

THE
LITTLE
BOOK
OF

ESSENTIAL OILS

MARTA
TARALLO

AN INTRODUCTION
TO CHOOSING,
USING AND
BLENDING OILS



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QUADRILLE

To my parents Chiara and Salvo, who have always supported me and raised me to appreciate the beauty of natural, slow living.

To my husband Jacopo, who has simply always believed in me.

To my son Leonardo, who was, quite literally, always with me while I was writing this book: from being in the tummy until he learned how to crawl.



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INTRODUCTION

My first encounter with essential oils

It was the spring of 2018, and I was standing in my kitchen in front of my first batch of handmade soap, about to pour it into the moulds. I had decided to try to make my own soap in the attempt to reduce waste from my life. It was a very simple coconut and olive oil soap, yet the most exciting part of the process came when I had to choose what essential oils to use to scent the soap. This was my very first encounter with essential oils.

The scent I had chosen was lavender. One tiny 10-ml bottle filled the entire kitchen with the most delicious aroma I have ever smelled. As well as my soap, I was able to use that same lavender essential oil for so many other projects: a natural deodorant, a jar of bath salts, a body balm.

What fascinates me about essential oils is how simple and natural they are, yet they have so many different, effective skincare and aromatherapeutic applications. The essential oils added to a natural deodorant certainly have an antibacterial action that stops odours forming, but can also instil a feeling of wellbeing through their aroma.

In a fast-moving world we may be drawn to buying ready-made bathroom and skincare products as a quick and easy solution. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that, but making your own products using essential oils can be a great way to slow down, feel empowered and reconnect to nature.

What are essential oils?

Essential oils are concentrated compounds extracted from plants. These precious plant oils are called ‘essential’ for a good reason: they carry the very essence of the plant they have been extracted from, that is the plant’s flavour, aroma and healing compounds. For this reason, they are often referred to as the ‘essence’ of a plant.

Volatile yet powerful, essential oils are very concentrated. A very small

amount of essential oil can be highly effective, just like a larger amount can be very damaging. For this reason, essential oils should be handled with extreme care, following very specific usage [thresholds](#).

Aromas are strictly embedded into our daily lives, so much so that they are a way for us to connect with the world around us. Every time we detect a scent, it triggers an emotion or a memory. We live in an era where we are so used to and almost addicted to technology, and this might make us feel, paradoxically, disconnected. As a result, many of us are craving a return to the 'origins' to feel more connected to nature. When we are feeling trapped within the hustle and bustle of our lives, the use of essential oils makes us feel grounded, almost as suspended in time.

How to use this book

The book is divided into three sections.

Section 1 - History and origins: This section walks you through the key information you need to know about essential oils. We will explore some of the history of essential oils, how they are made, as well as important safety information to follow when using essential oils.

Section 2 - Essential oils directory: This is the core of this little book: a directory of some of the most common essential oils. Each entry offers a snapshot of that essential oil, as well as how to incorporate it into your DIY recipes. You can decide to read the essential oils directory in order, or simply jump to a particular essential oil you want to learn more about.

Section 3 - Recipes: This is a collection of simple yet satisfying recipes featuring some of the essential oils in the directory. Each recipe has step-by-step instructions as well as substitution ideas, in case you would like to swap an ingredient or essential oil. You will also learn about scent families, notes and how to make scent blends.

At the end of the book, you will also find a small glossary section explaining some of the jargon used in this book.

My wish for you is that you will gain the confidence to use and enjoy essential oils, so you can incorporate them into your skincare routine and your home, at your own pace, and according to your needs. Let's start this journey together, one drop at a time.

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

The use of aromatic oils has been documented in the literature of many cultures and civilisations over thousands of years. Essential oils have been valued for more than just their aroma, being used in cooking, cosmetic use and for therapeutic and religious purposes. In fact, not only are many of their applications from centuries ago still valid today, but also their properties remain unchanged through time.

Ancient Egyptians used aromatic plants in the mummification process, as well as in medicines and skincare. The Romans used aromatic herbs to create scented oils to anoint the hair and body after a bath. During the Crusades of the Middle Ages, aromatic essences and distillation made their way from the East to Europe, with rose water becoming the most popular scent. During the Great Plague of the 17th century, aromatic herbs were used inside masks as they were thought to offer protection from disease. The perfumery industry burgeoned at the end of the 17th century, and in the 18th century the first eau de Cologne was created, containing a blend of rosemary, bergamot, neroli and lavender essential oils.

The scientific revolution in the early 19th century took a more scientific approach to essential oils. Chemists began to identify the chemical components of essential oils, and carried out the first laboratory tests on their antiseptic and healing effects. These components are what give each essential oil specific properties: calming, energising, deodorising, cooling, etc.

Nowadays, the increasing demand for essential oils has made them more readily available. They can be easily found in most health food shops, or are just a click away from many internet suppliers. One of the most appealing features of essential oils is their versatility, as they can be used for a wide variety of wellness applications. We can diffuse them to scent our homes and infuse the air with their beneficial aromatherapeutic properties. We can apply them topically, always diluted appropriately, to improve specific skin conditions. Perfume-making is another way to use essential oils, creating a welcome move away from the synthetic aromas which inevitably fill our everyday lives. It is possible to use essential oils

on their own, diluted within a carrier oil, or to create a blend to your preference: we will explore how later in this book.



How essential oils are made and where they come from

Essential oils can be extracted from different parts of a plant, depending on where the oil is concentrated in the plant, such as leaves, flowers, seeds, root, wood, bark, balsam and resin. For example, lavender essential oil is extracted from the flowers of the lavender plant, petitgrain essential oil is taken from the bitter orange tree's twigs and leaves, while grapefruit essential oil comes from the peel of the fruit.

One of the oldest methods of extraction is called **enfleurage**, which involves extracting the oil using vegetable or animal fat to obtain an 'enfleurage pomade', which is then treated with alcohol to separate the oil from the fat. The obtained oil is called an 'absolute' and the leftover fat is often used to make soap.

The extraction method used depends on the plant and the type of essential oil, and plays a big role in determining the quality of the finished product. While enfleurage is no longer widely used, the most common methods of extraction include direct steam distillation, water distillation, water and steam distillation, solvent extraction, CO₂ extraction, cold expression and maceration.

Steam distillation involves heating the plant material using steam, turning its molecules into vapour, which is then condensed back into liquid, formed by water and essential oils. Essential oils cannot mix with water, and therefore float on top of it: the last step of this extraction method involves separating the essential oils from the water of the plant.

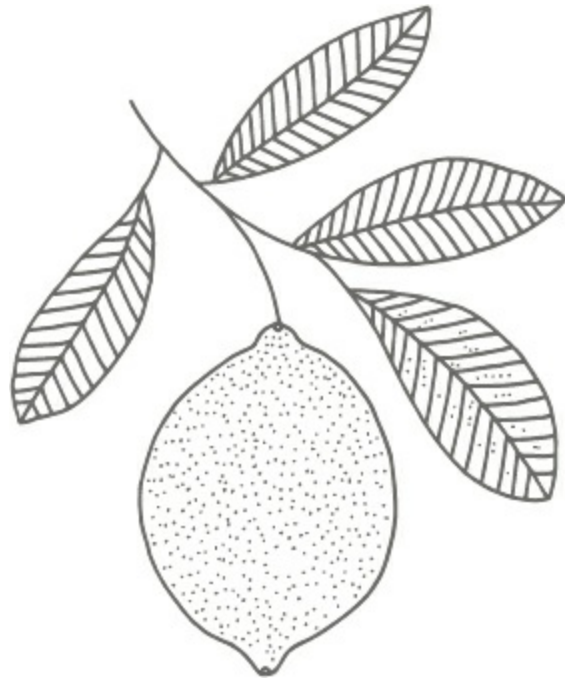
The leftover water is often used as a flower water or hydrosol.

Not all plants can be extracted using steam distillation. Some flowers, such as roses, would be damaged by the heat during the steam extraction process, so therefore **water distillation** is used, which extracts the oil using boiling water. Some flowers, such as jasmine, can be extracted using a **solvent** (eg ethanol or hexane). The first step of this process produces a 'concrete', which is a mix of oils and waxes. This concrete is then further processed to remove the waxes and the solvent, leaving a highly concentrated 'absolute'.

Essential oils can also be obtained by **CO₂ extraction**, which produces an essential oil containing a much higher quantity of the plant's constituents and preserves a much stronger aroma. The plant material is not altered by the heat of the steam distillation nor does this method use any solvents. Instead, this oil is extracted using carbon dioxide, which, when under a lot of pressure, enters a 'supercritical' state. In this state, the CO₂ becomes liquid-like and works as a solvent. Once the plant oil is extracted, the pressure is lowered and the CO₂ returns to being a gas and evaporates. Because CO₂-extracted essential oils contain a higher volume of plant constituents, they should be used with extra care because, depending on the usage you want to make of them, more research might be necessary.

Cold expression is used to extract citrus essential oils, using mechanical pressure to squeeze out the juice and the oil, which are then separated by centrifugation.

Finally, **maceration** is a process which involves extracting the plant properties by infusing the dried plant in a carrier oil, usually for 1-2 weeks. After this time, the oil has absorbed the beneficial plant properties, and it can be strained into a separate container to be stored in a dry, cool place, away from sunlight for up to a year. This simple method is also known as oil infusion, which many of us makers enjoy using in our kitchens.



HOW TO BUY AND USE ESSENTIAL OILS

Although there are essential oil companies offering pure essential oils that value transparency, before you buy essential oils, it is important to be aware that this is not always the case. With the increased demand and popularity for essential oils, sadly some companies have found ways to sell them to bring prices down and appeal to a wider audience. Essential oils that are not pure are adulterated with other substances, such as carrier oils, alcohol, synthetic compounds or other essential oils.

Read the label

Before purchasing, always spend time reading the label. Essential oils should be labelled with their Latin or botanical name, for example, *lavandula angustifolia* for lavender essential oil. The label should also list the essential oil's potential allergens (for example citral, geraniol, linalool, limonene). If not shown on the label, this should definitely be included in the IFRA (International Fragrance Association) statement on the supplier's website; if it is not, you can ask for it. Additionally, the IFRA conformity certificate certifies that an essential oil complies with the standards of IFRA, provided it is used under defined usage safety thresholds. If you wish to consult the complete list of allergens, this is listed on the European Commission Annex III of the European Union Cosmetics Directive (www.ifrafragrance.org/safe-use/standards-documentation).

Reading the label will also help you determine if the oil is pure or not – some essential oils are sold diluted in a carrier oil, as it allows mainstream customers to purchase an expensive oil, such as vanilla, for a fraction of the price, and still enjoy its scent and some of the properties. As long as this is stated on the label, and you are aware of it, there is nothing wrong with it.

Reliability

Unfortunately some companies may go to the extent of designing labels that suggest the product contains an expensive essential oil, but instead it is a cheaper, similar one. They may also adulterate essential oils using synthetic compounds or alcohol, which could cause irritation and skin sensitivities. It is therefore very important to thoroughly research the company you are purchasing essential oils from. A good check is to make sure that the company belongs to an association that regulates the trade of essential oils. Some examples of these are the Aromatherapy Trade Council in the UK and the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy in the US.

A reputable company will also have important safety documents available to read or download from their website, such as the safety data sheet and the IFRA conformity certificate. The safety data sheet details the composition of the essential oil, as well as any safety guidelines to follow when using and disposing of essential oils.

A reliable company will often provide information such as the country of origin of the essential oil or the extraction methods.

If you cannot find some of this information, do not be afraid to contact the company and ask. Although this is not a bullet-proof way to assess the reliability of a company, it is certainly a good start.

Purity

If you want to assess the purity of an essential oil, try doing the following test. Pour a few drops of essential oil onto a piece of paper. Due to their volatile nature, 100% pure essential oils should not leave any residue behind once dried.

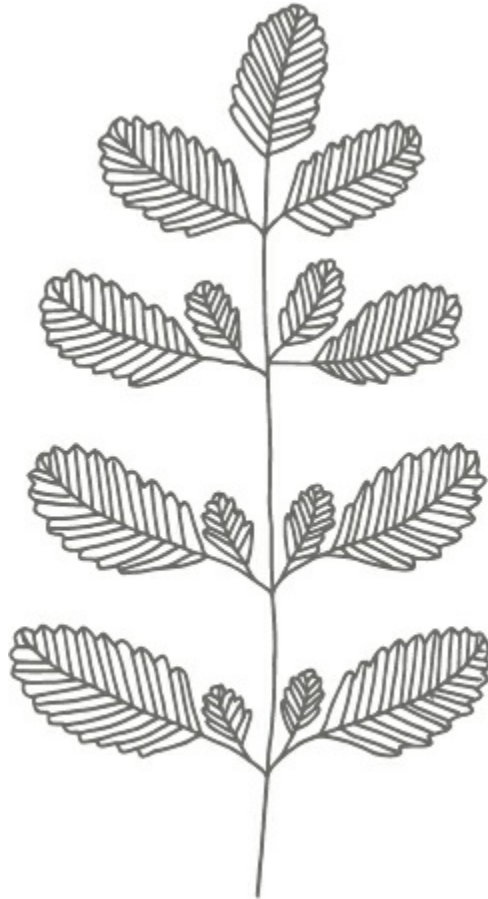
Keep in mind that purity does not necessarily correspond to quality, which is dictated by many conditions such as the plant material itself, how it was harvested, stored and distilled.

Essential oils and synthetic fragrances

You may have come across certain compounds called fragrance oils and wondered how these differ from essential oils. Fragrance oils are created in a laboratory to resemble aromas found in nature. Fragrance oils may contain essential oils or be completely synthetic. They are often made using aromachemicals, which are compounds used to enhance the scent. This makes fragrance oils more stable and long-lasting compared to essential oils, which are very volatile so their scent might morph into

something else over time. However, fragrance oils lack the aromatherapeutic properties that natural essential oils have.

Remember that natural essential oils are made up of many chemicals, just like fragrance oils, and have a similar potential to create skin irritation and allergenicity as fragrance oils. Always make sure to dilute essential oils as directed and read about any possible contraindications.



Organic or not?

Organic essential oils are essential oils that have been produced following organic farming standards, without the use of pesticides. Purchasing organic essential oils is therefore more eco-friendly and more sustainable, however it is also considerably more expensive. Although it is ultimately your personal decision whether you want to invest more and purchase organic essential oils. It is always important to buy essential oils from reputable suppliers to ensure you are buying from a company that adheres to safe manufacturing standards and produces good quality oils.

Are essential oils really sustainable?

Some essential oils require a very large amount of plant material in order to be produced. The larger the amount of plant material, the pricier the essential oil will be. Knowing this can help you assess if the essential oil you are purchasing has a fair price or is too good to be true. It can also help you learn which essential oils are more or less intensive to produce, and therefore their degree of sustainability.

The fact that so much plant material is required in order to produce such small amounts of essential oils always got me thinking: how sustainable are essential oils? The good news is that essential oils are incredibly concentrated, and therefore you really need very small amounts in your skincare recipes. If stored using the correct precautions, most essential oils have a pretty long shelf life of 1-3 years (see [picture](#)). One precious 10 ml bottle of essential oil can be used for so many different recipes, making it very sustainable.

