better! Still, it’s good to consider this -- today is as young as you will ever be, so enjoy it now.

How Skin Changes with Age

The genetic code of intrinsic aging is out of our control. But no matter what the timing of our maturation clocks is, eventually we all begin to go through the process that brings about collagen degradation, decline in blood flow, a weakened barrier repair, and inflammation that leads to wrinkles and the inability of skin DNA to repair itself; these are all things that contribute to aging skin. Extrinsic aging factors are things within our control. Taking care of our overall health reflects in the appearance of our skin. To keep our skin as youthful as possible we must create a healthy lifestyle and diet, get proper exercise and sleep, reduce stress, develop a calm demeanor, limit alcohol, and avoid cigarettes and other toxic substances. Most of all, there is universal agreement that limiting sun exposure is paramount to keeping skin youthful.

During our thirties our skin gradually loses its barrier function with its reduced production of ceramides. These essential skin fats hold the stratum corneum layer together and protect the skin’s barrier defense mechanism and moisture levels, both keys to youthful skin. During our forties a decline in DNA repair paves the way for the creation of wrinkles. Excess sun

exposure begins to show itself in the form of pigmentation problems and a reduction of estrogen plays a large part in diminishing skin strength and the compromising of the foundation of underlying elastin and collagen. By our fifties we are well on our way to deeper lines, thin, dry, sagging skin and reduced elasticity. But don’t despair! There are things that can be done to regenerate healthy skin and provide it with the nutrients it needs to repair itself, no matter your current age.



To begin with, the obvious healthy lifestyle practices should be in place, including a diet rich in phytonutrients found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and unprocessed foods, herbs and spices. The conditions that contribute to aging include oxidative damage, inflammation and irritation including the results of poor diet, air and water pollution, and excess sun. All contribute to poor skin hydration and the breaching of barrier integrity, permitting important nutrients to escape while allowing pollutants in. Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) cause cross linking of collagen that leads to skin sagging and wrinkles; these are accelerated by excess sugars and refined carbohydrates in the diet. Poor circulation through a sedentary lifestyle and excessive exfoliation which may lead to inflammation, also contributes to aging skin. Luckily, remedies lie in a variety of plants that help counter these problems by providing the body with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory competence, both internally and externally. Some of these botanicals have the capacity to normalize pigmentation and improve cell renewal; others provide lipid barrier repair, free radical scavenging capability, nutrients and moisturization. Amazingly, plants can lend their magnificent assets to all of these issues.

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Skin health and sunscreens

You don't have to be a dermatologist to be aware of the importance of sun protection, whether this is accomplished through the application of sunscreens or reliance on protective clothing. The abundant research on vitamin D that identifies it as the quintessential protector for everything from cancer to bone health, is a cause of confusion for many since this vitamin is made in the skin upon exposure to UV light. As with most things in life, moderation is key to a balanced life and sun exposure is no exception; it is paramount to a healthy body and to the skin. But you needn't be a sun worshipper to get your daily requirement. You can produce enough vitamin D with as little as 10-15 minutes of daily sun on bare arms or legs; the face should always be protected. Sunbathing for longer than 30 minutes can cause cellular damage. Sunscreens are a controversial issue since many are made with synthetic ingredients (nanoparticles should be avoided). They are accused of both causing and protecting us from skin cancers, and also providing a false sense of protection. While they may help prevent burning, there is discussion among the experts that it



does little to protect the underlying cells from DNA damage, inflammation and immune suppression. Do not rely on sunscreen alone for the prevention of wrinkles, pigmentation problems and skin cancer. No matter which side of that debate you are on, one thing is certain – some form of sun protection, especially for the face, is paramount. Limited sun exposure, especially during mid-day peak hours, a hat and protective clothing are minimum recommendations.

