

INCORRECT SAFETY

AN EXAMPLE OF THE DISINFORMATION FROM AROMATHERAPY ORGANISATIONS

The list of contraindications below was circulated to interested parties in **Canada on behalf of the British Columbia Alliance of Aromatherapists - around 2002-3**. It is a proposed list of oil contra indications to be presented to their Governments Office of Natural Health Products. They were subsequently advised not to present this list. I am leaving this on my web site despite it being out of date. The reason is to illustrate how badly informed most aromatherapy organisations were despite their claims of representing best trade practices, they never were **and many still are not**. The information presented is so inaccurate that I feel that it deserves a wider audience. **I am certain such nonsense continues to this day in many parts of the world.**

It is shocking, that despite sound safety data being available on some of these oils for up to 30 years, that certain aromatherapy teachers continue to ignore this. Instead they prefer to believe what the popular aromatherapy novelists and teachers say based on undocumented and unevaluated "experience". They think experience is better than sound documented facts.

The blue bold text is the British Columbia Alliance of Aromatherapists comments.

The ordinary text are my comments, not just my opinions, but mainly based on known facts.

ANISEED - Pimpinella anisum

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why, it is a permitted and common food flavouring?

"Stupefying with large doses". What are large doses and what relevance is that to external use?

"May irritate sensitive skin". Possibly.

"Do not use on children under 5 years". Then why is it used in (sweets) candies, biscuits, etc.?

BASIL - Ocimum basilicum

"Avoid during pregnancy". There is not a shed of evidence of harmful effects from external use.

"May irritate sensitive skin". Yes possibly, but so can most oils used inappropriately.

BENZOIN - Styrax benzoin

"May irritate sensitive skin". Nonsense, benzoin is a recognised skin sensitising agent. Its use in cosmetic products is restricted by RIFM. (See refs. In safety manuals).

BERGAMOT - Citrus bergamia

"Increases photosensitivity". Only if expressed oil is used. FCF grade is perfectly safe.

"May irritate sensitive skin". Yes possibly, but so can most oils used inappropriately.

BLACK PEPPER - Piper nigrum

"Avoid with severe kidney disease". Complete and utter nonsense; where on earth do they get this from as this oil is a permitted food flavouring!

"May irritate sensitive skin". Yes that's fine.

CAMPHOR - Cinnamomum camphora

"Avoid during pregnancy"

"Avoid with seizure disorders"

"Avoid with high blood pressure"

"May antidote homeopathic remedies"

"Do not use on children under 5 years or animals"

"Avoid with asthma"

Most of the above are references to pure crystalline camphor. Camphor essential oil is mostly linalool and so the safety considerations for crystalline camphor do not apply.

CEDARWOOD - Cedrus atlantica

"Avoid during pregnancy". No evidence that external use poses any threat.

"May be a potential allergen (if allergic to cedar)". Also applies to all other oils?

"Do not use on children under 5 years". Why?

CHAMOMILE, ROMAN - Anthemus noblilis

"Avoid during first trimester of pregnancy, use in low dilution thereafter". Complete trash!

"May cause skin irritation on some people". So do most other oils.

CHAMOMILE, GERMAN - Matricaria chamomilla

"Avoid during first trimester of pregnancy, use in low dilution thereafter". Complete trash!

"May cause skin irritation on some people" So do most other oils.

CINNAMON - Cinnamomum zeylanicum. **Which - bark or leaf ?**

"May irritate sensitive skin". The bark oil is **a major skin sensitising agent and should not be used on the skin.**

"Avoid during pregnancy". Avoid on everyone!!

Cinnamon leaf oil is similar to clove and safe in the appropriate dilution.

CITRONELLA - Cymbopogon nardus

"May irritate sensitive skin". This oil is a potential skin sensitiser particularly in humid conditions.

CLARY SAGE - Salvia sclarea

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why, what evidence please?

"Avoid with low blood pressure". No evidence-how many aromatherapists can take a BP?

"Avoid with heavy menstrual flow". Evidence please, not anecdote?

"Avoid with alcohol - increases impairment". Fine.

"Avoid when concentration is required, i.e., driving, operating equipment". Possibly.

CLOVE BUD - Eugenia caryophyllata

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why, what evidence please? It is a permitted food flavouring!!

"Use in low dilutions - may irritate sensitive skin". Fine

CORIANDER - Coriandrum sativum.

"Can be stupefying large doses". No more than many other oils - what does large doses mean?

CYPRESS - Cupressus sempervirens

"Avoid during pregnancy". Nonsense; absolutely no evidence of harm from external use.

EUCALYPTUS GLOBULUS, smithii and radiata

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why, what evidence please?