Some essential oils are more sustainable than others. For example, the production process of lavender essential oil has a good yield, with about 1.3 kg (3 lb) of lavender buds producing 15 ml (3 teaspoons) of essential oil, compared to about 47 kg (105 lb) of freshly picked rose petals yielding just 5 ml (1 teaspoon) of rose essential oil (rose otto). The process of making rose essential oil is also more intensive as the petals have to be distilled on the day they have been collected. Citrus fruits also have quite a good yield and stand out as more sustainable as the essential oil is extracted by cold expressing the peel, which otherwise would likely go to waste.

However, certain types of essential oils come from plants that are in extremely high demand but not readily available, and as such are classified as species at risk. Keep in mind that not all endangered species appear on the IUCN Red List of threatened species (International Union for Conservation of Nature), but this does not mean that they are not vulnerable and should therefore be carefully sourced.

Some of the endangered essential oils include Indian sandalwood (*santalum album*), frankincense (*boswellia carterii*), rosewood (*aniba rosaeodora*) and myrrh (*commiphora myrrha*). For example, Indian sandalwood essential oil comes from the trunk of the sandalwood tree and has been used for aromatherapy and in the perfume industry for centuries. Its sought-after aroma has led to over-harvesting, causing a lack in supply, an increase in price and the development of a black market. However, this does not mean all sandalwood is unsustainable; an alternative is Australian sandalwood essential oil (*santalum spicatum*) where sustainable cultivation has been established, producing a similar, yet much pricier

essential oil.

It is important to use essential oils in a mindful way, respecting their shelf life, adhering to their usage thresholds and using them only in projects where the oil serves a specific purpose.

Storage and shelf life

Under the appropriate storage conditions, most steam distilled essential oils have a shelf life of 1–3 years, with some essential oils lasting less or longer. For example, citrus essential oils generally last 1–2 years, while resinous essential oils such as patchouli or sandalwood last around 4–8 years. Absolute oils can survive to up to 5 years. The shelf life should be indicated on the bottle of essential oil with a PAO (period after opening) symbol.



Example of PAO symbol

It is important to use an essential oil within its shelf life. In fact, an expired oil might be oxidised and cause skin sensitisation. Always store essential oils in a dark cupboard, away from sunlight and fire, which can damage their composition, and therefore their properties. Some essential oils are more prone to oxidation, in which case it is recommended to refrigerate them. When you formulate a recipe using an essential oil that has a short shelf life or is more prone to oxidation, it is also recommended to use an antioxidant, such as vitamin E.

Are essential oils safe during pregnancy, breastfeeding, for children or with medications?

During the first trimester of pregnancy, essential oils should always be avoided. This is because the foetus is going through a very delicate structural development, and there simply is not enough research to support the safe use of essential oils under this state. During the second and third trimesters, some essential oils can possibly induce contractions and are therefore best avoided. Although some essential oils might be safe, others simply lack the research to be considered fine to use during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Therefore, it is important to always check with your medical professional before deciding to use any essential oils during any stage of

pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Similarly, children have a more delicate system and skin compared to adults. You should avoid using any type of essential oil on children below 3 years of age. It is generally considered safer not to use essential oils even on older children; if you do wish to use them, make sure to check the supplier's provided dermal limits for each essential oil. You should avoid using essential oils on pets, as some oils may be toxic to them.

Finally, some essential oils contain compounds which may interact with certain drugs. In this case, seek advice from your supplier and medical professional before using essential oils.

Safety thresholds

Essential oils are so highly concentrated that a single essential oil can be made up of hundreds of chemical components, which give the essential oil its distinctive aroma and properties. For this reason, all essential oils must be handled with care.

First of all, essential oils should not be applied directly on the skin, but should always be diluted. You can dilute essential oils with many different ingredients, such as oils, butters, waxes, flower water, glycerin and alcohol. The easiest and most common way to dilute essential oils is to use carrier oils (read for more [information](#) about which carrier oils to use).

In cosmetics there are two categories of products, referred to as leave-on products and rinse-off products. Leave-on products are those that are not removed from the skin after they have been applied, such as creams, deodorants or lip balms. Rinse-off products are removed from the skin with water, as in the case of soaps, shampoo bars or facial cleansers.

Generally, the percentage limit of essential oils in leave-on products is usually up to 1%, where 1% is a dermal limit you should not pass. In rinse-off products, the threshold is usually 2%, with the exception of cold process soap, where essential oils are usually accepted at up to 3%. As perfume sprays are normally sprayed on a smaller area of the body, they are sometimes formulated with around 5%+ essential oils.

However, these guidelines do not apply to all essential oils. Every plant is different and has its own very specific usage thresholds, depending on the type of products you are making.

The only way for you to know you are using an essential oil safely is to check the safety information on your supplier's website for each essential oil you are using. This is because each essential oil will have slightly different limits depending on their source and allergens. Reputable

suppliers will provide an IFRA certificate, and if it's not available, you can try to contact your supplier to request it. At the time of publication of this book, IFRA certificates should be either for the 49th or 50th amendment to be valid.

You may also wonder how many drops are in these percentages? An excellent question! It may be tempting to just use drops as a unit of measure for essential oils, but we need to consider that each oil has its own unique weight and viscosity, making using drops as a unit of measure quite imprecise. You can find dilution charts online, which have worked out what the average number of drops is in 1 ml of essential oil. However, as mentioned, these should only be used as a loose guideline, as they are not precise. I have included some resources on my website (see below).

Resources

Throughout the writing of this book I read a lot of interesting articles and came across many blogs containing plenty of information about essential oils. I have included a comprehensive list of reading resources, suppliers to purchase essential oils from, and dilution charts on my website at www.bottegazerowaste.com/pages/essentialoils



**ESSENTIAL OILS
DIRECTORY**

PETITGRAIN

Botanical name: *Citrus aurantium amara*

Appearance: pale yellow to amber

Mood: energising, grounding

Aroma: citrus aroma with bitter, woody undertones

Plant part: leaves and twigs

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Primarily grown in Paraguay, petitgrain means ‘little grains’ in French, which refers to the small size of the citrus fruit growing on this tree, also known as bitter orange. Petitgrain essential oil is extracted from the leaves and twigs of tree. The same tree yields neroli from its blossoms and bitter orange essential oil from the peel of the fruit.

Uses: Petitgrain essential oil has antiseptic, antibacterial and astringent properties so it works really well at toning oily, acne-prone skin or balancing the scalp’s sebum production, which causes greasy hair. Its intense, grounding aroma is an excellent addition to perfume recipes when you want to achieve a calming blend. Petitgrain essential oil is also an superb masking agent and can be a very helpful addition to deodorant recipes.

Blends well with: Benzoin, bergamot, lavender, lemon, mandarin, neroli, palmarosa, patchouli, sandalwood, sweet orange.

Contraindications: This essential oil is considered non-toxic and non-irritant when properly diluted. As it is often adulterated, purchase it from a reliable supplier.



SWEET FENNEL

Botanical name: *Foeniculum vulgare*

Appearance: clear to pale yellow

Mood: calming, uplifting

Aroma: very sweet, mildly herbaceous with a fresh and slightly spicy anise/licuorice-like aroma typical of fennel

Plant part: seeds

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Native to southern Europe, sweet fennel has been cultivated for centuries for medicinal purposes, particularly to aid digestion and weight loss. In Ancient Rome, before fighting in the arena gladiators ate fennel as they believed it would give them strength. The essential oil is extracted by crushing dried seeds, which are then steam distilled. Infused into a herbal tea, fennel seeds can help soothe an upset stomach and help digestion, and are thought to increase the supply of milk when breastfeeding (but see note on contraindications).

Uses: Sweet fennel essential oil is antimicrobial and can be used diluted to tone skin and balance oily or acne-prone skin. It can be used in haircare recipes, such as shampoo bars, for its scent and to combat oily/greasy hair. When diluted within a carrier oil it can help soothe sore muscles. When diffused it helps cleanse the air, creating a calming atmosphere.

Blends well with: Aniseed, basil, bergamot, cardamom, cypress, eucalyptus, jasmine, lavender, lemon, peppermint, rose, rosemary, tea tree.

Contraindications: Avoid using during pregnancy or when breastfeeding. Sweet fennel essential oil can cause sensitisation when it oxidises; therefore, store in the fridge after opening it.



BLUE TANSY

Botanical name: *Tanacetum annuum*

Appearance: dark blue

Mood: calming, grounding

Aroma: sweet, fruity aroma with a herbaceous hint

Plant part: flowering tops and stems

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Blue tansy essential oil comes from a beautiful yellow-flowered plant which grows in Morocco (it is sometimes referred to as Moroccan tansy). Despite blue tansy flowers being bright yellow, chamazulene (an aromatic chemical compound) is what gives this essential oil its distinctive deep blue colour and exceptional soothing properties. Chamazulene is also found in chamomile essential oil, but it is present in blue tansy in a higher concentration. Being quite rare, blue tansy is an expensive essential oil, which means the oil is often diluted with cheaper tansy oil (*Tanacetum vulgare*), which does not contain any chamazulene and is not suitable for aromatherapy purposes. Be very careful when buying blue tansy essential oil and only purchase it from reliable suppliers.

Uses: Blue tansy essential oil is wonderful for soothing irritated skin and reducing redness: try it diluted in a [facial oil](#) or [facial toner](#).

Blends well with: Cedarwood, chamomile, clary sage, frankincense, geranium, jasmine, juniper, lavender, myrtle, neroli, petitgrain, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Be aware that the blue colour of this oil might leave stains on surfaces, or if not properly diluted.



PATCHOULI

Botanical name: *Pogostemon cablin*

Appearance: light yellow to golden brown viscous liquid

Mood: balancing, grounding

Aroma: rich, musky, earthy, spicy and quite masculine aroma with woody undertones

Plant part: leaves

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: base

Origins: A perennial bushy herb in the mint family and native to Asia, patchouli essential oil is extracted from the leaves through steam distillation. It has a hearty, musky aroma, often used in perfumery as a base note. Its name comes from the Tamil words *patchai* ('green') and *ellai* ('leaf').

Uses: Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antioxidant, use it in skincare recipes to regenerate skin cells and balance production of sebum, or in haircare recipes to soothe an itchy scalp and reduce dandruff. A natural [insect repellent](#) against mosquitoes, ants, flies, moths and fleas. Often used as a fixative in perfumes or soaps, as it can make other scents in the product last for longer. Also an effective masking agent; being antibacterial, it can be used in recipes to mask bad odours. Try adding it to a natural deodorant, or to bicarbonate of soda/baking soda to place next to a shoe rack.

Blends well with: Anise, bergamot, cedarwood, chamomile, eucalyptus, frankincense, ginger, lavender, lime, mandarin, rose, sandalwood, sweet orange, vetiver.

Contraindications: Considered non-toxic and non-irritant in dilution; it is, however, sometimes adulterated with different essential oils or synthetic

compounds so buy from reliable suppliers.



MANDARIN

Botanical name: *Citrus reticulata*

Appearance: pale green (green mandarin), pale yellow (yellow mandarin), deep orange (red mandarin)

Mood: refreshing, calming

Aroma: sweet and slightly floral citrus smell, typical of mandarins

Plant part: peel or leaves (mandarin petitgrain)

Method of extraction: cold expression or steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: The mandarin orange has been cultivated for thousands of years, originating in China and southeast Asia and introduced to Europe in 1805 by the floriculturist Sir Abraham Hume, who brought different varieties of mandarins from Canton to England. Cultivation spread across the Mediterranean region, particularly to southern Italy. There are three main varieties of mandarin essential oil: green, yellow and red mandarin; the colours denote the degree of maturation of the fruit, with green being unripe and red the most mature. Each variety of oil has a different colour and slightly different chemical profile. The name *mandarin* means 'minister', and was used to refer to China's high-ranking officials, and the Chinese language spoken by them and other well-educated people. The fruit was so named because it was reminiscent of the deep orange robes worn by Chinese bureaucrats.

Uses: Mandarin essential oil is full of antioxidants, making it ideal for inclusion in skincare recipes for mature or oily/acne-prone skin. It is said to be a favourite aroma amongst children: try adding a few drops to a diffuser to calm a cranky, overtired child.

Blends well with: Other citrus oils such as bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, lime, sweet orange, as well as basil, chamomile, ginger, lavender, may chang, rose.

Contraindications: Even though most citrus essential oils extracted from the peel are usually phototoxic, this is not the case with mandarin essential oil. Instead, mandarin petitgrain essential oil, which is extracted from the leaves, is considered phototoxic. Mandarin essential oil can cause sensitisation when it oxidises; therefore, store in the fridge after opening it.



PEPPERMINT

Botanical name: *Mentha piperita*

Appearance: thin, clear to pale yellow liquid

Mood: very fresh, uplifting

Aroma: fresh and strong aroma typical of peppermint, with sweet and balsamic undertones

Plant part: flowering herb

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Peppermint is a natural hybrid between water mint and spearmint. Native to Europe and the Middle East, this herb has a wide variety of applications, from treating digestive disorders, to cooking or decorative purposes.

Uses: The high menthol content of peppermint gives this essential oil an invigorating, cooling aroma, which is perfect to treat digestive issues, respiratory problems and muscle pains. It is a base note and fixative, so it prolongs the strength of an aroma in a blend. Its strong scent can mask odours: try it in a [deodorant recipe](#). Peppermint is a decongestant so it is great in [shower steamers](#), steam inhalation, added to a handkerchief for inhaling its scent or in a [solid lotion](#) rubbed on the chest to ease the discomfort of a cold. Use in [haircare recipes](#) to balance the scalp's oil production or as an effective [insect repellent ingredient](#).

Blends well with: Cedarwood, cypress, eucalyptus, geranium, juniper berry, lavender, lemon, rosemary, tea tree.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation (check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier). Avoid using in case of cardiac fibrillation. Keep away from the face and mouth of children. Sometimes adulterated with cornmint oil, so buy from a reliable supplier.



NEROLI

Botanical name: *Citrus aurantium*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: uplifting, calming, refreshing

Aroma: sweet, floral, quite sensual and exotic aroma that smells like oranges and delicate flowers blended together

Plant part: flowers

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Neroli essential oil is steam distilled from the orange blossoms of the *Citrus aurantium*, or bitter orange tree. The same tree yields bitter orange essential oil from the peel of the fruit, and [petitgrain](#) essential oil from the leaves and twigs. The name is associated with Princess Marie-Anne de la Trémoille (1642-1722), wife to the Italian Prince of Nerola, a town near Rome. The princess so adored the aroma of neroli that she named it after the town. Neroli was also popular at the court of King Louis XIV, who seldom bathed as he was afraid of catching diseases through water; instead, he had perfumes made for him and his court, with neroli featuring heavily in his perfume blends.

Uses: This oil has many skincare benefits. With its antimicrobial and antioxidant properties, neroli can balance sebum production and make the skin feel refreshed and rejuvenated. It has a beautiful, uplifting and calming scent and is often used as aroma in perfumes. It can even be used on its own, diluted in a carrier oil.

Blends well with: Benzoin, cardamom, chamomile, clary sage, frankincense, geranium, ginger, grapefruit, jasmine, lavender, lemon, mandarin, myrrh, palmarosa, rose, sandalwood, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Being quite expensive, neroli essential oil is often

adulterated, so purchase from a reliable supplier.