Plants to the Rescue

Plants have been evolving on our planet for millions of years, converting sunlight into useful chemicals in the form of sugars, amino acids, fats, essential oils and much more. Humans have relied on them for food, medicine and spiritual guidance for as long as we have inhabited the planet. Their guidance in prayer and meditation is noted throughout history, but more importantly we share a biological similarity with their chemical compounds. We have specifically depended on herbs and their fragrant oils to keep us healthy and beautiful. Evidence of that is found in numerous hieroglyphic depictions from 5,000 years ago. Whether we ingest them as part of our diet or apply them to the skin in a cosmetic routine, it is well known that many plants contain restorative, healing, hydrating and soothing compounds – all of which can contribute to a slowing of the aging process, keeping us youthful.

Essential oils offer their own unique help as cell rejuvenators and communicators, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and antifungal agents. Following is a list of essential oils for various skin types, no matter what your age or skin condition. You can use them as single oils or blend a few together to create a more complex formula. Use a total of 2-5 drops of essential oil (single or blended) to one ounce of carrier oil or face lotion. If using your blend or single note for only one application, one drop is plenty. Depending on the specific oil used, it may need to be diluted further before adding to a single dose. This is accomplished by adding one drop to 4 drops of carrier oil; use 1 drop of that blend to provide approximately ¼ of a drop for sensitive skin.

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We all tend to have a 'constitutional' skin type, any of which can accompany aging skin. Many of the essential oils noted have multiple uses and benefits. Pick your favorite aromas within your category and blend together or use one single note. Many of these botanicals sourced as essential oils are also utilized as whole herbs in many skin care formulas, and some are suitable to consume as teas. Simply slowing down long enough to make and sip a cup of tea is de-stressing in itself, and your skin will benefit on many levels.

Mature skin

- Myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*)
- Frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*)
- Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*)
- Carrot seed (*Daucus carota*)
- Rose (*Rosa damascena*)
- Clary sage (*Salvia sclarea*)
- Rock rose (*Cistus ladaniferus*)
- Carrier oil: Red Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), Argan (*Argania spinosa*)

Dry skin

- Rose (*Rosa damascena*)
- Sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*)
- Geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*)
- Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*)
- Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*)
- Vetiver (*Vetiveria zizanioides*)
- Carrier oil: Carrot seed (*Daucus carota*)

Couperose skin

- Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*)
- Rose (*Rosa damascena*)
- Carrot (*Daucus carota*)
- Helichrysum (*Helichrysum italicum*)
- Carrier oil: Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)

Sensitive skin

- Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*)
- Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Rose (*Rosa damascena*)
- Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*)
- Jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*)
- Helichrysum (*Helichrysum italicum*)
- Carrier oil: Jojoba

Oily or acne skin

- Niaouli (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*)
- Lemon tea tree (*Leptospermum petersonii*)
- Honey myrtle (*Melaleuca teretifolia*)
- Kunzea (*Kunzea ambigua*)
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
- Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*)
- Citrus (*Citrus spp.*)
- Juniper (*Juniperus communis*)
- Spike lavender (*Lavandula spica*; *L. latifolia*)
- Carrier oil: Tamanu oil (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)

Scars and stretch marks

- Helichrysum (*Helichrysum italicum*)
- Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*)
- Mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*)
- Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*)
- Carrier oil: Kukui (*Aleurites mollucana*) / Tamanu oil (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)

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Specialty carrier oils

Despite the suggestions above on specific carrier oils for the different skin types, you can really mix and match many of them. Essential oils require dilution and there are many new and botanically active carrier oils available from plants that were once thought of as useful only for their fruits, such as raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) and pomegranate (*Punicum granatum*) oils. These seeds are cold pressed and some are available from organic sources. Some of my favorite carrier oils from nut, fruit, herb and vegetable seeds are new on the market, including nigella (*Nigella sativa*), borage (*Borago officinalis*), chia (*Salvia hispanica*), cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*), carrot (*Daucus carota*), tamanu (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), argan (*Argania spinosa*), blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), broccoli (*Brassica oleraceae*), sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) and more. The common, familiar carriers like almond (*Prunus amygdalus*), jojoba (*Simmondsia chinensis*), rosehip (*Rosa rubiginosa*), coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), apricot (*Prunus*



armeniaca), pumpkin (*Curcubita pepo*), avocado (*Persea Americana*) and hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) are still wonderful and readily available. Often the strong odor, intense action or high price of some of these oils will encourage their blending with the less expensive and more common carrier oils. Combining the specific qualities of the essential oils with the attributes of the carrier oils will make your formulas efficacious and distinctive.

