



# HEALING ESSENTIALS AROMATHERAPY NEWSLETTER MARCH 2014

## Issue #12 Ylang-Ylang Essential Oil

**Please Note: Third Aromatherapy Presentation Scheduled April 19. See attached flyer.**

### Ylang-Ylang Essential Oil

As a child growing up in Key West, I was surrounded with gorgeous fragrant flowers and exotic fruits. In the gardens of our family and friends' homes there were the tropical fruits guava (we loved guava jelly), sour-sop (tastes like pineapple/banana), sugar apples (looks like a green pine cone and tastes like creamy custard), Spanish limes (a large seed covered with a pink sweet and sour fuzz), sapodilla (delicious crispy pear/apple flavor), Cuban bananas (delicate flavor of banana/apple/pear), mangos, and of course coconut palms everywhere. I remember climbing like monkeys with my friends up into the large Spanish lime tree and gorging on the fruit until we were bursting. In our own family garden there were papayas, key limes (the tangy juice was squeezed over everything: rice, black beans, fish, and conch salad), Cuban bananas, huge avocados that we called "alligator pears," and the white waxy, intoxicating stephanotis (Island jasmine). And in many gardens, its powerful fragrance wafting on the sea breeze across the island, bloomed the trailing yellow flowers of the Ylang Ylang tree.



*Cananga odorata*



Ylang Ylang flower

Ylang-Ylang (*Cananga odorata*) is a large evergreen tropical tree of the *Annonaceae* family, which grows to 100 ft. in height. It has drooping branches and yellow, long-petaled flowers whose fragrance can be smelled from a distance of 30 ft. or more. The *Annonaceae* family is comprised of about 130 tropical and subtropical plants, among which are many well-known exotic fruit trees, including the sugar apple, sour-sop, and cherimoya, all of which grow in Key West as mentioned. The tree originated in Indonesia and is widely distributed in Southeast Asia, the Philippines, the Polynesian Islands and the Caribbean. In addition to its wonderful fragrance, the plant blooms practically year round. Its branches are entirely covered with clusters of flowers and dark green oval fruits. Unlike some *Annonaceae*, Ylang-Ylang fruits are not used in foods; however they are quite edible and have the tart but pleasant aroma of a conifer or juniper. Ylang Ylang is correctly pronounced "alang alang."

## \*Monthly Special: Key West Coconut Cream: Offered Below\*

### History

**Chanel #5:** The rare and exceptionally delicate scent of Ylang-Ylang flowers provides a distinct fragrance for perfumes. In fact, two persons and one plant participated in the creation of the world famous fragrance, "*Chanel No. 5*." The inventors of this renowned perfume were Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, and Ernest Beaux, who was born in 1881 in Moscow. Beaux trained as a perfumer at the famous Russian perfumery company Rallet, which delivered perfumes to the imperial court. He later served on Rallet's board of directors. While born in Russia, Beaux's heritage brought him to France and he continued to create fragrances. In 1920 a meeting was arranged in Paris with Mlle. Chanel where Beaux presented his series of current perfumes. Mlle. Chanel chose #5, which consisted of the fragrances of Rose, Jasmine, and Ylang Ylang. When asked what she would like to name the scent, she replied, "I always launch my collection on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month so the number 5 seems to bring me luck. Therefore I will name it *No. 5*." In the 1950's, a quip from Marilyn Monroe created instant worldwide popularity for *Chanel No. 5*. When asked by journalists what she wore in bed, Marilyn smiled and answered "*Chanel No. 5*."

**Method of Extraction:** Steam distilled. The Ylang Ylang flowers are steam distilled in small stills to protect the flowers from excess weight. The essential oil is labeled by how it is distilled. It is separated into different grades known as: Ylang Ylang Extra, Ylang Ylang #1, Y.Y. #2 or Y.Y. #3. Ylang Ylang Extra comes from the shortest duration of distillation and is the brightest and most fragrant of the varieties. Extra comes out in the first hour, #1 in the first two and a half hours, #2 in 3-4 hours. Ylang Ylang #3 is used more medicinally and in soaps as it is not as fragrant. Currently, Madagascar is the world's largest producer of Ylang Ylang essential oil.