YLANG YLANG

Botanical name: *Cananga odorata*

Appearance: pale to golden yellow

Mood: uplifting, relaxing

Aroma: very flowery, sweet, sensual, resembling bubble gum, peaches with hints of intense jasmine

Plant part: flowers

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: base



Origins: The name derives from the Tagalog word *ilang* ('wild region'), referring to areas where this tree grows in tropical countries of Asia such as India, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia as well as Australia. It has long, narrow leaves and pale green/yellow flowers, which are steam distilled using fractional distillation – the oil is extracted five times, producing five grades of essential oil of varying aroma strength: extra (the finest grade, used in perfumery), first, second, third and complete.

Uses: Has a very sweet and uplifting scent which some may find overpowering on its own, but it works well within a blend as a base or

fixative note. Considered an aphrodisiac aroma, try it in a [handmade candle](#) for a relaxing, sensual atmosphere. The essential oil is also praised for its haircare benefits, as it is able to balance the scalp's oil production, promote hair growth and bring fullness and shine: try it in a scalp massage or [hair oil](#).

Blends well with: Bergamot, cinnamon, clove, geranium, grapefruit, jasmine, lemon, sandalwood, vanilla, vetiver.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation – check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier. Ylang ylang is sometimes adulterated with other essential oils such as cananga oil and synthetic compounds, so purchase from a reliable supplier.



EUCALYPTUS

Botanical name: *Eucalyptus globulus*

Appearance: thin, transparent liquid

Mood: uplifting, refreshing

Aroma: very fresh, balsamic herbaceous menthol-like aroma

Plant part: leaves

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Did you know that in the world there are over 700 species of eucalyptus trees, and the vast majority originates from Australia? Eucalyptus is an evergreen plant which can grow to up to 90 m (300 ft) high. The name was coined by French herbalist Charles L'Héritier, and derives from the Greek words *eu* ('well') and *kalupto* ('concealed'), which refers to how the unopened flower buds are covered by the plant's bud caps. Eucalyptus has traditionally been used by Aboriginal Australians to disinfect wounds, relieve pains and aches, ease gastro-intestinal symptoms and treat fever.

Uses: This incredibly refreshing oil is perfect to decongest a blocked nose: add 2-3 drops to a handkerchief, bring it to the nose and inhale.

Alternatively, make some [shower steamers](#) and enjoy an uplifting spa experience in your own bathroom. Eucalyptus essential oil can leave a very warm sensation when applied, diluted, to the skin. Use it to create a refreshing massage oil to apply after an intense workout or if you have tired legs.

Blends well with: All herbaceous essential oils such as lavender, peppermint, rosemary, tea tree, thyme; also cedarwood, lemon and lemongrass.

Contraindications: Keep away from children, specifically from near their

face and nose.



VANILLA

Botanical name: *Vanilla planifolia*

Appearance: thick and viscous yellow-brown to dark brown liquid

Mood: calming, relaxing

Aroma: very sweet, balsamic, calming, sensual with chocolate undertones

Plant part: beans/pods

Method of extraction: solvent extraction

Note: base

Origins: Vanilla belongs to the orchid family native to Mexico and was first used by the Aztecs. Vanilla essential oil does not exist; instead, we use vanilla oleoresin – a thick, semi-solid concentrate extracted from flowers by macerating the beans/pods using alcohol solvent. The oleoresin is water soluble, so it can be further processed with a sugar-based alcohol solvent to produce a pourable, oil-soluble absolute. This absolute can be further diluted within a carrier oil.

Uses: Because it is not oil soluble, vanilla oleoresin can be used in alcohol-based perfumes or added to water-based sprays such as toners, linen sprays or diffusers. Use in oil-based cosmetics such as solid lotions, body butters and massage oils. Vanilla is said to rejuvenate skin and promote shiny hair. Use to scent candles or in natural cold-process soap (but it can cause discolouration, making products turn brown).

Blends well with: Aniseed, cedarwood, cinnamon, clove, ginger, lavender, mandarin, neroli, patchouli, rose, sandalwood, sweet orange, vetiver, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Vanilla absolute, CO₂ extracts and oleoresin are considered non-toxic and non-irritant when properly diluted.



BASIL

Botanical name: *Ocimum basilicum*

Appearance: golden yellow with a slight green hue

Mood: energizing, grounding

Aroma: a sweet, fresh and balsamic herbaceous aroma

Plant part: leaves and flowering tops

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Basil is known as the royal herb as its name comes from the Latin *basilikon* (king). Basil is native to Asia but different varieties are now widely cultivated worldwide, particularly in the Mediterranean region. The most common varieties grown for their essential oils are sweet basil, exotic basil and holy basil. Sweet basil is often used in aromatherapy as it has a lower content of methyl eugenol and methyl chavicol (estragol), which can be irritating to the skin.

Uses: In aromatherapy basil is used to treat colds and respiratory complaints or stomach issues. It can soothe muscle pains, so use it in a carrier oil to create a muscle massage oil to apply after doing sports. Its high linalool content makes it a great [insect repellent spray](#). Add this essential oil to haircare products as it stimulates hair follicles, promoting good hair growth.

Blends well with: Bergamot, cedarwood, citronella, clary sage, clove, eucalyptus, geranium, grapefruit, lavender, lemon, lemongrass, lime, peppermint, rosemary.

Contraindications: Depending on the source, basil essential oil might have different levels of methyl eugenol and estragol content, which can be checked with your supplier by obtaining the CoA (certificate of analysis). The usage rate will depend on the level of these compounds.



GINGER

Botanical name: *Zingiber officinale*

Appearance: pale yellow to dark amber

Mood: uplifting, energising, comforting

Aroma: warm and spicy aroma with zesty lemon notes

Plant part: root

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Ginger is native to India, and the stimulating and warming essential oil is steam distilled from the rhizome (the underground root). The word ginger comes from the Greek *zingiberis*, which derives from the Sanskrit word for horn-shaped. It has a long history of medicinal and culinary uses, especially in Indian, Chinese and Greek civilizations, and it plays a key role within Ayurvedic medicine.

Uses: Ginger is very effective at relieving feelings of nausea and other digestive issues. To calm an upset stomach, add a few drops of the essential oil to a handkerchief and inhale. Add the essential oil to massage oils to relieve muscle tension and improve circulation. Also use in a scalp [massage oil](#) to gently cleanse an oily scalp and to relieve any itchiness.

Blends well with: Citrus essential oils such as bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, lime, mandarin, sweet orange, plus other fresh and spicy essential oils such as clove, frankincense, geranium, juniper, patchouli, vetiver. Also blends well with lavender, rose, sandalwood.

Contraindications: Although not as much as citrus oil, ginger essential oil is slightly phototoxic. Avoid using it 12 hours before, or during sun exposure.



FRANKINCENSE

Botanical name: *Boswellia carterii*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: uplifting, refreshing

Aroma: fresh and earthy scent with spicy undertones

Plant part: resin

Method of extraction: Steam distillation

Note: base

Origins: Frankincense is extracted from the Boswellia tree, which grows in Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, Oman and India. The tree resin is called olibanum, from the Arabic *al luban*, which means white and refers to its colour. The olibanum is collected by making an incision into the tree trunk, it then hardens into resin which is steam distilled to produce the essential oil. The resin was considered extremely precious by Ancient Egyptians and used during religious ceremonies as an offering to Amun-Ra, as well as to embalm pharaohs. It was used for centuries to produce incense-style perfumes.

Uses: The essential oil has astringent properties and is widely used in facial recipes for toning the skin and also for reducing the appearance of wrinkles or blemishes. Thanks to its anti-inflammatory properties, it can be used in massage oils to reduce muscle discomfort. It can also be used to ease coughs: try adding a couple of drops to hot water to use as a facial steam.

Blends well with: A variety of oils, in particular floral, spicy and woody aromas such as basil, bergamot, cedarwood, cinnamon, geranium, lavender, lemon, myrrh, neroli, rose, sandalwood, sweet orange, vetiver.

Contraindications: Frankincense essential oil can cause sensitisation if it oxidises, so make sure to store it in the fridge once opened.



MYRTLE

Botanical name: *Myrtus communis*

Appearance: pale yellow (green myrtle) or orange-red liquid (red myrtle)

Mood: fresh and uplifting

Aroma: sweet and spicy, floral and camphoraceous aroma with balsamic eucalyptus-like undertones

Plant part: leaves and twigs

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: An evergreen shrub from the Mediterranean region, myrtle has white flowers in summer and blue-black berries in winter. The most common myrtle types are common myrtle, red myrtle and green myrtle. Its name comes from the Greek *myrtos* ('sprig') and it has a long history of religious, medicinal and cosmetic uses. In Ancient Greece and Rome it was a symbol of prosperity and love, associated with the goddess of love Aphrodite/Venus, used to crown athletes, celebrate a birth or wedding or show royal status.

Uses: Myrtle oil has antiseptic and astringent properties and can be used to reduce acne and oily skin. Myrtle can help with respiratory issues such as coughs, colds and bronchitis. Try adding it to a steam inhalation or make a body balm or [solid lotion](#) to rub on your chest. Its eucalyptus-like aroma is often used as a middle note in perfumes.

Blends well with: Woodsy and spices such as cedarwood, clove; patchouli, sandalwood; fresh and herbaceous oils such as cypress, lavender, rosemary; citrus oils such as bergamot, lemon, mandarin; flowers such as jasmine, neroli, rose, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation. Check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier.



ANISEED

Botanical name: *Pimpinella anisum*

Appearance: clear to pale yellow

Mood: energising

Aroma: a powerful sweet and spicy, liquorice-like aroma

Plant part: seeds

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top



Origin: Aniseed essential oil is extracted from the seeds of the *Pimpinella anisum*, a flowering plant which belongs to the parsley family (*Apiaceae*). Aniseed is native to the eastern Mediterranean region and southwest Asia. During the ancient times, aniseed was commonly used for its medicinal properties. For example, Ancient Greeks used it to clear congested airways, and the Assyrians made use of its digestive properties. Aniseed is also commonly used to produce liquors and in baked goods. Aniseed is not

to be confused with star anise essential oil (*Illicium verum*), which shares similar properties, but comes from a different plant.

Uses: Aniseed essential oil has antiseptic properties, so it can be used in a massage oil or body salve to soothe muscle aches. It can also help to decongest airways – if you have a cold, add the essential oil to a bowl of hot water and inhale the steam, or simply drop onto a handkerchief. It also makes a wonderful addition to natural toothpaste recipes as it has a lovely sweet, spicy and very refreshing taste. It is also mildly antibacterial, therefore killing the mouth's harmful bacteria while not attacking the teeth's oral microbiome health.

Blends well with: Citrus essential oils such as bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, mandarin, orange, petitgrain; spicy essential oils such as cardamom, cedarwood, fennel, ginger, rosewood, and also delicate floral essential oils such as chamomile and lavender.

Contraindications: Use well diluted. Check the usage rate with your supplier. Avoid using during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.



SWEET ORANGE

Botanical name: *Citrus sinensis*

Appearance: thin, bright orange liquid

Mood: energising, uplifting

Aroma: sweet, fruity and citrusy aroma typical of oranges

Plant part: peel

Method of extraction: cold pressed

Note: top

Origins: Sweet orange refers to the oranges we commonly find in our fruit bowls, and it is the most popular citrus fruit in the world. Although its exact origins are unknown, it is believed to have originated from China, and to be a hybrid between the pomelo and the mandarin. Sweet oranges were introduced to the West via the Silk Road, and then spread to Europe in the 15th and 19th centuries through British and Portuguese trading.

Uses: Sometimes referred to as ‘liquid sunshine’, sweet orange essential oil has a very uplifting and energising aroma that blends very well with many essential oils, and is perfect to add a bright note to a perfume. Due to its high content of limonene, sweet orange essential oil is very cleansing and suitable to use in recipes for oily or acne-prone skin or greasy hair.

Blends well with: Basil, bergamot, cedarwood, cinnamon, ginger, grapefruit, lavender, lemon, lemongrass, lime, mandarin, neroli, petitgrain, sage, sandalwood, vanilla.

Contraindications: Sweet orange essential oil can cause sensitisation when it oxidises; therefore, store in the fridge after opening it.



PALMAROSA

Botanical name: *Cymbopogon martinii*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: calming, relaxing, grounding

Aroma: rose-like aroma with a deep, balsamic and herbaceous undertone

Plant part: grass

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Also known as Indian geranium, palmarosa is an herbaceous plant native to India and Nepal with a herbaceous, rose-like scent. In the past, palmarosa oil was often used to dilute the more expensive rose oil. However, even though it does have a scent reminiscent of rose, it does not belong to the rose family, but to the same family as citronella and lemongrass.

Uses: A balancing and cleansing oil, palmarosa can regulate the skin's sebum production and be particularly beneficial in products for oily skin. Thanks to its antiseptic properties, palmarosa oil works very well as a deodorizing agent. Try using it in a [deodorant](#), blended with tea tree oil. Palmarosa's lovely, delicate scent is less fresh and herbaceous than that of the rose, and contains more balsamic and spicy hints. However, it can quite successfully be used to replace the more expensive rose otto or rose absolute in perfume blends.

Blends well with: Bergamot, cedarwood, geranium, grapefruit, jasmine, lavender, lemon, lime, neroli, sandalwood, sweet orange, tea tree, vetiver.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation. Check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier.



LAVENDER

Botanical name: *Lavandula angustifolia*

Appearance: clear, thin liquid

Mood: soothing, calming

Aroma: floral and herbaceous, slightly sweet aroma

Plant part: flowers

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Notes: middle



Origins: Lavender essential oil has been valued for its soothing, calming and anti-inflammatory properties for centuries. The fragrant plant was used by Ancient Egyptians and Romans to scent their baths and hair; in fact, the name lavender comes from the Latin *lavare* ('to wash'). The oil is incredibly versatile. As well as being used for a wide variety of applications, it also blends really well with nearly all essential oils. About 1.3 kg (3 lb) of lavender produces just 1 teaspoon of oil.

Uses: This oil is often used in recipes that promote relaxation or calm irritated skin. Infuse it in [bath salts](#) to pour into a warm bath, add a couple of drops on your pillow at bedtime, or add to a nourishing [solid lotion](#) to use before going to bed. Lavender essential oil also has antimicrobial properties, making it a very helpful addition to [natural deodorants](#), where it can fight off odour-causing bacteria and soothe the skin. Lavender essential oil can also repel mosquitos. Mix it with other insect-repellent essential oils such as lemongrass to create a natural mosquito [repellent spray](#).

Blends well with: Most essential oils, but particularly with bergamot, chamomile, eucalyptus, geranium, lemongrass, mandarin, palmarosa, peppermint, petitgrain, rosemary, sweet orange, tea tree, vetiver.

Contraindications: Considered non-toxic and non-irritant when properly diluted. Lavender oil is sometimes adulterated so purchase from a reliable supplier.



CEDARWOOD

Botanical name: *Cedrus atlantica* (Cedarwood Atlas), *Juniperus virginiana* (Cedarwood Virginian), *Cedrus deodara* (Cedarwood Himalayan)

Appearance: *Cedrus atlantica*: golden yellow or deep orange; *Juniperus virginiana*: pale yellow or orange; *Cedrus deodara*: pale to dark yellow

Mood: grounding, balancing, uplifting

Aroma: warm, sweet and camphoraceous woody scent with deep balsamic and citrus undertones

Plant part: wood chips and sawdust

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: base

Origins: There are several varieties of this essential oil, steam distilled from different cedar trees. Ancient Egyptians used cedarwood oil in embalming rituals due to its antimicrobial and insect-repellent properties. The Cedarwood atlas tree is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species so it is important that you source oil from reputable, sustainable sources. Today this essential oil is mainly produced in Morocco and France.