Botanicals for skin care

Herbs have been relied on for centuries to keep us youthful both inside and out, and there are scores to choose from. The best known herbs from days gone by happen to include many that have current research for proven efficacy in keeping skin youthful. Often the extracted form of these botanicals that are incorporated into the expensive creams sold at high-end stores are not available for retail sale so not easy for the individual to purchase, but they still offer benefits when using them as beverage teas, skin rinses, masks, compresses and tinctures. They include chamomile, green tea, rosemary, lavender, ginger, turmeric, grape, olive, burdock, plantain, gotu kola, ginseng, sage, and many more.

Basic skin care regime

Having healthy skin doesn't necessarily require spending hours each week primping. A simple routine of cleansing with a pH balanced liquid soap or cream cleanser (depending on your skin type), toning with an aromatic hydrosol (rose and neroli are easily found), and moisturizing with a botanically-rich cream or customized essential oil formulation constitutes the basics of good skin care. Add to this a weekly exfoliation with a mild blend of powdered oatmeal and lavender flowers and hydrating or nutrient rich botanical masks that can be created from fruits, clays and hydrosols, customized according to skin type.

No matter what your skin type, nature has raw materials that can address all types, making it easy and inexpensive to achieve the most beautiful skin possible at any age.

Mindy Green bio: [Click Here](#)

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Clinical Aromatherapy in the Treatment of Insomnia

Kelley Duncan Mayden, MSN, FNP, AOCNP, IAC

Sleep is a natural, anabolic state of reduced consciousness necessary for the growth and repair of all vital organ systems. Normal sleep is an important regulator of appetite, weight maintenance, and energy (Lumeng, et al., 2007). Insomnia, which is both a symptom and a disorder, is the subjective report of difficulty with sleep which may be in the form of sleep initiation, duration, consolidation, or quality that occurs despite adequate opportunity for sleep (Schuttle-Rodin, Broch, Buyssee, Dorsey, & Sateia, 2008). Insomnia affects approximately 1-10% of the general population and up to 25% of the elderly. The 1-year prevalence of insomnia ranges from 30-45% in adults. It is more prevalent in women, increasing with age, lower socioeconomic status, and those with co-morbid conditions, including malignancy (Thorpy, Wilner, & Kralian, 2009). It has been observed in all cultures and countries and contributes to the burden of rising healthcare costs.

The cause of insomnia is unknown but is thought to be related to a state of hyperarousal associated with higher levels of an adrenocorticotrophic hormone, cortisol, increased beta activity and decreased theta and delta activity as detected on electroencephalogram (Silber, 2005). It is classified as primary or secondary (see Table 1) and is linked to a number of complications including an increased risk of infection and obesity (Lumeng, et al., 2007; Thorpy, et al., 2009). Daytime consequences of insomnia include decreased energy, difficulty concentrating, decreased memory, fatigue, low motivation and productivity loss. Sleep-related psychophysiologic problems such as gastric distress, tension headache and muscle tension are increased with insomnia. Anxiety, depression, interpersonal difficulties and substance use disorders are common in the presence of chronic sleep deprivation (Thorpy, et al., 2009).

The specific outcomes in the treatment of insomnia are improvement of sleep quality, improvement of sleep quantity, improvement of insomnia related daytime impairments, and management of underlying conditions such as depression, anxiety and pain which may contribute to insomnia (Doghrumji, 2010; Schuttle-Rodin, et al., 2008). Current Food and Drug Administration approved pharmaceutical therapy

options for the treatment of insomnia include benzodiazepines, non-benzodiazepines such as zolpidem and zaleplon, and the melatonin receptor agonists, ramelteon. Despite their popularity, issues such as withdrawal symptoms, addiction, diurnal effects and rebound insomnia mark these drugs as poor candidates for long-term use.



