

OLD EMAILS TO NEWSGROUPS 2 of 2

More categories - see file 1 for the others.

Essential and fixed oil issues

Please take note of the age of these emails. If a supplier is mentioned it is likely they will have changed their descriptions, but as with other files, this serves to show the history of suppliers who knew very little about the subject when they first set up shop.

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Sunday, July 26, 1998 To: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Subject: Re fixed oils not going off.

If almond oil still smells good after a year then the answer is quiet simple. Despite what the label says or the b.s. the supplier gives, then it **must** have had antioxidants added. It is common for food grade antioxidants to be added to fixed oils at source.

Personally I prefer the preservatives because it makes the oils less likely to develop skin sensitizing chemicals. However, it should of course be declared on the bottle label, but rarely is. That is because aromatherapists accept all the b.s. put out by teachers about "[you must only use cold expressed oils](#)". The suppliers are not going to tell you that there may be preservatives in the oil that possibly they may not even know about.

Martin

August 1998 Probably to aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Re Rose oils & angelsefin

I have reviewed the statements put on this group recently by someone trying to sell Bulgarian rose oil. The reason I have done this, is because it is a classic example of the type of hotch potch of a few facts, embroidered with a mountain of misinformation as well as a few incorrect statements commonly used to sell essential oils.

OK here we go: First this guys statements about him being [an exclusive importer of Bulgarian rose oil](#) **are a lie**. This oil is exported all over the world including to several companies in the USA.

Most of the traditional uses information looks sound. What the heck 'moon blindness' is I haven't got a clue. The rose jam sounds wonderful. However, with traditional medicine a few things must be remembered. Many of these uses are where the preparations are made locally and used up quickly. For example, the best way to get rose water is to make a tea using the fresh or dried petals. In that you will get far more active compounds than occur in a distillation waste product. All floral waters will grow bacteria and particularly fungi very quickly after they are produced. They are only antiseptic for a very short time following production and remember that is how traditionally they have been used for thousands of years. Traditionally they were **not** put into bottles and shipped round the world. So if floral waters are purchased remote from the areas of production then it is very likely they will have

synthetic preservatives added and this will not be declared on the package. I am happy with such preservatives but I just wish suppliers would declare it.

The next thing with traditional medicine and vitally important to remember, is that often the native peoples had no choice but to use hazardous plant extracts and methods of use. They had no alternatives such as effective drugs and in many parts of the world that is still true. Therefore it is very important to take account of this when looking at the medicinal uses of herbs. Some of the medical conditions quoted would probably not be treated with rose nowadays even in Bulgaria. I am quite certain that in Bulgaria people would now go to a doctor or hospital if they had "severe asthma, jaundice and cardiac failure" and get appropriate medical treatments far more effective than rose extracts. Please people remember I am a herbalist, but I believe in using the best treatment for the respective condition including conventional medication.

"As yet, the mechanisms underlying the cosmetic effect of the rose are not clarified"

This statement is untrue as a lot of research has been done on components of rose such as farnesole and it is used in many cosmetics because of its proven effects.

"attar of roses, by regulating the lipid metabolism, counteracts the wear and aging processes of the human organism". "ingested per os, has the force to endow youth and beauty, similar to mythical ambrosia". Come on cut the sales crap, if there was such a fountain of youth, does that mean Bulgarians don't die of old age!!

The research on the psychological effects on the brain has of course been well documented elsewhere.

"Attar of roses has life-saving effect when introduced I.V. At a dose of 30mg/kg in the stage of cardiac arrest- blood pressure nil and absence of electrical activity".

I have not seen this paper, but would bet that this is experimental work on animals. 30mg/kg in an adult man of 70kg would be equivalent to having 2.1 mls of rose oil injected into their veins. Not my idea of fun during a heart attack!!

A host of unsubstantiated medicinal claims are made based on the internal use of rose 'attar', many I am quite sure are excellent remedies. However, with the gross adulteration of rose oil throughout the trade, I would not consider using this internally unless I had seen it come out of the still myself.

As to the claimed antimicrobial effects of rose water on all these pathogenic organisms. As I already pointed out above, these effects are transitory using the fresh extract only. I have the gravest doubts that the water would still be so active after a few days, unless preservatives had been added. In fact I guess a lot of these claims are from tests on the essential oil rather than rose water.

Conclusion: This is a classic sales pitch aimed at making a product that has its uses, look like a panacea. Please people try and look at claims made, and think about the massive differences between the use of a herb traditionally and the use of the same plants essential oil.

Thank you to those people who challenged this guy on his scurrilous comments made to Mynou and possibly others we don't know about. Do you really want to deal with people who can't take having their inaccurate sales pitch challenged?

Martin

“Mr Angel Sefin, I think perhaps before making the accusations about me personally my nation and the rose oil I supply”.

You should try reading again what I said. I made absolutely no references in my posting which were against your Nation. I think you may be mixing up what I said with what other people have said. If I ignored any mail from you, it was because I have not been on the list for a week.

I do know what I am talking about Mr Angel, having had very close contacts with the aromatherapy trade for years. Others on this list may care to tell you about the nature of my work within aromatherapy.

Sir, I **only** insult those people that deserve it, unfortunately there are many in aromatherapy who are lying cheating confidence tricksters. I am attempting to give people enough information so that eventually they can work out for themselves who these people are.

You may care to note that in all my mailings to the group I do not take advantage of the advertisement that is allowed at the foot, unlike yourself who makes sure yours is there. I can assure you I am not in this trade to just make money, as others can testify. I am in it to try and ensure that the cheats and con artists eventually get driven out. Then perhaps we just might get the respect that aromatherapy deserves.

You may care to answer why it is, that you did not attempt to say that I and others were incorrect, when you **lied** about being the “exclusive importer of Bulgarian rose oil”.

Martin Watt

August 1998 Group it was sent to is lost

Subject Adulteration

Some clarification was requested about my generalizations on saying "you all" in my post about semi synthetic oils. I thought this had been adequately addressed by the percentages I gave, which clearly indicates 'not everyone'. However for clarification there are two issues:

1. As I stated in an article in Aromatic Thymes recently, it is remarkable how nearly all aromatherapy suppliers say "ALL our oils are organically grown, wild crafted, 100 percent pure, etc. etc." Yet the fact is that vast amounts of adulterated oils ranging from totally synthetic to minor synthetic reconstructions are being sold by aromatherapy suppliers. I have good friends in the aromatherapy supply business and they know my attitude on this well. I doubt that even those who try their damndest to only supply pure oils have got 100 percent of their stock totally genuine all of the time. Due to the endemic dishonesty in the essential oils supply trade, this aim of 100 percent authenticity is almost impossible to achieve.

I would be perfectly happy if suppliers just said what Susan and others said "I/we do our best to get genuine oils", but that is NOT what you will see in sales literature, instead you will see all the claims mentioned above.

My comments on the percentage of phoney oils in the USA are based on my experience when I was there, on published analysis figures and on seeing private analytical data. Of course in the UK we have

gross adulteration, but here I would guess the level is slightly lower. We have also had a handful of prosecutions of dishonest traders who have been fined for selling grossly adulterated oils. I don't think in the USA this has been done. Even importing oils direct from growers is no guarantee you are getting what they tell you. I have seen so many examples of this kind of fraud, particularly where small distillers do grow and distil say half a dozen herbs, but then buy-in other oils they sell, from normal commercial sources which might or might not be genuine. Certain French producers are notorious for this trick.

2. My comments on the lack of the ability of most people to distinguish a genuine oil from a real one are really concerning good reconstruction's. Yes, many can tell if an oil is loaded with solvents and a tiny number of people have such good noses they can detect oils with a fair amount of synthetics. However, my point is this: How many aromatherapists will say that they have **not** had good results from using presumed genuine essential oils, I doubt many. Yet, if for arguments sake, 50 percent are using adulterated oils, then something is wrong. In my opinion the reason you do not get huge numbers saying their results are not good is quite simple. For a nice relaxing or stimulating massage, it makes little difference if the oils used are cut. It is also clear evidence that the vast majority cannot distinguish real from phoney. Why else do you think millions of dollars are invested in the most sophisticated analytical equipment mankind can develop if detecting synthetics were so easy. To this day it is terribly difficult to detect high purity synthetic linalool from natural, without expensive chiral analysis. That is why so much lavender oil is **not** 'pure and natural'.

Don't get me wrong, I am not therefore suggesting it does not matter if we use phoney oils, it certainly does matter for skin conditions and particularly internal use. This is precisely why I am generally anti internal use.

If someone insists an essential oil they sell is the genuine article, and they know or suspect the oil is not genuine, this is without a shadow of doubt FRAUD. It does seem that to date most government authorities are loath to tackle this issue. However, it has been tackled in the USA in the precious gem trade where similar adulteration of gems has only recently been ruled an illegal trade practice. Hopefully in time this may happen with essential oils.

Aug 1998 To: Aromatherapy-at-idma.com

In regard to the post Michel wrote on Ravensara.

I am replying to this issue as an individual, I am quiet sure Maria will have more to say on the subject.

I can see no good reason for using Ravensara aromatica for therapeutic treatments.

Reasons: The genuine essential oil is highly variable and a lot of it is suspect. I have seen analysis of samples of this oil which proved to be a blend of eucalyptus with a few other components thrown in for good measure. This (clear) oil is what was on the market for years being promoted as "the genuine article". On the other hand, a few years ago I saw a sample that was a murky green color and the analyst believed it was genuine mainly on the basis of the occurrence of chemicals that can't be purchased. What is particularly horrifying is that I know some herbalists have used these compounded oils internally and swear on their therapeutic efficacy.

There is little sound information that I can find on the past use of this oil therapeutically. That lack of information includes most foreign language publications including the French ones that Michel seems

to think get overlooked as well as German ones. I am not the only one to search for information on Ravensara, I know Sylla did that a couple of years ago and also drew a blank. All I can find is information on the traditional herbal use of the leaves and even then very little.

Interesting that in the references Michel sent I cannot see a single sound reference to the clinical use of this oil. All we have is the fact the oil was technically described. I could dredge up dozens of oils from my old pharmacopeias and old medical therapeutics books that historically were known existed, but for which there are no documented traditional or medical applications.

Aromatherapy uses for this oil:

Every use I have seen in aromatherapy novels (including particularly those originating from France), can be adequately covered by the use of other tried and tested oils. For example Cajuput, Eucalyptus, Tea tree, Cubeb, the Chamomile's, etc. All these oils have sound documented information substantiating their use. More importantly in my eyes, is that the safety of these oils is completely known, whereas there is **no safety data for Ravensara**. Of course if you have a lab making the oil then you can judge safety because you know exactly what it is *made* from!

Many aromatherapists have used (purported) Ravensara oil for a wide variety of infectious illnesses and claimed excellent results. Personally I do not doubt those *observed* effects in that you prescribe the oil and the client gets better. What I do doubt is that the observed improvement of the client is due to some magical properties of this specific oil, much more likely are three things:

1. Is that the condition is self limiting and will clear anyway.
2. Is the good old placebo effect.
3. Is that what is in fact being used is a blend of Eucalyptus with similar oils or components from other oils with known activity.

This does not mean I am saying genuine Ravensara oil is not useful for certain conditions, it may well be, what I am saying is:

No one knows

No ones knows if it is safe

Almost all conditions it is used for can be effectively treated with known safe oils, so why use it at all?

I believe Ravensara to be one of those oils hyped up by certain aromatherapy teachers and suppliers. It is part of aromatherapists seemingly desperate need to find magic bullets. Yet we already have those magic bullets, they are among the hundred or so well tried and tested essential oils, many with still undiscovered properties. Wouldn't it be nice if aromatherapists did some proper research on those oils instead of continually hopping around trying to find new ones and experimenting on their unknowing clients. My belief is that this search for novel oils is nothing to do with the search for new healing agents. No it is commercial interest, either with those teachers needing to be seen to be 'on the leading edge', or the oil producers happy to add extra things to their range if there is a sale to be made.

So to wind up: On the therapeutic effects of Ravensara oil: Where is the evidence? Where are the references?

Martin Watt, UK

Wed, 26 Aug 1998 TO: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

re solvent extraction and chemotypes

Solvent extraction:

This idea of not using solvent extracted absolutes is just another example of the uneducated hype initiated by early aromatherapy teachers. Unfortunately these weird ideas seem to still be persisting.

Firstly we should look at what is meant by 'an essential oil' This term is mainly an historical anomaly set in France in the days when steam distillation was the norm. Like all trades, technical matters move on, but unfortunately the aromatherapy trade tends to constantly lag 50 years behind.

It is possible to get a micro pipette and extract an essential oil from the storage glands in/on plants and analyze the liquid. This is really the plants 'true' essential oil. This is the substance that gives the beautiful fragrance of geranium when you crush the leaves, or rosemary in the garden. Once this substance is subjected to steam distillation these highly fragrant chemicals are frequently destroyed or turned into other chemicals. Only rarely does heat produces advantages substances.

When this fragrant material is extracted by a cold process, all these fragrant compounds are preserved in their naturally occurring form. Give me an Egyptian rose absolute any day to a 'cooked' steam distilled Bulgarian essential oil. The smell of rose absolute is much closer to that of the living plant. Surely that is what aromatherapy is mainly supposed to be all about, i.e. using the **fragrance** of plants for therapeutic effect?

As to solvent residues in absolutes this is one of the biggest loads of trash in aromatherapy. These solvents are harmful, yes. However, because absolutes are common food ingredients, the levels of solvents permitted under International regulations are infinitesimal. Anyone whose diet consists of a lot of processed foods are eating these solvents every day. Therefore the volume that is going to penetrate the skin during an aromatherapy massage using an absolute is going to be scientifically undetectable.

So use absolutes if you like the smell, provided you stick to RIFM guidelines they will cause no more harm than any steam distilled oil. On the other hand, if they smell better than a steam distilled oil, then they will have a far better effect on the mind and emotions.

Chemotype:

This word is another 'invention' of French aromatherapy teachers. It was never used by the larger essential oil trade. You will not find this term used in any of the old editions of the Journal of Essential Oil Research, or in other similar technical essential oil trade publications. A few people in those trades have started to use this term in recent years. However, try and get them to define what it means and you will get half a dozen answers. As far as I can see it should apply to a genetic variant from the accepted norm, i.e. thyme phenol type the norm, against thyme linalool type. Rosemary cineol type the norm, against rosemary borneol type.

I should point out here that the therapeutic effects of the vast majority of these so called 'chemotype' oils used in aromatherapy **are totally unverified**. Unlike the normal types which are well documented historically. **Likewise the safety of these chemotypes is unknown**. If you dramatically change the chemical composition of an oil significantly, the potential exists to have possible sensitizing chemicals in higher amounts than occur in the normal 'tested' chemotype.

Martin Watt, UK.