Uses: Its antimicrobial properties make this oil useful in recipes for irritated, acne-prone skin, helping to reduce irritation, soothe inflammation and clear pores. Its insecticidal properties work well in an [insect repellent](#). Use it in haircare to stimulate hair growth, fight dandruff, soothe an itchy scalp and condition the hair.

Blends well with: Bergamot, cinnamon, clary sage, cypress, frankincense, lavender, lemon, patchouli, petitgrain, sandalwood, thyme, vetiver.

Contraindications: This oil has a suspected emmenagogue effect (it can stimulate or increase menstrual flow) so best to avoid during pregnancy.



CHAMOMILE

Botanical name: *Anthemis nobilis* (Roman chamomile); *Matricaria chamomilla* (German chamomile)

Appearance: pale blue or clear to pale yellow and thin consistency (Roman chamomile oil); blue/green and viscous consistency (German blue chamomile)

Mood: calming, relaxing

Aroma: sweet, fresh and herbaceous apple-like aroma

Plant part: flower heads

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle



Origins: The name chamomile comes from the Greek words *chamáí chamáí* ('near the ground') and *míla mḗla* ('apple') referring to the low-growing features of the plant, and the apple-like scent of its flowers. Several types of chamomile essential oils exist, but the most popular ones are Roman

chamomile and German chamomile. Roman chamomile, also known as English Chamomile, is native to southern and western Europe, and is the type of chamomile commonly used as a tea infusion. German chamomile is native to Europe and west Asia and is often used for cosmetic and medicinal reasons. The high levels of a compound called chamazulene is what gives German chamomile strong anti-inflammatory properties, as well as its distinctive blue colour.

Uses: Due a the high content of chamazulene, German chamomile has strong anti-inflammatory properties, making this oil perfect in a facial lotion for sensitive, itchy, irritated skin. Roman chamomile has similar anti-inflammatory properties, although it is much milder than German chamomile. Infuse it in bath salts to enjoy a [relaxing bath](#) or add to a calming [solid lotion](#).

Blends well with: Bergamot, clary sage, geranium, lavender, rose.

Contraindications: This essential oil is considered non-toxic and non-irritant when properly diluted. Both Roman and German chamomile essential oils are prone to oxidation; it is therefore best to store these oils in a cool place away from sunlight or in the fridge after opening them.



HELICHRYSUM

Botanical name: *Helichrysum italicum*

Appearance: thin, pale yellow to red liquid

Mood: refreshing, uplifting, balancing

Aroma: fresh, herbaceous and slightly camphoraceous aroma with honey-like sweet and spicy undertones.

Plant part: flowers

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: base

Origins: The name helichrysum comes from the Greek *helios* ('sun') and *chrysos* ('gold'): golden sun, just like the beautiful golden yellow colour that these flowers have. Helichrysum is often referred to as 'Immortelle' or 'the everlasting flower', because the flowers are long lasting and because its essential oil has a rejuvenating effect on the skin, making it appear younger. Helichrysum flowers are typical of the Mediterranean region, such as Italy, France, Croatia and Albania.

Uses: Thanks to its powerful anti-inflammatory, regenerating and antioxidant qualities, helichrysum essential oil is often used in skincare facial recipes for mature skin. Add this oil to a [facial toner](#) or [facial oil](#) to even out the skin tone, cleanse pores and rejuvenate the skin.

Blends well with: Herbaceous and flowery oils such as chamomile, clary sage, lavender; spicy oils such as clove, geranium; citrus oils such as bergamot, grapefruit, mandarin, neroli.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation. Check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier.



LIME

Botanical name: *Citrus aurantifolia*

Appearance: light yellow to light green

Mood: uplifting, refreshing

Aroma: fresh citrus scent, which is less sweet and crisper than lemon

Plant part: peel

Method of extraction: cold expression or steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Lime is a fruit which originates from India and Malaysia, but is nowadays widely grown in other regions such as Mexico and the Caribbean. Limes are very rich in vitamin C, and British ships often carried lime and lemon juice to prevent scurvy, a very common disease among sailors caused by a vitamin C deficiency. Lime essential oil is expressed from the fresh peel or steam distilled from the dried peel of the lime.

Uses: Lime essential oil has toning and astringent properties. Use it to tighten pores in a [facial toner](#), try adding it into a facial cleanser or toner for an oily [scalp](#) or add it to a shampoo bar to reduce dandruff. Lime is also great at repelling insects, so you can add it to an [insect-repellent spray](#). It is antibacterial and refreshing, so it would work well in a [natural deodorant recipe](#).

Blends well with: Bergamot, cardamom, citronella, clary sage, jasmine, lavender, lemon, neroli.

Contraindications: When expressed from the peel, lime essential oil is phototoxic, so avoid using it 12 hours before, or during sun exposure. The oil is not considered phototoxic when steam distilled. This oil can cause sensitisation when it oxidises, so store in the fridge after opening.



CITRONELLA

Botanical name: *Cymbopogon nardus*

Appearance: thin, pale to straw yellow

Mood: very uplifting

Aroma: sharp lemon-like aroma, reminiscent of lemongrass but more pungent and less sweet

Plant part: grass

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: With a stem resembling bamboo, citronella is an aromatic perennial grass. It grows in eastern and southern Africa and southeast Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and Java. The use of this oil dates back to Ancient China, where it had a wide variety of therapeutic applications, being used as a natural remedy for rheumatism and digestive issues.

Uses: This oil is widely used in mosquito-repellent recipes, from candles to [oils and sprays](#), as it masks the human scent mosquitoes are attracted to. With a fresh, uplifting, pungent scent, this oil has excellent cleansing properties. For very oily hair, add it to shampoo to cleanse excess oil from the scalp. It is also good for cleaning purposes, where it can replace the aroma of lemon with its deeper, longer lasting scent.

Blends well with: Citrus essential oils with a milder scent such as bergamot, mandarin, petitgrain, sweet orange; sweet herbaceous aromas like lavender; fresh herbaceous essential oils such as eucalyptus, rosemary, thyme; spicy resinous aromas like clove bud, frankincense, ginger, myrrh.

Contraindications: Citronella essential oil may contain methyl eugenol, which can cause skin sensitisation. It is essential to use citronella essential oil well diluted. As with all essential oils, make sure to check the correct dermal limit depending on the application.



TEA TREE

Botanical name: *Melaleuca alternifolia*

Appearance: thin, transparent to pale yellow liquid

Mood: refreshing, invigorating

Aroma: fresh and herbaceous scent, reminiscent of eucalyptus but sweeter and with a pungent, medicinal undertone

Plant part: leaves and twigs

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: The name was coined by English explorer James Cook, who discovered the plant in Australia and noticed Aboriginal people using the leaves to make a tea. Due to antiseptic and antibacterial properties, the tea tree leaves and oil were used for various medicinal applications such as treating sore throats, coughs or minor wounds.

Uses: This essential oil's powerful antiseptic properties make it excellent in [natural deodorant recipes](#), where it can help prevent the formation of odour-causing bacteria. It can be used diluted with oil to treat acne scars and blemishes. It helps reduce dandruff, and, thanks to its anti-inflammatory properties, it can ease the discomfort of an itchy scalp. Its fresh, herbal, slightly balsamic scent is very helpful at decongesting a blocked nose – add a few drops to a handkerchief or use in a steam inhalation.

Blends well with: Clove, eucalyptus, geranium, grapefruit, lavender, lemon, peppermint, rosemary, thyme. However, this oil's very strong scent can overpower more delicate scents.

Contraindications: Tea tree essential oil can cause sensitisation when it oxidises, so store in the fridge after opening it. Avoid it if you have particularly sensitive skin.



SAGE

Botanical name: *Salvia officinalis*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: uplifting, grounding

Aroma: fresh and herbaceous aroma with balsamic, sweet and mildly spicy undertones

Plant part: leaves

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top



Origins: Sage is a perennial plant native to the Mediterranean region. In ancient times sage was considered a sacred, cleansing and healing plant – Greeks and Romans used it to preserve meat, while Egyptians and Chinese used it for fertility treatments. Sage is very different from [clary sage](#) essential oil, not only in aroma, but also in its properties.

Uses: Sage essential oil is very good for haircare. Use in a [scalp massage](#) to improve the circulation and mitigate the risk of hair loss. It is also purifying and cleansing, so it is perfect to use on oily or greasy hair. Add

to massage blends to promote relaxation or soothe sore muscles. It has antibacterial properties, so use it in a [natural deodorant](#) or in skincare recipes for oily or acne-prone skin. Sage essential oil is also an excellent [insect repellent](#).

Blends well with: Cedarwood, lavender, lemon, peppermint, rosemary, sweet orange, tea tree, thyme.

Contraindications: Due to the content of thujone, sage essential oil is neurotoxic. Avoid using during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Use well diluted and respect your supplier's recommended dermal limit.



CYPRESS

Botanical name: *Cupressus sempervirens*

Appearance: clear to pale yellow thin liquid

Mood: grounding, refreshing, cleansing

Aroma: spicy, woody, very herbaceous and fresh aroma with a sweet and smoky vanilla-like hint

Plant part: needles, twigs and cones

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Native to the Mediterranean region, the cypress is an evergreen tree with a long conical shape and can grow to 25-35 m (82-114 ft) high. On average, the cypress tree can capture about 23 kg (50 lb) of CO₂ in a year, which offsets to a 82-mile (132-km) long car trip! The name Cypress likely comes from the Greek *Cuprus*, which refers to the island of Cyprus, which since ancient times was heavily wooded with cypress trees. In Ancient Egypt cypress was used medicinally for its anti-inflammatory properties, as well as in the form of incense to burn during meditation.

Uses: Due to its astringent properties, cypress oil can be used in a facial toner for acne-prone and oily skin. It is often used in aftershaves and colognes due to its masculine aroma. Add it to a body massage oil to tone the skin and relieve muscle aches, or in [natural deodorants](#).

Blends well with: Benzoin, bergamot, cedarwood, clary sage, grapefruit, juniper, lavender, lemon, lime.

Contraindications: Can cause sensitisation if it oxidises, so store it in the fridge once opened.



JUNIPER BERRY

Botanical name: *Juniperus communis*

Appearance: transparent to pale yellow

Mood: cleansing, refreshing, balancing

Aroma: fresh, slightly pungent aroma reminiscent of pine needles, with mild spicy undertones

Plant part: berries

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Juniper is a plant with a long history, and is commonly grown in the Mediterranean region, Central Asia and North America. The Ancient Egyptians used juniper during embalming rituals, the Ancient Greeks burned juniper berries to fight epidemics, while the Romans used the plant for its antiseptic properties, as well as for culinary purposes. The essential oil is extracted from the juniper berries, which are actually the seed cones of the juniper plant. The same are also used in the preparation of gin, to which it imbues its flavour.

Uses: Due to its astringent properties, juniper berry essential oil can be used in skincare recipes for oily and acne-prone skin such as a [facial toner](#) and it is good for cleansing greasy hair. It can also be used in massage oils and in hot water for a steam inhalation to relieve a cough.

Blends well with: Woodsy oils such as cedarwood, sandalwood; fresh herbaceous essential oils such as geranium, lavender, rosemary; citrus essential oils such as grapefruit, lemon, sweet orange.

Contraindications: Juniper berry essential oil can cause sensitisation if it oxidises, therefore make sure you store it in the fridge once opened.



LEMONGRASS

Botanical name: *Cymbopogon flexuosus*

Appearance: light yellow to amber

Mood: uplifting, revitalising

Aroma: fresh, zesty, slightly herbaceous and sweet aroma, which is reminiscent of lemon but much sharper

Plant part: grass

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: Native to southeast and south Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and India, lemongrass is a perennial grass with fragrant leaves and stems, commonly used as a flavouring, particularly in curries, sauces, salads and desserts. In some countries, such as India or Sri Lanka, lemongrass is added to tea to relieve fever and often referred to as 'fever grass'.

Uses: This oil has strong astringent and antiseptic properties, and it is excellent in haircare recipes for greasy hair or to relieve an itchy scalp. It is also a natural [insect repellent](#). While its scent is similar to lemon, lemongrass tends to linger longer so try using lemongrass essential oil in your products instead. Lemongrass can be used to relax muscles, tired legs and soothe muscle aches, so it is perfect in a massage oil, particularly after a workout.

Blends well with: Basil, cardamom, cedarwood, clove, geranium, ginger, lavender, rosemary, tea tree, as well as with citrus aromas such as citronella, lemon, lime, mandarin, may chang, sweet orange.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation. Check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier. Lemongrass is sometimes adulterated with synthetic citral so make sure to purchase from a reliable supplier.



CINNAMON

Botanical name: *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*

Appearance: golden brown, slightly resinous consistency

Mood: uplifting, balancing

Aroma: sweet and spicy, intense aroma

Plant part: leaves, twigs and inner bark

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Cinnamon has been used for thousands of years for culinary, medicinal and religious purposes. Its name means ‘fragrant spice plant’ and the familiar sticks are created from the inner bark, which is dried and rolled. The essential oil is extracted from a tropical tree, found in Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar and Madagascar. There are two varieties of oil: cinnamon leaf essential oil and cinnamon bark essential oil, which are the results of the distillation of the leaves and the bark of the tree respectively.

Uses: This warm and spicy essential oil is known to alleviate aches and pain, making it a good option for massage oils. The oil is anti-inflammatory and antibacterial, and is often used in toothpaste to prevent tooth decay and gum inflammation, as well as to freshen the breath.

Blends well with: Most citrus essential oils, such as bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, sweet orange; spicy essential oils such as black pepper, cardamom, clove, ginger; fresh essential oils such as tea tree and frankincense.

Contraindications: Cinnamon bark oil is considered a sensitiser and as such should be used with extra care, and never in direct contact with the skin. Avoid using cinnamon bark essential oil when pregnant or breastfeeding. Use both cinnamon leaf and bark essential oils well diluted. Check the usage rate with your supplier.



ROSE

Botanical name: *Rosa damascena*

Appearance: viscous amber liquid (rose absolute), thin colourless/pale yellow (rose otto)

Mood: calming, relaxing

Aroma: sweet and floral aroma typical of roses with subtle fresh and herbaceous undertones

Plant part: rose petals

Method of extraction: steam or water distillation (rose otto) or solvent extraction (rose absolute)

Note: middle

Origins: With a history of cultivation stretching back 5000 years, roses have many symbolic meanings, such as beauty and love. They are depicted in wall paintings in Ancient Egyptian tombs, their petals spoken about in Greek mythology where the flower was linked to Aphrodite, goddess of love, and Romans bathed in rosewater. There are many rose species, but the one mostly used for oil is the Damask rose. The essential oil is steam or water distilled from the petals and is known as rose otto ('otto' comes from the Persian word *atir*, or 'perfumed'). Rose absolute is obtained through solvent extraction. Producing rose essential oil is very labourintensive: it takes over 10,000 freshly picked roses to produce just 5 ml (1 teaspoon) of rose essential oil, explaining the very high price this essential oil carries.

