

Complete Guide to Aromatherapy

by Salvatore Battaglia.

Reviewed by Martin Watt.

I thought parts of this book looked impressive until I started on the essential oil monographs. In those he includes the usual complete nonsense from earlier aromatherapy authors who took the traditional uses of herbs, and assumed the external application of an essential oil would have the same effects. All those authors books are riddled with error and therefore, as he has drawn on them for reference purposes, so is this book full of errors.

To be specific on each oil and every chapter would require a book in itself, therefore below are a few examples of the misinformation in this book.

Chapter 12 - The Essential Oils.

Lemon oil: He makes no attempt to justify or reference statements such as: "*Anti-anaemic, tonic to the circulatory system, for high blood fat and cholesterol, cellulite,*" etc. We see the oft repeated error that lemon oil is astringent when this is an action of lemon juice. A complete lack of understanding that an astringent is the opposite of a rubifacient, yet both are given as properties of lemon oil.

Grapefruit oil: We have the usual nonsense about it being useful in *treating cellulite*, etc. No attempt to justify or reference as to how the oil can be a diuretic when used eternally as is the norm in aroma therapy. Likewise no attempt to justify its use as a "*lymphatic stimulant*".

Sage oil: Under the entry for '*body-medicinal uses*' we have numerous medicinal claims that are entirely based on the use of sage herb as a traditional medicine, in its water soluble form containing hundreds of active chemicals that do not occur in the essential oil.

Thyme oils: All the historical references are to the use of the herb's, not the essential oils. The claims for some of the chemotypes are invention and speculation based on the major components in these oils and that system is packed with errors. Again, many of the claimed uses are of the herbal preparations taken internally as a medicine.

Yarrow oil: Around 80% of the therapeutic uses are those of yarrow herb, NOT the essential oil. The safety or otherwise of this oil is not known.

Chapter 14 - Hazardous oils.

Camphor is not an essential oil and therefore I question if it should be included in a workbook for aromatherapist.

There are some good warnings of the dangers of these oils, but insufficient indications when talking of their past uses, as to if it was the herb or the essential oil being used. Personally I cannot see the point in warning people away from the oils, if you then go on to list the traditional uses of the herb. This book is supposed to be about essential oils and many aromatherapists get confused over the major differences and might be tempted to use the oil instead.

Chapter 23 - p 331, Varicose veins.

There is no evidence that the suggested oils can do anything for this condition. Since there is no evidence that the essential oils can get into the blood via this method then they cannot have any physiological activity on the veins.

Chapter 24 - p 350, Herpes simplex.

The oft quoted error about *Melissa oil being anti viral*. All research indicates that activity is only in the water soluble portion of the plant. Neither is there any evidence that any of the other suggested oils are anti viral in-vivo.

I will leave it at that despite there being numerous additional errors of fact, or misinformation.

SUMMARY.

The therapeutics information is appallingly inaccurate and potentially dangerous for those who assume the oils will do the same job as the herbs on which much of the information is based.

This type of writing indicates an author who has attempted to make his work impressive by throwing in a few scientific references, yet clearly does not have the ability to sort the wheat from the chaff of the earlier aromatherapy novelists that he has copied.

I would not recommend this book as an authoritative text on aromatherapy in the manner many aromatherapy organisations have done.

Source and copyright:

<http://www.aromamedical.org>