



## HEALING ESSENTIALS AROMATHERAPY NEWSLETTER November 2012

### Issue #4 Featuring Cedar, Fir, Pine, and Spruce Essential Oils

[Healing Essentials News: Aromatherapy Presentation Saturday, 12/01/12.](#)  
Holiday gifts available. See Flyer

As the holiday season nears, we repeat an age old custom of bringing an evergreen tree into the house and in a moment the fragrance transports us to the forest. The aroma of pine, fir, and spruce bring back memories of past holidays and family gatherings. There are many beautiful essential oils from the Evergreen trees and I hope some of the information here will enhance your holidays.

Though many trees are considered evergreen that do not lose their leaves in winter, when we hear the word evergreen we think of stately pines and firs. The Evergreens: Cedar, Fir, Pine, Spruce, Juniper and Cypress are all Evergreen trees whose bark, needles, cones and sometimes resins produce wonderfully fragrant essential oils. When taking a close look at each of the evergreen essential oils, there is some confusion. Again, this is why knowing the botanical name is significant. These six oils actually belong to two different botanical families. Cedar, Fir, Pine, Spruce belong to the family Pineaceae (the needle trees). Juniper and Cypress belong to the family Cupressaceae. This article will focus on the family Pineaceae: Cedar, Fir, Pine, and Spruce essential oils.

Three hundred million years ago, these Evergreen essential oils as we know them today were already formed in the coniferous needle trees. The chemical constituents of these oils are primarily monoterpenes: limonene, pinene, and borneol whose medicinal effects include anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, and anti-allergenic properties. The Evergreen oils are similar yet have subtle differences. They are commonly considered useful for respiratory care. When you inhale the beautiful fragrance of a pine or fir, the lungs seem to know the benefit and one breathes deeply. It is said that because evergreen trees are tall, strong, and touching the sky, they have refreshing, mind-clearing, and breath enhancing fragrances.

#### **Atlas Cedarwood Essential Oil:** Botanical Name: *Cedrus atlantica*.

**Description:** Cedarwood is a pyramid-shaped majestic evergreen tree, which grows up to 130 ft. high, and is a descendant of the Lebanon cedars. Native to the Atlas Mountains of Algeria and Morocco, it is not to be confused with the North American "red cedar" and Virginia Cedarwood which are both in the cypress family. Other Cedars of the Pineaceae family are Deodar Cedar, Lebanon Cedar, and Himalayan Cedarwood.

**History:** Cedar essential oil has been used in medicine and cosmetics throughout the ages. The oil from Lebanon cedar was used by the ancient Egyptians for embalming purposes. It has been used as a temple incense by Tibetan Buddhists for centuries to enhance mental strength, endurance, and certainty, and in Eastern medicine to treat bronchial infections. In former times, linen chests were frequently crafted from this wood to keep moths out. We see cedar clothes hangers today.



**Description of Atlas Cedarwood Essential oil:** **Color:** Golden yellow to orange-brown liquid. **Consistency:** viscous. **Note:** Middle. **Aroma:** warm floral top note, a camphoraceous middle note and sweet woody undertones. A classic “cedar chest” scent. **Strength of Aroma:** Strong. Himalayan Cedar has a deeper, softer more woody aroma. **Chemical Constituents:** up to 80% sesquiterpenes which have the properties listed below.

**Plant part distilled:** Wood. **Extraction Method:** Steam Distilled.

**Properties:** antiseptic, anti-seborrheic, astringent, diuretic, expectorant, fungicidal, mucolytic, sedative,

**Uses:** **Dermatological:** treats acne and dandruff. Remedy: In a base of Grapeseed oil, blend with thyme, rosemary, lavender, and apply to scalp. **Lymphatic:** stimulates breakdown of fats. **Respiratory:** relieves lung congestion, treats chronic bronchitis. Use in diffuser. **Urinary system:** relieves cystitis. **Endocrine:** supports adrenal function. Remedy: In a 10 % dilution, blend Spruce and Pine in a carrier oil in and apply to lower back. **Psycho-Spiritual:** induces calm, brings purity of uplifted energy, grounding, induces sleep, balancing for stress and anxiety, counteracts nervous tension, increases focus and concentration.

