

## Aromatherapy in 2014.

### Trade and professional organisations.

The above has got so big I have put it on its own page 'Professional organisations-a review'

[Essential oils & suppliers.](#) [UK legislation.](#)

Some of my articles on this site were first written years ago. In mid 2006 I reviewed all of them, but only had to tweak a few because so little has changed. Likewise this year, **2014**, the scam web sites proliferate, all claiming to sell the most wonderful genuine essential oils, yet many of the oils they sell are adulterated in one way or another. In recent years there has been a huge increase in web sites in the USA making outrageous, illegal and dangerous therapeutic use claims. The enforcement authorities do nothing despite being told.

This is mainly for the benefit of new people who are not familiar with my past efforts to expose the dishonesty in aromatherapy. Aromatherapists can be wonderful caring people, but are rarely backed by accurate education on the products they use.

**Aromatherapy web sites and blogs:** See 'Huge errors on aromatherapy type Blogs'

The Internet is great in many ways, but it is an open book for the scammers and cheats. **You MUST always remember that there is hardly any regulation of what people say on web sites and blogs.** Therefore, suppliers, teachers & therapists will say anything they like to ensnare gullible people. Never believe therapeutic claims made for essential oils or hydrosols unless the supplier can point you to referenced data. References to the popular books are mostly worthless but are used by many sites to cover their backs in case a claim is challenged; "well that's what xxx author says".

**In the UK**, if you see a site making medicinal claims these are illegal, and a good sign of an outfit that are deliberately ignoring the laws which older businesses have complied with for years. It can also be an indication of a supplier who knows nothing on the laws relating to what they sell.

**In the USA and Canada** the claims made on web sites are frequently preposterous and are made simply to sell oils. Most of their medicinal claims are taken straight from books on herbal medicine and are irrelevant to the external uses of the essential oils. There are laws relating to consumer safety under which essential oils fall, and on medicinal claims. However, the enforcement authorities have been lax in enforcing them. This has led to a culture of "we can say what we like, no one will prosecute us". Thus the consumer is sold all kinds of quack medicines by criminal con artists.

In Oct. **2010** I decided to do an Internet search on Juniper essential oil. The web sites continue to promote the sale of their oils **intended for external use**, but with therapeutics drawn from the respective herbs or oils as **internal medicines**. This grossly inaccurate aspect of aromatherapy never changes, mainly because it pushes oil sales. **To this day, most schools and web sites continue with their nonsense on the properties of essential oils, and most of their readers believe them.**

Below are examples from just four web sites, searched again in Nov. **2012**, but a search will find hundreds of others making similar outrageous and dangerous claims. This is not an attempt to discredit any particular site, but just to give examples of the dangerous and misleading information out there. **It also indicates businesses who do not know or care about what their products can do. 2014 update.** If you find the sites below have subsequently changed their claims, it means that originally they did not know or care about what they told their customers, so I am leaving this as an historical record.

**KEY:**

Black text = their claims

Brown text = my comments.

<http://www.essentialoils.co.za>: "It is helpful when the prostate gland is enlarged and is used to help with the inability to pass urine, in cases of cystitis and kidney stones."

This is dangerously misleading. Even if used as internal medicine it is doubtful and very dangerous.

"For the liver, it has a tonic effect"

No essential oil applied to the skin can have such an effect.

"Juniper oil generally helps with the digestive system, particularly in cases of obesity, overindulgence of food". What when applied to the skin??

-----

[http://www.ehow.com/way\\_5333615\\_uses-juniper-oil.html](http://www.ehow.com/way_5333615_uses-juniper-oil.html): "Those who suffer from kidney stones, bloating or high sodium levels benefit by using it. Ulcers may also be prevented through the use of juniper, since it regulates bile to reduce the effect of acid on the stomach lining. It also detoxifies the blood, which helps to remove additional toxins like pollutants and metals that find their way into the blood stream."

No essential oils can "detoxify the blood". As with the site above, we have this dangerous nonsense about kidney stones. This site's claims are typical of those that masquerade as genuine consumer information sources, but in reality all that matters to them is the advertising revenue.

-----

<http://beauty.indobase.com>: "Juniper oil is extremely beneficial in treating kidney stones. It aids in retaining the fluids in the body, thereby preventing the body from being dehydrated." Kidney stones once again!!

As to it retaining moisture in the body, that is abject nonsense. Given internally it has an irritating effect on the kidneys causing expulsion of urine, the opposite to their claims.

"Juniper essential oil can be used as an astringent. Hence it is used to cure toothaches and strengthens the gums too. Juniper oil can cause the blood to contract during emergency and prevents hemorrhages."

Crazy dangerous nonsense, do not believe any of this!!

