

The essentials of aromatherapy

Swell Smells

by Kuan Nee See



THESE DAYS, WE are so outwardly focused, what with our digital devices and multitudes of social platforms to “connect” with everyone else on top of carrying out our normal duties as a spouse, a parent, a child, a sibling and a friend. We connect with everyone, that is, but ourselves.

We forget the importance of being in touch with ourselves as we trudge on from day to day. The constant falling sick, unexplained backache, headache, indigestion, difficulty in falling asleep are all taken lightly. In fact, it is our bodies saying, “Hey, I think we need a break here.” More often than not, these signals are drowned out by other noises and viewed as simply time consuming in our mounting daily responsibilities.

The Sweet Scent of Relief

Aromatherapy can provide us with some relief without taking up too much of our precious time. Olfaction stimulation is truly quite amazing; it is the only sensory information that

reaches directly to the cerebral cortex in our brain without going through a processing centre (called the thalamus). The cerebral cortex enables us to perform higher functioning tasks like learning and carrying out complex activities.

Olfaction also reaches the limbic system in the brain, which is responsible for our instinctive behaviours, emotions

and moods – that’s how diffusing an essential oil in a room helps people to feel calmer. This is the aspect of aromatherapy that most people are more familiar with.

Nature’s Gifts

It is important to buy organically farmed essential oils for their therapeutic value. Synthetically made

Calm Balms

Here are some tips on using essential oils to help you unwind and de-stress at the end of the day:

- 1 Diffuse essential oils such as Lavender, Sweet Marjoram, Cedarwood or Ylang Ylang in your room half an hour before your bedtime to promote relaxation. Five to eight drops in a candle diffuser will do the job.
- 2 Take a 15 to 30 minute bath with three to five drops of essential oils added directly into the water. I love Lavender or Vetiver for this purpose.
- 3 If you take an early warm shower in the evening, try dropping one drop of Eucalyptus directly onto the shower floor. This will help clear your mental chatter and your nose too!



fragrances do not provide any benefits and are taxing to our bodies. Buying organically farmed essential oils also supports sustainable farming in the long run. Essential oils come from different parts of the world, as different plants thrive in different climates. Organic farms are usually smaller plots of lands, with the farms normally run by families and passed down from generation to generation.

For all the glamour that people associate essential oils with (think spa), behind the scenes are hardworking farmers who have so much love for the plants they grow and harvest. Sometimes, they may not have the money to do organic certification, though they farm in organic ways, for instance, farming without pesticides. In many cases, the farmers who grow the plants for essential oils are also the distillers. Steam distillation is one of the common ways to extract essential oils from the plants.

Essential oils are truly beautiful gifts from plants. A lot of plant materials go into producing a single drop of essential oil, i.e. 50 roses to produce one drop of essential oil. Knowing this, do use essential oils with deep respect. Less is more in aromatherapy!

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A final word of caution: Always use diluted essential oils with a carrier oil like jojoba on your skin due to its high concentration, and do not ingest essential oils unless under the guidance of a medical health practitioner trained in aromatherapy or an Aromatherapist trained in ingestion.

Remember to first take care of yourself, before taking on the world! eh



Kuan Nee is a Certified Aromatherapist with the National Association of Holistic Aromatherapy, USA. She is really all for empowering people to take care of themselves through running workshops, talks and consults. The products on www.havaroma.com are all lovingly hand-blended herself and she carries a range of essential oils complete with individual batch specific gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GCMS) reports.