Date Sept. 2000

Re chemotypes again

I think there may be many people on this list you are completely confused by the discussions on this issue. So in order to hopefully introduce an element of clarification I offer a few notes as follows.

The word 'chemotype' simply means a plant variety that is producing a different chemical composition to its cousins. In the plants this involves minor differences in the genes or their functions. The word tends to be used quite loosely in aromatherapy to differentiate an oil from the accepted trade norm. For example rosemary cineole type (the trade norm) compared to rosemary verbenone 'chemotype'.

Plants in their natural habitat produce thousands of chemotypes. In a wild population it is common for two trees growing next to each other to produce very different chemical profiles-even if those trees grew from the same parent. This is natural genetic diversity; an excellent survival mechanism.

With the majority of plants we use for essential oils they have been BRED by mankind for our own purposes over thousands of years. That can even include some of the wilder growing varieties many of which have felt human interference at some stage. Mankind has been into genetic engineering for at least 10,000 years and probably much longer. In historically more recent times, plants have been selected and hybridized to produce the chemicals the perfume trade or flavoring trade require. NOT for aromatherapy purposes.

You will find certain people making comments about these so-called 'chemotype essential oils' as if they have discovered something new. In reality the botanical and phytochemical professions do this continually. It is mainly a mechanism to keep academics in their ivory towers and the phytochemical publications are packed with such reports. Only rarely are these discoveries of chemical variants exploited by the botanical extraction trades. I have here hundreds of such references, but in most cases they are of no practical use so I do not include them in my reference materials.

Anyone can trawl through these publications and find thousands of plants analyzed for their volatile and other constituents. In my opinion this is exactly what certain aromatherapy authors have done. They have found a paper published on a particular chemotype, then invented their therapeutics to fit the chemical profile based on highly questionable assumptions of activity, and then gone on to try and find someone who can produce that essential oil. I am sure Tony could tell you how easy it is to manipulate oils to fit such chemical criteria. For example, take ravensara oil, add a touch of fennel or aniseed oil and then call it "ravensara anisata". Mix 50% of linalool into basil oil and you have basil oil "chemotype linalool". That will be passed off as genuine to most aromatherapy oil suppliers with no problem. Now this does not mean that these plant chemotypes do not exist. What you have to ask is are these plants being commercially used for essential oil production? In the case of oils in aromatherapy clearly some are perfectly genuine chemotypes; I suppose a good example being the chemotypes of rosemary and thyme. In other cases (via what I have heard in the supply trade) I suspect that many of these oils are **in reality man made**.

So beware of those who try and pull the wool over your eyes by talking about 'chemotypes' to try to make you think they are very knowledgeable.

Like I have said before. We know what rosemary cineol type does, we know what thyme phenol type does - good old oils that have been used worldwide for hundreds of years. **No one knows what**

rosemary 'verbenone type' does, or if it is safe, no one knows what thyme 'linalool type' does or if it is safe, etc. That is apart from those who like experimenting on their clients as human guinea pigs, but without telling them of course. I will leave that aside as I have said plenty in the past on that issue.

Martin Watt

Oct. 1998

Re Hypericum (St John's Wort) ess. oil

This essential oil is a new untested product with absolutely no traditional medicinal uses.

The traditional use of hypericum has always been as an infusion of the flowers in a fixed oil; as a tea or as an alcoholic tincture. The herb and tincture has been extensively tested and proven to be effective for numerous medical conditions including depression and anxiety. See HerbalGram Summer 1997, NO.40 supplement.

The infused oil has long been used for inflammatory skin conditions, ear infections and for external use over painful nerves. It is widely acknowledge traditionally that **unless the fixed oil is almost red, then it does not work.** The main chemicals responsible for this effect are the hypericin's. Those chemicals are also believed to be partly responsible for the effects of the herb or tincture given internally.

The distilled essential oil is a modern development and it contains **none of the hypericin's.** As is usual with these 'new' oils, the suppliers will make-up all kinds of medicinal use claims none of which are checkable. In particular, certain suppliers in France are notorious for trying to sell aromatherapists oils that in the past have only ever been used by the fragrance trade. That trade tends to use 'novel' oils in minute volumes in order to give perfumes some special character. At levels of use of around a few parts per million these compounds are of course safe. However, when aroma-therapists use these compounds they frequently use 1-2 percent a factor of concentration many thousands of times higher than used to make perfumes. At such levels of use knowing safety factors is critically important.

Hypericum perforatum is a well documented **photosensitiser.** To the degree that is classed as a banned weed in certain States of the USA. Since the essential oil does not seem to have been submitted to any acceptable safety evaluation, then we do not know if it has the same properties as the herb or not.

Since EEC law is now so tight on the safety of raw materials, one must wonder if perhaps that is the reason that some of these Continental suppliers are trying to push their products on the USA where safety laws are *at the moment* much less stringent?

So as to trying to prove the 'effectiveness' of this oil as suggested, is that not putting the cart before the horses? Let the suppliers prove it is safe before you all start experimenting on your clients or on yourself.

Martin Watt

Aug 2001 Group sent to lost

Subject: Harvesting times

As Lowana said, this issue of harvesting times is mentioned in several aromatherapy books. However, these are often the books written by authors who swear blind the oils they supply (or supplied in the past) come only from wild crafted or organic sources. Then what do those same authors do, they buy their oils from large fragrance trade suppliers and sell that commercial oil as "organically grown" or "wild crafted". So as to their claims for how important time of harvest and distillation methods are, fine, but in practical terms forget it.

How do I know? Because I have worked for larger traders and know a lot about who supplies who with what. No, I can't name names because I do not have (in most cases) written evidence. Putting things in writing is not the way many selling to aromatherapy suppliers operate.

I think the recent posts on grapefruit seed extract and the fact most of it contains synthetic preservatives is very illuminating as to the way this trade operates. Every aromatherapy supplier will now put their hand on their heart and swear that "my citrus seed extract is the genuine article". Strange, I wonder who is selling all the preserved stuff then? Personally I have no issue with the use of synthetic preservatives. My issue is over misleading labeling and claims of "100% natural" when it is not.

Just as an aside. I wonder, if citrus seed extracts were tested from different times of the day, if that might make a huge difference in the extracts activity. However, in practical terms, as the extract is made from citrus waste, I doubt one could ever get a truly reliable product that was cost effective. Who is going to pay workers to pick citrus fruit at dawn just to get an extract that works?

Martin

Tue, 15 Oct 2002 To: Aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Subject: Fruit oils-Blueberry, Cranberry etc EO's

Good Morning, Martin:

Below, is a question that was raised on one of the lists I am a member of.

I wrote back and simply said that there is no such thing as these *fruit* essential oils asked about. Marnie wrote back and included some websites showing that they exist. I wrote back again and said that I still stick to my guns and they *do not* exist. Obviously, she is not going to believe me and I am turning to you for your expertise. Your help is appreciated.

Susan,

You are dead right, these fruit oils are NOT essential oils, they are either fruit essences or they are more likely semi synthetic flavor or fragrance compounds. You cannot steam distil most fruits such as pears and apples and get any fragrance out of them. I do not even think you can get a C02 extract of these.

There is no such thing as lilac essential oil. Those flowers cannot be distilled and their fragrance captured. This is a synthetic perfume compound.

There is no such thing as Lily of the Valley essential oil. This is a synthetic perfume compound.

There is no such thing as violet essential oil. This is a synthetic perfume compound. There is a violet leaf absolute but this is a dark green horrible smelling paste. Nothing at all like violet flowers.

There is no such thing as narcissus or wisteria essential oils. There is a narcissus absolute, but to get the real thing is very rare indeed.

Anyone selling these perfume compounds for use on the skin in their concentrated form is endangering peoples health. These fragrance trade materials are designed to be *hugely diluted* in commercial fragranced products such as soaps, perfumes, etc. Their safety in concentrated form on the skin is completely unknown. So if a home soapmaker even uses say a 1% solution this may be hundreds of times higher than the big soap makers would use.

Anyone describing these products as "essential oils" obviously either knows nothing about what they are selling or they do not care.

You may quote me.

Regards Martin Watt

Tue, 15 Oct 2002

Subject: horrified

I just took a look at some of those sites and it is obvious they have no idea on what they are selling or on safety issues. In particular this one describes all their products as "essential oils" and they are NOT: <http://www.thecelticshoppe.com/>

This one likewise: http://www.oilgarden.com/essential_oils.htm They also sell cinnamon bark oil with no safety warnings.

This one talks about using Rue essential oil on the skin which is **one of the most dangerous essential oils** and is banned by the International fragrance trade. www.wisoracle.com/oasis/

Horrifying that such materials are being sold to the unknowing public. These people need exposing.

Martin

Wed, 16 Oct 2002 Group posted to lost.

Subject: Re Lilac again

Susan, Please post this unedited

1. Re the INCI numbers: These are not an accurate list of botanical extracts. This list is full of errors because it was drawn up by a committee who had not the first clue on herbs or fragrance extracts. Therefore they lump all types of extracts from the same plant under the same number. The Latin names are also inaccurate.

2. CAS numbers: The fact a substance has a CAS number does not by default mean that the substance is available on the market. I have Allured's Flavor and Fragrance Materials directory. This contains all known commercially available fragrance ingredients and Syringa vulgaris (Lilac) is NOT listed. Therefore I can only presume that CAS number 90063-50-6 refers to the herb not the aromatic extract. However, please note what it actually says, which is that the CAS number applies to **any** extracts from that plant. They are not saying that lilac oil actually exists.

Next we come to price:

If a genuine absolute does exist (which I doubt) the price is going to be horrendously expensive. Even if it does exist then it is NOT an essential oil.

Now lets look at the prices on the web sites given by Marnie:

<http://www.thecelticshoppe.com/>

Lilac Essential Oil (2 dram) Price: \$4.99

Lotus Essential Oil (2 dram) Price: \$4.99

Rose Essential Oil (2 dram) Price: \$4.99

Anyone who knows anything about the essential oil trade knows those prices for the genuine article are just impossible. **They are synthetic perfumes and see next:**

<https://www.aromatherapygoddess.com>

Their oils are described as E.O.= essential oil or F.O.= fragrance oil

Their lilac says F.O.

LILAC-FO 5 ML \$6.75

Great, an honest trader and compare the price to the one above!

<http://www.gentle-earth.com>

They sell a soap with what they claim is pure lilac oil. They do not sell the oil.

<http://www.reigndance.com/therapeutic.html>

"There are a few natural fragrances as fulfilling as French Spring Lilac, the Queen of floral essentials".

No such essential oil exists. This may well be a small company who rely on their suppliers who will say anything to make a sale.

Next to the description of lilac:

Yes this is straight out of Stephen Arctanders excellent book published in 1960. Interesting that even the great Stephen Arctander had not seen the real oil!

I also note that all the claimed therapeutic uses are to the HERB!

Lilac like the other claimed "essential oils" is a fantasy or a scam.

Martin Watt

Date around July 2003 To: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Re Ormensis mixta oil

I have seen several analysis of this oil. No one has a clue on what the main chemicals are or do. There is no safety data on the main component so how it is possible to vaguely guess this oil is safe beats me. This oil has never been used in Moroccan traditional medicine and even the plant is only mentioned in passing in one report.

The only reason this oil was introduced to aromatherapy was because 20 odd years ago it was dirt cheap. Then certain suppliers started to sell it as "roman chamomile" to make a fast buck. That was reinforced by certain French con artists who invented wonderful medicinal properties as they did with several other unknown oils. Those 'inventions' were then copied by 90% of aromatherapy courses and novel writers.

Finally: To use any essential oil with unknown safety on the skin after 15 years of storage is about as crazy as you can get. If that oil contains even tiny traces of certain common chemicals in essential oils it will have degraded into known skin sensitizing compounds. I would not want it on my conscience to give out such misleading advice, but then many figures in aromatherapy do not care if they cause harm to other people.

Martin Watt

Dec 2003 To ATFE I think.

Michael said:

[“Could anyone describe the difference \(chemically or otherwise\) between a distilled oil and an aromatic plant infused in animal fat? My guess is that the distillation contains a more concentrated form of the non-water soluble ingredients. But wouldn't the action be somewhat similar?”](#)

You can't give an accurate chemical difference because it all depends on what plant and what oil or fat is used for maceration. What you get with a macerated oil is a touch of essential oil - maybe around 1% or a bit more or less depending on the plant. You get a lot of water if fresh plants are used - I have seen around 25% before separation. You also get water soluble chemicals that will not occur in the essential oil. With plants containing important water soluble alkaloids, an infused oil may work better than the distilled oil. That is why traditionally macerated plant compresses in oils or animal fats were used on painful areas.

If you steam distill that same plant you get a highly concentrated essential oil with maybe 1-2% of water. After separation there will be hardly any water and therefore only the minutest traces of water soluble chemicals such as the alkaloids. Oils like rose are an exception to the rule here.

A macerated oil also contains a heck of a lot of junk, i.e. useless waxes and other constituents that can cause problems such as photosensitisation.

So it's a case of using the respective extract for the respective therapeutic use. I can't be more specific as this is one of the questions for students in my course. Don't want to give away the answers do I.

[“would modern frankincense, myrrh or sandalwood be more like the ancient equivalents than say rose](#)

or jasmine?"

The resins of course will be the same as in the past, but the distilled oils may be different. Fragrance-wise I prefer a good quality frankincense oil in a heated diffuser to the resin, on the other hand a blend of resins, ground woods and dry herbs and berries makes very nice blends for herb diffusers. No way would I want to use a resin in my bath or be massaged with it. So it all depends on ultimate uses.

“And Chris mentioned before that resins can cause health problems in the body. Does this have to do with everything ending up passing through the liver?”

Not sure what is meant there. A resin can only pass through the liver if it is digested and the constituents get into the blood stream, or if a suppository is used. Essential oils or resins do not pass through the skin under normal methods of use, so that route is not relevant. With inhalation its doubtful that enough could be taken in to harm the liver. If it could then we would never have survived from when we inhabited caves and grass huts with open smoky wood fires. Of course dumb chemists will talk a lot about carcinogenic ingredients in smoke, but we are still around after a few million years of exposure:)

Martin Watt - Medical Herbalist

Feb 2004 To ATFE

The myths reviewed - LEMON.

A review of common aromatherapy errors which new people might find of interest. This review is intended to help people understand why so many urban myths have grown in this trade, and perhaps where that information may have originated.

You will find it quoted in the majority of aromatherapy books, on websites and in course notes that Lemon oil is "astringent".

So lets try and find out where this information comes from.

I have several old pharmacopoeias and herbals dating back to Ancient Greece. In none of those is lemon oil suggested as an astringent.

The excellent book by Gattefosse first published in 1937 makes no mention of lemon oil as an astringent.

I do not now have the book by Marguerite Maury - credited as the first AT book - because someone never returned it to me. However, I do recall much of its contents were beauty therapy orientated **rather than being factual information on essential oils**. Maury was an ex beautician and so carried over into her work hype from that trade.