Uses: Rose essential oil (otto) or rose absolute can be used in a wide range of skincare. Rose oil, in particular rose otto, is moisturizing and anti-ageing, so is perfect in products for dry and mature skin. With anti-inflammatory properties, it can heal sun-damaged skin, calm redness and bring a glow to the skin. Use in a [facial toner](#) or add to a moisturising facial lotion. Rose absolute has an intense rose aroma, and is also suitable to use in perfume recipes. For a similar scent at a more affordable price,

use [palmarosa](#) essential oil. It is not as fresh and delicate as rose essential oil or rose absolute, but it has a fairly similar scent, especially if used in a blend.

Blends well with: Benzoin, bergamot, chamomile, clary sage, clove, geranium, lavender, neroli, palmarosa, patchouli, sandalwood.

Contraindications: Due to its possible methyl eugenol content, use rose essential oil/rose otto very well diluted. It is essential to check your supplier's recommendations and apply the correct dermal limit depending on the product you are making. Due to its cost, rose oil is also often adulterated so buy from a reliable supplier.



CLOVE BUD

Botanical name: *Syzygium aromaticum*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: energizing, cleansing

Aroma: spicy, intense clove bud aroma

Plant part: flowering buds

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: A native of Indonesia's Malaku Islands, the clove bud tree can grow up to 9 m (29 ft), but it does not produce any buds for the first five years. Over 2000 years ago clove buds were a popular perfume and medicinal ingredient in China, and they were prized by Ancient Romans for their antiseptic properties. Dutch importation of clove buds to the West began in the 16th century, from their colonies in Zanzibar and Maldives.

Uses: The intense, sweet, spicy scent is perfect in a body perfume oil for a fresh, masculine aroma. Clove bud essential oil contains eugenol, a compound with analgesic properties, so it is often used in body massage oils to bring a warming sensation to the skin and relieve muscle aches. It is often featured in toothpaste or mouthwash products to relieve toothache and gum discomfort.

Blends well with: Sweet citrus essential oils such as bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, sweet orange; spicy essential oils such as cardamom, cinnamon, patchouli; herbaceous and sweet essential oils such as clary sage, lavender, Roman chamomile, sweet fennel.

Contraindications: Due to its eugenol content, it is vital to use clove bud essential oil well diluted (check the correct dermal limit for the usage). Only use clove bud essential oil (not clove leaf or clove stem, which are not suitable for aromatherapy purposes).



MYRRH

Botanical name: *Commiphora myrrha*

Appearance: amber to brown

Mood: relaxing, grounding

Aroma: spicy and fresh, with a slightly rubbery, medicinal aroma with sweet and balsamic undertones

Plant part: resin

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: base

Origins: Myrrh is a resin extracted from the *Commiphora myrrha* tree, native to Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. It has a spicy, fresh and medicinal aroma; its name is derived from the semitic root *mrr*, which means 'bitter'. In ancient times, myrrh was considered valuable. In the Bible, myrrh was one of the three gifts given to baby Jesus by the Magi, symbolizing the anointing oil. The Ancient Egyptians used myrrh in embalming practices as it masked any smells and slowed the decay of corpses. The Greeks used it for medicinal purposes, as well as a skin toner and hair perfume.

Uses: Myrrh essential oil can be used to treat and smoothen skin blemishes, such as those caused by acne or eczema. It also has astringent properties, which make it very suitable in [skin toner](#) recipes and scalp massages for oily/dandruff hair. It can also offer relief from coughs and colds when added to a handkerchief or used in a steam inhalation. In perfumes it is used as a fixative, enhancing the scent of other oils in the blend.

Blends well with: Floral, spicy or citrus essential oils, such as cedarwood, clove, frankincense, grapefruit, jasmine, lavender, lemon.

Contraindications: Avoid during pregnancy and breastfeeding.



GRAPEFRUIT

Botanical name: *Citrus paradisi*

Appearance: light yellow/orange or pale green

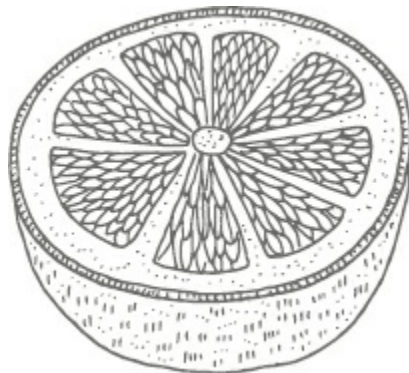
Mood: uplifting, energising

Aroma: zesty, citrus aroma which is much sweeter than lemon but not as balsamic as bergamot

Plant part: peel

Method of extraction: cold expression

Note: top



Origins: Grapefruit is a citrus hybrid, the result of a mix between the sweet orange and the pomelo. Originating from Barbados and first documented in 1750 by Welsh naturalist Reverend Griffith Hughes, grapefruit was said to be the 'Forbidden Fruit' from the tree of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Today, China is the largest grapefruit producer globally. It takes 200 kg (440 lb) of grapefruit peel, or about 2000 grapefruits, to produce 1 kg (2 lb 4 oz) of essential oil.

Uses: Grapefruit essential oil has antiseptic properties, so it is good in [natural deodorants](#). It also has astringent properties and is high in vitamin C, so it makes a wonderful addition to a toner for oily, acne-prone [skin](#) or to a scalp massage for [oily hair](#).

Blends well with: Other citrus essential oils such as bergamot, lemon, sweet orange; fresh and herbaceous notes such as cypress, frankincense, geranium, lavender, peppermint, tea tree; also palmarosa and patchouli.

Contraindications: Phototoxic, so avoid using it 12 hours before, or during sun exposure. It has a shorter shelf life than other oils and can cause sensitisation if it oxidises. Be sure to use this oil within its shelf life and refrigerate once open. It is sometimes adulterated so buy from a reliable supplier.



ROSEMARY

Botanical name: *Rosmarinus officinalis* leaf oil

Appearance: thin colourless to pale yellow liquid

Mood: uplifting, refreshing, helps with concentration

Aroma: fresh, herbaceous aroma with balsamic, minty undertones

Plant part: leaves

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: The name is from Latin *ros* (dew) and *marinus* (of the sea), probably as this plant grows along the Mediterranean coast. Ancient Egyptians used rosemary as incense to scent the journey of the deceased into the afterlife, Greeks burned it as an offering to the gods, and Romans connected it to immortality, and planted it near tombs.

Uses: Antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant. The oil stimulates circulation, so is ideal in haircare recipes to combat dandruff and hair loss, such as [scalp massages](#), tonics and shampoos. Use in a rinse to add shine and softness: add the essential oil to equal parts of vinegar and water, and dilute it to up to 2% of the total liquid amount, leave on the hair for 5 minutes then rinse off. This oil can be used in a body oil for sore muscles or after exercising or as ingredient in an [insect repellent spray](#). It is known to improve focus and concentration – diffuse it on your desk or while studying to promote clear thinking.

Blends well with: Basil, cedarwood, citronella, eucalyptus, lavender, lemon, lemongrass, lime, peppermint.

Contraindications: Avoid applying to or near the face of children. Sometimes adulterated with other essential oils, such as eucalyptus, so buy it from a reliable supplier.



JASMINE

Botanical name: *Jasminum officinale*

Appearance: orange to brown/red viscous liquid

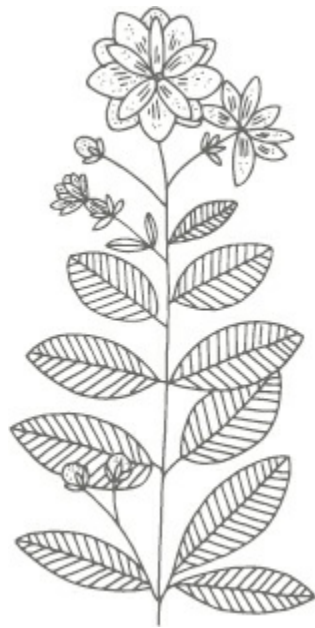
Mood: calming, soothing and sensual

Aroma: deep, warm, exotic floral scent, which is sweet, sensual and intoxicating

Plant part: flowers

Method of extraction: solvent extraction

Note: middle



Origins: Jasmine has long been considered the 'king of flowers'. In Ancient Arabia jasmine flowers were a symbol of love. Native to tropical Asia, the delicate flowers cannot be distilled. Instead, an absolute can be extracted from the flowers, with about 3.6 kg (8 lb) of jasmine blossoms, or around 20,000 jasmine petals, producing just 1 teaspoon of oil. This makes the oil precious and expensive. Its romantic and exotic fragrance is wildly used in the perfumery industry. A more affordable option is to

dilute it in a carrier oil such as fractionated coconut oil or jojoba. Always check with the supplier what percentage of jasmine absolute the bottle contains.

Uses: Jasmine absolute essential oil can promote deep relaxation, not only for the soul, but also for the skin. Adding a few drops of jasmine oil to a diffuser will create a calming and positive atmosphere.

Blends well with: Citrus oils such as bergamot, lemon, mandarin, sweet orange, as well as clary sage, frankincense, lavender, rose, sandalwood.

Contraindications: Jasmine absolute is often adulterated, and it is therefore important to purchase it from a reliable supplier. Avoid using if you have sensitive skin.



CARDAMOM

Botanical name: *Elettaria cardamomum*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: uplifting and refreshing

Aroma: spicy and sweet with balsamic undertones

Plant part: seeds

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: The cardamom plant is part of the ginger family and originates from India, where cardamom has been traditionally used for culinary purposes. It is now cultivated in many other Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, and in South America, including Guatemala.

Uses: The spicy and sweet aroma of cardamom makes a lovely addition to a natural handmade [candle](#), especially when blended with spicy, floral and citrus oils. Its fresh aroma and antibacterial properties means the oil works well in a natural deodorant or mouthwash recipe.

Blends well with: Bergamot, cedarwood, cinnamon, frankincense, ginger, lavender, mandarin, neroli, patchouli, petitgrain, rose, sandalwood, sweet orange, vetiver, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Cardamom essential oil is often adulterated, and it is therefore important to purchase from a reliable supplier.



LEMON

Botanical name: *Citrus limon*

Appearance: light yellow

Mood: uplifting, energising, revitalising

Aroma: very fresh and sweet scent typical of lemons

Plant part: peel

Method of extraction: cold expression

Note: top

Origins: The lemon tree is native to Asia, but it is also a very popular crop in America (in particular Argentina and the states of California, Arizona and Florida) as well as the Mediterranean region, in particular southern Italy and Spain. Lemon trees were brought to Europe as early as c. 200 A.D, and eventually came to America when Christopher Columbus brought lemon seeds in 1492.

Uses: With its fresh, reinvigorating aroma, lemon essential oil also carries strong antiseptic properties, so it is perfect to use in [natural deodorant](#) recipes, as well as in domestic cleaning products. Lemon essential oil is also very cleansing and toning: try adding it to a scalp massage oil to counterbalance excessive sebum in greasy [hair](#). It can also help with focus; try diffusing it to cleanse the air or place next to your desk while working.

Blends well with: Other citrus oils, such as bergamot, grapefruit, lime, sweet orange, as well as fresh and herbaceous oils such as eucalyptus, juniper, lavender, tea tree.

Contraindications: Lemon essential oil is phototoxic, so avoid using it 12 hours before, or during sun exposure. It can also cause sensitisation when it oxidises, so store in the fridge after opening it. This oil is sometimes adulterated so buy from a reliable supplier.



THYME

Botanical name: *Thymus vulgaris*

Appearance: yellow to reddish-brown

Mood: refreshing, grounding

Aroma: sweet and herbaceous with slightly minty undertones

Plant part: leaves

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle



Origins: There are about 300 species of thyme, but Common/Garden Thyme has antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, due to its high thymol content. Thyme is rich in antioxidants and usually used in cosmetics in the form of a thyme extract which is left after steam distilling the plant to obtain the essential oil.

Uses: Depending on where the plant grows (such as at sea level or at altitude), thyme produces different chemotypes with varying properties. The most popular are Thyme ct (chemotype) thymol which has a high thymol content, and Thyme ct linalool, which is gentler than thyme ct thymol and thus more suitable for skincare, such as a [facial toner](#). Thyme

ct thymol has strong antibacterial properties and can be used to balance the hair's oil production; it is excellent in [natural deodorants](#) as it removes odour-causing bacteria.

Blends well with: Bergamot, cedarwood, eucalyptus, grapefruit, juniper, lavender, lemon, mandarin, peppermint, rosemary, tea tree.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation. As with all essential oils, please check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier.



CLARY SAGE

Botanical name: *Salvia sclarea*

Appearance: pale or golden yellow

Mood: relaxing, balancing

Aroma: complex sweet and floral aroma carrying a penetrating herbaceous and musky undertone

Plant part: leaves and flowers

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Clary sage is a biennial or perennial herb, growing to about 1.5 m (5 ft), with large hairy leaves and small violet or pale blue flowers. It grows mostly in southern Europe (France, Italy and Spain) as well as in north Africa and Middle Eastern countries such as Turkey and Syria. It has been used for medicinal purposes since the Middle Ages, particularly to treat eye problems (the plant was often referred to as 'clear eye').

Uses: Clary sage contains a high concentration of linalyl acetate, a compound which carries soothing and calming properties. Its grounding aroma makes it perfect when you want a relaxing blend that is also soothing for the skin. Add it to hand lotion or [bath salts](#) or use as a roll-on [blend](#) to promote relaxation at bedtime. Clary sage has the ability to revitalise damaged hair and balance the scalp's sebum production, so add it to a post-shower [hair oil](#) treatment.

Blends well with: Geranium, lavender, lemon, lime, patchouli, Roman chamomile, sweet orange.

Contraindications: It is essential to use this oil well diluted and to check the correct dermal limit depending on the application. This oil can be adulterated with synthetic ingredients, so purchase from a reliable supplier.



BENZOIN

Botanical name: *Styrax benzoin*

Appearance: thick, dark brown molasses-like texture

Mood: uplifting, calming

Aroma: vanilla-like scent

Plant part: gum resin of the benzoin tree trunk

Method of extraction: solvent extraction

Note: base

Origins: Benzoin has been used by many ancient civilizations for medicinal or incense purposes, including the Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The benzoin tree grows in Asia, where it is present as two varieties, the Sumatra benzoin tree and the Siam benzoin tree. The essential oil is extracted by making an incision in the trunk of the tree, to collect the benzoin gum resin. The resin is then mixed with a solvent to extract the essential oil. This solvent can be alcohol, dipropylene glycol, or propylene glycol, which makes the thick resin pourable.

Uses: Benzoin essential oil can be used in [natural deodorants](#) to fight off bacteria that cause bad odours. Even if pourable, benzoin essential oil has a molasses-like thick texture, and won't pass through a dropper. Instead, you need to slowly pour it straight from the glass bottle. Benzoin is often used in perfumery as a fixative, to slow down the evaporation of other essential oils or fragrances within a blend.

Blends well with: Citrus, floral and earthy essential oils such as bergamot, black pepper, cedarwood, frankincense, juniper, lavender, lemon, mandarin, myrrh, petitgrain, sandalwood, sweet orange.

Contraindications: Use well diluted, and avoid using if you have very sensitive skin. As with all essential oils, please check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier.



