

ESSENTIAL OILS SALES VIA AMAZON.COM & INADEQUET SAFETY WARNINGS BY THEIR SUPPLIERS

By Martin Watt.

Safety: Amazon say: “*The Product Safety Team at Amazon works to protect Amazon customers from risks of injury associated with products offered on Amazon by looking into and taking action on reported safety complaints and incidents*”. Yet when you try to find out **how to report a safety issue** it is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Amazon are very careful to avoid giving email addresses and you may need to sign up for an account to be able to contact customer services. *See the links at the foot for more.*

Recently I was sent an email by webessentialoils.com requesting I put a link on my website to their site promoting essential oil sales via Amazon. So I then followed the links to the suppliers featured on Amazon. It was horrifying that essential oils **with known hazards** were being sold by these Amazon 'shops' without any or inadequate safety warnings. In addition, the referring blog site above lists every oil as “therapeutic grade”. **There is no such thing as a therapeutic grade essential oil, this is just marketing hogwash!!**

The blogger above is giving incorrect and potentially dangerous information on her site and in a book. She admitted that this information had been gleaned from online sources. I informed her that most such sources were of doubtful merit and some were giving dangerous information. She then tried to defend herself by saying that it was “down to suppliers to give safety information”. This blogger is also recommending essential oils that have never been subjected to formal skin safety tests. She also lists **mustard oil** but fails to say if she means distilled mustard or the infused cooking oil. Distilled mustard oil burns the skin and is banned by most if not all aromatherapy organisations.

Please readers do not rely on blogger websites for information on essential oils. *See my file on the online essential oils conference for more on these people.* Many of these sellers on Amazon are amateurs who often have no training in anything to do with essential oils. Anyone that sells essential oils should have the authoritative data about essential oil safety which has been available for years.

A few examples of the lack of knowledge, or not caring about safety, of sellers linked to by Amazon shops:

1. On edensgarden.com I noticed on the shelf life of most of their oils it was claimed to be “two years”. That is fundamentally incorrect unless antioxidants have been added to their oils, particularly with citrus and pine type oils. If you see a supplier claiming a two year shelf life for citrus oils then beware, they either do not know or do not care about major safety issues. They might be relying on their suppliers for such information but that in turn means their

suppliers either do not care or are also ignorant about what they are selling. **All large wholesalers who supply aromatherapy outlets have known of these safety issues for many years.** Therefore, such errors as the above on a web site can indicate someone who is buying via small resupply outlets. In the UK it has been the law for years that any customer requesting safety data must be supplied with it. In the USA most of the larger aromatherapy outlets will provide data sheets if asked and some even put MSDs on their site for downloading. Therefore a supplier unable to provide such information is likely to be an amateur and much smaller than their flashy web sites suggest.

2. A company www.neroliane.eu. Are based in France and are making illegal medicinal claims about what their oils can do, but of course most USA customers (their target) have no idea about EU medicines laws. Some smaller French oil suppliers have ignored EU medicines laws for years and no action has been taken by their Government.

Bergamot expressed: nothing about its severe **photosensitizing** properties.

Bitter Almond oil they say nothing about it being one of the most **toxic** essential oils. Any reputable supplier would only sell the variety that is free of prussic acid. With this company you have no idea what they are selling.

Sandalwood has the botanical name "**Thymus vulgaris/L.**" A typo perhaps or just another company that buys and sells essential oils but knows nothing!

3. A USA company natureskissproducts.com states "Essential oils have been used since biblical times" and lists numerous biblical references in order to mislead their customers. The statement is incorrect; the references in the bible are to infused oils or more often the use of the herb. Such language indicates someone who has been fooled by the lies told by multi level sales scammers.

4. Calamus oil sold by a company in the USA called dradorable.com. No mention of the safety issues of using this oil and the fact that the reputable safety authorities in the fragrance trade severely limit its use in products to less than 0.01% which is way below anything that an aromatherapist or natural perfumer would use it at. **Yet it is classified further down the page as "suitable for Bath & Body".**

There is nothing about the concerns of Calamus oil being carcinogenic. Of note may be that while this oil is still on the Amazon shop site, if you go to the company site they no longer seem to sell essential oils. This oil is promoted as: **"Calamus is used to promote cerebral circulation, and to help manage a wide range of symptoms including neuralgia, epilepsy, memory loss and shock"**. The medicinal uses given are the traditional ones for the herb, NOT the essential oil. Some of these claims are also illegal in the USA.

It is so disheartening that the efforts made over many years by myself and a few others on the safe use of essential oils have been made all but worthless by bloggers and sellers on Amazon. There are examples of

essential oils being promoted that are the most dangerous known and have no safety warnings. There are many such blog type sites run by people who know next to nothing about essential oils but that have direct links to Amazon **just to make money from clicks to ads or suppliers.**

I despise marketing that puts sales above all other considerations. These large corporations top managers/owners have some kind of psychiatric malady which pushes them to make cash without any consideration of public safety or people being ripped off. Their only interest is the company share price, nothing else matters. Most advertising agencies in the world have now got this mind set. They will dream up to most misleading ads all to capture the gullible and particularly the young gullible.

Illegal sale. This is clearly a problem for Amazon because the laws on that vary around the world. However, Amazon safety staff should have a knowledge of concerns published by reputable International journals. In particular they should have data where Government organisations have created laws banning or restricting essential oils from public resale.

Inadvisable sale. There are several essential oils that aromatherapy associations advise their members not to use. For example cinnamon bark, costus, verbena, expressed citrus oils, etc. There are other oils that reputable International organisations ban or restrict in cosmetic products due to known dangers. **You will find most of these oils available on Amazon.**

Unethical sale. A common get-out among suppliers of dangerous oils is that they claim to "just sell the oils and what people do with them is up to the individual". Certainly essential oils are used in a wide spectrum of trades but that said most sellers on Amazon are targeting the general public. On Amazon shops only rarely do you see warnings about certain oils. The supplier may give warnings on their packaging but how many people read the small print. Instead they assume if the item is on Amazon that it must be legal and safe.

If Amazon had any real concern for public safety they would insist that all suppliers submit provable referenced safety data before they allow them to sell via their shops. Any large trader with such huge cash assets should have staff that would check into claims made for the products and safety issues. The public buy from them assuming what their approved traders sell is fit for use. Clearly that is not the case with Amazon. Remember the thousands of hover boards that had to be withdrawn due to batteries exploding? One would think that such an event would prod them into upping their safety reviews departments.

It is interesting to note that Amazon were recently fined \$350,000 by The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration for breaching packaging regulations on a drain cleaner that spilled. Nine UPS employees had to be treated for chemical burns. The agency is continuing to investigate Amazon's compliance with hazardous shipment rules.

<http://time.com/money/4366920/amazon-hazardous-materials-fine/>

Complaints: There are thousands of complaints against Amazons customer services to be found on the Internet. They seem to have outsourced that activity to countries where the agents command of English is so poor people get frustrated trying to make them understand the nature of the problem. I do not know if the same has happened with the safety department but if it has been outsourced it would explain a lot. I have not dealt with Amazon for years after my own poor customer experience. In view of what is here and on other web sites I hope my readers know what course of action to follow!

For more customer complaints see:

<http://thripp.com/2015/09/amazon-digs-a-deeper-hole-for-themselves/>

<https://www.consumeraffairs.com/online/amazon.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/feb/16/giles-coren-declares-war-amazon-prime-free-trial-subscription>

<http://www.bbb.org/alaskaoregonwesternwashington/business-reviews/internet-selling-services/amazon-com-in-seattle-wa-7039385/complaints/>

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