



HEALING ESSENTIALS AROMATHERAPY NEWSLETTER March 2013

Issue # 6 Featuring Basil Essential Oil

Here in Ojai we are experiencing some perfectly beautiful days, even though it seems much of the country is still blanketed in snow. In spite of very cold temperatures in January, most of the plants in my garden made it through, and spring is well on its way here. Nothing fazes the lavender and rosemary, my few potted roses are leafing out and happily my dozen cymbidium orchids are bursting with buds. I am recovering from a big mishap myself, but more on my personal story later.

****Monthly Special Offered Below****

The last newsletter focused on essential oils that support the healing, cleansing, and purification process. Another wonderful essential oil that has powerful healing properties, as well as culinary uses is Basil.

Dr. Kurt Schnaubelt, aromacologist, says, "In aromatherapy, Basil holds a special position. There is extreme diversity within the species which display different chemical compositions and consequently different properties. A survey of the available literature shows that it is nearly impossible to find an ailment for which Basil would not at least be somewhat helpful, from restoring movement to injured limbs to its effectiveness against the polio virus. Even if not every author's praise of Basil's healing qualities can be one hundred percent verified, it is true that this oil in particular and essential oils in general have an astonishingly broad range of preventive and healing properties."

Basil: **Botanical Name:** *Ocimum basilicum*. **Plant Part:** Leaves. **Extraction Method:** Steam Distilled.

Plant Description: Basil is an annual herb growing to about 0.5 m in height. Although basil originally comes from Africa, the plant is relatively easy to grow, flourishing in the areas around the Mediterranean. There are many varieties of basil cultivated all over the world, however, much that is grown for essential oil production comes from Egypt, Viet Nam, and India.



History: Basil takes its name from the Latin 'basileum' meaning royal, because the plant was so highly prized it was considered a king among plants. There are many rituals and beliefs associated with Basil. The ancient Egyptians believed that it would open the gates of heaven for a person passing on.

In India, Basil or Tulsi (Holy Basil) is dedicated to Vishnu and every household has a basil plant surrounded by a shrine at the front door. Tulsi is called

upon for life and death, and for various stages of life. Tulsi protects from unfortunate spirits thus the placement at the front of the home, both bestowing health on visitors and protecting against untoward influences.

Basil has long been prescribed for melancholy and depression. The 16th century herbalist John Gerard wrote: "The fragrance of basil....taketh away sorrowfulness and maketh a man merry and glad."

Basil Essential Oil Varieties: Each of the many varieties produces a unique essential oil which is dependent on environmental factors such as temperature, geographic location, soil, and water. Based on the chemical constituents, they are called chemotypes. The most commonly available Basil oils are:

- ❖ **Exotic or Reunion Basil** *Ocimum basilicum* which has a higher percentage, approximately 75%, of methyl chavicol (estragole).
- ❖ **Sweet Basil** *Ocimum basilicum* with a higher percentage of linalool. Safest to use in aromatherapy. Origen India: methyl chavicol 70%, linalool 20%.
- ❖ **Holy Basil** or Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*).

Exotic Basil Essential Oil of the methyl chavicol chemotype is also known as Spicy, Exotic, or Reunion Basil. It has been found to have potent antimicrobial and antifungal properties.

Essential Oil Description: Color: Pale yellow to amber color liquid. **Consistency:** Thin. **Note:** Middle. **Aromatic Scent:** This variety has a sweet anise-like, mint, smoky odor. **Strength of Aroma:** Medium.

Chemical constituents: Methyl chavicol is antispasmodic and balances the autonomic nervous system. Linalool (monoterpene alcohol) is antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, tonic and sedative. Many others.

Properties: Analgesic, anti-depressant, anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, anti-viral, carminative, digestive, expectorant, febrifuge, nervine, rubefacient

Uses:

- **Gastro-intestinal:** noted as a digestive aid relieves gastric spasms, nausea, and hiccups. For stomach distress, put one drop on a spoonful of honey and dilute it in hot water. When massaged (in a carrier oil) into the abdomen, may help relieve nausea and stomach cramps.
- **Genito-urinary:** Relieves urinary tract infections.
- **Nervous system:** one of the finest remedies for the brain. Clears the head, relieves nervous exhaustion and fatigue, and gives the mind strength and clarity. Relieves headaches.
- **Immune system:** wards off infectious diseases and is used in all types of fevers. In Ayurvedic medicine it is combined with Black Pepper for malarial fever.
- **Respiratory:** antispasmodic property relieves asthma, bronchitis. When diffused, Basil essential oil may help relieve sinus congestion well as loosen mucus from the lungs.
- **Energetics:** Warming, lifts spirits. Recommended to treat mental exhaustion and nervous depression. Further, it has been noted as 'adaptogenic' regarding its ability to restore calm.
- **Commercial Use:** Basil with a high methyl chavicol gives it a strong sweet fragrance making it effective for use in the perfume industry.
- **Hydrosol:** Basil Hydrosol (Tulsi Water) is a wonderful tonic and de-stressor.
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Basil Exotic Blends well with: Bergamot, Clary Sage, Clove , Lime, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Lemon, Neroli, and Rosemary. Exotic Basil may be used with discretion in blends calling for Sweet Basil but it is recommended as a supplement not as a substitute.