The earliest aromatherapy book I can find making this claim is 'The Practice of Aromatherapy' by Jean Valnet published in 1980. What most subsequent aromatherapy authors failed to realize - when they copied his work - was his book is largely a herbal, rather than a sound book on essential oils. With the Properties and Therapeutic uses he failed to define if he meant the use of the herb or the use of the oil.

The next book making therapeutic claims for "lemon" is Aromatherapy A-Z by Patricia Davies 1988. She makes numerous claims about what "lemon" can do **but fails to define if she means lemon juice**

or lemon oil. As a herbalist I know most of those attributes are for the juice not the oil. She also gives no references on the source of her information other than Valnet above. She says that “[lemon is an astringent](#)” and leaves it up to the reader to guess what she means.

The next book I looked at is 'The Encyclopaedia of Essential oils' by J. Lawless first published 1992 in which she does say [lemon oil is astringent](#), plus a heap of other unreferenced medicinal claims mainly based on the juice not the oil.

'Aromatherapy' by Daniel Ryman first published in 1991 (one of only a couple of early aromatherapy authors I have any respect for). She goes to great pains to differentiate between the use of lemon juice and lemon oil. I can immediately spot copies and corruptions of her work in many of the subsequent aromatherapy books.

'The Aromatherapy book' by Jeanne Rose published in 1992 quotes Valnet as saying "[lemon](#)" is "[astringent](#)" and gives a whole string of uses that are based on the juice NOT the oil.

At the risk of boring you, I am not going to mention the plethora of subsequent 'novels' as I call them. Almost all of them are copied from the early aromatherapy books and they just tweaked the information here and there. I know of two such authors who privately admitted that their books were based around the courses they attended. Courses where the teachers based their information on the books already mentioned above. That includes one of the more recent books now used as a basis of courses around the world.

The unfortunate aspect is that Joe public and therapists read these books and simply assume the authors knew what they were writing about. They did not, and when I point this out, I am the one that comes under attack. People do not like having their icons lack of real knowledge exposed to scrutiny.

Martin Watt

31-mch 2004 To ATFE or Oils-herbs

Organically certified oils

I thought some of you may be interested to read the latest offerings on this subject on Crissie Wildwood's website [no longer online](#) She has shown that the committee who advise the UK Soil Association on setting OG standards are mainly comprised of representatives of companies involved in selling products. Such a committee cannot possibly be classified as independent of trade interests.

Here in the UK and in France many oil suppliers are claiming their essential oils are "certified organic". However, when the certifying organizations are checked out they are next to worthless. It has become clear that there are no sound organic certification organizations throughout Europe. They are all rubber stamping, paper pushing bureaucrats. For example, our Soil Association claim to inspect growers in the UK once a year. If that visit is pre-arranged I do not yet know, but one can be sure such a visit will mean certain farmers quickly hiding any non organic methods they have been using.

I can recall many moons ago when I was in the print trade, that our Government 'Factory inspectors' would tell the company when they were going to visit and suddenly there was a mad rush to clear the place up and put all the guards back onto the machines that the operators had removed.

Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that there are no organically grown oils as certainly there are, what I am saying is you cannot trust any certification systems in Europe. You will be paying premium prices with absolutely no assurance that what you get is in fact produced according to the guidelines of organic growing. You certainly cannot trust any oils that bear OG labels where the country of origin is outside of the routine area covered by the certifying body. Here the Soil Association were planning on awarding OG status ***based on what the oil suppliers told them*** for oils from Madagascar, Rosewood and Sandalwood. They have clearly been conned by certain suppliers who **say** their producers comply with the guidelines-yeah-yeah-yeah!!

In the USA I do not know if the OG certification organizations are similar to our own, but all I can say is buyer beware.

Certainly there are genuine producers around the world who grow to OG standards, or who wildcraft to ecological guidelines. How you as a therapist can get satisfactory evidence though is another ballgame. As it stands anyone can claim "all their oils are OG produced" and get away with it because no enforcement agencies prosecute them for fraud, the worst offenders can be found on Canadian and US web sites.

It makes little difference if an essential oil used in massage or by inhalation is organically grown or not. Most people get a hundred times more synthetic chemicals in their food every day than is ever going to get through the skin from external application of an oil. We also take in all kinds of nasty chemicals in most processed foods and from atmospheric pollution. That is why breastmilk throughout most of the world is contaminated with pesticide residues, PCBs and even DDT 30 years after it was banned.

I would personally only be interested in OG oils for internal use, or if I was 100% certain that the premium I paid was fed back to the producers rather than just lining the pockets of oil traders.

I am sure there will be more to come on this in the near future.

Martin Watt

May 2004 To ATFE or Oils-Herbs

Re the growing conditions of the herbs used to create the oils:

While agreeing with most of what Carol says, there are a few points I would like to explore a bit more.

I am not a fan of most so called "organically certified" essential oils because I know ***most*** of the certification schemes are either scams or are badly administered. Rarely are the certificates worth the paper they are printed on. What should matter more is not if pesticide residues occur in essential oils, but do they make any difference? It seems that as far as external use is concerned they do not. Reason is the average person is consuming thousands of times higher residues in their daily food; getting them in their water and in the air. Pesticides are only a real concern if the essential oil is taken as medication or if someone might be hyper-allergic to a given chemical.

[“We trust the end safety issue with EO manufacturers”](#)

You have got to be kidding!

“So would you recommend attaining recommendations for each individual synthetic.”

In most cases fragrance blends are commercial secrets and you will not find out their exact formula. Knowing which chemicals occur is worthless without knowing the volume used. Therefore, gathering safety data (which is available) would not be of much use. The critical issue is to only use the fragrance in a product below the manufacturers trade recommended level for that type of product. With home producers people tend not to ask such questions of the supplier. The smaller suppliers often do not know themselves because the supply chain in this cottage industry can be very long indeed.

“Also, would not the issue of the end product being a wash-off or stay-on matter”.

Yes of course this makes a big difference and applies equally to synthetics as naturals. With natural essential oils they tend to be insoluble in aqueous solutions and so coat the skin more than with synthetic fragrances which are often designed to be water soluble. So in that case some naturals (such as expressed bergamot oil) are more dangerous than the equivalent synthetic.

“They also recommended that they bathe with non-tap water--due to all the chemicals”.

That is only relevant if someone is allergic to the chemicals in tap water. It should not make the slightest difference if someone has cancer because so little would be absorbed by the skin. Most of these chemicals are in the food and air anyway, you cannot get away from these chemicals on this Earth. Fine to reduce exposure, but in sensible ways.

“his doctor told him the human body can absorb up to a quart of water in one average bath session of approx”

I would love to see the research reference on that one.

Personally I do not drink bottled water - apart from in countries where I am not used to the local bugs. I have no confidence in its quality or lack of microbial contamination. See the article on my website on hydrosols that gives some references to contaminated bottled water sold in the USA. Recently, here in the UK, Coca Cola shut down a brand new plant producing bottled water because too much chemical from the processing got into the water. What were they were using for the water supply? Local tap water!!! So they turned safe tapwater into a product that had to be withdrawn from the supermarkets due to higher chemical residues than in the tap water they started with.

There certainly are concerns over chlorine and estrogen's in tap water. I guess a lot depends on where people live, if tap water is drawn from below heavily farmed areas it may well contain chemical nasties, compared to if it is run-off from the US mountains. However, please remember the radioactive contamination that hit European mountains after Chernobyl. In some parts of Wales all these years later, a few hill farmers still get radioactive sheep. I know for example that the beautiful silver fir oil that is imported here from the Alti mountains in Russia has to have a certificate of radiological purity before it is allowed in. So bottled mountain water..just use a bit of sense about its origin and of course "trust the suppliers"-yeah-yeah-yeah"!

“But I think what is pointed out over all is the disparity of theories and the lack of trust we as a whole, are developing about our national regulatory agencies who we rely on to identify toxins and keep them out of use”.

I agree. The problem though is because these agencies tend to employ scientists who cannot see further than the end of their test tubes. In everything one has to strike a risk versus benefit and go for the lowest risk possible. That applies just as much to the question of real essential oils and synthetics.

With synthetics there are other factors to take into account such as the cost to the environment of any indestructible wastes used in manufacturing them. We need to examine the facts and not rely on urban rumors, or none-informed philosophical concepts which are common on the newsgroups.

Martin Watt

June 2004 To ATFE

“So Martin, Dear One, for those that are new do not scare them into thinking the 'whole' industry is corrupt”

Well I would not be far off, but I have on several occasions pointed out that there are genuine suppliers out there who do their best to get decent products. However, there are numerous aromatherapy suppliers who simply pass on what they have been told by corrupt essential oil middlemen. That is pointed out in various articles on my web site. Newcomers are not familiar with past exposures on IDMA and other groups of companies selling fake oils and they need to know these things because **we deal with peoples health!!!**

Some AT oil suppliers have been caught out with bad batches of oil. Yet they insist on coming onto newsgroups saying that they only get the best oil direct from specialists in such and such country. Only once have I seen someone forced into apologizing for selling fake oil and that was when someone (now deceased) got caught with a batch of heavily adulterated rose oil and had to admit publicly he had been selling that junk as the real thing. Both Butch and myself could tell instantly that this oil was junk, but the person selling it just did not know the trade well enough to tell the difference (that is the norm in AT). That person had/has a band of followers who even now swear this guy was so knowledgeable!

I can understand people not wanting to admit they have bad oils, but when they are caught out the least they should do is tone down the nature of their selling hype. Instead, some of their selling techniques on the newsgroups could be considered a form of subliminal advertising, i.e. if you see a regular contributor with a signature line telling you how wonderful their oils are, then after a while people really believe it. Anyone who has been told by people who know the trade better, that their source of oils is suspect, but continues hyping that source, is dishonest.

There are other suppliers who take a few snippets of known facts and then weave convincing fairy tales to persuade their customers to buy their products. There are other suppliers who buy the cheapest oils they can and resell them as organically grown and certified. These and many others are all common practices in this trade and newcomers need to be informed that they must be careful about believing anything which cannot be backed by hard facts.

This all kicked off because of my skepticism over the claims for Helichyrsum oil. I am always concerned about claims made for oils used in aromatherapy for only around 20 years that have no real traditional uses. In some cases 'the body of opinion' may be correct and a particular oil may have some of the claimed uses. In other cases the claims are simply hype and urban rumors disseminated by certain aromatherapy oil suppliers **to sell product!**

Note I often refer to AT oil suppliers, this is because newcomers to our trade are never told that AT suppliers are very small fish in the big sea of essential oil production. The AT marketing hype always leads customers to think they deal direct with oil producers when often that may be true for two or three of their oils, the rest being bought via the trades middlemen dealers, some good, some not so

good, some diabolical and yet sold to treat **health conditions**.

I have no problem with clever marketing techniques designed to sell a cheap hand cream as the best thing since sliced bread. On the other hand, I have a huge problem when aromatherapy suppliers tout particular oils **as being ideal for serious medical conditions**, or even mild medical conditions when those suppliers do not have any sound evidence about the claimed uses. Then the get out is: "I have hundreds of customers who have told me this oil is just great for..." Newcomers need to know that these claims are rarely verifiable or checkable and that *no one in our trade is validating their authenticity*. A quick glance around US and Canadian websites will see thousands of such unjustified medicinal claims. Hopefully soon not any more in Canada.

Newcomers also need to be told that most aromatherapy oil suppliers are cottage industries with little if any controls on what they do or sell. Newcomers need to be told that often these suppliers have had no training on the products they sell or in any kind of medical sciences. Some suppliers do have such training, but all I am doing is equipping people with what kind of questions they need to ask and never to be fobbed off with "I have hundreds of customers who tell me that..." or "my oil supplier tells me" or "I have used this oil myself and it does x,y.z.". Beware that this trade is packed with crooks who will rip you off anyhow they can. Ask pointed questions and do not accept wooly answers. The good suppliers can and will answer appropriate questions; some to ask are on articles on my website. Incidentally, my web site has been on line for years; several articles have been published years before that in AT journals, but how many AT oil suppliers tell people where they can get informative articles. They do not want newcomers to know I exist.

Also on my site are some suppliers. I did intend revising the links page so I could place a link to different suppliers who sold oils from validated sources, but the nature of this trade is the big producers sell to hundreds of AT outfits and it would require a whole website to accommodate the thousands of links, some of which I know would be to suppliers who also sell fake oils. A minefield for the unwary with no easy answers.

Martin Watt

Your source of superb aromatherapy information. Hey anyone can say that, maybe I should try subliminal advertising :)

Nov 2004 To ATFE or Oils-herbs.

Review of the bs on a Young Living distributors website.

Neroli (Citrus aurantium)

Which varieties? this name tells you nothing other than the genus.

Extraction Method: Absolute extraction from flowers of the orange tree.

Most is steam distilled

Chemical Constituents: Monoterpenes (35%).

This tells you nothing

Alcohols arom. (40%); linalol (30-32%).

This tells you nothing

Esters; Aldehydes; Ketones: jasmone.

This tells you nothing

Action: Anti-infectious.

What a stupid term, does that mean it stops you getting viral infections, bacterial infections, fungal infections, etc. if so how?

Antiparasitic. What via external use???

Digestive. Apples only to the tea

Tonic. What the heck does that mean?

Traditional Uses: Loved by the Egyptian people for its great attributes for healing the mind, body, and spirit. Strange, I did not think the Ancient Egyptians knew how to produce essential oils.

Indications: Neroli may support the digestive system and fight bacteria, infections, parasites, and viruses. Maybe if the tea is used, but the essential oil-hogwash!

Poor circulation. Hogwash!

Scars, stretch marks, thread veins, and wrinkles. Skeptical

Other Uses: In support of the skin, neroli works at the cellular level to help shed the old skin cells and stimulate new cell growth. Hogwash!

Safety Data: If currently under a doctor's care or pregnant, consult physician prior to use. And what does the average physician know about such matters? where is the real safety data?

Martin

Nov 2004 To Oils-Herbs. Two emails merged into one.

Re oil grades-reply to Chris and Butch

As the thread from the article has jumped onto oil grades, I thought it wise to try and introduce some clarification of where this tread began.

What was being talked about in that article was typical aromatherapy marketing intended to fool those who do not know better. Of course there are "grades" of essential oils as quality varies even within genuine oils. What those who commented on this were trying to get over, was that the grades *described in that article* are suppliers hype rather than being accurate information.

Newcomers to this group must get to grips with the fact that aromatherapy is but a drop in the ocean of essential oil production. The big dealers in essential oils deal in ton lots, not kilo lots. Most of those oils go into the many products and trades that utilize essential oils. Often in those trades purity is not a criteria, but price is, and that is where the question of grades creeps in.

