



Liz Fulcher
Clinical Aromatherapist
Aromatherapy Educator
Aromatic Wisdom Institute

Aromatic Wisdom Podcast Episode #003

Getting to Know Essential Oils and a List of Ten Basic Essential Oils to Get You Started in Aromatherapy

This is the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast, Episode 3. Today's topic: Getting to know essential oils and a list of ten basic essential oils to get you started in aroma therapy.

Intro: You're listening to the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast, with your host, Liz Fulcher. If you're interesting in learning about essential oils, hearing interviews with industry experts and discovering ways to grow your own aromatherapy business, this is the podcast for you. For more information and show notes, visit the website at aromaticwisdominstitute.com. Now, sit back, relax, take a deep breath and enjoy as Liz shares a dose of aromatic wisdom.

Hi everyone and thank you so much for joining me today, here at the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast. My name is Liz Fulcher, I'm your host and today's Thanksgiving in the United States. I live in Pennsylvania and if you are celebrating Thanksgiving today, I really hope that you're in a place that is warm and happy and safe and that you're with people that you love. I know I am – this is a prerecorded show, so I'm with my family.

Today also, unofficially marks the beginning of the holiday season. The day from sort of Thanksgiving right through to New Year's day, I would consider the holiday season and it can be a very stressful time for a lot of people. There's a lot going on, a lot is expected of us, we tend to expect a lot of ourselves over the holiday season. So I wrote a blogpost this week called 'Managing Holiday Stress with Essential Oils and Affirmations' and it gives some suggestions, tips, techniques, of course recipes, some ways to help you soften around the holiday season, so it's not quite so tense. I will put that link in today's show notes.

Okay – onward and upward to today's topic: Essential Oils. Now, last week, in episode 2, I shared proper blending dilutions because I want you to make safe aromatherapy products and I want you to make products that are effective. So if you go back to episode 2, all the information is there to making the proper – using the proper dilutions to make products.



So today I'm gonna talk about probably the most important component of those products, and that is essential oils – that's why we're here. Essential oils are the cornerstone of true aromatherapy.

I use the word 'true aromatherapy' intentionally. If you are using fragrance oils, if you are using perfumes, if you are using anything other than a pure essential oil, it's not aromatherapy, so let's just get that out right in front. In today's episode, I'm going to cover 3 specific points related to essential oils: What is an essential oil is point number one. Why do we use essential oil? Point number two. And then, for point number 3, I'm going to give you a list of 10 best essential oils to get you started with aromatherapy. I'm not gonna go into too much detail about each one because I'm keeping this episode a little bit shorter, because it's a holiday weekend. If you are a veteran aromatherapist, someone with a lot of years of experience, this is really basic information.

However, I invite you to stick around and listen anyway, and I'll tell you why. Those of us that have been practicing aromatherapy for a lot of years, sometimes forget what it's like to have a beginners mind. So if you are working with people who are inexperienced with essential oils, if you are teaching people who know nothing about essential oils, it's always good to go back to beginner mind – what it was like when you were first starting?

Okay, number 1: What is an essential oil?

Well, in a nutshell, an essential oil is a liquid compound that forms inside a plant, and is the part of the plant that gives its signature fragrance. A good example of that is peppermint. Well, that familiar, fresh, minty aroma comes from the essential oil in the plant. If you were to look at a peppermint leaf under the microscope, you'd see hundreds of fat, juicy sacks full of liquid. Well, those sacks are glands and the liquid is essential oil. So let's just take a moment to use our imaginations. Close your eyes for a second, unless you're driving! If you're driving, good lord, keep your eyes open! So imagine now that you have a peppermint leaf between your thumb and your first two fingers. Gently crush that peppermint leaf and now imagine the aroma that is left on your hands. That, my friends, is essential oil that you just squeezed directly from the glands in the leaf. So just try to imagine the peppermint plant without its beautiful minty aroma. It would just be another unremarkable weed in the garden.

I have a really cool resource for you that you're gonna love. It's an article that was published by the American Botanical Council a couple of years ago – I don't remember when it was, but it's a while back. The article's called 'A closer look: secretory structures of



aromatic and medicinal plants'. It's a really good article – I recommend you take the time to read it, but what I really want you to take a look at are the photographs. They have taken highly magnified microscopic pictures of the glands in the plant that are full of essential oil. They will blow you away – they are really great pictures. It does deepen your relationship with essential oils when you actually see them sitting in situ – right in the plants where they were born. You can see clary sage, clove, chamomile, oregano, lavender and yes, even our friend peppermint. So I'll put that link into the show notes and I invite you to go and have a look at it. It's a great article and the pictures are superb.