BERGAMOT

Botanical name: *Citrus bergamia*

Appearance: light yellow

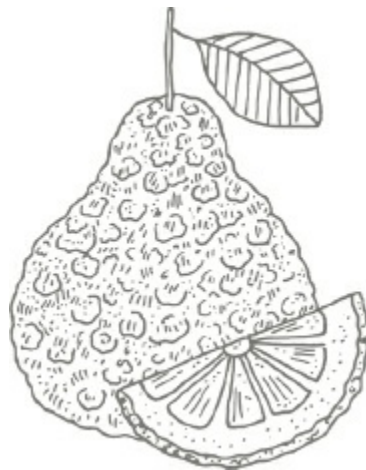
Mood: calming and uplifting

Aroma: citrus with sweet and balsamic undertones

Plant part: peel

Method of extraction: cold expression

Note: top



Origins: Bergamot's origins are somewhat hazy; some historians say it is from Asia, while others suggest Christopher Columbus imported it from the Americas. Even the word has unknown origins, with some suggesting it comes from the Turkish *beg-armundi* which means 'pear of the lord', referring to the pear-shaped appearance of its fruit. Now widely grown in Mediterranean regions, in particular southern Italy, its fruit has a bitter, sour taste, but produces a very sweet, mild essential oil. With a lovely balsamic and sweet aftertaste, it is used in many fragrances, from eau de cologne to Chanel No 5, and Earl Grey tea. It takes 200 kg (440 lb) of bergamots to produce just 1 l (35 oz) of essential oil.

Uses: Antibacterial and purifying, this oil can be used in products for oily

hair and acne-prone skin to balance sebum production. Has a very pleasant, mild aroma, which is perfect in a calming [perfume blend](#), relaxing [candles](#) or [bath salts](#).

Blends well with: Chamomile, cypress, geranium, jasmine, juniper, lavender, lemon, neroli.

Contraindications: Contains bergapten which can cause phototoxicity so don't use 12 hours before or during sun exposure. Can cause sensitisation if it oxidises so store in the fridge once open. Can be adulterated with synthetic compounds or cheaper citrus oils so buy from a reliable supplier.



MAY CHANG

Botanical name: *Litsea cubeba*

Appearance: yellow

Mood: energising

Aroma: reminiscent of lemongrass but sweeter, fresher and less pungent, with rich fruity undertones.

Plant part: fruit

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: top

Origins: May chang goes by different names. Due to the pepper-like shape of its fruits, it is also known as mountain spice or mountain pepper. Although it does not have any connection with the verbena plant, its very fresh and sweet lemon-like scent means it is sometimes referred to as tropical or exotic verbena. May chang is native to China and other southeast Asia regions, including Vietnam and Indonesia.

Uses: The antibacterial and antiseptic properties of may chang make this oil suitable for use in [natural deodorants](#). May chang is ideal in recipes for oily complexions and hair. Thanks to its intense lemon-like scent, it can be used instead of lemon to achieve a stronger and sweeter lemon-like aroma. May chang oil is also an excellent natural [insect-repellent](#).

Blends well with: Basil, bergamot, cedarwood, lavender, mandarin, neroli, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Use well diluted to avoid skin sensitisation. As with all essential oils, please check the essential oil usage rate with your supplier.



SANDALWOOD

Botanical name: *Santalum album*

Appearance: thick, yellow viscous liquid

Mood: relaxing, calming

Aroma: woody and slightly balsamic with sweet honey-like undertones

Plant part: wood

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: base

Origins: This essential oil is steam distilled from *Santalum album*, the East Indian sandalwood tree which has a long history and has been highly valued for centuries. The sandalwood tree takes up to 30 years to mature and for its oil to be harvested. Due to overharvesting, the Indian sandalwood is currently an endangered species, so supply of its essential oil is limited. A more sustainable sandalwood essential oil is now being sourced from Australia. Another alternative is *Amyris balsamifera*, extracted from the resin of *Santalum amyris*. Though it has a different scent, reminiscent of [benzoin](#), it shares some similar properties with *Santalum album*.

Uses: The sweet, sensual aroma is used as a fixative note in perfume blends. This oil has great skincare properties, suitable for different skin types, as it is able to balance the skin's oil production. In haircare sandalwood essential oil is suitable to use in a scalp massage [recipe](#), as it improves circulation, enhancing hair growth.

Blends well with: Bergamot, frankincense, mandarin, neroli, patchouli, rose, sweet orange, vetiver, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Sandalwood is sometimes adulterated with cheaper sandalwood oils and synthetic compounds so purchase from a reliable supplier.



GERANIUM

Botanical name: *Pelargonium graveolens*

Appearance: pale yellow

Mood: uplifting, energising

Aroma: flowery and very herbaceous aroma reminiscent of rose, its pungency depending on the variety

Plant part: leaves and flowers

Method of extraction: steam distillation

Note: middle

Origins: Geranium essential oil is steam distilled from the flowers of *Pelargonium graveolens*, a plant which belongs to the *Geraniaceae* family, native to South Africa. There are two varieties of geranium essential oil: geranium and rose geranium; they have the same properties, but differ slightly in scent. Although they share the same flowery and herbaceous aroma, rose geranium has a much sweeter, rose-like scent, while geranium has a sharper, more pungent smell.

Uses: Geranium or rose geranium essential oil work incredibly well at masking odours and scents, so use them in [natural deodorants](#) or [insect repellent sprays](#). The essential oil is also great to use on oily hair and complexions. Add it to an oily hair scalp [massage oil](#) or to a [toner](#) for oily, acne-prone skin.

Blends well with: Bergamot, grapefruit, lavender, mandarin, peppermint, rose, sweet orange, tea tree, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: Avoid using this oil if you have particularly sensitive skin.



VETIVER

Botanical name: *Vetiveria zizanioides*

Appearance: thick and viscous golden to dark brown liquid

Mood: calming, grounding, helps with focus

Aroma: herbaceous, mildly sweet, slightly leathery aroma with woody undertones

Plant part: roots

Method of extraction: steam distillation or hydro diffusion

Note: base

Origins: Vetiver essential oil is often referred to as ‘the oil of tranquillity’ for a good reason; its grounding, calming, mild and earthy aroma is often used in high-end perfumes, such as Chanel No. 5. The vetiver roots have incredible cooling properties and have been traditionally used in India to make curtains and mats to cool the air coming through, or to freshen drinking water. Even though it is native to India, vetiver is now primarily produced in Haiti.

Uses: Vetiver essential oil has a very calming aroma, which can be used to aid sleep. Being a base/fixative note, vetiver essential oil can be added to blends to complement other scents and make them last for longer. Try blending vetiver with lavender and add it to a [solid lotion](#), a handmade [candle](#) or a [perfume oil](#) for a restful night’s sleep. Vetiver also has the ability to repel moths naturally – add 2–3 drops of the oil into little lavender sachets, and place these in your closet. Finally, vetiver essential oil also has antiseptic and astringent properties, it can balance the skin’s oil production and help mature skin feel rejuvenated. Try using it in a [facial toner](#) or [facial massage oil](#).

Blends well with: Bergamot, geranium, lavender, neroli, petitgrain, sandalwood, sweet orange, ylang ylang.

Contraindications: This essential oil is considered non-toxic and non-irritant when properly diluted. Vetiver essential oil may contain isoeugenol, in which case the dermal limit must be restricted.



RECIPES



CREATING YOUR UNIQUE BLENDS

Aroma families

Essential oils are categorized into eight different aroma families: Citrus, Floral, Camphoraceous/Minty, Resinous, Earthy, Woodsy, Spicy and Herbaceous. To simplify things, I group them into five main families:

Families

1. **Citrus:** bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, lemongrass, lime, mandarin, may chang, petitgrain, sweet orange.
2. **Floral:** blue tansy, chamomile, clary sage, helichrysum, jasmine, neroli, palmarosa, rose, rose geranium, ylang ylang.
3. **Herbaceous:** basil, eucalyptus, juniper berry, lavender, myrtle, peppermint, rosemary, sweet fennel, tea tree, thyme.
4. **Spicy:** aniseed, cardamom, cinnamon, clove bud, ginger.
5. **Earthy:** woody aromas (cedarwood, sandalwood), resinous/balsamic aromas (benzoin, frankincense, myrrh, patchouli, vanilla, vetiver) and coniferous aromas (cypress).

Top, middle and base notes

Essential oil notes are an important consideration when blending oils, as they refer to the rate at which the oil evaporates. Combining different notes can create a more stable blend of essential oils that complement and support each other, by lingering within the aroma and evaporating at different speeds.

Essential oils notes can be categorised as top, middle and base notes:

1. Top notes represent the first scent that usually comes out of a blend, however they evaporate faster. Examples include bergamot, lemon, spearmint.
2. Middle notes form the core of your fragrance and bind top and base

notes together. They often form the largest proportion of the blend. Examples include geranium, lavender, rosemary.

3. Base notes represent the pillar of your blend, as they support the entire blend, and often act as scent fixatives. They have deeper, intense scents, which take longer to fade. Examples include cedarwood, frankincense, patchouli.

There are no strict rules in perfume blending, meaning you can combine top, middle and base notes based on your unique preference. However, many perfumers often suggest following a 3:2:1 or 4:3:1 ratio of top, middle and base notes respectively, or to make the middle notes prevail within the blend. The combination of different notes within a blend is referred to as an aromatic 'chord' or 'accord'.

How to blend essential oils

1. First, write the type of aroma you want to achieve. Do you want a very flowery blend? Or perhaps a blend with fresh and woody notes.
2. Next, take the time to do some more brainstorming on the type of mood and feeling you want your blend to evoke. Do you want your blend to be calming, energizing or to help with focus?
3. Finally, it's time to make your choice of essential oils.

Let's create a blend together

Aroma family: citrus, flowers, earth/wood

Mood: calming

Notes: lemon (citrus, top note), lavender (floral, middle note), sandalwood (wood, base note)

I always stick to a 1% or 2% dilution rate for the overall product, for rinse-off and leave-on products respectively. Please note this might vary depending on the essential oils you use. Some essential oils need to be used at a much lower dilution. Make sure to always check the safety information on your supplier's website and the contraindications in the essential oil directory.

Now it's your turn!

Fill out section below or in a notebook to create your own unique blend: It's useful to keep a note of your blends so that you can recreate a favourite one at a later date.

Aroma family:

.....
.....

Mood:

.....
.....

Notes:

.....
.....

See the next page for how to test and build your essential oil blends.

Testing your blends

The last stage of creating your blend is the most fun.

1. Take some scraps of paper or cardboard or another porous material.
2. On the same piece of paper, write down which essential oils you want to include in your blend.
3. Place a pinch of bicarbonate of soda/baking soda on your paper base.
4. Add your chosen essential oils to it depending on what your recipe calls for, or add 1 drop for each oil.
5. Mix the drops gently with a finger and cover with a glass or a beaker to stop them from evaporating and to ‘capture’ the scent within a closed space.
6. Let the blend sit for at least half an hour, or overnight. Aromas can develop with time; leaving it overnight will give the oils the chance to work within the blend and form a scent.
7. Lift the glass/beaker and inhale to assess and enjoy the incredible aroma you have just created – or if is not to your liking, change the essential oils in your blend.

Now that you have your essential oils blend, the sky is the limit. Read on to the next section and try out different recipes using your favourite essential oils and blends.



SOME ESSENTIAL OILS BLENDS TO TRY

Cosy afternoon

Top: lavender

Middle: rose geranium

Base: patchouli

The calming notes of lavender combine with the grounding aroma of patchouli, and both are completed by a spicy geranium aftertaste.

Fresh memories

Top: peppermint

Middle: cedarwood

Base: rosemary

A fresh pepperminty aroma with a balsamic cedarwood note, completed by grounding rosemary.

By the fireplace

Top: petitgrain

Middle: benzoin

Base: cypress

Notes of woody petitgrain and smoky benzoin with a hint of cypress freshness.

Sweet dreams

Top: bergamot
Middle: lavender
Base: frankincense

The sweetness of the bergamot and the freshness of the frankincense are bound together by lavender.

Summer's day

Top: sweet orange
Middle: lemongrass
Base: jasmine

Fresh and zesty citrus aromas are complemented by the deeply sensual and grounding scent of jasmine.

Country meadow

Top: ylang ylang
Middle: rose geranium
Base: vetiver

The powerful and sweet ylang ylang notes are nicely tempered by the woody and smoky vetiver and uplifting freshness of rose geranium.

BERGAMOT & LAVENDER

BATH SALTS

Close your eyes and imagine having a relaxing soak in a bath that smells like lavender and bergamot.

Making your own bath salts is so easy, and a great way to enjoy the therapeutic properties of your favourite essential oils.

Lavender essential oil carries a very relaxing aroma with an herbaceous note and inflammatory properties. Bergamot essential oil has a sweet note which is really grounding yet uplifting. This blend will help your body and mind release any tension.

Salts are filled with beneficial minerals that can help soothe sore muscles, reduce legs or feet swelling, detoxifying the body and increasing overall relaxation.

This recipe features Dead Sea salt and sea salt, but you can also use Epsom salts and finely ground Himalayan salt.

Adding gentle powders such as cornflour/cornstarch and oat powder will help anchor the essential oils scent into the bath salts better, while adding beneficial properties to your bath. Arrowroot powder, rice starch or cornflour/cornstarch soothe itchy or irritated skin. Colloidal oatmeal is a very fine oat flour which is soothing and anti-inflammatory, perfect for sensitive skin. You can also grind some oats into a powder or use oat flour.

A touch of a lightweight carrier oil, such as sweet almond oil, adds extra nourishing properties to your bath salts and avoids the salts clumping and hardening up.

Sweet almond oil is soothing and skin softening. Grapeseed oil is antioxidant and skin toning. Coconut oil is antibacterial and anti-inflammatory.

Flower petals of your choice can be used as a decorative element, while adding extra properties to your warm bath.

Note

If you are changing essential oils in the recipe, make sure to check the directory for any contraindications.

Equipment

- Scales
- Bowl
- Tablespoon
- Wide-mouthed glass jar
- *Optional*: teaspoon, food processor or bullet blender

Ingredients

Makes 100 g/3.53 oz salts

Shelf life: 6 months

- 89% salt of your choice e.g. Epsom salt + finely ground Himalayan salt, or Sea salt + Dead Sea salt: 89 g/3.14 oz
- 4% cornflour/cornstarch or arrowroot powder or rice starch: 4 g/0.14 oz
- 4% oatmeal powder or colloidal oatmeal: 4 g/0.14 oz
- 1% sweet almond oil, grapeseed oil or coconut oil: 1 g/0.04 oz
- 1% lavender essential oil: 1 g/0.04 oz
- 1% bergamot essential oil: 1 g/0.04 oz
- *Optional*: 1 teaspoon calendula petals or lavender buds or chamomile flowers

Alternative oil blend recommendations

Lavender & chamomile: calming Peppermint & rosemary: energising
Eucalyptus & thyme: refreshing Ylang ylang & palmarosa: balancing
Neroli & patchouli: grounding

How to make

1. Add your chosen starch and powders into a bowl.
2. Add the essential oils into the starch/powders and mix thoroughly.
3. If your Himalayan salt is coarse, grind it into fine salt using a food processor or bullet blender.
4. Add the Epsom salt and Himalayan salt into the bowl containing the powders and the essential oils, and mix everything together using a tablespoon.
5. Add the oil and mix well until completely incorporated.
6. *Optional*: add your chosen flower petals, either as they are or finely

- ground, and mix them in. Alternatively, you could simply top up the bath salts with some flower petals once the salts are in the jar.
7. Using a spoon, place the mix into a wide-mouthed glass jar.