Yes, we have to the separate marketing crap such as Young Living go in for from the realities. Of course to say an oil is "therapeutic grade" is complete garbage because one then has to consider what is

meant by "therapeutic". A beautiful smelling fake oil can have a very therapeutic effect on the emotions, but might be useless for treating a bacterial infection for example.

The facts are that the aromatherapy market is and always has been awash with fake or low grade essential oils. As soon as you look at what is done to essential oils then the question of grades has to come into the picture. The example I gave of lavender is perhaps one of the better examples. And Butch you know as well as I do that such adulterated "low grade" oils are common, why else would the better AT suppliers have their oils analyzed to ensure they are genuine?

You can start with perfectly natural 100% genuine steam distilled lavender oil which could be considered to be top grade. All AT suppliers will claim this is what they sell...yeah!!

However that oil can be and is manipulated in a number of ways:

1. You can cut it with chemicals extracted from other cheaper plants such as linalool ex ho leaf oil which is added to lavender oil. That oil could be considered a grade above the semi-synthetic version.
2. You can cut it with synthetic chemicals which makes it a lower grade to the real thing.
3. You can fractionate the oil to remove certain compounds. This makes it more useful in fine fragrances, foods, drinks and can give it more effective therapeutic properties. Don't believe me, read the book by Gatefosse which is all about terpeneless oils.
4. One would not for example expect to pay anything like as much for a standard Bulgarian lavender as a top grade English one.

Essential oils can be processed the same as crude oil and you can end up with dozens of different blends and fractions.

“Commercial Grade is one that has been manipulated by man”

ALL essential oils are manipulated by man whether that be variations in temperature, length of time of distillation, method used, etc. They all create chemicals that do not occur in the plant materials and loose others to the air that occur in the plant materials. As you know well Butch, you can get genuine Turkish village distilled rose oil that smells damned awful, or you can get the wonderful carefully distilled oil that you sell. Both are "real", but are you seriously trying to tell me that the stinky village oil is a better "grade" than yours because it has been produced by a method not involving manipulation by man?

Back to grades: You can have a perfectly natural oil distilled badly and as the result it smells bad. That same oil can be refined to remove the burnt chemicals and the resulting oil can once again smell fine. That oil is still 'natural' but the big players (*not aromatherapy suppliers*) will recognize the oil has been played with and mark it as lower grade and pay less for it.

The commercial oils trade is constantly fractionating and refining essential oils to create various grades and to turn bad materials into usable materials. Anyone who claims such materials are not widely distributed in aromatherapy are living in a fools paradise.

“Your example of Patchouli is a very negative position.”

All I said was that oils are available in grades and gave that as one of many examples. In the

commercial oils trade you pay for an oil based on the quality indicated by analysis. If patchouli oil has alpha gurjunene then a good analyst knows this is due to the addition of gurjun leaves. The seller gets a much lower price depending on how much alpha gurjenene is in the oil because a lot of that indicates a "low grade oil". Yet, via smell the untrained nose can hardly tell the difference.

When I used to work for an analyst he had to test Cyprus grapefruit oil for the content of one single chemical. If that was low the oil was classified as "low grade" and the price was fixed accordingly. The growers knew this and would try to ensure they harvested the fruit at the best time to ensure that chemical was high and therefore the price they got was better for a higher **grade** of oil.

So grading of essential oils is a reality. Yes the issues involved can be confusing, that is why people need to educate themselves properly on the subject rather than rely on newsgroups and web sites where the information given can be highly misleading.

Martin

Nov 2004 To Oils-herbs

A few comments on the post on Sandalwood by Chris.

[“Now, please do keep in mind that there IS some legally exported sandalwood oil available, just not a lot of it at the moment”](#).

Yes, but what about the significant amount of sandalwood oil sold which is being manufactured and sold as the real thing? Of course none of that is sold by aromatherapy suppliers!!!

1. Sandalwood Australian: [“Extraction Method: steam distilled”](#).

It is not, it is solvent extracted.

Conservation problems with Australian trees: The biggest problem is that the trees occur in very remote areas and grow on poor soils. You cannot possibly replant trees in such an environment. You would need a whole army of workers to care for the newly planted trees such as watering them until they get established and preventing wild creatures damaging the young trees. Believe me that just aint gonna happen. Therefore, they are depleting a limited natural resource and it is **not being replaced**.

About export regulations: People always seem to forget that you are dealing with the kind of Governments where a few bucks slipped into a few pockets will wave any regulation of any kind.

About genuine sandalwood: Legally traded sandalwood oil coming out of India is like gold dust or may even be a fantasy. If it is Indonesian oil, people should just think back a couple of years to when a vast area of the Earth was blanketed by smoke due to deliberate forest burning in Indonesia. Severe health problems resulted from that all over the Far East, particularly with breathing in children and the elderly. Logging interests are always very strong at Government levels. Most of the people involved are only interested in making money by destroying the Earths resources.

[Butch saying that Europeans ecologists should look in their own backyards before complaining about what is happening in other countries has little to do with this issue.](#) If one looks at history, then of course, many countries have pillaged the worlds resources. That is not justification to denounce those who are trying to prevent that situation continuing and campaigning to stop it.

The simple answer: Treat sandalwood oil as of great historical interest, but do not use it anymore, or at least not for another 50 years until some plantation trees in India may come into production again.

As an aside, the pagans in this group should examine their own belief systems which generally are to care for mother earth and her resources.

Do not put your blind faith in anyone who is selling products where such matters are concerned. Try to check facts for yourself from sources independent of the trade selling the products. Independent references on Rosewood and Sandalwood have been posted on this group several times and are on my web site, Chrissie's and others.

Martin Watt

Merinda,

Not sure who this ABC is that you refer to, but that article sounds as if they have been sucked in by the hype from the oil producers.

My information comes from the sources below which you can check for yourself.

First, *Santalum spicatum* plantations are not yet productive as they are new. Virtually all the trees are currently being taken from the wild, from the arid regions of Western Australia. In such harsh conditions they can take over 100 years to reach the required size in order to produce enough essential oil to make commercial uprooting worthwhile. The trees are not being replanted in the arid regions from where they are being harvested due that slow growth rate. The plantations are in the wetter Wheat belt regions hundreds of kilometers distant.

Sandalwood is also not being successfully grown in the Northern Territory. The project was abandoned a few years ago as the trees (*Santalum album* in this instance, not *S. spicatum*) were found to be too slow growing to make commercial harvesting profitable. If you do not believe me, contact the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) in Western Australia. Ian Kealley, Regional Manager of CALM, confirmed this a few months ago for the research Chrissie Wildwood did.

I'd also refer you to the articles by Tony Burfield and Chrissie. This exposes all the misinformation given by the producers. With regards sustainability, much of that information came from Ian Kealley of CALM. He is surprisingly open and admits that no sustainability studies have ever been carried out!

There are dozens of other oils that can be used for respiratory tract problems, I suggest you try some of those instead of depleting your countries natural flora and lining the pockets of unscrupulous oil producers.

Refer to: Articles on my web site on conservation and the links in them.

Martin Watt

Who will never "lighten up" as long as I am certain people are being lied to by essential oil producers and their distributors.

Feb 2005 To ATFE-at-yahoogle.com

The Essential Facts About Essential Oils. From a natural foods trade magazine. By Bryce Edmonds
My reply to the article above.

This report is hogwash, the writer did not consult with REAL experts in the essential oil trade. Instead they made the big mistake of consulting with aromatherapy oil traders who are **not** experts.

Most of what Butch said I would back up. There are a few notes that I would like to add though. I do not sell oils and so no one can accuse me of bias as I have nothing to gain or lose.

1. I have warned many times before, never assume a certificate of organic production means anything. I know that here in the UK many small aromatherapy suppliers are joining the Soil Association simply so they can fool their customers into thinking all of their oils are organic. The membership of an association does **not mean that the companies oils have all been certified as OG**. I know for a fact that some of these companies buy the cheapest commercial oils they can, but resell them as OG certified. How do I know, because I worked in the bulk oil supply trade and got to hear about who was buying what and I still have contacts with the real experts.

2. Several aromatherapy oil suppliers have built their companies on nothing but spin and lies. The more flowery their language the less you should trust them. I know one UK trader who sold his oils saying they were 'Aromark' certified, yet they were not even current members of the organization that does the certifying! That same trader put Ecocert approved labels on their oils when they were not. That resulted in a complaint to Ecocert who insisted this trader stopped this fraudulent activity. Other traders claim their oils are 'aromark' certified, yet a close look at the certificate shows that it is at least 5 years old!

3. Test certificates: GLC traces can and are abused like crazy in aromatherapy. There are many suppliers who do not have their oils analyzed but instead give out analysis results based on academic research data, or maybe pay for the cheapest analysis they can get once, but forever give out the same certificate. Very few aromatherapy suppliers are big enough to have routine batch analysis done. So unless a supplier is prepared to tell you who did their analysis and when and give a contact you can check, then beware.

4. "[We grow our own or have it grown under contract](#)": Yes a few AT suppliers do this for a few of the oils they buy, but it is impossible to do that for the other hundred oils they supply that come from around the world. Therefore, beware of those who make such sweeping claims, as it is a good sign of people who are liars.

So what do you do?

Never ever trust an aromatherapy supplier who uses flowery marketing hype. Try and find out where oils are produced and who sells small lots. For example, on my web site I only list suppliers who have provable connections with producers or who produce oils themselves. That lets out the vast majority of AT suppliers who may deal in some genuine oils, but with others I have reason to doubt them. Get the oils you want from those who can prove they produce them, that will often mean having several suppliers. At some stage you have to get other oils from one of these suppliers who buys them from elsewhere. At that stage you are then getting into areas where you have to give the supplier some trust. The way to judge the honesty of that supplier is on how open they are to questions and supplying you with provable information. For example, never take on trust someone who tells you their hydrosols are "tested" or "we never had a problem" or "no one has ever complained" - how do you know? If they are happy to give you the name of the laboratory that does the testing, that is a sign of honesty as you can

check out their claims yourself.

Just a snippet of guidance on an industry that is packed to bursting and overflowing with con artists.

Martin Watt

In ATFE-at-yahoogroups.com, "Victoria Linssen" wrote:

“Hi,

I think the journalist did a fabulous job of researching information and wrote a quality article. While they didn't list some of the best suppliers, the article is well-written. I agree with the majority of comments in this article - esp. the importance of buying high quality, organic-where possible, synthetic free essential oils, and the importance of educating the consumer about essential oil uses and benefits.

Victoria”

“I think the journalist did a fabulous job”

Far from it, the article is packed with aromatherapy oil supplier hogwash. The journalist did not consult with REAL experts in the essential oils trade, but rather with aromatherapy oil traders who will spin any yarn they can if they think they can make a sale to people who are happy to live in a fairy tale world.

I believe Butch is posting a reply to this junk article point by point on Oil-Herbs.

Martin Watt

Date March 2005 To Oils-Herbs I think.

Re expiry dates

While I have a good deal of respect for Butch and his knowledge of the trade in essential oils, some things in his recent post might be confusing or misleading to home users or therapists.

I would agree with Butch that many expiry dates on bottles are simply because most AT suppliers are covering their backs or complying with legislation requiring an expiry date. These labels should indeed be viewed with caution. You need to equip yourself with real knowledge on this subject and not rely on what AT oil suppliers tell you. It is very important to your health and those that you use essential oils on. The date of production is of course the best to use, but since most AT suppliers get oils via a long chain of supply (except for a few oils), that date is often impossible to ascertain.

Firstly there is a huge difference between if an essential oil has "gone off" and smells bad or weak and if that oil may contain skin sensitizing chemicals because of age. Similarly the fact an oil smells better with age is not necessarily an indication that it is safe for use on the skin.

The example was given of myrrh oil. That oil can smell the same after 10 years as the day it was

produced. That should never be taken to say that this oil is safe for skin application. Myrrh oil - depending on its source which you can never rely on - can contain quite a lot of the two pinene's. These chemicals are well documented as changing their nature within months of production and skin sensitizing peroxides develop.

In particular you need to watch your citrus and pine-type oils. Many producers of oils with a lot of pinene's or d-limonene add antioxidants at source to stop this chemical decay. I note that Butch said "up to 18 months and longer if stored under nitrogen and refrigerated". Yes maybe, but that is NOT how most people store their oils. So do not assume a date of 18 months but better to assume a date of 6 months. Likewise for lavender (see my web site for the latest on that).

Butch said "Tea Tree - shelf life is a minimum of Four Years". I strongly disagree with that, again maybe if stored as above, but certainly not for the home user or therapist. It is known that tea tree oil deteriorates and forms skin sensitizing peroxides as it ages. I reckon a safe bet would be no longer than 6 months to a year.

So for the occasional user, you would be far better off assuming a use-by-date of 6 months for most oils, particularly if you know the oil contains alpha or beta pinene or d-limonene. Very few oils such as rose and patchouli are known to be skin safe for years.

Lastly, you must bear in mind that the smaller AT suppliers and shops may have oils in stock for months or more before you buy them. Very few of those places store oils correctly. I have seen such poor storage conditions even in larger UK and USA aromatherapy suppliers. So do not put your health at risk by using old oils on the skin, instead use them up in diffusers and buy fresh ones for any skin application purposes.

Martin Watt

Trade, standards and training issues

Aug. 1998 To: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Subject: aroma-therapy

Sherill said:

["The therapeutic use of the fragrance of plants sounds, like a lovely idea, but to me it isn't the same as aromatherapy"](#).

My answer: Like I keep saying, look at the name-aroma therapy!

There are rare circumstances where the properties of the essential oil may have nothing in to do with the fragrance yielded, i.e. as you said, the effects of the azulene's.

The internal use of the oil may not require it to have the same fragrance as the plant from which it is extracted. Here you are primarily relying on straight pharmacological actions of a range of natural chemicals. This is where most aromatherapy authors have it all mixed up, by equating known internal therapeutics with the same oil being used externally.

However, fragrance research has shown that **smell is critically important on the effects on the brain.**

Several researchers have commented that if an individual preferred a fragrance then the effects were enhanced.

For example, look at the difference between a badly steam distilled organically grown lavender oil, and a beautifully fragrant 'like the plant' commercial oil or absolute. I know which I would prefer for a massage, certainly not a caramelized poorly distilled smelly oil.

You say that 'what we know about the effects of essential oils is from the use of distilled oils'. Well yes, but only following their internal use, or as medicinal agents externally. On the other hand, effects on the brain have been widely monitored and confirmed whether what was used was a real essential oil, or a synthetic floral fragrance.

You may think that extracting the aromatic principles in plants by micro pipette is not relevant. However, it is exactly that fragrance which you smell in a beautiful garden, in the wild, in a pine forest, etc., **not** the chemically unnatural essential oil.

The Russians in particular have undertaken several studies on the volatile compounds found in forest air. These are not the same as occurs in the steam distilled oil, and in my opinion these substances do have valuable pharmacological properties when we inhale them.

