



## HEALING ESSENTIALS AROMATHERAPY NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2013

### Issue #10 Featuring Frankincense Essential Oil

**The sacred healing power of Frankincense!!** In previous Healing Essential Newsletters, we have looked at and learned about essential oils coming from flowers, herbs, leaves, twigs, bark, and roots. The essential oil of Frankincense comes from a tree resin. The story of Frankincense is indeed fascinating. From its very ancient origins, extremely sought after trading value, sacredness in religious ceremonies, long known effect in healing, to currently being researched by science for its medicinal properties. There is no doubt that Frankincense is the world's most valuable resin. Frankincense is mentioned often in the Holy Bible for its importance in religious rites and most famously as a precious gift of the Magi to the Christ child Jesus. The incense is used today in religious rites by Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus.

### **\*Monthly Special Offered Below\*\***



#### **Frankincense: *Boswellia carterii***

**Plant Description:** The Frankincense tree is a scraggly but hardy tree originating from southern Arabia and India. Frankincense essential oil today comes from Oman, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, and India.

#### **History:**

The Frankincense market of the Old World was highly lucrative for almost 1,500 years. The trading of Frankincense expanded greatly around the 11th century BCE, with the establishing of improved land routes and domestication of the camel. From centers in northeastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the resin was transported to Egypt, and then by sea to India and other destinations. By 1000 BCE, Frankincense was widely distributed throughout the Old World. Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Rome, Greece, and China all imported these resins, to be used as temple incenses and as important medicines. The oil was a prized possession in the ancient world, rivaling the value of many precious gems and metals.

Rome became the greatest consumer of perfumes and spices. The height of the Frankincense trade occurred during the second century CE when some 3,000 tons were shipped each year from south Arabia to Rome, Greece, and the Mediterranean region. After the 3rd century CE the trade went into decline, although demand still supported Arabia for another three hundred years. Even into the Middle Ages Frankincense was an Arabian trading commodity.



**Extraction Method:** By slashing the barks of the tree, a sticky, fragrant resin is produced from which the Frankincense essential oil is derived. Frankincense is the hardened oleo gum resin exudate (a mixture of volatile oil, gum, and resin) from different species of *Boswellia*. It is a translucent, brittle, whitish-yellow substance, in roundish, pear-shaped, or irregular “tears”. It melts with difficulty, becomes soft and adhesive by chewing. When burned, frankincense produces a brilliant flame and diffuses an agreeable aroma.

**Plant Part:** Resin.

**Method of Extraction:** Steam distilled.

**Essential Oil Description:** **Color:** Colorless to pale yellow clear liquid. **Consistency:** Medium. **Note:** Base. **Aromatic Scent:** Fresh, balsamic, dry, resinous, slightly green, with a fruit top note and a diffusive note of unripe apple peel. This fragrance is due to mixtures of complex mono- and sesquiterpenes. **Strength of Aroma:** Medium.

**Chemical Constituents:** Contains primarily antispasmodic esters and sesquiterpene hydrocarbons. 50-60% octyl acetate. The essential oil of Frankincense contains more than two hundred molecular compounds, which give the essence a very complex bouquet and range of therapeutic applications. Even within a particular species of tree there can be considerable difference in the proportion of these components depending on the microclimate and soil where the trees grow, the season at which the resin is harvested, and a number of other variables. The oil is also influenced by age and storage. Frankincense oils are therefore diverse from an olfactory and therapeutic standpoint.

#### **Immune Enhancing Properties of Resins:**

The oleo gum resins produced by trees such as frankincense, myrrh, pine, spruce, fir, and others are a major part of the trees immune system. Tree sap has antibiotic and antifungal properties which protect the tree from infections, wound-healing proper-ties for closing and regenerating the bark, and pheromone-like signaling mechanisms for repelling insect attackers and attracting the attacker’s natural predators. When humans use oleo gum resins or essential oils derived from trees, we are utilizing the molecular components of the trees immune system to boost our own.

**Essential Oil Properties:** Immune-enhancing; antibiotic, antifungal, antiviral, and antiseptic; and wound-healing, with pronounced anti-inflammatory properties.