How to use

Add the salts to a warm bath using clean and dry hands, or a tablespoon. Let them dissolve for a couple of minutes and then relax in the bath tub and enjoy your handmade spa experience.



HELICHRYSUM

FACIAL TONER

Helichrysum flowers are also known as *Immortelle*, which means *everlasting*, as they never lose their bright yellow colour. When distilled, Helichrysum has incredible regenerative, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic skincare properties. When used in a facial toner, Helichrysum essential oil has a rejuvenating effect on the skin. In fact, it can reduce the appearance of blemishes such as acne scars and wrinkles, and it tones and cleanses the skin, while promoting an even, youthful complexion. Distilled water, neroli hydrosol and aloe vera juice complete this recipe, adding a boost of hydration, while witch hazel adds an astringent, pore-cleansing effect.

Equipment

- Scales
- Spouted glass beaker
- Spray bottle or 50 ml/1.7 oz upcycled mini liquor glass bottle

Ingredients

Makes 30 g/1.06 oz

Shelf life: 6 months

- 57% distilled water: 17.1 g/0.60 oz
- 18% neroli hydrosol: 5.4 g/0.19 oz
- 13.8% aloe vera juice: 4.14 g/0.15 oz
- 10% witch hazel: 3 g/0.11 oz
- 0.2% helichrysum oil: 0.06 g/0.002 oz (2 drops)
- 1% preservative: 0.3 g/0.01 oz

Choose one of the following preservative systems:

- Benzyl alcohol and dehydroacetic acid
- Benzyl alcohol, salicylic acid, glycerin, and sorbic acid (not suitable to

- use in products for children)
- Phenoxyethanol and ethylhexylglycerin

Notes

If you are changing preservatives, make sure to check what their usage rate is with your supplier.

How to make

1. Using a high precision scale, weigh all the ingredients into a spouted beaker, in no particular order.
2. Pour the ingredients into your chosen toner bottle.

How to use

Shake well before using. Either apply it using a soft cotton wipe or spray it straight onto clean skin, keeping your eyes closed whilst doing so.

Notes

If using upcycled containers, make sure to wash them thoroughly and sterilise them first with at least 70% isopropyl/rubbing alcohol. You can swap neroli hydrosol and aloe vera juice with a different hydrosol such as chamomile hydrosol or lavender hydrosol. Do not exceed the percentage of helichrysum essential oil. If you wish to use different essential oils, check the recommendations in the [Directory](#). As always, if you are changing essential oils, make sure to check any contraindication and specific [safety thresholds](#).



LAVENDER & GERANIUM

NATURAL DEODORANT

There is something inherently satisfying about creating your own natural deodorant. Not only you are able to choose exactly what ingredient you want to put on your skin, but you also get to choose exactly what aroma you want it to have.

Have you ever wondered why we smell? When we sweat, the combination of the bacteria present in our skin develops the typical unattractive smell we want to get rid of using a deodorant. Many essential oils have powerful antibacterial qualities, so they are the perfect addition to a natural deodorant recipe.

My favourite essential oils blend in a natural deodorant is lavender and geranium, both containing excellent antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. Lavender essential oil has a lovely herbal, sweet and calming aroma. Geranium essential oil has quite a pungent, yet very refreshing scent which complements lavender and does a great job at keeping unwanted odours at bay.

This deodorant includes non-nano zinc oxide, which has antimicrobial and soothing properties, reducing odour-causing bacteria and keeping the skin irritation free. If you are unable to source zinc oxide, you can also use bicarbonate of soda/baking soda or magnesium hydroxide powder.

The rest of the ingredients in this recipe have very specific functions: the arrowroot powder or cornflour/cornstarch will thicken the recipe, turning the deodorant into a cream, while absorbing any extra sweat.

Shea butter will keep your skin soft and moisturized, counteracting any drying effect that the starches might give. It will also make the deodorant easy to spread. Coconut oil will help soften the deodorant so it's not too stiff, and, thanks to the high lauric acid content, it will also help fight off any odour-causing bacteria.

It is best to use the refined versions of coconut oil and shea butter, so that the scent won't interfere with the scent of the essential oils.

Equipment

- Scales
- Glass or ceramic bowl
- Tablespoon
- Silicone spatula
- 50 g/1.76 oz wide-mouthed aluminium, glass or plastic jar with lid

Ingredients

Makes a 50 g / 1.76 oz deodorant cream

Shelf life: 6 months

- 40% cornflour/cornstarch or arrowroot powder: 20 g/0.71 oz
- 33% shea butter: 16.5 g/0.58 oz
- 13% coconut oil: 6.5 g/0.23 oz
- 8% kaolin clay: 4 g/0.14 oz
- 5% non-nano zinc oxide: 2.5 g/0.09 oz
- 0.5% geranium or rose geranium essential oil: 0.25 g/0.01 oz (7 drops)
- 0.5% lavender essential oil: 0.25 g/0.01 oz (12 drops)

Alternative essential oils

Lavender & tea tree

Bergamot & geranium/rose geranium

Palmarosa

Lemon, grapefruit & tea tree

Peppermint, lemongrass & lavender

Note: Please check any contraindications for any essential oils by consulting the [Directory](#).

How to make

1. Add the cornflour/cornstarch or arrowroot powder, the kaolin clay and the zinc oxide into a bowl.
2. Add the coconut oil and the shea butter to the same bowl.
3. Mix really well with a tablespoon or a spatula, pressing down into the bowl, so that the shea butter is fully incorporated, and any chunkier grains of zinc oxide are crushed and dissolve into the mix.
4. Add the essential oils and mix very well until they are all incorporated.
5. Transfer the deodorant into your chosen container. You can try the

deodorant straight away!

How to use

Apply a pea-sized amount of deodorant to both armpits using your finger. Re-apply after 6-8 hours or as needed.

Notes

Depending on the climate where you live, the consistency of the deodorant might vary. You can adjust your recipe by adding more coconut oil if you need it to be softer, or more starch and shea butter if you need it to be harder. You could also add about 1-2% of melted beeswax or candelilla wax pellets to make it even more solid.



CHAMOMILE & CLARY SAGE

SOLID LOTION

Imagine a fragrant lotion for your hands and body, but in a solid shape. It's the ultimate zero waste fragrant skincare treat.

A solid lotion contains a mix of oils, butters, waxes and essential oils which add beneficial properties to the bar. This bar is perfect to use on dry and stressed hands, before going to sleep, or as a massage bar.

The blend of chamomile and clary sage is soothing, relaxing and grounding. Chamomile essential oil, in particular German chamomile, contains chamazulene, a compound which gives the essential oil its anti-inflammatory, calming properties (you can also use Roman chamomile, which has lower levels of chamazulene but similar anti-inflammatory properties). Clary sage has very soothing properties, and it is said to improve sleep by promoting relaxation and reducing anxiety.

Cocoa butter melts in contact with the skin, releasing the nourishing properties of oleic acid-rich sunflower oil and antioxidant vitamin E. This moisture is sealed into the skin due to beeswax (or vegan candelilla wax) creating a protective skin barrier. Arrowroot powder (or rice starch or cornflour/cornstarch) soothes the skin.

Equipment

- Stainless steel saucepan
- Scales
- Heat-safe glass or ceramic bowl
- Tablespoon
- 50 g/1.76 oz silicone mould

Ingredients

Beeswax solid lotion

Makes 50 g/1.76 oz

Shelf life: 6 months

- 38% sunflower oil: 19 g/0.67 oz
- 30% cocoa butter: 15 g/0.53 oz
- 29% beeswax or candelilla wax: 14.5 g/0.51 oz
- 1% vitamin E: 0.5 g/0.02 oz
- 1% arrowroot powder or alternative starch (see right) 0.5 g/0.02 oz
- 0.5% chamomile essential oil: 0.25 g/0.009 oz (9 drops)
- 0.5% clary sage essential oil: 0.25 g/0.009 oz (9 drops)

Candelilla wax solid lotion

Makes 50 g/1.76 oz

Shelf life: 6 months

- 42% sunflower oil: 21 g/0.74 oz
- 30% cocoa butter: 15 g/0.53 oz
- 25% beeswax or candelilla wax: 12.5 g/0.44 oz
- 1% vitamin E: 0.5 g/0.02 oz
- 1% arrowroot powder or alternative starch (see below) 0.5 g/0.02 oz
- 0.5% chamomile essential oil: 0.25 g/0.009 oz (12 drops)
- 0.5% clary sage essential oil: 0.25 g/0.009 oz (9 drops)

Alternative starches

Cornflour/cornstarch, tapioca starch, rice starch, potato starch

How to make

1. Add a couple of inches of water to a saucepan, place it over a low heat and bring the water to a simmer.
2. Weigh the sunflower oil, cocoa butter and beeswax (or candelilla wax) in a heat-safe bowl.
3. Place the bowl inside the saucepan, sitting in the water, and let the ingredients simmer at low heat.
4. Once fully melted and still on the stove, keeping the heat to a minimum, add the arrowroot powder (or your chosen starch) and mix it in really well for a few minutes until there are no lumps left.
5. Have a clean mould ready next to you and the vitamin E and the essential oils to hand.
6. Remove the bowl from the heat and place it on the scale. Add the vitamin E, followed by the essential oils.

7. Mix well until all the ingredients are incorporated, then pour into the mould.
8. Carefully place the mould in the freezer to solidify for about 15 minutes. Freezing means the lotion will keep a smooth consistency and you will avoid any graininess in the butters.

How to use

Rub the bar between your hands to melt some of the lotion and apply it to your skin. Alternatively, rub the bar straight onto the desired area of your body, such as the arms or the legs. This method will turn the bar into a massage bar. This solid lotion can also be used as a solid perfume. Rub it behind the ears, on the wrists or back of the neck to enjoy the aromatic and therapeutic properties of the oils.

Notes

As always, if you are changing the essential oils in the recipe, make sure to respect each essential oil [safety threshold](#).



LEMONGRASS & CEDARWOOD

INSECT REPELLENT SPRAY

Did you know that some essential oils have the ability to repel insects naturally, without causing any harm to them and the environment? In this project, I will share how you can make an all-natural essential oils insect repellent spray.

Conventional anti-insect products rely on a synthetic ingredient called DEET (N,N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide). DEET works by creating a barrier on the skin surface so that insects such as mosquitoes are deterred from landing on our skin and biting us. When it comes to natural insect repellents, the oil extracted from certain plants is able to mask the scent of our skin, preventing insects from being attracted to us and biting us. In this recipe, we will use lemongrass and cedarwood: as well as repelling insects, this blend also smells incredibly good.

Alternative insect repellent essential oils

Lavender, rosemary, peppermint & basil

Citronella, lemongrass & tea tree

Geranium, may chang & lemon

Eucalyptus, sage & cedarwood

Eucalyptus, clove bud, thyme & vetiver

Patchouli

Important: This is a natural alternative to conventional insect-repellent spray. Being all natural, and depending on the quality of the essential oils used and how often the spray is applied, it may not offer a complete, bullet-proof coverage. It should also never be treated as a remedy against any vector-borne disease.

If you are changing essential oils in this recipe, make sure to consult the [Directory](#) for any contraindications.

Equipment

- Scales
- Spouted glass beaker
- Spray bottle (preferably amber-coloured glass)

Ingredients

Makes 30 g/1.05 oz

Shelf life: 6 months

- 68% distilled water: 20.4 g/0.72 oz
- 20% witch hazel: 6 g/0.21 oz
- 10% glycerin: 3 g/0.11 oz
- 0.5% lemongrass essential oil: 0.15 g/0.005 oz (4 drops)
- 0.5% cedarwood essential oil: 0.15 g/0.005 oz (4 drops)
- 1% preservative: 0.3 g/0.011 oz

Choose one of the following preservatives systems:

- Benzyl alcohol and dehydroacetic acid
- Benzyl alcohol, salicylic acid, glycerin, sorbic acid (not suitable to use in products for children)
- Phenoxyethanol and ethylhexylglycerin

Important: if you are changing preservatives, make sure to check what their usage rate is with your supplier.

How to make

1. Add all the ingredients into a spouted glass beaker.
2. Slowly pour the mix into a spray bottle.
3. Give it a gentle shake to mix all the ingredients together.

How to use

Shake it prior to every use, and spray it onto arms and legs to repel insects. Avoid spraying it on the face or sensitive areas.

Note

You can use regular tap water instead of distilled water, although distilled water is more suitable for cosmetic use as it will make your spray less prone to bacteria.



YLANG YLANG, ROSE GERANIUM & VETIVER

SOY CANDLE

Making your own natural candle scented using only essential oils could not be easier. In this project you can let your creativity run wild and create the perfect essential oil blend you want to scent your candle with.

The blend of ylang ylang, rose geranium and vetiver in this recipe is dominated by the sweet flowery and sensual notes of ylang ylang, with an herbaceous touch of freshness given by the rose geranium, all completed by the woody notes of vetiver.

This all-natural blend featuring essential oils will not only infuse the entire room with a pleasant aroma, but will also release the therapeutical properties of the essential oil you chose, into your home.

Many candles use paraffin, a wax derived from petroleum. A good alternative is soy wax, which is a fully biodegradable wax derived from soy. To make this project even more fun and sustainable, why not upcycle the container you will use for your candle? You can hunt for the perfect vintage mug at a local flea market or simply reuse a short glass jam jar or a ceramic dessert ramekin dish.

Equipment

For melting the wax

- Scales
- Tablespoon
- Pyrex glass or stainless steel jug/pitcher
- Stainless steel saucepan
- Glass beaker or small ceramic bowl
- Infra-red or candy thermometer

For your candle container

- 200 g/7 oz heatproof glass jar or tin container
- Pre-waxed candle wick
- Tape or superglue

- 2 pencils or chopsticks or plastic food bag seal clips
- Optional decoration for your candle such as cinnamon sticks, dried herbs or flowers, dried orange slices

Ingredients

Makes a medium size, 160 g/5.6 oz candle

Shelf life: 1 year

- 94% soy wax: 150.4 g/5.31 oz
- 2% ylang ylang essential oil: 3.2 g/0.11 oz
- 2% rose geranium essential oil: 3.2 g/0.11 oz
- 2% vetiver essential oil: 3.2 g/0.11 oz

Notes

If you wish to use a different [essential oil](#) blend.

How to make

1. Weigh the soy wax into a heat-safe glass or stainless steel pitcher.
2. Add a few inches of water to a stainless steel saucepan and bring to a simmer.
3. Place the soy wax beaker into the water bath and let the wax melt at low heat.
4. While the wax is melting, prepare the jar/container. Secure the wick to the base of the container using a piece of tape or glue, using a pen to stick the wick into the base well.
5. To prevent the wick moving to one side when you pour the melted wax in, use two pencils, a pair of chopsticks or plastic seal clips. If using pencils or chopsticks, secure the wick to the pencil/chopstick using a thread or some tape. If using a seal clip, gently tape the edge to it to close it slightly, without breaking the wick.
6. Measure the essential oils in a glass beaker or small ceramic bowl: this is so you have the essential oils ready to be poured as soon as the wax is at the right temperature, you will need to act fast or it will solidify.
7. Measure the temperature to make sure it is below 54°C/130°F. This will ensure that the essential oils will not be damaged by the very high heat, and the aroma will linger inside the candle.
8. Once the wax is completely melted, and has reached the correct temperature, remove it carefully from the heat and place it on a heat safe surface, such as a tray or a coaster.