"Avoid with seizure disorders". Why, what evidence please?

"Avoid with high blood pressure". Nonsense.

"May antidote homeopathic remedies". What's that got to do with public safety?

"Do not use on children 5 and under or animals". It is used in many O.T.C. products.

What about Toxicity? If consumed, death has been reported at 5mls.

FENNEL - Foeniculum vulgare

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why it is a permitted food flavouring? Hormonal effects are unproven?

"Avoid with kidney disease". Complete nonsense from external use.

"Avoid with seizure disorders". Even more nonsense!

"Narcotic in large doses". You gotta be kidding - what like a gallon!!

GERANIUM - Pelargonium graveolens

"May irritate sensitive skin". So can any essential oils.

"Causes wakefulness is large doses". What taken or rubbed in?

GINGER - Zingiber officinalis

"Slightly increases photosensitivity". Such a mild photosensitiser it is hardly worth mentioning.

"May irritate sensitive skin". Yes.

GRAPEFRUIT - Citrus paradisi

"Increases photosensitivity". Incorrect, especially for the distilled oil

"May irritate sensitive skin". So can any essential oils.

HYSSOP - Hyssopus officinalis

"Avoid with high blood pressure". Nonsense. There is no such evidence.

"Avoid with seizure disorders". Evidence weak apart from consumption.

"Avoid during pregnancy or breast feeding". Pregnancy no evidence - breastfeeding maybe.

"Do not use on children under 5 years" Why?

JASMINE - Jasminum grandiflorum

"Avoid during pregnancy until labour commences". No evidence for this.

Not for use by nursing mothers. There are couple of published papers proving the smell of jasmine inhibits lactation.

JUNIPER - Juniperus communis

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why, it's a permitted food and drink flavouring?

"Avoid with kidney disease". Nonsense only if you drink the stuff in excess.

LAVENDER - Lavendula officinalis or angustifolia

"Avoid during pregnancy". Complete and utter nonsense.

"Avoid with low blood pressure". Utter nonsense.

"May be sensitising if over used". So may all oils.

LEMON - Citrus limonum

"Increases photosensitivity". No, particularly not the distilled oil.

"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than most oils.

LEMONGRASS - Cymbopogon citratus.

"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than others, but is a weak sensitiser.

"May exacerbate auto immune disorders". Complete and utter fantasy!

"Increases photosensitivity". Possibly

"Do not use on children under 2 years". OK

LIME - Citrus citrata or aurantifolia

"Increases photosensitivity". Expressed lime oil is a **potent photosensitiser** and not suitable for skin contact. Distilled oil is OK.

"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than most.

LINDEN BLOSSOM - Tilia europa.

No such oil, only an absolute - most is fake!

"Avoid when concentration is required, i.e., driving, operating equipment"

"May irritate sensitive skin"

There is no known safety data on this material and it is commonly adulterated.

LITSEA CUBEBA - Litsea Cubeba

"Increases photosensitivity". May do slightly.

"May irritate sensitive skin". May be a weak sensitiser in hot humid conditions, (not an irritant).

MANDARIN - Citrus reticulata

"Increases photosensitivity". Incorrect.

"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than most.

MARJORAM - *Oreganum marjorana*

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why, it is a permitted food and drink flavouring?

"Avoid with low blood pressure". Nonsense!

"May deaden emotions". What on earth has that to do with safety ???

MANUKA - *Leptospermum scoparium*

"None noted". That's because it has only been around a few years. **No formal dermal safety testing has been undertaken on humans.**

MELISSA OR LEMONBALM - *Melissa officinalis*

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why?

"Avoid with prostate problems". Oh my goodness don't they like fantasies!

"Avoid with glaucoma". As above

"May irritate sensitive skin". RIFM advise it should not be used in cosmetics, due to inadequate skin safety data.

MYRRH - *Commiphora myrrha*

"Avoid during pregnancy". Nonsense - no evidence of any kind.

MYRTLE - *Myrtus communis*

"May irritate sensitive skin". Similar to clove so OK in moderation.

NEROLI - *Citrus Aurantium*

"None noted". Incorrect, although skin allergies to this are very rare.

NIAOULI - *Melaleuca quinquiflora* or *Melaleuca viridifolia*

"Avoid during pregnancy". Why?

"Avoid on small children". Why?

No formal skin safety trials have been published.

NUTMEG - *Myristica fragrans*

"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than most.

"Avoid during pregnancy". No evidence and improbable unless consumed.

"Stupefying with large doses". Yes if you drink the stuff in excess, not in massage.

"Avoid with cardiac disease". Nonsense.