**Blends well with:** Rosewood, Bergamot, Cypress, Jasmine, Juniper, Neroli, Labdanum, Frankincense, Clary Sage, Vetiver, Rosemary, Ylang-ylang. **Cautions:** Non-toxic, non-irritant. Avoid during pregnancy.

**Fir Needle Essential Oil:** **Botanical Name:** *Abies siberica*. **Plant Part:** Needles. **Extraction Method:** Steam Distilled.



Fir

**Plant Description:** Fir is a coniferous evergreen, with a pyramid shape, and is grown worldwide. The Siberian Fir is native to China, Mongolia, and Eastern Russia. Other Firs are White Fir, Canada Balsam Fir (produces Turpentine), all with similar properties.

**Description of Fir Essential Oil:** **Color:** Colorless to pale yellow clear liquid. **Consistency:** Medium. **Note:** Middle. **Aromatic Scent:** fresh, woody, earthy, sweet scent that is much like the outdoors. **Strength of Aroma:** Strong. **Chemical Constituents:** 40% bornyl acetate which is antispasmodic.

**History:** From the earliest times Fir was thought to be a forest healer. The natives used the crushed needles in poultices to heal wounds and infections. The needles were also boiled and drunk since it was believed to assist with respiratory issues. Fir exudes a resin called Fir Balsam which was used by North American Indians for medicinal and religious purposes.

**Properties:** analgesic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, expectorant, deodorant, rubefacient, stimulant.

**Common Uses:** **Holiday:** Diffuse during holiday season. Can be added to a candle, releases the fragrance of Christmas trees. **Musculo-skeletal:** relieves pain of arthritis, muscular aches and pains. Recipe: Especially effective when combined with other oils high in anti-inflammatory properties such as German Chamomile, Juniper, Lavender, Helichrysum, Pine, Spruce, and Rosemary. **Respiratory:** Acts as an expectorant and is included in some cough remedies. Due to antispasmodic properties, relaxes bronchial cough. Has been researched for its ability to kill airborne microbes. Add to diffuser with a few drops of Eucalyptus and Tea Tree to ward off colds and the flu. **Psychological:** encourages clarity of mind and spirit, allowing one to achieve strength and inner unity. It is considered elevating and grounding. **Additional:** Fir is used to bring out masculine, outdoorsy attributes in men’s fragrances, bath preparations, soaps, and shaving creams.

**Blends well with:** Pine, Cedarwood, Benzoin, Lavender, Spruce, Chamomile, Frankincense, Lemon, Myrtle, and Rosemary. **Methods of Administration:** Topical in a massage blend, inhalation, and diffuser. **Cautions:** non-toxic, non-irritant and non-sensitizing. Avoid getting near eyes. Avoid using during pregnancy.

**Scotch Pine Essential Oil:** Botanical Name: *Pinus Sylvestris*



Scotch Pine

**Plant Description:** Native to the dense forests of Russia and northern Europe, this evergreen tree can grow up to 40 meters (130 feet). It has flat crown; the bark is a reddish-brown that is deeply fissured; the needle-like gray-green leaves grow in pairs; the flowers are orange-yellow; and the brown cones are pointed.

**Plant Part Distilled:** Needles and Twigs **Extraction Method:** Steam Distilled

**History:** Pine essential oil has been used in herbal medicine for centuries, especially when added to baths to cure nervous exhaustion. It was investigated by Hippocrates for its beneficial effects on the respiratory system. It was used by the Native Americans to prevent scurvy and the needles were used to stuff mattresses and to repel lice and fleas. The essential oil is extensively used in pharmaceutical preparations for cough medicine, and in analgesic ointments.

**Essential Oil Description:** **Color:** Colorless to pale yellow liquid. **Consistency:** Thin. **Note:** Top. **Strength of Aroma:** Strong. **Aromatic Scent:** Scotch Pine has a crisp, fresh, sweet, forest like aroma, with a tangy citrus top note and soft balsamic undertones. It is more resinous and warm smelling than the other pine oils with a lower content of turpentine. **Chemical Constituents:**  $\alpha$ -Pinene: 34.3%, Limonene: 16.6%,  $\beta$ -Pinene: 15.2% imparting the properties below.

**Properties:** analgesic, antibacterial, anti-neuralgic, anti-rheumatic, antibiotic, anti-fungal, antiseptic, antiviral, balsamic, deodorant, expectorant, rubefacient, restorative, stimulant to adrenals, tonic.