Okay – that was point no. 1: What are essential oils? So now, point no.2: Why do we use essential oils? What are their benefits?

Well, first of all, I'll tell you why we use essential oils: because they rock! Essential oils are plant medicine. They're not just valuable for the plants, they're also valuable for us. They have a ton of therapeutic properties. I'm getting excited – can you tell? Essential oils can be, let me see – I'll just pull a few out of my hat here: anti-inflammatory, analgesic – essential oils are good for pain; they affect the central nervous system so they'll be really good for bringing you up when you feel down, for stress relief, immune support; they're good for skincare, awesome for skincare. In fact, the two body systems that have the greatest affinity with essential oils are the skin and respiratory system, because there's a direct interface with the essential oils. So this time of year, bring out essential oils to support your respiratory system. Sinuses, lungs – all of that stuff, essential oils will address so many things that you don't even need to think about taking medicine.

Of course, they're super for emotional balance and that, really that's just the tip of the iceberg. Another cool thing about essential oils is that they're all antibacterial, and that makes them a really good addition if you're making your own home cleaning products: essential oils are a superb addition. I'm probably going to do an episode just on green cleaning and making your own cleaning products for home – it's something I'm really passionate about. Imagine having this remarkable plant medicine at your disposal, that smells good, that can make you feel better, that can reduce pain that can help heal wounds. I'm so grateful for essential oils: they are an amazing gift from Mother Nature.

Okay – and now, the moment you've all been waiting for: the list of 10 essential oils that I recommend for your starting aroma therapy collection are: lavender, tea tree, peppermint, orange, cedar wood – and that would be Virginia cedar wood, eucalyptus, frankincense, roman chamomile, rosemary and vetiver. It was hard to narrow my choice down to just 10 oils, so I'll tell you what my criteria was for these oils. No. 1: I wanted a



broad selection of different plant parts. So we have flowers: lavender, roman chamomile – are flowers. We have leaves: tea tree, peppermint, rosemary are leaves. I'm just glancing at them, oh – and eucalyptus. Orange is a citrus, thought it would be nice for you to experience a citrus. Cedar wood is a hardwood, it comes from the wood of the tree. Frankincense is a resin. Vetivert is a root – there are seeds and so forth out there I did not include in this list. I think this is good, this is a good beginning list. It also is a list with a lot of versatility. So these 10 essential oils would be fabulous for addressing a lot of different physical and emotional discomforts. The other thing is that all of these essential oils are really quiet safe. They still need to be diluted: listen to last week's episode to understand why, but there aren't any that have any real dangerous side effects or consequences of using too much.

The dilutions for how much essential oils to use for different age groups, for different carriers, again – last week's episode. That's episode 2, so you would go to aromaticwisdominstitute.com/002 to hear that. So now I'm going to go through each one of these top 10 essential oils and just tell you a little bit about each one. In the show notes, I have each one listed with some resources where you can go and read more about the essential oils. Some of them are within my own website, and some are outside the website. Okay, lavender. I started with lavender, because if you want to start with just one essential oil, it should be this one. It has so many applications, it almost seems like a panacea. If you don't know what to use, get the lavender. It's very safe for the skin, it's best known for addressing burns – that's its most famous property. But it's good for any skin concerns because it's so safe and kids love it. It's calming, it's good for headaches, pains, it's good for insomnia – just general relaxation and again, it's a really good oil to use with children.

The second oil on the list is tea tree. Now, my husband, he's a wild guy. He has a school for primitive skills and outdoor survival, it's pretty hardcore. And for years, my friends have encouraged him to apply to be on the TV show 'Survivor' and I always said that if he was accepted, I would insist that he'd take a gallon of tea tree with him because it is so antiseptic for topical wounds and cuts and scrapes and anything imaginable that can happen in the woods. Tea tree is my go-to oil absolutely for anything that has to do with sinuses. So steam inhalation with tea tree, fabulous if you feel you're getting a sinus infection.

The next oil on the list is peppermint, which is my go-to oil for nausea. Motion sickness, any time you just have an upset stomach, it is a really wonderful oil for settling the stomach. Spearmint is actually a better choice for kids under 3, but for anyone over,



peppermint's great. Peppermint is refreshing, uplifting, is a really good mental stimulant to help bring clarity and alertness. It's a nice afternoon oil, sometimes at around 3 or 4 o'clock I feel like I may need a coffee, but sometimes I go ahead and inhale a little bit of peppermint and it's enough to kind of bring me back around. It's a really nice blend with rosemary for alertness. When I make homemade soft scrubs or counter sprays, I always like to add peppermint. It makes the house smell really clean, and besides - ants do not like peppermint.