ORANGE - *Citrus aurantium* or *Citrus sinensis*

"Increases photosensitivity". Unlikely unless expressed oil is use, even then it is weak.

"May irritate sensitive skin". Slightly but not much more than most. The problem is with sensitisation, not irritation and that only occurs with oxidised oils. They didn't understand the difference and yet this organisation trains therapists!!!!

PALMAROSA - *Cymbopogon martini*

"Avoid during pregnancy". Nonsense!

"Use with care with menstrual problems". Nonsense!

"May irritate sensitive skin". Far less than most oils.

"Increases photosensitivity". Unlikely

PATCHOULI - *Pogostemon patchouli*

"May cause appetite loss". Who says so? So what's the problem?

"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than most.

PEPPERMINT - *Mentha piperita*

"Avoid during pregnancy". How silly can you get. A common permitted and safe food flavouring!

"May antidote homeopathic remedies". That's not a safety warning.

"May irritate sensitive skin". Yes see below.

"May disrupt sleep patterns if used late in day". That's not a safety warning.
"Do not use on children under 5 years or animals". They better not eat candies then!

PETITGRAIN - Citrus aurantium or vulgaris
"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than any others.
"Increases photosensitivity". Incorrect.

PINE NEEDLE - Pinus sylvestris
"May irritate sensitive skin". OK.
"Increases photosensitivity". Rubbish!
"May cause allergic reaction to those sensitive". Old oils are sensitisers.
"Avoid with prostate cancer". Rubbish - typical corruption of herbal medicine!

RAVENSARA - Ravensara aromatica
"None noted". **This oil has not undergone any skin safety or toxicological trials.**

ROSE - Rosa Centifolia or Rosa Damascena or Otto
"Avoid during first trimester of pregnancy; in very low dilutions thereafter". Utter nonsense. It is a safe food flavouring - traditionally advocated in Turkey to produce happy and healthy babies!!
"Do not use on children under 5 years". Why?
"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than any other oils, more likely the reverse.

ROSEMARY - Rosmarinus officinalis
"Avoid during pregnancy". Complete nonsense - it is a permitted food flavouring.
"Avoid with seizure disorders". No sound evidence, it's all aromatherapy hype!!
"Avoid with high blood pressure". No evidence whatsoever.
"May antidote homeopathic remedies". Not a safety issue.
"Do not use on children 5 years and under or animals". A sweeping statement - evidence??

ROSEWOOD - Aniba roseodora
"None noted". Safety is OK.

A severely endangered species, see other articles on this site. Major questions on various countries enforcement of C.I.T.E.S. endangered species laws.

SAGE - Salvia officinalis
"Avoid during pregnancy or breast feeding". Corruption of internal uses of the herb.
"Stupefying with large doses". What are large doses?
"May be toxic even in low doses". No evidence unless consumed.
"Avoid with seizure disorders". Nonsense as with rosemary.
"Avoid with high blood pressure". Nonsense - how many aromatherapists can take a BP?
"Do not use on children 10 years and under or animals". A sweeping statement - evidence?

SANDALWOOD - Santalum album
"Avoid if severely depressed". What a heap of trash!

SPIKENARD - Nardostachis jatamasi
"Avoid during pregnancy". Nonsense.
"Stupefying with prolonged use". What does prolonged use mean?
No safety testing has been undertaken on humans.

TARRAGON - Artemesia dracunculis
"Avoid during pregnancy". Certainly internally, but externally no problem.
"May irritate sensitive skin". No more than most.

TEA TREE - Melaleuca alternifolia
"May irritate sensitive skin". OK.

"May induce sweating in higher doses". Oh boy, where did they dredge this junk up from!
"May be sensitising if over used". Old oil causes sensitisation.

THYME - Thymus vulgaris

"Avoid during pregnancy". Nonsense a permitted food flavouring.

"Avoid with high blood pressure". Nonsense no evidence whatsoever.

"May irritate sensitive skin". Will irritate anyone if not well diluted.

VERBENA - Lippia citriodora

"May irritate sensitive skin". Stupid, it is an extremely **powerful skin sensitising agent**.

"Increases photosensitivity". **A strong photosensitiser**.

This oil is extremely hazardous and RIFM recommend it should not be used in cosmetics.

YLANG YLANG - Canaga odorata

"Avoid with low blood pressure". Rubbish!

"May cause headaches and nausea". Hmm, might also cure them-not a safety issue.

Conclusion: The above is an indication of the lack of real knowledge endemic in the Canadian aromatherapy scene only a few years ago. I doubt much has changed, but I know this kind of appalling lack of knowledge is also being promoted in New Zealand, Japan, Korea and doubtless most other countries.

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