**Uses of Frankincense Essential Oil:** Below is a brief list of the most important therapeutic applications of frankincense, which is by no means complete; the uses of frankincense are so numerous that it can accurately be described as a panacea, used for everything from colds to cancers.

- ❖ **Dermatological:** Frankincense has cytophylactic properties, meaning that it encourages healthy growth and regeneration of skin cells. Because it has rejuvenating and wound-healing effects on the skin, it is useful for treating cuts and other wounds, eczema, boils, acne, scars, stretch marks, skin ulcers, and inflamed skin. Traditionally, the resin was prepared into various salves and ointments for these purposes, while now the essential oil is used.
- ❖ **Gastro-intestinal:** Compounds of extracts of Frankincense have been shown to be uniquely effective against inflammatory intestinal processes.
- ❖ **Mouth:** Frankincense resin is chewed to strengthen teeth and gums and to refresh the mouth. It has antibiotic properties which make it useful for infections of the teeth and gums. Rinsing with the hydrosol is also effective.

- ❖ **Musculo-skeletal:** While all types of Frankincense have anti-rheumatic properties, the Indian Frankincense in particular has been utilized by Ayurvedic medicine for this purpose (see *Boswellia Serrata* and Boswellic Acids below). Use of the essential oil in massage is an excellent treatment for rheumatic and other pains of the muscular system.
- ❖ **Respiratory:** Frankincense essential oil is used for treating a variety of respiratory problems such as bronchitis and laryngitis. Steam inhalation of the essential oil, combined with other respiratory oils such as eucalyptus, is highly effective
- ❖ **Nervous System:** Diffusing Frankincense has been used in various cultures to treat a wide range of psychological and emotional disorders. In modern aromatherapy, it is used to promote calmness, deeper breathing, and a relaxed state of mind, and is therefore beneficial for depression, anxiety, and mental negativity. Headaches are relieved by diffusing the oil.
- ❖ **Subtle Aromatherapy:** Frankincense essential oil is also believed to encourage a meditative state bringing balance and peace to individuals
- ❖ **Cosmetics:** Frankincense has countless uses in both modern and traditional cosmetic products. Egyptian women use Frankincense in preparations for rejuvenating face masks; improve dry and aging skin.
- ❖ **Insect Repellent:** Burning Frankincense repels mosquitoes and flies.

**Frankincense Essential Oil blends well with:** Basil, Bergamot, Cardamom, Cedarwood, Chamomile, Cinnamon Bark, Clary Sage, Coriander, Geranium, Ginger, Myrrh and Vanilla. **Safety:** Frankincense essential oil is non-toxic, non-irritant and non-sensitizing. Avoid use during pregnancy

**A review of PubMed reports on clinical trials using oral boswellic acids:** The gum resin of Indian Frankincense (*Boswellia serrata*) contains four major acids that collectively have an anti-inflammatory action much like conventional non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications. Taking oral boswellic acids are effective in such conditions as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, low back pain, soft tissue rheumatism, myositis, fibrositis, chronic colitis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, bronchial asthma, and peri-tumoral brain edemas. Besides its pronounced anti-inflammatory properties, it has been found to have a strong immuno-stimulant activity. There also has recently been increased interest in using Frankincense essential oil as an anti-cancer agent.

**However during the steam distillation process, boswellic acid is removed and there is no boswellic acid in Frankincense essential oil. "The properties of boswellic acid isolated from Frankincense resin by extraction are often attributed to Frankincense essential oil, even though there is no boswellic acid in the essential oil. However it is not impossible that components of the essential oil do have identical or similar properties as boswellic acid. "** K. Schnaubelt, **The Healing Intelligence of essential Oils**, Healing Arts Press, 2011.