-----

<http://100pureessentialoils.com>: "Juniper oil is used externally to cleanse the body, ridding it of excess fluids, and is helpful with kidney and bladder problems".

Same comments as above, total nonsense!

"Pure juniper berry oil is also listed as helpful in obesity and cellulite as it is known to remove toxins, is a diuretic, and has (physical) cleansing properties".

Nothing but sales hype. There is no evidence whatsoever that juniper oil is useful in obesity, or acts as a diuretic if used externally.

-----

**Is the information on such sites deliberately misleading?**

In many cases the answer is yes. Many are there just as sales outlets, not really to aid peoples health.

Is it because the site owners are not aware their claims are wrong?

Yes this can be the case, especially where the owners have taken the many lousy courses around, or had their minds controlled by companies such as Young Living and DoTerra.

**Why does no one tell them they are wrong?**

Mainly, because most of those who know better, are also traders and do not want to offer competitors good information. Also, because most trade associations do not monitor what their members do or say.

### **Should I inform regulatory authorities?**

Yes, but don't hold your breath that they will do anything, especially in the USA.

### **Are these errors you report not just one persons opinion?**

This is something my opponents will often hide behind. There are facts and there are opinions. I base reviews on facts that I can prove if challenged. However, after having these articles online for around 20 years I can count on the fingers of one hand the challenges made.

### **Legislation:**

Difficult to be precise here because this varies a lot around the world. Most countries do not have National approved standards for aromatherapy. For example, there is often legislation over massage, and increasingly a lot of legislation over the sale and supply of essential oils. Anyone interested in training needs to check out the laws in their own country. Anyone supplying essential oils in the EU in countries that comply with the community laws, is now burdened with a lot more legislative hurdles and need to be ultra cautious.

Sadly, numerous aromatherapy suppliers continue making unfounded and illegal medicinal claims to sell their oils, frequently because they have either no training in the subject, or have taken one of the many appalling quality courses. Never forget anyone can set up a flashy Internet site and start selling essential oils. Rarely are illegal operators prosecuted by the enforcement authorities. Even in the UK, with our old laws on medicinal claims, the MHRA agency of the Department of Health are not fit for purpose and can take a year to take action against rogue companies.

### **Essential oils & suppliers:**

I could write a book on the aromatherapy supplies trade as it has grown at a fantastic rate since the 1980s. What most therapists are not taught is that aromatherapy suppliers are tiny fish in an International trade in essential oils. Below is the structure and function of the traders as a guide. *See other articles for more.*

It first became a way to make a fast buck back in the 1970s. The small aromatherapy suppliers mainly bought their oils from large fragrance trade companies. Many of those sold blended and semi synthetic oils because their primary business was supplying the fragrance trades; aromatherapy suppliers were at that stage a nuisance but a way to boost sales. Sometimes the aromatherapy suppliers were told what they were buying, sometimes not. The aromatherapy suppliers were often business people, or therapists, who by and large had not the first clue about the REAL essential oils trades. They assumed what they bought was the real thing, or they did not care and told their customers their oils were 100% genuine.

The trade continues selling its adulterated oils as much as they ever did. The one big change is that many more traders are claiming to sell "organically grown" oils. These scams were being endorsed by the once respected UK Soil Association. Several aromatherapy suppliers have joined this organisation in order to fool their customers into thinking all their oils are "OG" and certified as such. **The Soil Association were proposing giving certification of organic production based on paperwork furnished by UK oil traders, or discredited overseas OG certifying bodies.** The Soil Association - like many other certificate issuing organisations in the field - seem to have been taken over by University educated clones who only want to deal with pieces of paper and "work with the trades". As to real monitoring of the scams of traders - forget it.

Beware of essential oils originating in far flung countries where "organic certification" is being offered. Do not believe a fraction of what essential oil suppliers will tell you on this issue. Most

aromatherapy traders do not have a clue on the true origin of their oils because they purchase most of their stock via middlemen who will lie through their teeth to make a sale. Many will claim to get ALL their oils direct from artisan producers. This is a lie, they may get some oils that way but certainly not all.

In the UK the ATC claim to represent suppliers but have only around 45 members. Last time I checked two years ago I found over 300 web sites in the UK alone selling essential oils. Admittedly some of those were buying oils from a few ATC members, but there are still many who buy from a plethora of other sources, many of which are highly suspect as far as quality is concerned. The ATC did enforce the medicines laws on its members which is a fine thing. Therefore, if you come across a site making medicinal claims, please report them to the MHRA- <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/>

UK organisations representing the trade in essential oils and herbs always opt for compromises instead of fighting attempts by the EEC to restrict our fundamental rights. These organisations never inform the public of what they are doing until everything is too late. Of course, if you fight the bureaucrats and tell them they are wrong, you do not get the cushy jobs, funding or Queens awards do you! In recent years the EU have produced a mountain of regulations which (for those who adhere to them) makes selling essential oils or natural cosmetics a nightmare of red tape.