Aromatherapy, which is defined as the skilled and controlled use of essential oils for physical and emotional health and well-being, provides a safe and effective treatment alternative for insomnia (Cooksley, 2002, p. 3). Evidence suggests that aromatherapy, as a treatment for insomnia, is efficacious among many patient populations including patients with cancer and ischemic heart disease (Barton, et al., 2011; Block, Gyllenhaal, & Mead, 2004; Moeini, Khadibi, Bekhradi, Mahmoudian, & Nazari, 2010). Therapeutic effects are observed in adults and infants alike (Field, et al., 2008).

In recent years, public interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) as a treatment for insomnia has gained in popularity. An analysis of the United States National Health Interview Survey data from 2002 revealed that of the 17.4% of adults reporting insomnia in the preceding month, 4.5% have used CAM to improve their sleep (Sarris & Byrne, 2011). Along with growing public interest, the scientific community is conducting an increasing number of randomized controlled trials (RCT) examining the anxiolytic and sedative properties of essential plant compounds.

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The Federal government has established a lead agency for scientific research on CAM known as The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, one of 27 institutes that make up the National Institutes of Health.

While additional trials are needed to firmly establish aromatherapy as an adjuvant and stand-alone treatment for insomnia among traditional practitioners, much information is already available for clinical application. There are numerous herbs with clinical implication in the treatment of insomnia, some of the most commonly studied and applied herbs are chamomile, lavender, Melissa, valerian, and ylang ylang. The following is a brief introduction to these commonly recommended herbal therapies as they relate to the treatment of insomnia.

Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) is a member of the Compositae or Asteraceae family. The hollow, bright gold cones of the flowers are packed with disc or tubular florets and are ringed with about fifteen white ray or ligulae florets. The dried flowers contain numerous terpenoids and flavonoids contributing to chamomile's medicinal properties (Srivastava, Shankar, & Gupta, 2010). Sedative effects may occur as the flavonoid 'apigenin' binds to benzodiazepine receptors in the brain (Wheatley, 2005). Chamomile essential oil is extracted by steam distillation, has a slightly fruity aroma, and the oil ranges in color from yellow to shades of blue and green. It can be taken orally in the form of herbal tea and its essential oil can be applied topically as a lotion, poultice, inhaled from the hands, or added to bath salts (Srivastava, et al., 2010). Chamomile should be avoided during the first trimester of pregnancy and is not indicated for long-term use in individuals with a history of estrogen-dependent cancer (Cooksley, 2002, p. 344).

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), a member of the Labiatae family, is an evergreen sub-shrub with linear or lance-shaped leaves and is native to the Mediterranean region. The *Lavandula* genus has approximately 30 species grown around the world. Lavender from France has a superior fragrance and lavender grown and distilled at a higher altitude is of the highest quality. It is often referred to as the "mother" of essential

oils (Battaglia, 2003, p. 217-219). The essential oil produced is extracted by steam distillation of the fresh flowering tops of the plants. Its main components are linalyl acetate and linalool (Wheatley, 2005).

By way of inhalation, lavender has been shown to improve sleep quality (Lewith, Godfrey, & Prescott, 2005). In both men and women, lavender has been found to increase the percentage of deep or slow-wave sleep (Goel, Kim, & Lao, 2005). In cases of mental and emotional agitation, lavender calms the mind and alleviates fears. This is one reason lavender is regarded as the first choice in the treatment of insomnia (Battaglia, 2003, p. 218). While safe in all age groups, it should be avoided during the first trimester of pregnancy and used with caution in the presence of hypotension (Cooksley, 2002, p. 353).

Melissa (*Melissa officinalis*), commonly known as lemon balm, belongs to the Lamiaceae family. It is a sweet-scented perennial herb whose leaves and flowering tops yield a pale yellow or pale amber essential oil when steam distilled. The odor is fresh, herbaceous, and sweet citrus. The volatile oil contains citronellal, geranial, and neral which have demonstrated sedative properties in rodents (Battaglia, 2003, p. 231; Wheatley, 2005).

