

REFINED ESSENTIAL & FIXED OILS COMPARED TO CRUDER EXTRACTS FOR TREATING WOUNDS.

The man credited with some of the founding research on the clinical value of essential oils Rene-Gattefosse, did not think that the terpene content of natural oils was beneficial for the skin. He makes reference to this in his book and in the 1950s he produced several articles for the perfumery trade where he re-emphasised this belief.

UNREFINED FIXED OILS.

Many modern aromatherapists recommend crude wheatgerm oil for damaged skin. However, this crude extract can contain viable fungal spores. Any such unrefined plant materials will contain such spores because they are present in high concentrations in old barns, the air, or are naturally present on the plant materials. These spores are inert in the fixed oil, but as soon as water and humidity is introduced such as occurs in wounds or cosmetic formulations, then these spores can and do come to life.

Crudely prepared fixed oils can contain bacterial toxins. Garlic infused in fixed oil and ingested was responsible for a number of deaths in the USA and as the result laws now require such oils are pasteurised. Such toxins applied to intact skin should not cause a problem, but it would not be wise to apply them to broken skin.

With already traumatised tissue, the introduction of irritating substances such as viable fungal spores, is likely to produce over-granulation of the wound. This is because the body is trying to protect itself against the invading organisms.

UNRECTIFIED ESSENTIAL OILS.

Removal of some of the terpenes from distilled lavender oil has a number of advantages:

1. The terpenes are probably of little therapeutic value.
2. The odour components are frequently found in the minor non-terpene fractions of essential oils.
3. Any trace chemical compounds with therapeutic actions will become concentrated by reduction of the terpene fractions.
4. Rectification and redistillation tends to “clean up” the naturally occurring irritating or sensitising chemicals present in a “natural” oil
5. Natural does not always equal safe or beneficial

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