In her delightful book, **The Scent Trail**, Celia Lyttelton describes her search for the origins of Frankincense essential oil which led her to the island of Socotra off the coast of Yemen: "There are twenty-five species of Frankincense in the world, nine of which are indigenous to Socotra and in this valley; we saw hundreds of Frankincense trees. The most ancient of them were probably three hundred years old, and they were bent double; they looked like black-clad, lumbago-ridden dowagers. ....In Socotra man and nature have a fierce alliance; every drop of water, every bird, insect or plant has a role to play. Many of the plants and trees are sticky with saps, juices, resins, and gums making Socotra one big open-air apothecary. Oil of Frankincense is lit to celebrate the birth and the naming of a baby. It is also rubbed onto the stomach to ease the pain of childbirth, to ward off illness, and to keep vermin at bay just as in ancient Rome. Medicinally, Frankincense was used for all kinds of maladies, for headaches, pains, nosebleeds, palsy, gout, spasms and coughing. It was also thought of as a spiritual cleanser and dispeller of dark moods." "Today in Yemen, they pound Frankincense in a drink for various ailments; they use it to sweeten drinking water, and to fumigate clothes. It is also used as a deodorant, in shampoo, to seal cracks in pots and pans, and is chewed to improve concentration."

- ❖ **Holiday Recipe for a room mister:** In an 8-10 oz spray bottle add essential oils of: Pine 4 drops, Mandarin or Orange 2 drops, Cinnamon 1 drop, Frankincense 1 drop. Add to 8 oz of water. This blend can also be added to a diffuser.

The wonderful healing effects of Frankincense are in many Healing Essentials products as you can see below.

**Note: Beginning in December there will be a Series of 3 Aromatherapy presentations at the Ojai Retreat Center. For details see flyer attached.**

**\*\*Monthly Specials\*\***

- **MOISTURIZING CREAM:** Ess. Oils: **Frankincense**, Jasmine, Myrrh, Rose, Sandalwood, Lavender, Patchouli, Grapefruit. Carrier: Cream Base with Jojoba Oil. *This is a rich, all natural base cream with many beautiful hydrating essential oils including rose, bergamot, frankincense, and sandalwood.*  
**1 oz. originally \$20.00 Special price \$15.00**
- **RESPIRATORY RELIEF FOR ADULTS:** Ess. Oils: Lemon Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus radiata, **Frankincense**, Hyssop, Palmarosa, Rosemary, Tea Tree, Grapefruit. Carrier: Grapeseed and Jojoba Oils.  
• *Created to contain essential oils with a more powerful anti-microbial and decongestant effect to relieve symptoms of coughs, colds, sore throat, nasal, and chest congestion. Pour 8-12 drops into hands and massage length of back from buttocks up to neck, and under arms. Apply lightly over chest. Massage soles of feet. Also effective in bath as described above. (Not for children under 10 years of age.)*  
**1.5 cobalt glass bottle originally \$20.00. Special price \$15.00**
- **ROSE PETAL FACIAL OIL:** Ess. Oils: Carrot Seed, Bulgarian Rose, Clary Sage, Jasmine, **Frankincense**, Orange. Carrier: Rose Hip Oil.  
*A gentle roll-on oil with fragrant essential oils in a base of very healing Rose Hip Oil. Lovely as an overnight facial treatment.*  
**10 ml glass roll- on originally \$8.50 Special price \$5.00.**
- **SERENITY ROOM MIST:** Ess. Oils: **Frankincense**, Jasmine, Lavender, Sandalwood, Marjoram, Ylang Ylang Carrier: Purified Water. *Fragrant soothing mist for relaxation, prior to sleep, guest rooms, etc.*  
**4 oz. cobalt plastic w/ mist spray originally \$8.00 Special price \$6.00**
- **SERENITY BATH SALTS:** Ingredients and Properties: Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*): anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, restorative, sedative, and balancing. Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*): analgesic, antidepressant. Mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*): anti-spasmodic, sedative, uplifting. Rose: (*Rosa damascena*): Refreshes the soul. Anti-depressant, sedative, heart tonic, relieves irritability. **Frankincense** (*Boswellia carterii*): sedative, promotes meditation. Blended in Epsom salts, Dead Sea Salts, and Soda Bicarb. *To relieve anxiety / depression. Add 1 TBSP to bath. Soak 20 minutes.*  
**1.5 oz. envelope originally \$8.00 Special price \$6.00**

Patricia Wing, RN, IAC, Clinical Aromatherapist

References:

1. The Scent Trail by Celia Lyttelton, 2007. P. 213 -228.
2. The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy, by. Battaglia, S., P. 263-266.
3. Frankincense and Myrrh: The Botany, Culture, and Therapeutic Uses of the World's Two Most Important Resins © Copyright 2007 NAHA, David Crow.