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Melissa has been proven to have anxiolytic effects in humans and improve insomnia by as much as 85% in some groups (Cases, Ibarra, Feuillere, Roller, & Sukkar, 2011; Kennedy, Little, Haskell, & Scholey, 2006).

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) is a perennial herb native to Asia, Europe, and North America. The plant's roots are extracted by an aqueous or aqueous-alcoholic process leaving valerenic acid, valenol, and valepotriate as the main chemical components (Barton, et al., 2011). There is evidence of GABA re-uptake inhibition and flunitrazepam-binding in the brain which may be responsible for the sedative action of valerian. Its use as a sedative dates back to ancient Greece. The extract has been used to treat sleeping disorders in Europe for decades and the herbal form of valerian root is becoming more popular in the United States as a self-prescribed treatment for insomnia (Bent, Padula, Moore, Patterson, & Mehling, 2006).



(Editor's note: The following paragraph is concerning the herbal form, not the essential oil.) Fernandez-San-Martin and colleagues' review of 18 RCT of valerian preparations suggests that valerian is effective for subjective improvement in insomnia (Fernandez-

San-Martin, et al., 2010). In a separate analysis of 16 RCT, examining a total of 1093 patients, a pooling of the most commonly reported sleep quality measure found that valerian had a statistically significant effect on the relative risk of improved sleep. In addition, six of the studies reporting a measure of after sleep feelings found no difference between valerian and a placebo (Bent, et al., 2006). Although some side-effects such as diarrhea, headache, and vivid dreams have been reported with use of valerian, in general, it is considered safe when consumed within the recommended dose range (Salter & Brownie, 2010). In a phase III study involving cancer patients, no significant toxicity or safety issues were identified among 227 patients receiving 450mg of valerian or placebo 1 hour prior to bedtime (Barton, et al., 2011).

Ylang Ylang (*Canaga odorata*) belongs to the Annonaceae family and is a rapidly growing evergreen bearing yellow-green, heavily scented flowers. The essential oil produced by steam distillation has a strong, exotic aroma. Its chemical composition is largely benzyl acetate, methyl ether, and linalool. Although long valued in the perfume and soap industry, ylang ylang is also important in the treatment of a number of conditions, including insomnia. Findings suggest that ylang ylang has a calming, relaxing effect and has the ability to reduce anger, rage, and frustration (Battaglia, 2003, p. 278; Hongratanaworakit & Buchbauer, 2006). It is likely that these properties make it an effective treatment for insomnia. It should be used with caution in those with low blood pressure, bradycardia, or sleep apnea.

Typical modes of administration for these essential oils include direct inhalation by use of a diffuser or oil vaporizer, massage, and bath. An area that deserves further investigation based on a study from an oncology population is application by aromasticks (wooden sticks used to absorb and diffuse essential oils), (Stringer & Donald, 2011). The oils may be used as single agents or in combination depending on the needs of the patient. A higher success rate is probable in the treatment of insomnia when other co-morbid conditions such as depression, stress, anxiety, and fear are also treated. Patient education is a key component to improved outcomes and patients should be

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taught to recognize habits and behaviors that aggravate insomnia (see Table 2) and educated on important elements of sleep hygiene (see Table 3) (Doghramji, 2010). In appropriate cases, cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation therapy, biofeedback, and acupuncture may be combined with aromatherapy to treat sleep disorders and represent legitimate interventions for improving quality of life (Sarris & Byrne, 2010; Schuttle-Rodin, et al., 2008).

Conclusion

Insomnia is a non-discriminating, prevalent, multifactorial public health issue that affects millions, increases co-morbidity, and contributes to health care costs. In the presence of undesirable side-effects and failure on the part of traditional pharmaceuticals, interest in alternative treatment has increased. Holistic aromatherapy, combined with patient education and lifestyle modification, represents a safe and effective alternative in the treatment of insomnia. Present research supports aromatherapy as an approach to treating insomnia and future studies with valid methodology, cohort controls, and adequate sample size are expected to establish it as the preferred initial treatment approach.