**Common Uses:** **Respiratory System:** Combats bronchial infections, relieves cough, sore throat, and sinusitis. Diffuse for asthma. Remedy: to relieve sinus congestion add to 4 cups of steaming hot water 1 drop each of Eucalyptus, Tea Tree, and Pine. Form a tent over head with a towel. Breathe deeply. Keep eyes closed. **Circulatory System:** warms and improves circulation to extremities. **Musculo-Skeletal:** Relieves arthritis pain. Soothes sore muscles and aching joints. (See Fir remedy). **Dermatological:** Disinfects and heals wounds. Useful as a deodorant. Do not use to combat allergic skin reactions. **Psychological:** Effective at combating fatigue and nervous exhaustion. Eases mental anxiety. Revitalizes and uplifting to mind and body. Pine has long been described as a symbol of an uncompromising will to live, endurance, and strength. **Additional Uses:** Pine essential oil can be used in room fresheners, disinfectants, soaps and detergents. Its versatility is well documented.

**Blends well with:** Bergamot, Citronella, Clary Sage, Coriander, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Frankincense, Juniper, Lavender, Lemon, Myrrh, Orange, Rosemary, Spikenard and Tea Tree. **Methods of Application:** Topical: Best used in a carrier oil for massage as it may cause skin irritation. Diffuse or inhale directly. **Cautions:** Undiluted, may be a skin irritant.

**Black Spruce Essential Oil:** Botanical Name: *Picea mariana*.



**Plant Description:** Black Spruce is a naturally growing tree in Canada. It is typically found in wet, swampy areas growing up to 15 meters high. **Plant part used:** needles and twigs. **Extraction method:** steam distilled.

**History:** Black Spruce Essential Oil has a long history of use in saunas, steam baths, and as an additive to baths and massage products in spas. A particular strength of this essential oil is its ability to target sore muscles and reenergize.

**Essential Oil Description:** **Color:** Colorless to pale yellow liquid. **Consistency:** Thin. **Note:** Top. **Strength of Aroma:** Medium. **Aromatic Scent:** Spruce Black is sweeter, and softer than most evergreen oils with a balsamic, resinous odor with green woody notes. Overall, the scent is very clean, fresh and pleasant. **Main Constituents:** Bornyl Acetate: 24%.

**Properties:** antimicrobial, antiseptic, antitussive, astringent, diuretic, expectorant, nervine, rubefacient.

**Common Uses:** **Respiratory:** Alleviates bronchitis and asthma symptoms. Suppresses coughs and expels chest congestion. Use in diffuser for cough relief. **Endocrine:** revives exhaustion and supports adrenal glands. (See Cedar remedy). **Circulatory:** stimulates circulation to hands and feet. **Immune system:** stimulates immune response. **Musculo-skeletal:** in a massage blend, relieves muscular aches and rheumatism. (See Fir remedy). **Psychological:** Relieves anxiety and stress related conditions, clarifying and stimulating, uplifting. Promotes steadiness and grounding during times of transition. Aids in yoga and meditative practices.

**Blends well with:** Pine, Cedarwood, Galbanum, Benzoin, Lavender and Rosemary. **Application:** Topical in massage blends. Use in diffuser for inhalation. **Safety:** generally non-toxic but dilute in carrier oil on skin. Avoid use during pregnancy.

**Holiday Recipe:** Combine all evergreen oils in virtually any ratio. Add a few drops of each Pine, Spruce, Fir, and/or Cedarwood to the diffuser with a drop of frankincense and you will find yourself in the middle of a heavenly forest. This combination also works well in bath salts (Epsom salts).

### \*\*\*Healing Essential Special of the Month \*\*\*

**Pine/Cedar/Spruce Massage Oil 1 oz. \$7.00**

**Holiday Evergreen Diffuser Blend 4 ml. \$4.00**

**Holiday Spice Diffuser Blend 4 ml. \$4.00**

#### References:

Schnaubelt, K. PhD, [Advanced Aromatherapy](#), page 26, 55, 57.

Battaglia, S., [The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy](#), page 179-183.

Rose, Jeanne, [375 Essential oils and Hydrosols](#), page 12-12, 57-60.