Time perhaps for aromatherapists to get back to thinking and learning about natural aromatic plants, and not unnatural essential oils!! Awaiting the howls of horror-"essential oils not natural, how dare he"

Martin

Wed, 26 Aug 1998 To: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Scalp dermatitis

The person who has this problem should immediately stop washing their hair for a couple of months. Yes, I am serious, unless someone is working in a particularly dirty environment then there is no need to wash the hair as often as most people do. It is the continued application of powerful detergents containing numerous chemical fragrances that cause most of the scalp problems so many complain of.

Many have been brainwashed by advertisements over the last 40 years to thinking hair should be washed frequently, (many do it every day). Then when you get problems these companies can sell you another product to 'cure' dandruff.

Lastly, a tea made from nettles is an excellent conditioner for the scalp. Easily available to most people, costs nothing except a little time preparing it. Chuck in a few sage leaves and a few dried rosemary leaves and that will improve the scalp better than anything else you can buy.

Martin

October 1998 aromatherapy-at-idma.com

re standards (wtallman)

Firstly I would like to say how delightful I find the mails from wtallman, here we have a deep thinker

who is making a valuable contribution to this group. Long may he continue.

wtallman said: "It makes no difference at all if the teacher doesn't know that the material is unfounded and baseless, because ignorance is construed as incompetence, and rightfully so, I think".

Oh yes well said, and I would accuse a big proportion of aromatherapy course providers of gross incompetence and a number of fraud as well.

The problem of aromatherapy teachers keeping up with research is a hard nut to crack. So many of the 'old school' teachers are just so arrogant, they have built their reputations on marketing hype rather than on sound knowledge. "Oh yes my dear I trained in France under French doctors and they taught me all I need to know". Or "I trained in England at such and such school and they are the real experts in aromatherapy".

These people really do think they know it all, and to let it be seen that they themselves are taking advanced training with real experts such as at the Purdue course, is something they simply could not tolerate. **This trade has evolved from a background of ignorance**, promoted by some pretty dishonest characters in the essential oils trade. These people do not want the truth coming out via a close examination of standards of any kind.

In other cases, certain individuals have made a small fortune over the years by selling people phoney or sub standard goods and services and this continues unabated. Certainly they do not want a close assessment of their business activities. That will prove to the world that all the b.s they have given out about 'holism' and such pretty poetic hype, has been just to make them money.

As long as such people are in control of the major trade organizations, how can the trade ever be expected to get its act together and develop into a respected form of complementary medicine?

Certainly there are a few people in this trade that desperately want to improve everything about it. However, I know the proportion of such people are infinitesimal, when compared to those that just want a nice easy part time job, selling smellies, and doing the odd massage. Anything that comes along to upset their cozy little fantasy world is most unwelcome.

Sorry if this all sounds doom and gloom, but I really do not see any movement within aromatherapy to try and make it into a respectable business. In my opinion all the talk of 'higher standards' will end up with the honest people chasing their tails round, while the rest carry on regardless with their money making rackets. All done to get a good public image, but in fact a smokescreen.

I for one cannot co-operate with trade organizations until they bite the bullet and do a root and branch examination of the practices of their members, the fundamental knowledge base of the trade and make such examinations public. Some hopes!!

Martin Watt

Sun, 22 Nov 1998 TO: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Re despair and despondency

To those that feel this after reading my articles.

Do not despair about the effects of essential oils. They can be wonderful healing agents in a number of ways.

Do not despair and think aromatherapy does not work, it does, but not necessarily in the ways you have been taught, or for the conditions you are told it will help.

Do not despair and think you can't help friends, family and clients by utilizing aromatherapy. You can, and they will be enormously grateful.

The despair comes in with:

Aromatherapy book publishers who don't give a damn if what they publish is accurate as long as they are making big bucks. Believe me some aromatherapy books have made a small fortune for certain publishers and writers.

The trades associations who cannot get to grips with quality control on what teachers are telling students. This is because most of their leading teachers have not a clue themselves.

The aromatherapy journal publishers who prefer to print the pretty poetic articles, because they know that is what most of their readers want.

The teachers who just read aromatherapy books and regurgitate their contents without a second thought.

The well-known figures who take snippets of sound science, and weave a whole load of inaccurate pseudo-science around it to make themselves look knowledgeable.

So how can a student sort the wheat from the chaff?

See if an aromatherapy book contains references to scientific articles and books, or just to other aromatherapy books.

Purchase sound referenced safety information, never ever accept such information from unreferenced aromatherapy sources. I do get very irate with the numbers of people on this list who ask safety questions that should be properly answered, if only they took the bother to purchase one of the 2 or so publications on the subject.

Do your best to check-out references for yourself. Major libraries can obtain copies of research articles. Yes of course this costs money, but if you are involved in a profession that is dealing with health care issues, you owe it to your clients and yourself to make sure that what you do is safe and effective.

Stop being lazy and think you can learn all you need to know from taking a few weekends classes and reading a few books, you can't. The study of essential oils is a lifetimes learning. I will never stop learning myself about this vast subject. I have never taken an aromatherapy course, only massage. OK I trained as a herbalist which equipped me with a basic knowledge. However, I found out most I know about aromatherapy by ferreting it out from all kinds of places. No reason others can't do this if they have a reasonable level of intelligence. And yes I do share my knowledge with others via IATA, but I will not under any circumstances share everything I have got via the current aromatherapy set-up.

Ask your teachers pertinent questions. If they can't give you an answer and particularly if they try to demean you, then think twice about if you wish to waste more money on their classes.

Ask the trade associations what they intend to do about quality control of aromatherapy education.

Get angry if you find out the wool has been pulled over your eyes. Don't just give up and put it behind you. Get evidence if you think you have been lied to and cheated. Only by gathering **evidence** can you have any hope of turning this trade around from its long history of dishonesty. I can only get away with saying what I do because I have been assembling evidence for years and they know it!

I hope that helps the despondency a little.

Martin Watt. UK.

Jan. 1999 Group unknown

Subject: What is Aromatherapy

Re Nervous Breakthroughs-dilutions

Right lets try a little clarification.

First off one has to consider what the term aroma-therapy means. To me what it means is quiet clear:- the therapy of aroma. Now how individual therapists undertake a hugely divergent spectrum of treatments using essential oils is another issue. People are inventing names all the time for different types of aroma-therapy.

As I have said before in my articles on 'how aromatherapy works' (on my website and AGORA), the healing actions of a good aromatherapy-type treatment are not due to one thing or another, they are generally a combination of different types of treatments all rolled into a wonderful package.

Lets have a look at some aspects of that package:

1. The aroma-therapy, i.e. the use of fragrant plant extracts. The evidence is these do produce effects on the olfactory system and the brain and thereby the psychology and physiology. To do that they need not come into direct skin contact. I have a wonderful report from Dr Cho. a psychiatrist in Korea who used just inhalation of essential oils on patients with chronic anxiety and got better results than any drugs in his armory.
2. Fragrant plant extracts applied to the skin with massage. Here the benefits can be produced by the inhalation of the aroma, or if enough essential oil is used, a direct physical effect can be produced by dilating superficial skin capillaries. That in turn is proven to heat underlying muscles.
3. Skin absorption; when I started looking into this years ago I was completely open minded on the subject. Now I am totally convinced it is not correct for the average treatment using maybe 1-5% of essential oil. One thing that is heavily weighing against it is the fact that aromatherapists have been using adulterated oils for years yet still reporting good results, why?
4. Massage: Tons of sound research results on how that can affect the body, both physiological and

psychological. Many of the reported effects of essential oils are in fact due to the massage alone.

5. Energetic-yes I said it! As some on this list know **I consider energies in essential oils the biggest load of nonsense going**, but I certainly do not dismiss an energetic reaction between the therapist and the client. However, what is important is to acknowledge that the numerous tools that natural therapy practitioners utilize are almost immaterial, it is not the tools they use, it is their own natural healing powers that are important. This ability is frequently completely ignored in aromatherapy. I know at least two people on this list who are born healers but not sure if they are aware of it themselves. Many others try and give the impression they are healers, but this is mainly marketing b-s.

One major problem with aromatherapy is that people seem to have this very deep need for belief systems. They are brainwashed into a set of beliefs by the teachers and the rubbish literature on the subject. When someone comes along and challenges those belief systems it is equivalent to saying there are no Gods and their brains shut down.

I do not follow ANY belief systems, that may be why I am more interested in looking for facts. Notwithstanding that, I do acknowledge the superb healers that many true traditional practitioners are, particularly the true Sharmanistic healers (**not** those who have done a couple of weekend courses)! These people know more about the healing or killing power of the mind than any psychologist or most modern complementary medicine therapists. They often use some kind of aroma to **assist** their activities.

Can you give an aromatherapy treatment without touching a client-of course you can.

Can you give a good all round physical and psychological workout without using massage-no you can't.

Can you get profound psychological changes without touching a client, but maybe with diffusing oils, or incense-yes of course you can.

Can you heal a leg ulcer using **minute** amounts of essential oil-probably not although one must never dismiss the placebo effect.

Can you get an aromatherapy treatment using Martins chocolate formula-you betcha! ([next below](#)).

Does that add clarification or more confusion, I do hope the former. If not sniff some rosemary and read it again.

Martin Watt, UK

Martins chocolate formula

Date unknown

To IDMA

Re immune system stimulation

Some may find the following formula useful for stimulating the immune system, in fact it may work better than most other aromatherapy treatments for immune dysfunction.

Take about 300 grams of good quality (organic) plain bar chocolate.
Melt slowly over a bain marie or steamer.
For those with dry skin add a few lumps of pure cocoa butter.

When completely liquid, allow to cool until about 80 degrees F.
Add two teaspoons of an orange liqueur or Southern Comfort. Blend in well until most of the alcohol has gone. Then add a teaspoon of previously filtered coffee made from pure organic beans of course!

Immediately before using the blend add two drops of Turkish rose oil.

Use this blend while still warm and do a full body massage.

I have checked for potential adverse effects on the skin of coffee and cocoa and in Mitchell & Rock few adverse effects are reported. Of course you don't do this on someone known to be allergic to any of the ingredients.

Finally, if used on a partner, lick the chocolate off, or have a double shower to remove it. **I will guarantee a night to remember and the immune system effects will last a week or more :)**

Wow the fragrance-Now THAT'S what I call Aromatherapy.

Applications for clinical trials welcome.

International Patents applied for.

Martin Watt

06/11/2000

“As anyone that has taken my classes can vouch, I always do my best to allow free exchange of opinions”. Martin

Hi Martin & Listmates:

Yes, I must say Martin, your reputation did precede you and when Mynou said you were giving a Class on Safety.. I was excited and apprehensive. That was about 3 yrs ago I believe.

But then I thought .. hell.. he can't be all that bad.. after all, I did work in Prison for 20 yrs.. how big and bad could a Martin Watt be..

All this to say.. I found you have a wonderful sense of humor (in that British sorta way) and though I went there with certain 'notions' in my brain, you patiently explained the 'myths' that have been perpetuated in the AT books.

I also heard the frustration in your soul.. It is not 'popular' to go against the majority. And yes, you may be a 'big bear' of a man. But I honestly feel, that class I took with you... changed my whole perception of AT and the courses being taught out there.

You made me 'think'.. you made me start to question and look for documented research.. And if I recall, I did 'attempt' to argue with you. Yet, you patiently explained and after the shock of learning that some of the information I had learned was not valid.. I had to take a step back. Regroup.. and move forward.

I know that some instructors have asked you to review their courses .. and that they had to change some the information they had. I think that ... with all the new information coming out.. that it is only natural for courses to be updated ..

Lest we forget.. this is still a new arena ... with many different aspects of utilizing e/o's. And though you do not always take a popular position Martin.. and maybe you do not 'sugar coat' the way you present things... but.. at least you give us 'food for thought'..

Aromatically,
Rosanne Tartaro

Hey Rosanne,

As for the comments made on Martin not taking time to talk with folks at the IATA Conference, I can say that's incorrect. There was little time for any of the speakers to talk to anyone and the fact that we were billeted in a hotel across town from almost all of the attendees was another problem.

But even at nights, those few who stayed in our hotel could find him and Rob Pappas and Susan Renkel and Arthur Phillips and Butch Owen and the other speakers in the dining room or in the bar - and they did!

The schedule of the conference was tight - in fact, often there were activities ongoing at the same time and folks had to decide which one to attend. During breaks, folks ran for a smoke or coffee or the toilet or whatever but the speakers were always there and I saw each of them, me included, being swamped with folks after every presentation. The fact that one didn't want to spend a lot of time involved in peeing contests became evident to me quickly when I was approached by one of the Young Living followers who wanted to shower me with bovine excrement about what MR. Gary Young had to say about this or that.

As for Martin's taking on the establishment - he has elected to follow a path that many others don't follow. But he doesn't sell EOs so he has more of a reason to tell it like he thinks it is than some others might have. Of course Martin is not perfect so he can't always be right but he does provide references for what he says - some folks will argue about those references but in this cottage industry, there are few universal truths - we just have to go with what we think is right now and as for me, I'll take referenced data before I will tales of who knows who who did this.

As for safety, there's no question about his concern in that area - some think he is overly cautious but in my opinion, that's to his advantage because you can take what he says when he says something is safe and not worry about it too much. Also, Martin is a trained Medical Herbalist - he has a wider background in alternative healing than do most of the folks who practice AT.

From Butch Owen:

I know of a good many instructors who have had Martin review their courses so I guess they felt his knowledge was valuable. I know that Professor Baser here in Turkey believes that Martin is extremely

knowledgeable - but I could provide a laundry list of folks he thinks are full of crap - he is informed of the happenings in the American AT community - I ensure that he is ... ;-)

He doesn't sugar coat much - sometimes he comes across as a Grade A S.O.B but he's really not. Actually, he's mild compared to the real Butch. I'm just nice so I can sell my oils to you folks ... ;-)

We have a saying in Turkey that makes lots of sense. To really know someone, you have to either travel, drink or gamble with them. I've traveled and drank with Martin and we took a few gambles on some of the mountain roads we traveled so I guess I know him pretty well - and it's my opinion that he's a helluva nice feller.

It's not easy to be liked by everyone when you're more concerned with telling it like you think it is rather than how folks want to hear it -you don't gotta be right all the time but as long as you're consistent that's fine with me because I also don't give a damn about being liked by everyone. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Butch

Sun, 22 Apr 2001

Subject: Martin Watt..Reply to Shivani's post

This is an extremely vague statement; without knowing what kind of volume she is talking about, and frequency of use, it is meaningless. To suggest that because she has no problem doing this that it is therefore fine for the majority of people is really misleading. I know a couple of people who have used cinnamon bark oil on their skin with no problem, yet statistics tell us that it is a severe sensitizer and it kills skin cells as good as acid.