9. Add the essential oils into the melted wax and mix well until combined.
0. Pour the melted wax mixture into the jar, making sure the wick is still centred.
1. If you wish to add some decorative elements to your candle, wait until the wax becomes semi solid, ie when the wax becomes white-opaque, but is not solid yet. At this point, stick your decorations inside the wax by firmly pushing the decoration into the wax. Make sure to place any decorative element away from the wick, as otherwise they will catch fire.
2. Let the wax solidify completely at room temperature before lighting the candle.



BLUE TANSY

FACIAL MASSAGE OIL

Blue tansy is the star oil of this facial massage oil recipe: a truly magical oil, which has powerful anti-inflammatory properties so is able to soothe irritated skin, reducing redness and blemishes. Chamazulene is what gives this oil its deep blue ocean colour and soothing properties; it is a compound also present in German blue chamomile, which could be used as an alternative oil in this recipe (see more in the [Directory](#)).

As with all essential oils, blue tansy should be diluted with care before it can be applied onto the skin, to avoid irritation and possible blue stains. Clear and lightweight oils such as fractionated coconut oil, olive squalene and safflower oil are very lightweight and non-greasy, which will add special nourishing properties to the skin, making it feel rejuvenated. These clear carrier oils will also make the beautiful blue of blue tansy stand out. If you choose to use darker oils such as olive oil or avocado oil or vitamin E, the blue tansy will make the carrier oils turn into a beautiful forest green.

Equipment

- Scales
- Glass beaker
- Teaspoon
- Glass bottle with dropper

Ingredients

Makes 30 g/1.06 oz

Shelf life: 6 months

- 50% fractionated coconut oil (caprylic/capric triglyceride): 15 g/0.53 oz
- 35.5% olive squalane: 10.65 g/0.38 oz

- 14% safflower oil: 4.20 g/0.15 oz
- 0.5% blue tansy essential oil: 0.15 g/0.01 oz (4 drops)

How to make

1. Mix all the oils together.
2. Pour the blended oils into a glass bottle or your chosen sterilised container.

How to use

Prior to applying the massage oil, wash your hands and face thoroughly.

Add 3-4 drops of the massage oil to the palm of your hand. Distribute the oil between your hands and start massaging it onto the face, including the neck, using circular movements. Continue massaging your face: enjoy it and don't rush it.

Leave the oil on the skin to work its magic overnight or during the day before applying any make-up.

Alternatively, dampen a face cloth or soft terry towel with very warm water and squeeze any excess water out. When the cloth/towel is warm and no longer too hot, place it onto your face and leave it there for a few seconds, then place it onto the neck area. The warmth of the water and softness of the fabric will gently remove any excess oil off your skin, leaving it moisturised and incredibly soft to the touch.

Notes

Do not exceed the essential oil amount percentage, as this might cause irritation or stain the skin or surfaces.

If you wish to use different essential oils, check the recommendations in the [Directory](#). As always, if you are changing essential oils, make sure to check the essential oil specific [safety thresholds](#) for leave-on products.



PALMAROSA , NEROLI & BENZOIN

PERFUME OIL

The word perfume literally means ‘through smoke’, as the original way to make perfume was to burn aromatic plants. Incense was the first kind of perfume, which was often used during religious rituals to worship gods or mask odours from animal sacrifices. However, the purpose of perfume is not just to cover odours. Perfumes uplift our spirit, they give us a special identity, they trigger memories.

Perfumes made using essential oils may not be as long lasting or strong as perfumes made using synthetic fragrances. However, they do have deep therapeutic benefits, which synthetic fragrances do not carry.

As you have learned, by [blending](#) essential oils with different notes and aroma families, you can create a well-balanced, complex aroma. When you dilute the essential oils into a carrier oil, the final oil can be rolled onto specific areas of your body to enjoy the skincare and therapeutical benefits of the perfume.

Distilled from the bitter orange blossoms, neroli is an uplifting top note with a distinctive flowery, citrusy aroma, often used in perfumery (see [Directory](#)).

Palmarosa is distilled from a tropical type of grass from the lemongrass family. It carries a rose-like aroma with balsamic and citrus undertones, without the price-tag and intensive manufacturing process of rose oil (see [Directory](#)). It is a very calming, balancing oil.

Benzoin is a base note used in perfumery as a fixative, meaning that it can slow down the dispersion of essential oils into the air, thus acting as an ‘anchor’ in the blend. It has a sweet, vanilla-like scent, acting as a good substitute for the pricier vanilla oil (see [Directory](#)). Being extracted from the benzoin tree resin, which is protective to the tree, it is said to have similar healing properties when applied to the skin (but see [contraindication](#) information).

Equipment

- High precision scale
- 30 ml/1 oz glass roll-on bottle

Ingredients

Makes 30 g /1.06 oz perfume

Shelf life: 1 year

- 99% fractionated coconut oil or jojoba: 29.70 ml/1.05 oz
- 0.5% neroli essential oil: 0.15 g/0.005 oz (5 drops)
- 0.3% palmarosa essential oil: 0.09 g/0.003 oz (4 drops)
- 0.2% benzoin oleoresin: 0.06 g/0.002 oz (2 drops)

How to make

1. Add the essential oils into the glass roll-on bottle.
2. Pour the carrier oil into the roll-on bottle.
3. Shake gently to combine.

How to use

Apply on the wrists, behind the ears and on the back of the neck.

Alternatively, you can also roll the oil into the palm of your hands, and apply it onto your hair ends. Since hair is a natural diffuser, it will retain the perfume and leave a very pleasant aroma behind!

Contraindications

Benzoin essential oil is not suitable for sensitive skin. If you wish to change the amounts or essential oils in the perfume, do make sure not to exceed 0.6% for benzoin and a total of 1% essential oils in the recipe. For any essential oil substitutions, make sure to check their specific [safety thresholds](#) for leave-on products.

Notes

Fractionated coconut oil is a great oil to use in perfumes because it is odourless, colourless and very stable (with a shelf life of about 2 years). Jojoba is actually a liquid wax; it is also unscented, soft on the skin and very stable (with a shelf life of about 5 years), but is pricier. You can also use sweet almond oil (with a shelf life about 1 year) or grapeseed oil (with a shelf life about 6 months), but in these cases I would suggest adding vitamin E between 0.5% to 1% respectively, to slow down the oxidation of

the oils, removing the added percentage from the carrier oil.



ROSEMARY & LAVENDER

HAIR OIL

When washing our hair, we run the risk of stripping it of its natural oils. This can lead to dandruff, itchy scalp or dry ends. There are many benefits to using essential oils diluted in vegetable oils for haircare: they add shine to dull hair and promote hair growth.

The perfect blend for this hair potion is rosemary and lavender. Rosemary essential oil revitalizes the scalp by stimulating hair follicles, promoting hair growth. The sweeter herbaceous note of lavender essential oil softens the blend, whilst adding conditioning, shine and dandruff control.

The recipe uses several lightweight carrier oils which are rich in specific fatty acids beneficial to hair. Coconut oil is incredibly lightweight and rich in lauric acid, a fatty acid that can be easily absorbed by the hair shaft. Camellia seed oil is very similar to our skin's sebum and was used by Japanese geishas to nourish their shiny black hair and soft porcelain skin. Blackseed oil is rich in linoleic acid, and is perfect to soothe dry, itchy scalps. Castor oil complements the blend by strengthening and thickening the hair. Vitamin E is an antioxidant, which slows down the oxidation of the oils.

Equipment

- Scales
- Glass beaker
- Teaspoon
- Glass dropper bottle

Ingredients

Makes 50 g/1.76 oz

Shelf life: 1 year

- 60% fractionated coconut oil (caprylic/capric triglyceride or coco caprylate): 30 g/1.06 oz
- 29% camellia seed oil: 14.50 g/0.51 oz
- 6% blackseed oil: 3 g/0.11 oz
- 3.5% castor oil: 1.75 g/0.06 oz
- 0.5% vitamin E: 0.25 g/0.01 oz
- 0.5% lavender essential oil: 0.25 g/0.01 oz (12 drops)
- 0.5% rosemary essential oil: 0.25 g/0.01 oz (10 drops)

How to make

1. Weigh the ingredients into a beaker using high precision scales.
2. Mix with a teaspoon and pour into a glass dropper bottle

Notes

Instead of the fractionated coconut oil, you can also use normal coconut oil. If solid, melt it first. Once the temperature reaches 45°C/113°F, add the rest of the oils and essential oils.

Contraindications

Avoid using blackseed oil and castor oil if pregnant. You can swap blackseed oil with sunflower oil. Castor oil is more difficult to swap, but you can use other nourishing oils such as jojoba, sweet almond oil or apricot kernel oil.

How to use

As a scalp massage: add 3-6 drops of oil in the palm of your hands and start massaging your scalp starting from the crown of the head, all the way to the sides and the back. Don't rush it, and enjoy! Leave the oil on the scalp for 20-30 minutes before hopping in the shower to wash any greasy residue off using a gentle shampoo.

As a hair oil: add 2-3 drops to the palm of your hand and apply to damp, dry hair ends after a shower. Leave the oil in to work its magic.



PEPPERMINT & EUCALYPTUS

SHOWER STEAMERS

Whenever you feel congested or need an uplift, there is nothing better than a warm shower. Did you know that if you hang dried eucalyptus from your shower head, it will release a fresh uplifting aroma? Similarly, we can utilize the natural power of essential oils to decongest airways, cleanse skin and boost our spirit. This shower steamer uses very simple ingredients and when placed in your shower, the fizzy reaction of the bicarbonate of soda/baking soda and citric acid and the steam from the warm water will release the uplifting scent of the essential oils. Just remember to breathe in, breathe out...

Equipment

- Scales
- Bowl
- Tablespoon and teaspoon
- Rubber gloves
- Round silicone mould, about 6 cm/2½ inches diameter and 2.3 cm/1 inch high, or ice cube tray for smaller cubes
- *Optional*: spray bottle

Ingredients

Makes 1 shower steamer, about 80 g/2.82 oz

Shelf life: 6 months

- 68% bicarbonate of soda/baking soda: 63.92 g/2.25 oz (4 tablespoons)
- 28% citric acid: 26.32 g/0.93 oz (2 tablespoons)
- 1.5% eucalyptus essential oil: 1.41 g/0.05 oz
- 1.5% peppermint essential oil: 1.41 g/0.05 oz
- 1% witch hazel: 0.94 g/0.03 oz (about 1 teaspoon)

Alternative essential oils

Decongesting: peppermint, sweet fennel.

Skin-toning and pore-cleansing: eucalyptus, frankincense, juniper, may chang, myrtle, patchouli, rose, rosemary, tea tree, thyme.

Soothing: bergamot, chamomile, lavender.

Notes

If changing the essential oils in the recipe, make sure to check any contraindications.

If you wish to resize the batch, remember that the bicarbonate of soda/baking soda to citric acid ratio is always 2:1.

You can also use water instead of witch hazel, but make sure to add it little by little.

How to make

1. Prepare your ingredients so you have them ready before you start. If you have it, place the witch hazel into a spray bottle.
2. Fill a bowl with the bicarbonate of soda/baking soda and the citric acid. Mix using a tablespoon until there are no clumps left.
3. Add the essential oils and mix again until completely incorporated.
4. Wear rubber gloves to start wetting the mix. Your aim is to achieve a 'wet sand' consistency. When you squeeze the mix in the palm of your hand, it should not crumble. Instead, it should hold its shape. If you have a spray bottle, spray the witch hazel about 5 times. If not, add up to 1 teaspoon of witch hazel and mix well. If still dry, add more until you obtain the right consistency.
5. The witch hazel might make the mix fizz a little. That's ok! Quickly mix using your hands, then take some of the mix into the palm of your hand and squeeze to check if it holds its shape.
6. Repeat this process until you reach the desired consistency. For this quantity, I have tested up to about 15 sprays or 1 teaspoon of witch hazel.
7. Using a tablespoon, fill the mould. Press very hard with the tablespoon or using your thumb: the mixture should not crumble, but feel very hard and sturdy if you tap on it with your finger.
8. Let the shower steamer air dry for at least 1 hour, or leave to dry completely overnight.
9. When completely dry to the touch, gently unmould it.

0. Store the steamer in a closed glass jar.

Notes

If the mixture starts to swell, it is because too much liquid was added. Wait for about 5 minutes and mix again until you feel it is not too wet anymore. If the steamer starts to swell when in the mould, this also means that the mixture has been wetted too much. This is only an aesthetic issue.

How to use

With dry hands, place a steamer on your shower plate, turn the water on and take a shower as normal. The warm water will activate the fizzing reaction of the steamer, and release the aroma into the steam.



Glossary

Absolute: very concentrated aromatic oil extracted from plants by solvent extraction

Antioxidant: inhibiting oxidation which can make oils go rancid

Antiseptic: inhibiting the growth of bacteria

Aromachemical: chemical substance that imparts odour

Blend: the mix of two or more essential oils

Carrier oil: an oil used to dilute essential oils in order to 'carry' them on the skin

Chemotype: different chemical type; two plants of the same species might have different chemotypes, affecting their essential oil

CO₂ extraction: a method of extracting essential oils using carbon dioxide

Cold pressing: a method of extraction commonly used with citrus fruits, by applying pressure to extract essential oils

Concrete: a mix of waxes and oil obtained from a plant extract using a solvent; the concrete can be processed to obtain an absolute oil

Diluting: action of dispersing essential oils within an oil- or water-based solution to reduce concentration

Enfleurage: a method to extract essential oils using animal or vegetable fats

Ethanol: liquid alcohol produced by the natural fermentation of sugar, also known as ethyl alcohol

Fixative: essential oil used to stabilise the volatile components of a blend

Fractionated coconut oil: a lighter, processed coconut oil that always stays liquid and has a longer shelf life

Grounding: emotionally stabilising

Hexane: liquid solvent used to extract certain plant materials such as carrier oils, oleoresins or absolutes

Hydrosol: water-based flower water, the by-product of the essential oil's distillation

Isopropanol: liquid alcohol, also known as Isopropyl alcohol

Leave-on products: cosmetic products to be left on the skin and not rinsed off

Maceration: technique of infusing plant material to obtain a fragrant oil

Oleoresin: a thick, semi-solid extract made up of resin and oil, obtained by evaporation of the solvents used for its production

Perfumery note: the rate at which an oil evaporates

Rinse-off products: cosmetic products that are meant to be washed off with water

Safety threshold: the level at which something might not be safe if surpassed

Solvent: liquid used to dissolve other substances

Solvent extraction: method of extracting essential oils with the help of solvents

Steam distillation: extraction method of vaporising and condensing plant material to extract essential oils

Tincture: a concentrated herbal extract dissolved within an ethanol solution

Viscosity: a state which describes a thick, semi-fluid consistency

Volatile: a state of essential oils when they easily evaporate

Marta Tarallo is a soap maker and the creative mind behind Bottega Zero Waste. Marta's mission is to empower people with the tools to transition to a zero-waste lifestyle, with a specific focus on beauty and personal care. Through her platform, Marta shares recipes to teach people how to make their own products at home: from soaps and shampoo bar to customisable creams. In response to the popular demand, Marta opened an online school, through which she hosts online soap making and zero waste beauty workshops and courses accessible from anywhere in the world.

Follow Marta online for more soap inspiration and workshops:

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