Safety: Over and improper use of 'Exotic' or 'Spicy' Basil should be avoided, as it can over-stimulate the nervous system. Always test a small amount of essential oil first for sensitivity or allergic reaction. Not to be used during pregnancy but otherwise it is normally a non-toxic, non-irritant with possible sensitivity in some individuals.

Sweet Basil Essential Oil is a tender-leaved, powerfully aromatic annual herb of *linalool* chemotype.

Essential Oil Description: **Color:** Pale yellow to amber color liquid. **Consistency:** Thin. **Note:** Top. **Aromatic Scent:** This variety has a sweet sunlit floral aroma reminiscent of Basil grown in its natural habitat. A sweetly-spiced, grassy and fresh top note on a distinctly round, full bodied balsamic and wood undertone generate uplifting, awakening, clarifying and stimulating effects. **Strength of Aroma:** Medium.

Properties: Analgesic, anti-depressant, carminative, digestive, expectorant, hepato-stimulant, febrifuge, nervine, rubefacient.

Traditional Uses of Sweet Basil Essential Oil: Similar to Exotic Basil, Sweet Basil has most of the same properties but is much milder.

- Dermatologic: Milder and useful for all skin conditions. For a nice hair treatment, blend 5 drops of Sweet Basil, Lavender, and Rosemary in 1 Tbsp. of Jojoba oil and massage into scalp.
- Energetics: It has been referred to as 'the royal oil to strengthen the mind and heart.'

Blending: Sweeter than the *methyl chavicol* type, Sweet Basil oil is an excellent choice for a wide array of aromatherapy applications. It blends and balances nicely with Bergamot, Peppermint and Eucalyptus oils. If you're a great fan of Basil, creating your own blend of the two oils can make a really wonderful, complex scent.

Culinary Uses: Traditionally the fresh leaf of the Basil plant is ingested as an ingredient in a wide array of culinary creations. A relatively recent application of Basil in cooking is adding a drop or two of essential oil to add a rich basil flavor. One must be VERY mindful about quantities. 1-2 drops can add a nice Basil flavor to a meal for a family, 4 drops can make it taste like you suddenly have a Basil patch growing in your kitchen!

Safety The *linalool* chemotype is considered the safest of all Basil varieties. Over and improper use of Basil should be avoided as it can over-stimulate the nervous system. For children, always choose the 'Sweet' or 'Linalool' type Basil.

Holy Basil or Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*): Most literature indicates that Holy Basil, though a different chemotype is used in remedies as indicated above in both Basil types

Personal Anecdote Using Essential Oils: On February 28, 2013, I fell and badly fractured my right shoulder. It has been a huge challenge, but, three weeks later, progress has been made and the fracture is "set" and healing. I am typing with one finger but should have use of the right arm in another month. Throughout this recovery period, my wonderful essential oils have provided a great deal of comfort. Here are some of the ways I am using them.

- My Healing Essentials Anti-inflammatory / Pain Relief Blend: am applying daily for pain relief and it has reduced the inflammation in the hot, swollen arm. The ingredient Helichrysum (also known as Immortelle or Everlasting) essential oil is well documented to relieve the pain of acute injury and promotes the reabsorption of hematomas.
- Rose Geranium and German Chamomile Hydrosols: have used intermittently as sprays to relive and hydrate irritated skin on arm. Very cooling and comforting.
- Rose Geranium: its lovely uplifting fragrance has helped with nausea and sleep. It never fails to revive me when feeling low. I inhale directly.
- H.E. Lymph Tonic: am massaging into lymph glands around and under arm to promote drainage of fluid from excessive swelling. Also should boost immune system.

- Rose Tulsi (Basil) Tea and Chamomile Tulsi (Basil) Tea: wonderful relaxing herb teas containing purifying and healing Basil.
- Respiratory Relief Diffuser Blend (based on the oils contained in “Thieves”): I began to develop a cold a week after the injury. By diffusing and inhaling these essential oils, thankfully, the cold was reduced to only a few days of mild sniffles.

***** Healing Essentials Special of the Month *****

- **H. E. Lymphatic Tonic: 5 ml. for \$5.00** Apply over lymph nodes to resist viral infections. Good for travel protection. Contains essential oils Basil, Bay Laurel, Bergamot, Roman Chamomile, Geranium, Juniper Berry, Lemongrass, Ravensara, T. Tree in Jojoba oil.
- **Adult’s Respiratory Relief Massage Oil: 30 ml. for \$6.00** Relieves congestion and cough. Opens bronchials. Strong antiviral properties. Contains essential oils Eucalyptus Stageriana (Lemon E.), Eucalyptus Radiata, Frankincense, Hyssop, Palmarosa, Rosemary, Tea Tree, Grapefruit in 30 ml. in Jojoba and Grapeseed oil base.

Happy Spring to all. Take time to enjoy our beautiful flowering season, and inhale nature’s lovely fragrances. And watch your step!!

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Penoel, MD, Natural Home Health Care Using Essential Oils
K. Schnaubelt, PhD, Medical Aromatherapy, p. 31,33.
S. Battaglia, PhD. The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy.