



HEALING ESSENTIALS AROMATHERAPY NEWSLETTER May 2013

Issue #7 Rose Essential Oil

In Ojai, our first bloom of roses has passed, but at this very moment in late May and on into June, a wonderful and ancient process of harvesting rose petals for the making of Rose Essential Oil is taking place in Turkey. There is so much to say about this historically exquisite flower.

****Monthly Special: Rose Essential Oil Blends and Rose Water Offered Below****

History

Of all flowers, the rose has been the most universally loved for its beauty and scent since the dawn of civilization. Fossils reveal that roses have existed for 32 million years. One of the earliest recorded notations of the rose, from sometime before 3000 B.C., comes from one of the volumes of the Sanskrit Vedas, the Ayurveda, which deals with life and good health. *Rosa sancta* has been found buried with mummies. Roses decorated Cretan vases since 1600 B.C. Herodotus wrote in 700 B.C. that King Midas introduced a many-petaled scented rose to Macedonia. In 200 B.C. the Greek philosopher and botanist, Theophrastus, describes in *A History of Plants* the propagation of roses by cuttings instead of the usual method of planting seeds. In his many perfume recipes, he writes that the scent of roses is best absorbed by sesame oil. Pliny also listed 32 medicines prepared from roses.

The Persians perfected the art of distilling rose water and even stuffed their mattresses with rose petals, giving rise to the expression "Life is a bed of roses." The Roman Emperor Nero's rose banquets were celebrated with fountains of rosewater, while rotating discs from the ceiling scattered perfume and rose petals down over the guests. Guests wore garlands of roses around their necks. Rose pomades were much in use and were prepared by macerating rose petals in hot fat. The first essential oil distillation was probably by the Arabs in A.D. 500, although ancient drawings show primitive stills as far back as 10,000 B.C. In the 1600's the Turks introduced the rose industry into Bulgaria where to this day the town of Kazanlik is still the home of the best rose planting and the best essential oil of Rose.

Symbolism

The red rose is certainly the symbol of love. Red roses have been associated with romantic love since time memorial. Apparently Cleopatra carpeted her floors knee deep with red rose petals when entertaining Mark Antony. No wonder rose petals strewn all over have been included in romantic getaways ever since. Their color and beautiful aroma certainly enhance any romantic interlude. The white rose is inspiring, bringing energy and joy in life. The wild rose is the symbol of independence, warming the heart and softening the emotions. At first the early Christians disapproved of roses which reminded them of Roman paganism. But, slowly, the rose transformed into the emblem of the Virgin Mary. The first rosary was made of dried roses threaded on a string and was used to say the prayer "Hail Mary full of Grace." The roses have been replaced by precious stones, but it is still called the rosary.



Rosa Damacena



Bulgarian Damask Rose Absolute



Rosa Centifolia (Cabbage Rose)

Plant description:

There are over 10,000 varieties of roses and no two species emit exactly the same scent. Of these only a few are called “Old Roses” and are used for the extraction of rose scent. The *Rose de Mai*, *Rosa Centifolia* (Pink Cabbage Rose) and Damask Rose, (also known as the Bulgarian Rose) are oil bearing. The Damask Rose provides the bulk of the world’s production of essential oil. The name *Rosa Damascena* indicates that the rose originally came from Damascus, but more than likely the first Damask Rose originated in Persia (Iran) and was introduced to Turkey by seafaring tradesmen. Today the Damask Rose, *Rose de Mai*, and *Rose Gallica* are cultivated intensively on the plateaus of Bulgaria and Turkey. Some good Rose Essential Oil also comes from Morocco and India.”

Method of extraction:

The rose, the undisputed queen of flowers, harbors the richest and most complex of fragrances. Some four hundred volatile components make up its inimitable scent. The most common aroma concentrates of Rose Otto (Rose Oil) and Rosewater are extracted by steam distillation, while Rose Concrete and Rose Absolute are made by solvent extraction. In her delightful book [The Scent Trail](#), Celia Lyttleton travels to Turkey to observe the entire rose distillation and extraction process.

It takes about 5 tons of rose petals to produce one liter of Rose Essential Oil. “At daybreak in late May and early June, Isparta’s rose fields are a flurry of activity as women and children hurry to pick the blooms while the dew is still on the petals and before the sun hits them. Picking is very labor-intensive and even the best pickers have never managed more than six kilograms (one kilogram is 2.2 pounds) of flowers an hour. Every bloom is picked by hand right at the base of the flower. As much as 100 kilograms (210 pounds) of petals will make only 10 milliliters (1/3 ounce) of essential oil. Imagine a laundry basket full of petals yielding one milliliter of essential oil!!



Rose de Mai



“Using steam distillation, which may take several hours, Rose Essential Oil is obtained from the petals by steeping in boiling water. The waxy constituents of the rose oil that float to the top of the water are decanted... The leftover rosewater, still imbued with essence of rose, is also drained off.”

“The extraction process only takes about twenty minutes. It is more complicated and dangerous due to the chemicals and the solvent *hexane* which is so volatile that any battery-powered equipment could cause an explosion. The rose petals are shoveled onto tiers of circular tray steeped in hot solvents so that the wax and oils can be dissolved... There are successive solvent rinses, then the solvent saturated with scent is decanted to remove excess moisture. Evaporation and recycling leave a paste-like mixture composed of fragrant molecules and waxes at the bottom of the vat: this is the *concrete*.”

“All Rose Essential Oils and *concretes* are dispatched to Grasse, France. The *concrete* undergoes a further alcohol rinse, is frozen, and filtered to remove all traces of wax. The alcohol is then evaporated leaving what is called an *absolute*, which is pure and is considered “the jewel of the essence.”

“The Damask Rose and the rare *Rose de Mai* are both made into *concretes* and distilled into essential oils. The *Rose de Mai* is lighter, with a lemon sherbet note. The Damask Rose is more suited to making the Rose Essential Oil favored by aroma-therapists, while perfumers prefer the *concrete* or *absolute* to work with. Both are used in high quality perfumes, creams, and lotions.”

Rose Essential Oil is very costly; ½ ounce costs anywhere from \$50.00 to \$150.00. The fragrance is intense thus only a drop or two is required in a blend. ½ ounce is equal to 15 milliliters, and there are 300 drops in 15 ml; thus the ½ ounce lasts a very long time.

Chemical constituents: Rose is one of the most complex essential oils known. It contains over 300 chemical compounds, many still unidentified. The main constituents of attar of roses are the fragrant alcohols geraniol and l-citronellol and rose camphor, an odorless solid composed of alkanes, which separates from rose oil. β-Damascenone is also a significant contributor to the scent.

Description: Rose Essential Oil is dark orange-red. 'Rose Absolute' is darker, a dark yellow to orange color.
Aroma: complex, sweet floral scent. **Consistency:** Viscous. **Note:** Middle. **Aroma Strength:** Strong.

Blends well with: Bulgarian Rose Essential Oil generally blends well with all oils, though it works particularly well with Bergamot, Chamomile German, Chamomile Roman, Clary Sage, Geranium, Melissa, Rosewood, Sandalwood, and Ylang-ylang.

Properties: Rose Essential Oil may have the most diverse therapeutic properties of all essential oils. Anti-depressant, anti-viral, aphrodisiac, astringent, cicatrisant, diuretic, hepatic, sedative, heart/liver tonic, relieves irritability, relieves insomnia.

Uses: Rose the Queen of precious oils: refreshes the soul, brings joy to the heart.

- ❖ Nervous system: Rose hips, rose petals, and rose oil have an uplifting and wonderfully restoring effect on the nervous system. Soothes fear. Heals emotional wounds and grief.
- ❖ Cardiovascular: Eases heart palpitations. Lowers blood pressure.
- ❖ Reproductive: Relieves uterine congestion, premenstrual syndrome, and irregular menses. Diffuse for emotional difficulties during menopause.
- ❖ Skin care: Has excellent emollient, softening, and hydrating properties making it ideal for dry, sensitive skin. Astringent properties aid broken capillaries, redness, and inflammation of the skin.

Rose Water (also known as Rose Hydrosol, Rose Hydrolat): Intensely fragrant rose water is leftover from the essential oil distillation process. Used since antiquity in dozens of ways, especially in the Middle East, India, and Asia. Many uses include: misting the environment, hydrating skin, added to bath, added to drinking water, used in cooking, etc.

****Monthly Specials****

- **MOISTURIZING CREAM : 1 oz. white plastic jar. \$8.00**
Lovely fragrant moisturizing face cream. Contains essential oils of Frankincense, Jasmine, Myrrh, Rose, Sandalwood, Lavender, Patchouli, Grapefruit in a cream base with Jojoba Oil. Originally \$9.50
- **ROSE PETAL FACIAL OIL: 10 ml. glass roll on. \$3.00**
Apply following cleansing, leave on overnight. Contains essential oils of Bulgarian Rose, Carrot Seed, Clary Sage, Jasmine, Frankincense, Orange in Rose Hip Oil. Original price \$3.50
- **SANDALWOOD MASK / EXFOLIANT : 1 ½ oz. in glass jar. \$5.00**
Apply and leave on during shower, use circular motions to exfoliate, rinse. Contains Sandalwood powder, essential oils of Rose and Sandalwood in a cream base with jojoba oil. Original price \$6.00
- **ORGANIC ROSE WATER: 4 oz. blue plastic spray bottle. \$6.00** Directions for uses included.

To simply smell a Rose will refine our sensitivity, take us into an unknown world and disperse the shadows of our worries, anxieties, and sorrows. The Rose shows us love; not only human love, which is a gift as it is, but spiritual love, and we would even say Divine Love.

Mailhebiau, P. Portraits in Oil.

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2. 375 Essential Oils and Hydrosols by Jeanne Rose, 1999. P. 130-134.
3. Flower Power by Anne McIntyre, P. 191-122.
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