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Table 1: Classification of Adult Chronic Insomnia

Primary Insomnia

- Idiopathic (begins in infancy with unremitting course)
- Psychophysiological (bed associated with increased arousal, not sleep)
- Paradoxical (polysomnographic findings inconsistent with sleep report)

Secondary Insomnia

- Adjustment insomnia associated with psychosocial stressors
- Inadequate sleep hygiene (lifestyle habits that disrupt sleep)
- Psychiatric disorder (e.g., anxiety, depression)
- Medical condition (e.g., chronic pain, nocturnal cough, dyspnea, hot flashes, restless legs syndrome, BPH)
- Drug or substance (e.g., medication, alcohol, caffeine, substance abuse)

Source: Silber, M. (2005). *Chronic insomnia. The New England Journal of Medicine*, 353, 803-810.



Table 2: Insomnia Provoking Habits/ Behaviors/ Conditions

- Excessive alcohol
- Caffeine
- Smoking prior to bedtime
- Large meals at bedtime
- Vigorous exercise 3 hours before bed
- Clock watching
- Bright light exposure
- TV, radio, or computer use in bed
- Shift work
- Snoring (includes partner)
- Temperature extremes
- Excessive worry
- Noise
- Physical inactivity
- Chronic illness
- Pain
- PMS

Source: Doghramji, K. (2010). *The evaluation and management of insomnia. Clinical Chest Medicine*, 31, 327-339.

Table 3: Important Elements of Sleep Hygiene

- Establish a routine wake-up time
- Exercise daily in the morning or early afternoon
- Increase exposure to daytime bright light
- Set aside a worry time
- Create a comfortable, quiet sleeping environment
- Drink a cup of warm milk at bedtime
- Take a warm bath one hour before bedtime
- Make sure mattress is comfortable

Source: Doghramji, K. (2010). *The evaluation and management of insomnia. Clinical Chest Medicine*, 31, 327-339.

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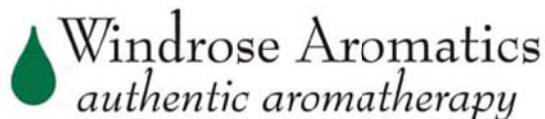
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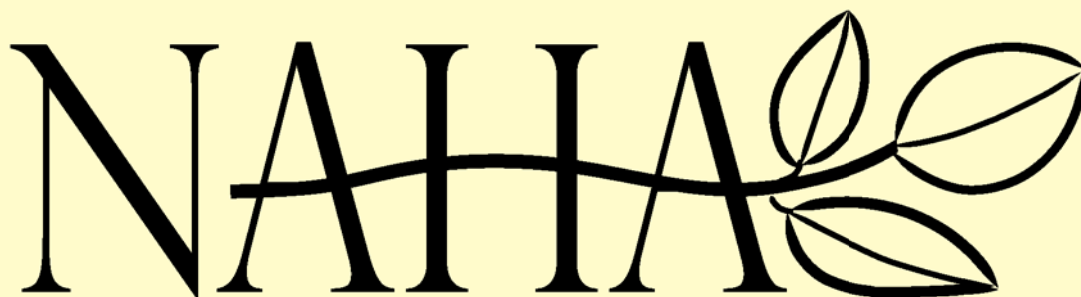
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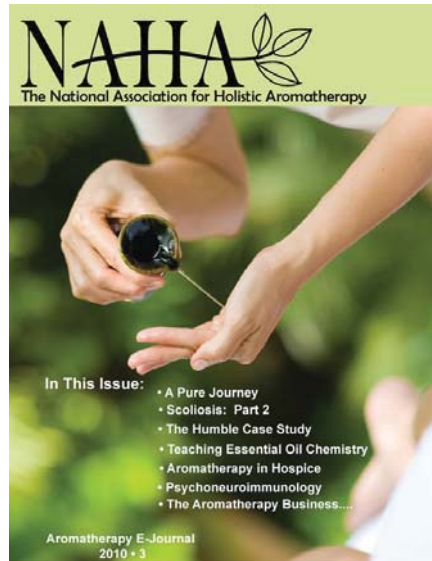