#### Ylang Ylang Essential Oil Description:

**Color:** pale yellow. **Consistency:** somewhat oily. **Note:** Base. **Aromatic Scent:** Intensely floral and complex rose, jasmine-like with a soft balsamic undertone. When the flowers are put in a vase the fragrance can last up to a month, even after they have wilted.

**Chemical constituents:** It is said to contain some 30 constituents and is high in alcohols, esters, and sesquiterpenes. These chemicals are known for their fragrant odor and their antispasmodic, calming, sedative, and anti-inflammatory properties.

**Ylang Ylang Essential Oil Properties:** Antidepressant, Antiseptic, Anti-inflammatory, Aphrodisiac, Hypotensive, Sedative.

#### Uses of Ylang Ylang Essential Oil:

- ❖ **Cardiovascular:** Historically believed to reduce high blood pressure. Slows rapid breathing and heart-beat, especially associated with stress and anxiety.
- ❖ **Dermatologic and Cosmetic:** Healing to acne. Conditions hair, promoting hair growth. Relieves skin irritations such as insect bites and allergic reactions. Balances epidermal oil production.
- ❖ **Hormonal:** Balances mood swing symptoms associated with PMS. Balances the feminine and masculine energies.
- ❖ **Nervous System:** Psychologically promotes a calm and clear mental state. Relieves nervous tension, stress, and anxiety, the underlying symptoms of depression. Calms frustration and anger. Restores joy and confidence.
- ❖ **Reproductive:** Treatment: To alleviate symptoms of PMS, combine Ylang Ylang with Clary Sage and Neroli, and add a few drops to bath, in a carrier oil, or undiluted in a diffuser.
- ❖ **Subtle Energy:** Creates a feeling of peace, dispelling anger which is often a hindrance to meditation and spiritual activities.

**Additional Uses:**

- Ylang Ylang has long been considered one of the most important essential oils in perfumery.
- Added to body care products with applications specifically for hair and skin, Ylang Ylang is known to assist in balancing the moisture levels.
- Treats split ends when combined with coconut butter.
- Combine any of the compatible essential oils listed below, such as Rose, Neroli and Jasmine for an intoxicating diffuser blend.

**Ylang Ylang essential oil blends well with:** Bergamot, Balsam, Jasmine, Neroli, Rose, Rosewood, and Vetiver.

**Mode of Administration:** Topically, Ylang Ylang can be used in a massage oil, bath, or cream. It can be inhaled in a diffuser or directly from the bottle.

**Safety:** Ylang Ylang is non-toxic, non-irritant, and non-sensitizing. Always test first for sensitivity or allergy. Excessive use can cause head ache. If pregnant or diagnose with a medical condition, consult with a physician prior to use. As with all essential oils, keep out of reach from children.

**\*Monthly Special: Key West Coconut Cream: ½ oz. \$5.00\***

**In memory of my beautiful childhood home, I have created a rich cream of coconut butter with the fragrances of Ylang Ylang, Rose, and Neroli essential oils and the underlying scent of cocoa. This is a solid cream that instantly melts on skin contact imparting a silky feeling to the skin. It can be used to treat excessively dry skin, especially applying it to the rough areas on elbows, neck, and feet. It can be massaged into the scalp to relieve itching dryness, and/or applied in small amounts to nourish and balance the hair.**

**Up- coming Aromatherapy Presentation:** We have had the first two aromatherapy workshops at the Ojai Retreat and everyone had a wonderful time. At the workshop in February participants had so much fun making a massage oil blend, a room mister and bath salts. The third in the series is coming up in April. It is more advanced; covering the systems of the body and how the chemistry of essential oils affects those systems. All are welcome but some prior knowledge or experience with essential oils will be helpful.

We are grateful for the rains and the orchids are all in bud. Spring is just around the corner and happiness is within your reach!

Patricia Wing, RN, IAC, Clinical Aromatherapist

**References:**

1. The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy, by. Battaglia, S., P. 277-279.
2. Information on the history of Ylang Ylang was adapted from Wikipedia.
3. Essential oil information adapted from the Wholesale Essential Oils website.
4. 375 Essential oils and Hydrosols by Jeanne Rose, 1999, p. 158-160.