I stick to my statement that ***anything* designed to kill bacteria is also likely to kill skin cells whether it be natural or synthetic.** Of course volume and length of use are very important, particularly when the substance is used in cosmetics. There are no long term studies in the public domain on the effects of the preservatives used in cosmetics with consistent use over say a 10 year period. If it be natural or synthetic in this case is not relevant. Most natural preservatives such as benzoin were abandoned long ago by the cosmetics trades because of hazards associated with their use. On the other hand, some of the newer colloidal metals preparations seem to be very good and safe preservatives because they only need to be used at the minutest levels.

Perhaps people should consider why it is, that increasingly, women in their middle to late 20s seem to be developing noticeable wrinkling around their eyes. Could it be the damaging effects of wearing cosmetics for maybe 10 years plus? I am mighty suspicious.

Martin Watt, UK

Date early 2002.

Re the aim of this group - a proposal for a new trade group in the USA.

For those that don't know me, my attitude to aromatherapy trade associations is made clear in my web site articles. I see most of them as being only interested in selling more products and services while

protecting their members backs. I do not want you wasting efforts on forming yet another group that will have no influence on the rest of the trade.

I see a danger in this group of it becoming similar to UK trade associations who in reality have very little influence on anything. Let me tell you a bit about their history as I hope this may help you consider what your objectives are:

Around 15 years ago, a small group of aromatherapy traders set up the old EOTA. I was involved with that group for a short time and I know how things have developed over the years. This group had all kinds of objectives and held regular meetings. However, what did they achieve next to nothing, they could not even agree on basic oils safety guidelines. They also could not agree on an oil quality monitoring system.

The next group (formed from some of the old EOTA members) was the ATC. Other members of the old EOTA joined NORA (UK).

Then the original EOTA was resurrected by Mike Van Moppes who produced many challenging articles published in The Aromatherapy Quarterly. I knew Mike and trusted his honesty and I knew members of the ATC who I deeply distrusted, so I did my bit to support the new EOTA.

The clever - but dishonest - publicity machine surrounding the AOC and ATC enabled it to become more influential. Despite all their claims to "influence Government", we now have far more restrictive and crippling laws controlling the sale and supply of essential oils than ever before. For example, in the UK, in theory, it is now illegal on a label or in suppliers literature to claim that an essential oil is good for "stress"! The laws now and in the near future may not prevent the sale of oils, but they totally inhibit what you can say they are good for. So I maintain these trade organizations have achieved nothing of any significance.

The ATC has not protected the public from the sale of phoney essential oils. Reason is despite the ATC having an analytical programme, all results are kept within the confines of the organisation. Last year one of their members was caught by one of our consumer organizations selling fake sandalwood oil. The result (I am told) is his company was refused renewal of membership by the ATC. So what difference has that made to his company - non. Have the public or therapists been told why membership was refused, of course not.

You have to be very careful indeed in not wasting your efforts setting up something that just will not work. The only thing that can police and improve any trade is if an organization is structured in such a way that any misdeeds by members are made public knowledge.

The only answer is a properly funded organization administered by professional managers independent of the trade. If you want a trade to have standards you can only achieve that if it can be seen publicly that you ostracize any criminal elements in it. To do that an organization needs to come up with sound documents such as the excellent one recently prepared on rain drop therapy. Not an easy task, but with the appropriate researchers it can be done. A small group of traders will end up the same as our EOTA-ATC-etc, and achieve nothing but hot air. That is my fear for this group.

A suggestion I have - that many of you will not like - is that you need to form a group which then allies itself with those trade interests who do have a political lobby and real influence. That is the large essential oil traders associations and the cosmetics trade bodies. The big boys in the trade have been

around long before aromatherapy was even thought about. These organizations are allied to the larger International flavor and fragrance organizations and they are the *only ones* who have any influence on European legislation. As the result all their members are kept fully informed with proposed legislation giving them at least a fighting chance to oppose and change it. You may think this will not affect you in the USA, but I suggest you need to watch your backs, the FDA are always hovering in the wings, they do not like natural therapies or therapists. If they can grab some legislation from Europe and use it against you they will.

Martin Watt, UK:

Feb 2002 To: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Replies to all and Marge

Firstly I would like to say there has been a lot of mis-interpretation of what I said about aroma-therapy. I never said that essential oils did not work via other pathways of course they do. What I said was that aroma-therapy was primarily relying on the effects of fragrance on the mind. If you want to talk about the use of oils on wounds, eczema, antibacterial, antifungal, relief of muscle pain, etc. I would question whether this is true aromatherapy, but rather something akin to herbal medicine or even dare I say conventional medicine. I would also question if most aromatherapists are well enough trained to treat some of these medical conditions. I have seen myself how seriously people can be affected by taking the advice of Aromatherapy authors.

Take the relief of muscle pain as an instance. Yes aromatherapy massage is superb for that. However to get sufficient oil penetrating the skin to have any effect on capillary circulation, you need to use far higher levels than used by most massage methods. Therefore one has to consider if the essential oils are doing anything other than working on the mind (very, very important), and is the pain being relieved primarily as the result of the massage. My bet is in this case it is the massage. I have always said (see previous articles) that aromatherapy is a package of measures, and a highly effective package for some ailments.

Marge said:

[“but it doesn't seem to me that refusal to use an EO because it has **not** had the full range of testing is unreasonable”.](#)

Marge, I am not into testing essential oils on humans without their express permission. I think this has been well discussed on this list previously. Many aromatherapists have simply assumed that the people who teach about these 'new' oils must know what they are talking about. I can assure you that they do not. Look at the origin of the information on chemotype oils and you will find it comes from 2-3 French teachers who I have absolutely no respect for.

How can anyone have respect for those that are allying themselves with the confidence trickster Gary Young. If that does not tell people the true nature of these teachers then nothing will.

As to the substances used in soaps and perfumes, I presume you mean the synthetic ingredients. In actual fact these synthetics have been very well tested. In soaps they are washed away so should not be a major problem. That is except for these home made soap people, many of which seem to be ignorant of all safety issues. In perfumes and cosmetics they are used at extremely low levels of use frequently 1000 times less than used by an aromatherapist. Therefore comparisons are false. The chances are

that verbena compounded perfume is far safer than the real oil. I would be cautious about verbena hydrosol, although it might be OK because the levels of sensitizing agents will be far lower than in the oil. Personally I do not advocate the use of hydrosols simply because they are **overpriced distillation waste products**, and need very effective preservative systems to prevent bacterial and fungal growth. Much cheaper and more effective to make a herbal tea and use that as a lotion.

Martin Watt

2005 probably to ATFE

An old letter I found that is just as relevant today (2005) as when it was written. Sorry but I have lost which journal it went to.

Some comments on the article "Hope for 1990".

I am a qualified Medical Herbalist but have refused for numerous reasons to join my "appropriate organization" the N.I.M.H.

Therapists only being allowed to practice if "registered" by these professional bodies annoys me greatly. Membership of these bodies provides no more protection to the public than does being an independent practitioner. Many people join these organizations for cheaper insurance; ability to fill their business cards with initials and for fear of not being a member.

The medical profession and its organizations are a prime example of what these organizations are really about, i.e. protecting their members not the public.

"Ethical codes provide protection" - utter rubbish! What about the numerous cases of medical incompetence covered up by that profession and how difficult they make it to get compensation for their members negligence?

Who does the torturing in third world countries?

Who performs mandatory abortions in some countries?

Who allows people to get hooked on tranquillizers?

Who are involved in transplants of organs stolen or obtained from the poor overseas?

Who never or rarely report incompetence in their colleagues?

Who permits junior hospital doctors to work crazy hours endangering their patients?

Do you really need an answer? "Ethical codes and oath swearing protect the public", don't make me laugh!

What a nerve telling complementary medicine to get our house in order.

The proposals to limit calling oneself for example a 'Medical Herbalist' to only registered practitioners means that those who have trained, but choose not to join incompetent professional bodies, will be restricted in how they can work. For no good reason because these organizations rarely police what their members are doing anyway.

On the other hand, some therapists who have done a few weekends appallingly bad training in Colleges of further education, and then join their "appropriate body", are let loose on the public without a clue on medicine or much else.

The final point about professional bodies is that the money to run them has to come from membership contributions. The more people they can register, the more funds they get. Just take a look at the vast amount of funds wasted on hundreds of medical profession organizations. Many have overlapping functions, but no one ever dares suggest they amalgamate to save money. The Royal Colleges in the medical profession are the biggest waste of resources going.

Complementary therapists should stop pandering to the stupid threats produced by medical profession dominated Government departments and the media. Instead we should attack the long history of incompetence of these regulatory bodies which is far worse than any harm caused by any Complementary practitioners.

Jan 2005 To ATFE or Oils-Herbs

To reply to a couple of points made by Michel:

1. Anyone who uses untried and untested methods of administering health treatments IS a quack. I do not care if they are qualified as a doctor or not. In the USA you have plenty of doctors offering quack complementary medicine treatments. One such web site was on this group recently where all the advisory board were doctors, but the treatments were completely unverified. In the case of these claimed injections with essential oils I do not know of any verified research. If this work were valid medical research it would be published for certain, but it never is.

2. Michel said: "[Martin is in MHO a bit too severe towards France](#)".

OK, so lets make a list of some of the misleading information originating from France:

"The French produce the best essential oils".

Not true, the best lavender oil, roman chamomile oil and peppermint oil have **always** been produced in England and still are. I have historical data on that proving this statement if anyone wants it. The French producers have been adulterating their lavender oil since the year dot! That even applies to some of their farmers. I know someone who tried going to French law when he was ripped off by a farmer but the French justice system is loaded against foreigners suing their nationals.

The most reliable Rose oil or absolute comes from Turkey and Egypt, but you will find AT suppliers trying to fool you that their "Rose De Mai" oil comes from France. Yeah, imported from Turkey and reprocessed in a chemical plant in France!!

Can you trust French oil suppliers?

You can't even trust your own eyes in France. There are distilleries there where real lavender plants come in the front door and visitors see the distillation. However, in their back yard are the drums of ho leaf oil and the chemical that converts the linalool in ho oil into linalyl acetate, all so the genuine oil can be "stretched".

Do they not supply organic certified and wildcrafted oils?

Many French suppliers claim all of their oils are organically grown or wild crafted. Some even show aromatherapists the areas where they gather wild plants. What these therapists are not told is that the same producers also buy oils from normal commercial sources, particularly when they run out of their local supplies. Do they tell their customers they are selling standard commercial oils - do they heck!

Sales policy:

French suppliers will buy oils on which there is no safety, therapeutic or chemical data and resell them **only** to cottage industry aromatherapy suppliers who are so gullible they will buy anything coming from France!

That said, I would not wish it to be inferred that there are no genuine essential oil produced in France, as I know **there are**. The big problem is knowing who you can trust and that is a very big minefield.

Safety data:

As someone who has published that for years I have supplied my manual to several producers in France who had no idea such data existed. Rather surprising when many seem to think France was the home of essential oils used in therapy! I even have a copy of a letter from a French Pharmacist who teaches for one oil supplier there. In that letter he states "[there is no reason why Verbena oil cannot be used neat on the skin](#)". This letter was sent to an aromatherapist I know who queried what she was taught in one of their classes. This is evidence that the French aromatherapy world ignores all International accepted safety precautions. This is despite the big French fragrance houses having a great deal of specialists in the area of safety who have contributed to numerous good scientific studies. **The French aromatherapy scene has never kept up with what their own REAL essential oils experts know.**

French aromatherapy training:

It stinks, the training materials I have seen are just appalling, including that from a well-known doctor. That information goes back for years and indicates a complete lack of knowledge on safety issues. Those materials prove that the therapeutic effects were invented based on the chemical profile of phoney oils by those who had no knowledge of real essential oil chemistry. Much of that material can be found in Gary Young's early book which dates back years before the conference that Michel referred to. The French source book for Gary Young was not even fully written by the claimed author as Michel admitted years ago, the copy of that email to IDMA I still have.

Wrong chemistry:

The French are responsible for much of the dreadful chemistry taught in aromatherapy around the world. Much of that is wrong because those who invented it had no training in phytochemistry, also they had no knowledge of the larger International trade in essential oils and their real chemistry. One of those so-called 'experts' invented the ridiculous energies system that is still being taught in aromatherapy despite it having been discredited years ago.

Shady business practices:

Those who take therapists on conducted tours showing them oil-yielding plants being grown, but not telling them that is NOT what they will get when they go home.

Visits are arranged to called 'expert' French herbalist who learnt all they know from books, not from traditional uses or from proper training.

Those who sell essential oils to aromatherapists despite analysis proving that nothing is known about the oil.

Those who sell Ravensara grown in France!!!! Atlas cedar grown in France!!!, etc.

Those who set up websites providing clinical information which is illegal in France as in most of the rest of Europe, but of course the Americans don't know that do they!

Boy I better stop here although I do know a lot more. I am not anti French as such but what I am against is the sinister influence a **tiny** group of French con artists have had on aromatherapy around the world. Other countries have their fair share of con artists in aromatherapy, but much of their hype is traceable back to French sources.

Martin Watt

Miscellaneous issues

Date unknown To IDMA I think.

I can write fiction with the best of them! This was a sendup of those aromatherapy and similar authors who have made up the bs about energies in oils.

THE CHARACTEROLOGY OF COMMON FOODS

Menu:

Leg of lamb

Broccoli and new potatoes

Herbs-Rosemary, mint and marjoram.

Leg of lamb-This provides youth and vigor to men. By consuming this dish, the transference of the lambs youthful energies will ensure extremely fast regrowth of hair. It makes the consumer cling to mothers, but the only drawback is it makes them want to be suckling constantly. A sound sleep pattern is established with early rising and early to bed. The energy transfer also forces the consumer to adopt a healthy diet of grass and milk. Therefore the consumption of lamb is ideal for old people who will gain youthful vigor. However the consumer should be warned that due to the high growth rate of lambs, that the energy transfer to humans will mean they may have a healthy old age, but will die in about two years from over exertion.

Rosemary, mint, marjoram-The energy transferred from these herbs will have the effect of increasing blood flow to the brain. This improves intelligence and concentration and is particularly useful for those aromatherapists who don't possess a fully functioning brain. Rosemary has energies that provide for a long life, and is ideal for the lethargic or lazy character. Mint energies are good for those who are overactive and suffer stomach complaints as the result of stress. Marjoram energies are associated with the mystical East. They will take the consumer back to their past life as members of the priesthood in Ancient Egypt.

Broccoli -Energies from broccoli are common with those from the rest of the cabbage family. They increase body wind and so are good for those whose wind pulse is weak. Like lamb, these energies originate from fast energetic growth. Therefore they are good for stimulating lethargic or aged metabolism. The packed, luxuriant flower head is natures signature that the plant will promote healthy hair in the consumer.