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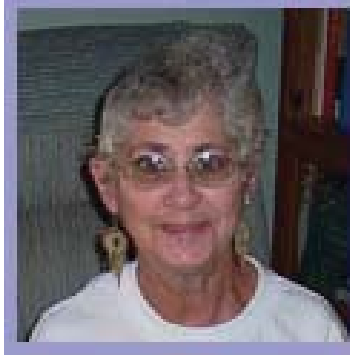


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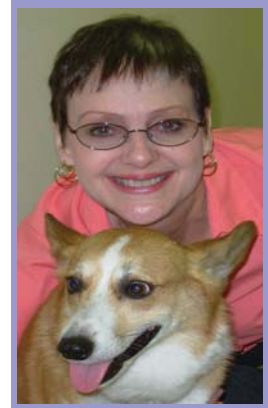
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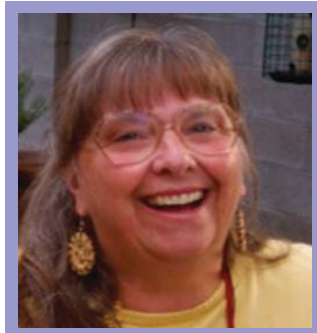
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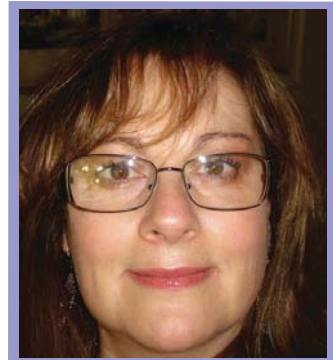
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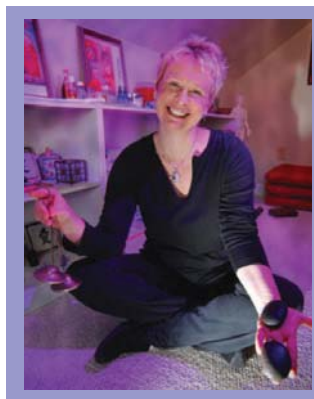
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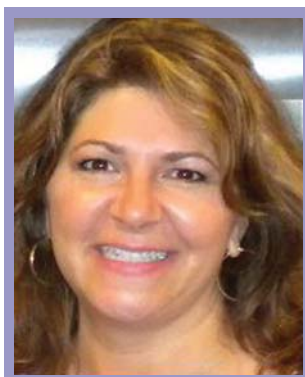
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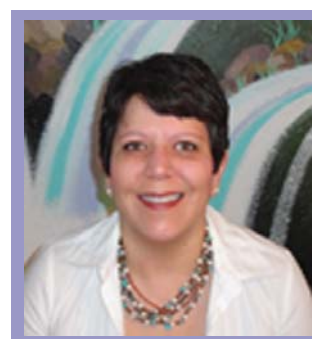
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- Monthly E-Newsletter and E-Announcements
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- Access to NAHA Member's Only Network
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- Member Window Decal*
- Use of NAHA Member Logo graphic*
- NAHA Blog (reciprocal links available)
- Student Membership Available
- Networking Opportunities
- Access to Professional Committees and Regional Directors for aromatherapy insight and expertise
- NAHA has placed an advertisement in Massage Magazine and other aromatherapy publications to promote awareness for the approved schools/educators, professional and business members and true aromatherapy.

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Please Print or Type. Incomplete forms will delay processing of application.

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Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____

Website:(Required) _____

Contact Numbers (Required): *Please indicate by marking an 'X' next to numbers available to the public.*

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I am a Licensed Practitioner: (Check each applicable profession)

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 Other: _____ (in regard to your profession section)

Referred By: _____

Memberships: Business/Professional applicants must submit typed description of business/practice background and copy of applicable aromtherapy certificates/training for NAHA review.

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