In the UK most enforcement of laws is the job of the police or local Trading Standards departments. In both cases these organisations do not have the resources to go chasing rogue traders in aromatherapy, or enforcing the associated legislation on labelling, cosmetic ingredients, etc. I know that Trading Standards departments around the country have had essential oils analysed and found them to be fake, yet only a few magistrates court cases have occurred. The fraudulent sale of fake essential oils has never been addressed industry wide by UK authorities as it can be difficult to prove. The same applies in most other countries.

**Producers:** These are mainly large agricultural concerns producing essential oils by the ton. Some such as Turkish rose, are produced via small growers all feeding into a central processing factory who then sell in bulk. We do also have a number of small scale growers who sometimes do distillation. However, the vast bulk of the worlds essential oils originate from the big agricultural producers and not the tiny growers as many aromatherapy companies would have you believe.

**International dealers:** These large organisations deal mainly with the big producers. Some 'deal' in essential oils as commodities like coffee and tea and rarely involve themselves with handling the oil. These traders seldom involve themselves with aromatherapy suppliers as that is too small volume for them. They tend to supply the big essential oil users such as food and flavour trades and perfumers.

**Middlemen wholesalers:** There are a variety of different sized operations here. Some also do not deal with aromatherapy as it is too small, but instead they resupply the smaller wholesalers. It is frequently the middlemen who will modify the oils adding cheaper synthetics or fractions of cheaper oils in order to make a better profit.

**Aromatherapy suppliers:** Again a huge range in size of businesses ending up with many one person, kitchen sink operations. Incidentally, that is how most aromatherapy suppliers who are now big names started up. Often without any knowledge of what they were really selling.

Some aromatherapy suppliers will buy small volumes of oil direct from producers, but often those sales are only a tiny part of their total sales. The remainder come from middlemen wholesalers many of which cannot be trusted on quality issues. Some of these middlemen will tell aromatherapy suppliers anything to achieve a sale. Many (if not the majority) of aromatherapy suppliers, just regurgitate on their web sites what the oil trade con artists have told them, or regurgitate what they have read in aromatherapy novels.

Some aromatherapy suppliers will do their utmost to ensure they only sell genuine oils by having basic analysis done, and by dealing with a selection of small producers directly. The problem is

that essential oils adulteration further up the chain can now be so sophisticated that only expensive analysis by a trade expert can detect good fakes. That kind of cost is beyond the financial means of most aromatherapy suppliers. There are of course other aromatherapy suppliers who will buy the cheapest junk they can and resell it at the highest price they can get away with. It is very much a case of **buyer beware** and ask questions. When I was on the newsgroups I got so tired of those saying "I trust my supplier", yet I knew some of these suppliers were liars and worse.

**Beware of flashy web sites covered in logos of conservation and other organisations, all designed to fool the eye and deceive you.** A genuine supplier will answer questions on their oils except giving you the name of the producers or suppliers they buy from.

**The market is now flooded with semi-synthetic sandalwood oil** due to the shortage of the real thing. The aromatherapy trade is only a small part of the huge criminal trade in real Sandalwood oil, but I thought aromatherapists were supposed to be caring people??? There is a little oil from sources claimed to be sustainable but about which there are grave concerns. Also the variety of trees is different from what has been the major source in Mysore and so is the chemical profile. I still see numerous web sites claiming to be selling "Mysore sandalwood oil". Some claim to have stocked up on it some years ago - most are simply liars or misled by wholesalers.

**So take a look at what your supplier claims on the above issues.**

The conservation issues make me more sick of the hypocrisy in aromatherapy than anything else. Many of its leading figures try to give the impression they are lovely spiritual caring people. Yet what do they do - they condone the rape of the Worlds forests for their 'energetic' oils. It has been reported that Amazon jungle deforestation increased by 40% between 2001 and 2002 BBC world news report: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3024636.stm>

The above is despite the Millions wasted by conservation organisations. Most of the larger organisations and the EEC have become a bottomless pit for our money. They employ pen pushers who waste vast amounts of money on conferences, codes of conduct, meetings, etc. One thing they cannot to grips with is that the people in the countries where the wild plants are gathered often can't read their codes of conduct. The Governments in these same countries are run on corruption and vested trade interests. See a good article on this situation here: BBC world news report: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2193172.stm>

By Martin Watt. "Oh he is always so negative"- the common comment you will hear coming from the aromatherapy trade con artists, or those who have this mad idea that to criticise wrong doing is politically incorrect, or that everyone has a place in this trade.

[Back to top](#)

Source and copyright:  
<http://www.aromamedical.org>