Potatoes (new of course)-These energies are **most** potent. They represent the energy of spring and the need to promote new growth. Their consumption (or rubbing on the skin where the energies will be quickly absorbed), will help regenerate all the cells in the body. The plant takes its character from the Solanaceous family, fast invasive growth, with beautiful small flowers which freely give up their

energetic nectar. Therefore the energies are ideal for characters who give freely, but quickly become exhausted from others taking advantage of their generous nature. The energies of potatoes are ancient in origin and take the consumer back to their past lives as priests in the Mayan civilization. Thus the consumer of marjoram and potatoes unites the energies of the old and new world, bringing harmony and peace to the world.

NOTE: Beware of excessive intake of potatoes or their powerful energies will induce a state of trance. Once in that state, contact will be made with the Atlantians who genetically engineered this plant using knowledge left by our ancestors from the stars. They encoded all their knowledge into the DNA of potatoes hoping that when humans evolved into 'spiritual' beings, that we could all utilize their highly advanced knowledge.

Copyright Martin Watt.
Chaneller for the Libran constellation civilizations.

August 1998 to IDMA

Freedom of expression

Sorry this is a week late, but I started last weekend on replying and run out of time. Shanti's challenges were good ones that I needed to apply a lot of thought to.

Firstly as to you not liking a 'witch hunt'. I would not want that as I have one who works for me part time, they are honest people who care deeply about the Earth and will not knowingly cause harm to others. Now on the other hand, some of the people in aromatherapy use the Christian religion, and brainwash vulnerable people, **just in order to make cash**, several also promote practices which can and do bring harm to others. That I find morally repugnant, and will do everything within my power to destroy their reputations.

I am all for free expression and unhindered exchange of ideas and concepts. However, when peoples uneducated beliefs are likely to harm other people then I object. As I said in a recent NAHA letter, perhaps we should all be allowed access to plutonium so that we can 'choose' if we should make a nuclear bomb or not if you take "freedom" to its ultimate end.

Now getting back to aromatherapy; some of the people who have established certain types of treatment regimes, and who are who are held in high esteem by many people, simply **did not have any concept of what safety meant in relation to the use of essential oils when they first started to cash in and teach people**. This still remains the case among some teachers and essential oil suppliers to this day. For instance only last weekend a colleague told me they had received a letter from a French doctor (not one we know) stating that there was absolutely nothing wrong with using a 5 percent dilution of verbena oil on the skin. Yet, some of the testing which proved without a shadow of a doubt how dangerous this oil is, was done in France, and they also have representatives on the RIFM and other safety assessment committees. Obviously this individual just does not know, what they should know, before making such categorical statements that could harm people. I have also sold some of my data manuals to French distilleries. The reason being they needed accurate data to meet Government regulations. My point here is that the French **aromatherapy trade** did not have the first clue about Internationally recognized and accepted safety standards for essential oils.

["I again will say, whose criteria for adverse reactions."](#)

Well no one should need to ask that question if they are treating people with essential oils or selling them. Extremely sound and well documented safety guidelines have been widely available for well over 30 years. Organisations such as the W.H.O. F.D.A. E.E.C. R.I.F.M, I.F.R.A. all have conducted very extensive research and made recommendations on maximum usage levels based on sound science. Many National pharmacopoeias give recommendations on the dosage of essential oils given internally as medicines in particular the 1938 British Pharmacopoeia and the older US pharmacopoeias.

[“Are you giving them the opportunity to discuss their beliefs and application before their names are mentioned with implications that they are dishonest?”](#)

Over the years I have made many attempts to get articles printed by various journals challenging the teachings of the trades icons. Only rarely have I succeeded, this is because trade journals have a living to make, and they simply will not print material that challenges their readers deeply held beliefs. I know that certain essential oil traders have threatened journals with boycotts if they publish articles exposing trade malpractice. That is why I have had several articles published in Aromatic Thymes because Pam is a rare exception in publishing controversial material.

I can tell you that Bernie Hephrun publicly asked Dr Penoel at a conference in Sweden, to have a panel discussion on his recommending aromatherapists use essential oils internally. That request was simply ignored. Some of these people know they dare not take part in debates, because their knowledge base simply is not up to it.

If Gary Young would care to fly me to the States, I would be only too pleased in open forum to discuss with him, where he obtained his knowledge of essential oils and the methods of use that he advocates. What do you think the response would be!

On the other hand, I am happy to be challenged by anyone such as yourself as to my knowledge and beliefs on how essential oils should or should not be used. By the way, in reply to your question '[do I know everything about essential oils](#)' no, I most certainly do not and will never ever stop learning about them. However, one thing I do know is WHO the confidence tricksters in our trade are, and fortunately I now have enough documentary evidence to stand up in court if I am sued.

The fundamental problem with aromatherapy is that the vast majority of the authors and teachers in the old days had virtually no knowledge of, or training in, the medical or botanical sciences, they had no close connections with the essential oil trade or horticulture. Their background is primarily in the beauty therapy trade. Therefore, that trades baggage of hype has been imported into aromatherapy. Just look at the utter nonsense written about grapefruit oil being good for cellulite, classic beauty therapy hype.

I will never sit down to discuss things with people I know are out and out fraudsters. I tried it for a short time with some of the aromatherapy organizations, but as soon as I realized that when it came to challenging the icons in the trade that was not going to be an option, I soon resigned. This is one reason you will never see me at a normal aromatherapy conference. They revolve around frauds and quacks.

Hey, no I don't put you in the old boy/girl network because I do not know of your allegiances (if any). I am happy to be challenged, I love it. You see I am a thinker, not a sheep. I make my judgments on people by what they write and teach, nothing else. All I can say with you by what you write, is you give the appearance of wanting to defend people and practices that are difficult to defend. Clearly you know how packed aromatherapy is with misleading and wrong information, so why try to defend these

people? If these people will not respond in an articulate and reasoned manner to their practices being challenged, which clearly is the case, then I will expose those people publicly if I can.

On your question on statistics of adverse reactions. Yes a rate of 1 or 2 per thousand is significant. A cosmetic manufacturer would not put a product with that kind of reaction rate on the shelves. So why should aromatherapy be any different?

Thank you for your message of me exerting balance and caution, I really do appreciate these thoughts. However the time for this has long gone, I care deeply about the future of aromatherapy. It should be a respected medically orientated healing therapy, but it cannot achieve this until the charlatans are driven out of the trade. It is just so sad that we are burdened with so many of them, some worse than others. I despise these people, I am not prepared to work with such criminals and yes some are criminals. As far as I am concerned anyone that sells you people an adulterated essential oil is a criminal and should be treated as such. Anyone that advocates a treatment that could harm others is a criminal in my eyes.

Oh just a last point, I am not the **only** one fighting the con artists, there are others, some are not on this list, although I hope to be posting some of their work here. There are very few though who are prepared to stand and fight these people in our midst. As I explained to someone the other day, I am 54 this September, so death threats are meaningless to me. I would be delighted to go down fighting. **yes**, such threats are not unknown in this trade. Does that not tell you the type of people we have to deal with!!

Martin Watt

Tue, 17 Nov 1998 TO: aromatherapy-AT-idma.com

Re natural progesterone

Firstly that message looks like an advert for Y.L. to me.

There is no such thing as a source of human hormones in plants. There are compounds that are hormone-like, but these have to be converted by the body and no one knows for sure if that occurs even by internal ingestion.

Certainly some herbs taken internally are recognized by herbalists as having hormone regulating properties, but if that is due to pharmacologically active substances, or if it is due to the particularly plants being excellent sources of vital nutrients is still unclear. For example, evening primrose oil is simply a source of the fatty acids that certain people cannot efficiently make themselves.

I have not found a single published and reviewed clinical study supporting the claimed effects of these plant based progesterone creams. If there is any I would love to know the references. All I have come across is a load of scam merchants making every claim in the book with no evidence in support.

Here in Europe it is illegal to sell these creams (with medicinal claims) without a full drugs license. So instead, women are wasting a fortune ordering it from off-shore locations. The merchants are of course rubbing their hands in glee.

I am sure many women will say this stuff seems to help them, the answer to that is 'placebo' if you think it does you good then it will. The more people pay, the better they think it is.

For those that want effective treatments caused by hormonal dysfunction, go and find a good qualified herbalist or genuine native healer. There are a handful in the USA.

Martin Watt. UK. Qualified Medical Herbalist

Aug 2000 Group sent to unknown.

Latin names for essential oils.

I have stayed out of this discussion because I know next to nothing about Agarwood, but when I saw Patrick's delightful post I just had to back up what he said.

Bravo Patrick, how delightful for someone else to come on this list and tell people that Latin names applied to such traditionally gathered materials are hogwash.

What you said about Agarwood is mirrored exactly with Frankincense and Myrrh. When I wrote the small book with Wanda Sellar it drove me nuts trying to get to some kind of accuracy on their botanical names. After going into the subject in the greatest depth, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible to apply accurate botanical names to essential oils gathered from many wild grown species.

Patrick said "[We westerners are obsessed with classification](#)".

Yes, but I believe many teachers and authors in aromatherapy are obsessed with it because they are lacking in sound knowledge on the oils themselves. Inaccurate classification systems are forced on students as a smokescreen to hide their teachers lack of fundamental knowledge.

In a traditional society the knowledge of how to use plants and which ones to use is carefully learnt and monitored by the teachers. This is because in such societies training takes years before someone is recognized as a medicine person or whatever. In our modern societies people just want to learn everything they think they need to know over a few weekends courses, then they call themselves Shaman/women, energy healers, crystal healers, raki masters, 'herbalists', aromatherapists, etc.

Analysts can give superb information on the composition of oils. Over a long period of time they have built up good data enabling them to pinpoint geographical origins. However routine analysis cannot give you an exact botanical name. You only have to look at the pedantic names for citrus family oils in aromatherapy. There are hundreds of varieties and sub varieties of citrus trees, let alone the fact that most commercial ones are grafts. If you have one variety as the root and another as the head what the heck is the botanical name for any products (oil) yielded?

So do not be fooled by those who post great lists of botanical identities for a material. Yes these are important to science, but ask yourself if they are relevant to the subject under discussion.

[Footnote 2015](#). Most aromatherapy schools still insist that their students learn the Latin names for essential oils despite them often being wrong or misleading.

Martin Watt

Date Sept 2000 Group sent to lost

Re herbs and health-radiation

As a herbalist, I would rather use a herb tea that has been zapped with radiation any day, rather than the older method (still used) of pumping nasty poisonous gases through the herbs. These gases are known to leave residues, all those people that think they are drinking nice 'natural' herbal teas, or eating imported nuts, fruits, etc. haven't got a clue!

Many countries insist (quiet rightly) that imported agricultural goods are gassed or irradiated to prevent the spread of pests and diseases. Of course the sellers of health foods are not going to tell the public that are they?

I have seen test results on irradiated herb teas and the results look impressive. Reduction of bug count, but no loss of quality. Indeed if you 'cook' the bugs you will get less contamination of the herb. It stops them eating the herb and the result is a better quality.

Of course all this will not convince those that live on another plain and talk about 'energies' in DEAD plants! Best thing with them is to tell them to grow their own, then they can cook the bugs themselves when they make a herb tea. Goodness knows how killing all them creatures affects the energies in the tea!

Martin Watt

Date early 2001 Group sent to lost

Animal aromatherapy

I just took a look at that animal web site and what I saw did not surprise me one bit. These animal aromatherapy courses are booming both in the UK and the USA. Most of their material hails from extremely dubious origins and is worse than human aromatherapy in that respect. The authors of the books on the subject will frequently be found to have had absolutely no training in any of the animal related sciences. They are aromatherapists who started dabbling in the subject, write a book, run courses and overnight have turned into gurus.

They make fundamental blunders such as saying that "[because a horse is attracted to a smell that indicates the fragrance is what they need](#)". This is hogwash. A horse will happily chomp away on ragweed until it dies as will most other 4 legged creatures. They will also happily consume peppermint sweets (candies) because they love the taste the same as humans. Does that mean if they, or we, sniff peppermint oil that this must be what they need-of course not.

The aromatherapists from this school of thought also use essential oils on which there is not a hint of safety data and on which there is a good deal of oil trade suspicion about their authenticity. Seaweed absolute is about the best example. Several analysts have told me they have never seen a genuine sample of this material. **The therapeutic claims are invented based on the herbal and food use of seaweeds.** The claimed effects on animals are never published in veterinary publications, nor as far as I know are they consistently documented or appraised.

I was at a lecture on animal aromatherapy last year given on the same day as my talk on rose. I just could not believe the garbage these people were talking. Perhaps the best example was they suggested smearing benzoin oil on a dogs paws to help prevent hormonal hair loss!! They clearly had not the first clue on the dangers of benzoin, nor that what they were using was probably 50+% synthetic solvents.

The medicinal claims on this particular web site would be illegal in the UK for humans. If such claims are for animals I am not certain, but suspect they may be because Veterinary law in the UK is very strong.

I am certain many of these animal aromatherapists are good caring healers, but their lack of real knowledge on what they use and how is mind boggling. However they also have this dreadful attitude that their teachers are such holistic gurus they are not to be questioned.

Martin Watt, UK

Re Equine Aromatherapy-reply to Catherine

I don't know where Catherine gets the idea that people on this list are not aware of the extent of equine aromatherapy. Certainly in the UK many people are aware of it and some are concerned about the way it is mushrooming with few sound controls.

Personally I do not doubt that some essentials oils can be very useful to treat some horses and other animals ailments. For example, I am reasonably happy for oils to be used as inhalants for horses lung problems; some oils for wounds will work very well used appropriately and of course inhalation for calming them. I certainly am not happy with several of the other treatments advocated such as using neat citronella oil on horses to deter flies, or benzoin on a dogs paws to ["detoxify its liver"!!](#)

The problem is that most equine aromatherapists start off as ordinary aromatherapists. Some of us know that a lot of aromatherapy qualifications are a sick joke. Many courses to this day do not give their students a sound grounding in safety issues, so this means blunders can occur using oils that should never be used on animals. My comments on benzoin the other day being a good example. The therapists concerned simply did not know the hazards associated with this material, doubtless because they did basic training on one of the many junk courses around.

I do not agree that equine aromatherapy is anything like a profession as its advocates claim. A profession would be monitoring what its members do, how effective they were, safety standards, etc. I am not aware of this happening in any concerted manner with animal aromatherapy.

To make matters worse, I know that one of the leading teachers in the UK acts like a little child when someone comes along and challenges her knowledge base. A colleague of mine who is a skilled analyst and oil supplier got very irate letters when he challenged this stupid concept that ["if a horse liked a smell that the oil must be good for them"](#). This same teacher has been taught all about the chemistry of oils by one of the biggest con artists in the aromatherapy oils trade. I wonder why it is that some of the most expensive perfumery materials around like violet leaf abs. seem to have been introduced to equine aromatherapy - **think about that!**

This same teacher was warned some years ago that she was dealing with a confidence trickster, but she chose to ignore this sound advice given in good faith by a person I know who had sound evidence.

