

OJAI HEALING ESSENTIALS AROMATHERAPY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2018 ISSUE #29

This Month:

History, Description, and Uses of Fennel Essential Oil



Fennel Essential Oil: To see the surrounding hills of Ojai layered with a fine layer of vibrant green growth after the tremendous fire only a few months ago brings joy to my heart and a feeling of rebirth. This sign of regeneration and the unfailing beauty of nature lifts us to a new level of awareness and gratitude.



And very soon, covering much of the coastal hills, we will begin to see the brilliant yellow fronds of Fennel waving in the breeze. Though the seeds are commercially dried, the fresh whole plant is edible and one can easily forage for the seeds. The seeds can be eaten green even prior to drying. The photo is wild Fennel growing at Point Reyes, California

In previous Healing Essential Newsletters we have covered essential oils distilled from flowers, herbs, roots, resins, fruits, and grasses. Essential oils from seeds such as cardamom, cumin, and carrot are among the most versatile in their usage. In Newsletter #25 we featured the skin nourishing Carrot Seed Essential Oil. Here we will discuss the history, properties and uses of the wonderful digestive Fennel Seed Essential Oil. Well known and researched,

Fennel Seed has been used for centuries for digestive complaints mainly through chewing the seeds, infusions, teas, and tinctures. Fennel Seed Essential Oil relieves all these conditions and more.

Fennel Botany:

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare dulce*) is a flowering plant species in the carrot family. It is a hearty, perennial herb with yellow flowers and feathery leaves. It is indigenous to the shores of the Mediterranean, but it has become widely naturalized in many parts of the world, especially on dry soils near the sea-coast and on riverbanks.

It is a highly aromatic and flavorful herb with culinary and medicinal uses. Fennel is widely cultivated, both in its native range and elsewhere, for its edible, strongly flavored leaves and seeds. Its aniseed flavor comes from *anethole*, an aromatic compound also found in anise and star anise, and its taste and aroma are similar to theirs, though usually not as strong.

Fennel has become naturalized along roadsides, in pastures, and in other open sites in many regions, including northern Europe, the United States, southern Canada, and much of Asia and Australia. It propagates well by seed, and is even at times considered a weed.



SEE BELOW: MONTHLY SPECIAL

Fennel History and Folklore:

Fennel is considered one of the oldest medicinal plants and culinary herbs. It is fairly certain that fennel was in use over 4000 years ago! It is mentioned in the famous Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian collection of medical writings from around 1500 BC. There it is referred to principally as a remedy for flatulence. Later authors of herbals, such as Pliny (AD 23-79), also describe Fennel primarily as an aid to digestion. In the Middle Ages it was praised for coughs. Fennel was also well known to the ancient Chinese, Hindus, and Egyptians as a medicine and spice.

In Roman times, physicians held Fennel in high regard for medicinal purposes. They also believed Fennel seeds imparted courage and strength, and conveyed longevity. Roman women nibbled on the seeds to help depress the appetite believing fennel prevented obesity. Greeks and Anglo-Saxons ate the seeds on fasting days to reduce appetite. Fennel is one of nine Anglo-Saxon herbs known for secret powers. In ancient days a bunch of Fennel hung over a cottage door on Midsummer's Eve was said to prevent the effects of witchcraft. Nicolas Culpepper, herbalist, believed Fennel to be an effective antidote for poisonous mushrooms and snake bites. A plaster of fennel roots was a traditional treatment for mad dog bites.

Fennel Essential Oil Description: Colorless to pale yellow. **Method of extraction:** distillation of crushed seeds. **Aroma:** spicy, sweet, similar to licorice. **Note:** Top. **Consistency:** Thin. **Chemical composition:** *Anethole* (50-80%) responsible for licorice-like fragrance, also inflammatory and antispasmodic, *limonene* (5%), *fenchone* (5%), *methyl chavicol*, among others.



NB: Sweet (dolce) fennel is not to be confused with bitter (amara) variety, which is not used in aromatherapy due to its relatively higher content of fenchone (12-22%) and its more "harsh" nature.

Properties of Fennel Essential Oil: antispasmodic, carminative (expels gas; its most healing of properties), antibacterial, antiseptic, astringent, diuretic, expectorant, digestive, splenic, tonic, and warming.

Therapeutic Uses of Fennel:

- **Commercial:** The dried seeds are mainly used as a flavoring agent in medicines and to disperse flatulence. It is an ingredient of the official compound powder of licorice.
- **Digestive:** 1. Add 8 drops of Fennel essential oil to 1 pt. of distilled water to relieve bloating, gastric distress and flatulence. 2. Fennel Tea can also be made by pouring ½ pint of boiling water over 1 tsp. Fennel seeds and allow to infuse. The dose ranges from 1-8 tsps. 3. To relieve colic in restless babies, give one tsp. of tea from seeds, lightly sweetened. For older children, 1 drop Fennel essential oil on a lump of sugar. 4. Also 1 dropper of Fennel Tincture in 8 oz. of water relieves bloating. 5. For abdominal massage oil: blend 3-4 drops each of Rosemary, Peppermint, Ginger, Black Pepper and Fennel with 1 oz. carrier oil. Massage in clockwise direction over abdomen. This blend can also be added to bath water.
- **Lymph System:** Fennel is a diuretic and lymphatic decongestant assisting the body to eliminate toxins. Fennel tea is used for treating fluid retention and obesity.
- **Reproductive:** Balancing to hormones: one study suggests the seeds have a mild estrogenic effect. This may have something to do with the traditional use to promote lactation and relieve menstrual cramps. To relieve PMS and/or menstrual cramps add 5 drops Fennel, 5 drops Clary Sage, 5 drops Angelica root, 8 drops Coriander seed, and 12 drops Lavender to 1 oz. carrier oil. Massage into abdomen a week prior to menses period and 2-3 X's a day during period. Also can inhale Fennel essential oil directly from bottle. To increase milk production for nursing mothers, Fennel tea can be made by pouring ½ pint boiling water on 1 tsp seeds and allow to infuse. Fennel tea will also relieve menstrual cramps.
- **Respiratory:** Fennel has antispasmodic properties and can relieve bronchial spasm and loosen phlegm.
- **Urinary:** Fennel is a diuretic and is used for fluid retention and to treat urinary tract infections.
- **Nervous System:** Relieves mental fatigue. Promotes self expression.



St. Hildegard von Bingen, Christian mystic of the 11th century, realized both physical and emotional benefits of fennel:

“A person whom melancholy is harming should pound fennel to a liquid and rub it often on his forehead, temples, chest and stomach. His melancholy will stop.”

This statement made hundreds of years ago still holds true--Fennel essential oil is quite an uplifting and clearing agent. Its volatile oils ease the mind and body, clearing away the cobwebs so thoughts and creativity may be freely and playfully expressed.

Fennel Essential Oil Blends Well With: Angelica root, Coriander, Clary Sage, Sweet Marjoram, Rosemary ct cineole, Peppermint, Cardamom, Ginger, Citrus oils, Ylang Ylang, Geranium, Bergamot, Lavender, Frankincense and Rose.

Application: Topically Fennel essential oil is safe to use diluted in massage oil, compress, and bath. Can be directly inhaled from bottle or in a diffuser. Caution: undiluted Fennel essential oil applied to the skin for a long period of time can produce local irritation. In an experiment of human volunteers using an application of 4 % essential oil did not produce any reactions.

Safety: Fennel has the remarkable quality of being both effective and safe. No acute or chronic toxic reactions to Fennel or to Fennel products in humans have ever been reported. Even though allergy to fennel is occasionally mentioned, since 1948 there have been only two reports of allergic reaction to Fennel. It has been shown that Fennel allergy is caused by the plant's pollen, always present in unprocessed seeds. Fennel seed oil, which is produced by distillation of Fennel seeds has no pollen particles in it , and therefore, cannot product allergic reactions.

Current Research: Drug interactions: Sweet Fennel oil can inhibit platelet aggregation (blood clotting) and should not be used with anticoagulant medications. Frequent oral use can reduce blood glucose level and should not be used orally by diabetics. Due to its *trans-anethole* content which exhibits estrogenic actions, fennel essential oils should be avoided by any method of application, expecially oral, in pregnancy, breastfeeding, endometriosis, and estrogen dependent cancers. Essential oils with *estragole (Methyl chavicol)* should also be used carefully, especially orally for its effect on the blood.

MONTHLY SPECIAL AND NEW PRICES

Product Price Increase: As of March 1, 2018, due to increasing prices for essential oils, materials, and packaging, I have incorporated a small price increase for my products. New prices can be seen on my website. I will always continue to strive to use only the highest quality of ingredients and to keep the cost of my products affordable.

All Ojai Healing Essential products will be 10 % off the new price for the remainder of March. Products can be ordered by emailing me at ojaihealingessentials@gmail.com or calling me at 805-646-0655.

May each and everyone enjoy the spring rebirth taking place within our soul and in our beautiful Ojai Valley.

Patricia Wing, RN, IAC, Clinical Aromatherapist

References

1. The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy, by. Battaglia, S., P. 200-202.
2. The Complete Illustrated Guide to Aromatherapy, by Julia Lawless, P. 144, 194.
4. The Healing Intelligence of Essential Oils, K.Schnaubelt, PhD. P .
5. Essential Oil Safety 2nd Edition, Robert Tisserand, Robert Young, P. 277-278.

Logo and Website:

New LOGO: My new lovely Ojai Healing Essentials logo and label design was created by Charlotte Day, professional illustrator and pattern designer in the U.K. The logo represents essential oils from our fragrant Ojai orange groves: Orange (the peel), Petitgrain (the leaf), and Neroli (the orange blossom). Please take a moment to visit Charlotte's website to view her wonderful botanical alphabet designs.

<http://www.charlottedaydesign.com>

Revised WEBSITE: Please check out my revised website at: www.ojaihealingessentials.com. Click on Products at the top menu bar for new pictures of products, updated information and prices. I wish to thank Victoria Hargreaves for the lovely product photos. She took infinite care to photograph each and every product. Victoria has a diverse background that includes professional photography and is certified in Sangetsu floral arranging. She particularly enjoys travel photography and has portfolios of Abu Dhabi, Thailand, and South India. She lives in Ventura and can be reached at [805-844-0129](tel:805-844-0129), vharg@pacbell.net.