So Catherine I think some of us are pretty wise as to what is going on in this new therapy

As with ordinary aromatherapy you completely fail to take into account the placebo effect, or that the therapist is more important than the materials they use. At a demonstration I saw, the person doing the treatment had all the attributes of a healer, it mattered not if she had used essential oils or water.

As to the Veterinary colleges, well they do not have the first clue about essential oils and are just as gullible to hype as most of the rest of this trade. As long as they are not aware of any problems and as long as the therapists works in collaboration with a vet they are reasonably happy here.

I do not know who does the training in other parts of the world, but if it is as riddled with hype and errors as in the UK I feel very sorry for the animals. I am sure many gain great benefit, but who is recording the failures and who is monitoring standards?

At least humans have a choice of not having treatment, but it seems that as long as an animal does not shy aware, the therapists just assume everything must be fine with their proposed treatment. Not so.

None of my comments apply to equine massage, only to aromatic extracts inappropriately used.

Martin Watt, UK

Tue, 17 Apr 2001 To: Newsgroups: alt.aromatherapy

Subject: Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

I'm hoping that you might be able to advise me on what essential oils to use for Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome please. Has anybody used aromatherapy to help with the symptoms?

PCOS is a hormonal imbalance which causes hair loss, body hair growth, irregular periods, infertility, bloatedness, fluid retention, weight gain, fatigue, poor skin.

Any professional advice on what to use for any of the above would be most appreciated.

Thank you very much

N.....

p.s. it is to help a friend

Wed, 18 Apr 2001 Re: PCOS

From: "phil.bat"

PCOS. Probably did you have same problem with your knees or spleen, for the spleen use red mandarin zeste 3 time /days, 3 drops at first use santalum album 4 drops/ 2 times/days and Ortemis mixta with chamomila nobile 2+2 drops /2times/days (used for collibassile, staphilo. aurum) after 1 weeks use satujera montana or hortensis and origanum compactum 2+2 drops / 2 times/days; you must always used these two essences with vegetal oil.

During 1 week during 2 months before to sleep, use Homeopath. product: PYRITE D8 trituration (Powder) sorry for my bad english.i'm french aromatherapist and other.

Date Apr 2001
Martins reply:

A friend has just forwarded me your message asking for help and the French therapists reply. I must strongly advise you NOT to listen to this advice, particularly as it looks like you are in the UK.

The main reason that most aromatherapists here are not allowed to use essential oils internally is because many are fake. At the moment you will be lucky to obtain genuine sandalwood oil, (see the recent Health Which report). In addition, this therapist mentions oils such as Ormenis mixta on which there is **no known safety data** for external use let alone internal. There is also absolutely no traditional use information on its medicinal properties. Most of what is known has been invented by two well known French confidence tricksters.

Finally, as it is illegal in France for anyone other than a registered doctor to use aromatherapy in this way, I wonder about the qualifications and methods of working of this individual.

Beware you are into VERY murky waters.

Regards Martin Watt, UK

Date Aug. 2001 Group sent to unknown.

Subject: Reflex therapy

Reflex therapy is complex with lots of theories but here is a potted history/explanation.

1. The skin is divided into what are known as dermatomes. You may already know that, but briefly, a nerve or set of nerves tends to supply a relatively small patch of skin in strips about 2 inches wide. This is how the medics check for nerve route damage by pricking the skin and seeing if sensation is lost.

Because the nerves supplying the skin arise from the same nerve root in the spine that also supplies the internal organs, the theory is that if you stimulate the skin you can indirectly stimulate the internal organ associated with that area. It is hellishly complicated physiology/neurology, but based on the reflex arc theories. i.e. if you stimulate one area then by nerve reflex action you can stimulate another area. It's a bit like a baby sucking on a nipple and mom getting uterine contractions because of the nerve pathways.

2. Since very ancient times indeed, it has been believed that if you apply heat to a particular area, say for example over the liver, that you can stimulate the underlying organ as well as other areas. Many traditional societies have used hot herbal poultices to 'heal' what they think are organ problems. The Egyptians as well as the Chinese were masters of this kind of treatment. However the shaman in South America use it even now.

In my old Leechbook from the 1400s which contains recipes believed to originate from Greece and Egypt they have several such treatments. The best is as follows:

RECIPE 1063; **for migraine**; take a pint of vinegar, half a pint of mustard and an ounce of frankincense. Make a plaster thereof and lay it on the neck, and thou shalt be whole within 3-4 times if it be laid fairly hot.

Migraine is caused by vaso dilation followed by vaso constriction. So if you hit the circulation before the vaso constriction occurs, this formula would almost certainly work. You stimulate the blood flow with the mustard, and you calm the mind with the frankincense.

3. Anytime you stimulate blood flow in the skin you stimulate blood flow in the muscles beneath. That is a tested fact got a reference lurking somewhere if you need it.

4. Even acupuncturists use heating the needles to improve the action. As well as burning artemisia on the needles.

So to cut a very long story short, the methods that Kersher is recommending are working on this reflex system combination of increasing blood flow as well as the reflex actions on internal organs. The actual oils used are unlikely to be absorbed in sufficient volumes to do anything. It is the fragrance being breathed in that helps calm the mind and have indirect brain initiated effects. It's a bit like Dr Cho who found the actual fragrance he used was not that important. His patients got better from Chronic anxiety despite him using about a dozen different oils and blends thereof.

Martin

Feb 2002 Group sent to lost

Memory conditioning

Last night I saw a TV report on some experiments done on false memories. They showed that if someone sees a falsified photograph of themselves in a given situation, that this image can become imprinted on the memory and the individual really believes the situation did happen. Quiet amazing results from these trials and proving how easy it is to create false memories.

It occurred to me that this might be a useful therapeutic action that anyone could try to help clients.

My thoughts are running like this:

We all know how relaxing or stimulating music or some relaxation tapes can be while having a massage. It occurred to me that the following might be useful:

If you have a regular client and took a digital photo of them; enlarge that slightly and print out on a color printer. Fix that picture onto a wall poster of perhaps a tropical island, sea scene or some other pleasing image. Position that within the clients vision (perhaps on the wall at the top of the couch). Tell them to look at the picture for a short time while doing the back massage.

If someone was a highly anxious individual and they are given a blend of essential oils used during the massage. Then if they start feeling anxious and have a sniff of the blend, their mind may associate the imprinted memory of seeing themselves in a nice location with that smell and be instantly calmed. This effect works as it is with just a blend, but I wonder if it may work better as the result of some visual imagery.

I think this could be developed in many ways. Anyone have any other ideas?

Martin Watt

Feb 2002 TO: aromatherapy-at-idma.com

Re John Kersher and herbal medicine

John I am puzzled why you try to give us a history lesson on herbal medicine when it was Tony's own statement on this very issue that I was objecting to. He said:

[“..and will continue where people rely on, and live in harmony with their treasured plants. This doesn't seem to be the case in Europe any more,...”](#)

I object to that statement because like you I am well aware of the huge contribution to herbal medicine within the Eastern block as well as the rest of Europe. My point about America is that via HerbalGram they have made a concerted effort to gather together world wide research and promote it publicly. That has not occurred throughout Europe in anything like such a public manner. In the UK there is not even a good journal on the subject for the public. Yes I know much has been done in Germany, but most has been done by private companies who keep their findings to themselves for product development. As to Russia I have the greatest respect for their efforts, but regretfully little has been made available in English. Only last week I obtained a copy (in English) of research done in Leningrad in 1985 on headspace volatiles in forest air. A subject of the greatest relevance to aromatherapy.

[“Do you have a good knowledge of Phytochemistry and traditional medicine yourself Martin?”](#)
Enough to get by on; at least I was trained in the subject. Were you?

Personally I hate most chemistry because so many wrong suppositions are made based on it. It is poor quality chemistry which is leading to potentially devastating restrictions on essential oils via the EEC. Properly trained phytochemists yes I have a great deal of respect for. Unfortunately there are non of them in aromatherapy and only a few in herbal medicine.

[“If you carefully look through publication lists, you will notice that the best works on Essential oils from the USA date from about the beginning of the nineties.”](#)

Do you mean aromatherapy or essential oils? If the former then you know my opinion on most of the popular novels. If the later then where have you been looking? There are loads of research books and papers from the USA way before that date. Ever heard of the US pharmacopoeia 1890 which has over 30 essential oils listed?

[“And what to think of India where, when we still ran around in sheepskins”](#)

John, you really need to do some reading on Europes Ancient traditional medicine. Do you not know that the preserved body found in an Italian glacier carried tattoos on his skin in exactly the same points modern acupuncturist use to treat arthritis? The date eludes me for the moment but think it was around 6000 BC. However, it definitely pre dates known acupuncture in China. No single society can lay claim to being the founders or most significant promoters of herbal medicine.

[“Give credit where credit is due please...”](#)

Oh but I do; I think Theophrastus (300 BC) was a wonderful botanist/herbalist. I rate true sharmen and

women very highly indeed. Note I say "true" because there are many phoneys even among that group. I rate Jim Duke in the USA very highly indeed. I give credit when it is due, not just because someone writes a nice mass appeal novel packed with misinformation as some of the authors you talk about have.

Martin

Date and journal lost.

A phone interview for an aromatherapy journal several years ago - unpublished.

Reporter: Martin you have spent many years investigating scientific research related to essential oils and aromatherapy. I wonder if you can help us clear up some ideas which are commonly promoted by certain authors, but on which we can find no evidence.

Martin: Yes, I will tell you what I can, although the subject of essential oils is huge. I can't possibly know everything about them.

Reporter: Is it true as reported by some teachers, that essential oils can increase the oxygen going to the body's tissues?

Martin: That's a strange idea; I always thought it was the hemoglobin in our red blood cells that transports oxygen to the body's cells. I have never seen any research proving that essential oils can increase oxygen uptake of cells. The idea is ludicrous because the great enemy of essential oils is in fact oxygen. This is because oxygen tends to destroy the useful chemicals and change them into sensitizing substances.

Reporter: It is claimed by some writers that Dr. Valnet was the first to investigate the clinical uses of essential oils, is that true?

Martin: Certainly not, many essential oils were being used in the UK and the USA long before the turn of the century. Indeed the chief Physician of Guys hospital W. Hale-White wrote a book in 1901, which contained in-depth clinical references to many essential oils. They used essential oils internally for a variety of ailments and also used them externally, mainly for musculo skeletal problems.

Reporter: Is it true that essential oils are very good at killing viruses.

Martin: No this is not correct. Most research into the antimicrobial properties of essential oils has concentrated on their antibacterial and antifungal properties. Very little research has been done on their antiviral effects. A few trials have tested oils in vitro (in lab dishes) and found highly variable effects depending on the oil chosen. However, that work certainly cannot be assumed to have any relevance to their potential to kill viruses once they are in our body. A few trials have been done on the effects of some obscure essential oils given in capsules in massive amounts. However, this has little relevance to the use of these oils in aromatherapy. The vast majority of the reports quoted by aromatherapy authors, are in fact reports of tests conducted on the water-soluble part of the plants. Generally this has nothing whatsoever to do with the essential oil from that same plant. A lot of plants do have antiviral properties, but these are invariably due to the water-soluble portion of the chemicals, not the oil. Hence the use of herbal teas to treat many ailments. If essential oils were antiviral we would have had a cure for the common cold years ago.

Reporter: Have you ever come across any research that says a virus causes scoliosis, and that essential oils can cure it. The reason I ask is because Gary Young says in his book that the neat application of essential oils can cure the problem.

Martin: Well I find such a statement beyond belief. Scoliosis is caused by a misshapen vertebral column, often of congenital origin. Once the individual vertebrae are formed into an irregular shape, nothing short of surgery can correct them. The only other form of treatment that might help a little is osteopathy or chiropractic, but even that will not cure the problem. There is no evidence whatsoever that the condition is caused by a virus. Certainly there is no way that any essential oils have the ability to physically change the shape of bones. To suggest the use of neat essential oils applied down the spinal column flies in the face of all Internationally accepted safety information. To suggest this method of use **"burns the virus out of the body" is crazy quack medicine practiced by people who should be in jail for fraud**, and it also has the potential to cause severe skin damage.

Date and group lost.

"What would be the best aromatherapy books to add to ones collection?"

There are very few AT books that I have any respect for. Of those that I do, most of the books written by Daniel Ryman are pretty good.

A good basic starter is 'The Essential oils book' by Coleen Dodt.

I recommend Chrissie Wildwood 'Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Aromatherapy'.

Even in these though there are properties attributed to essential oils that are based on herbal medicines, but at least these authors tried to do the background research rather than just copying from others.

Gattefosse's Aromatherapy is an excellent historical work written in 1937 republished by C.W.Daniel and Co. ISBN. 0-85207-236-3. However, you need to be aware that he mostly used deterpenated oils not whole ones as many AT writers assume.

For those with this desperate need to live in a fantasy world they can buy any of the rest of this trades novels. In that respect people should stop and think why it is that the biggest selling books in the world are **novels or semi novels**. It is lovely to be able to escape reality by being told that if you rub a bit of lemon oil over your liver that it will cure your gallstones! Those people who write well researched technical books do it for the love of what they are writing about, not money. That applies to all good technical works of any kind.

The list below is for those who are prepared to pay for good information resources. Many more good technical works can be added to this list.

Martin

PERFUME AND FLAVOUR MATERIALS OF NATURAL ORIGIN by Steffen Arctander. Available from allured Press, USA.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF COMMON NATURAL INGREDIENTS. ISBN 0-471-50826-8

POTTER'S NEW CYCLOPAEDIA OF BOTANICAL DRUGS AND PREPARATIONS. ISBN 0-85207-1973

THE BRITISH PHARMACEUTICAL CODEX 1934, or old US PHARMACOPOEIAS.

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF HERBAL DRUGS vol. I & 2 by De Smet. ISBN 3-540-55800-4

TEXT BOOK OF PHARMACOLOGY & THERAPEUTICS 1901 by W. Hale-White M.D. F.R.C.P.

A MODERN HERBAL by Mrs M.Grieve. Various publishers.

CHINESE HERBAL REMEDIES 1984 by A. LEUNG.

THE ESSENTIAL OILS by E. GUENTHER. Publ. Van Nostrand. New York.

BOTANICAL DERMATOLOGY 1979 by Mitchell and Rook . (out of print)

ADVERSE REACTIONS TO COSMETICS by Anton de Groot. ISBN 90-900-2597-9

SCENTED FLORA OF THE WORLD by R. Genders, Publ. Mayflower.

STURTEVANT'S EDIBLE PLANTS OF THE WORLD 1919 republished 1972 by Dover.

THE CHEMISTRY OF ESSENTIAL OILS BY DAVID WILLIAMS. ISBN 1-870228-12-X

AROMATIC PLANTS AND ESSENTIAL CONSTITUENTS. ISBN 962-238-112-X