Next, we have one of my favorite essential oils: sweet orange. Orange is just plain fun. It makes you happy, just smelling it makes you feel cheerful. Children love it; it's a really nice essential oil to add in a diffuser, it makes the room smell good. It's one that I tend to use quite a bit here in the winter, because in North America it gets kind of dark and cold, and not a lot of sunshine - and so I will often use orange in the wintertime just to pick up my mood. And one of the really outstanding properties of sweet orange essential oil is that it is not phototoxic. There are many cold pressed citrus oils which you have to be very careful going out into the sun after you've applied them to the skin, and that's not true for orange. It's really skin safe when your skin is exposed to the sun and it has orange oil on it.

Next, we have a nice, calming, grounding oil and that is cedar wood. It is really good for the skin - it's an oil that I would use perhaps in acne skin. It helps stimulate the respiratory system, so it's really nice in a chest rub to help relieve congestion or fight infection. It is insect repellent, it is also mildly diuretic, if that is something you need to be aware of. It is expectorant and mucolytic - helps break down mucus. I also love the earthy, grounding quality that cedar wood exudes; if you are feeling overwhelmed and your head is just too full of information, taking a moment to pause and use a little bit of cedar oil, just inhale it from a tissue, and take a deep breath and bring yourself back to center - it's a great oil for that.

The next oil on our top 10 list is eucalyptus. Specifically, eucalyptus globulus. This has a real camphoraceous and stimulating aroma. It's your classic cold and flu remedy. It is awesome in a steam inhalation - you can use it in a diffuser. It's also good as a prevention - you can diffuse it in the home to help prevent airborne bacteria from making people sick. It helps break down mucus and it's just overall cleansing for the respiratory system.

Now, the next oil on the list is very special. The sacred resin called frankincense. It has a lot of connections to divinity and has a lot of story behind it that makes it very sacred. The aroma is exquisite. It supports meditation, it helps to deepen the breath, it is an essential oil that I like to use on someone who has asthma. It opens up the airways and you're having a deeper or fuller breath.



The next oil on our list is the most expensive in this group. I try to indicate oils that I thought would be economical – just wouldn't be very, very expensive for someone starting out, putting together the first collection. But I had to include roman chamomile. I have a particular weakness for roman chamomile because it was the oil that was used on my second son at his birth. You can read the story on my blog about it, called 'My unusual introduction to aromatics' and I'll put it in the show notes. So apart from I have a personal story with roman chamomile, and I actually did talk about that in episode 1, I also shared that story. The other reason I included roman chamomile is because it is very, profoundly antispasmodic. So if you have a muscle cramp, if you have menstrual cramps, any sort of contractions of muscles, roman chamomile is a powerful antispasmodic. It also is very sedative – so this is a great one if you need to sleep, just to help calm you down and super for insomnia.

Our next oil: rosemary, is another stimulant. It's a good mental and physical stimulant. I really like to use this one in the shower in the morning. So sometimes I'll just take just a blob of shower gel – unscented shower gel in my hand – and I'll put in a drop of rosemary, it really wakes me up. It's great for soothing aching muscles and it's very nice to help with the tension headache, especially when blended with lavender. It also have an affinity with the respiratory system, so I will use it in blends for cold and flu.

And finally, the last essential oil on our top 10 list is vetivert. I have seen it spelled with a 't' at the end, but generally it does not have the 't', but is always pronounced 'vetiver'. This is an incredibly grounding, earthy oil. This is another good overwhelm oil. Kind of smells like dirt, which may or may not be a good thing; I personally like the smell of dirt, especially when it first starts to rain, I like the way the earth smells. Vetivert is very sedative, it's very calming to the central nervous system, it is emotionally grounding, it is a superb oil for anxiety relief. I haven't mentioned this about any of the other oils, but it's another one I use energetically for trust. There is a whole energetic vibe to vetivert essential oil that really is great if you're having a hard time trusting the process of life, trusting the universe, trusting anything or you feel that your fate is shaky – vetivert is great for that.

So that ends this segment of the podcast. I hope that you have learned a little bit about essential oils and that you feel clear about what they are and why we're all crazy in love with them. And, as always, I'd like to end the podcast with my very special segment called 'Smell my life!' I think I'm gonna have to get some jungle music for this segment – I'm gonna look around for that for next time. So in the 'Smell my life' segment, I always share some kind of a spontaneous moment in my life from the previous week when I used essential oils in a real life situation.



So this past weekend, I went on a strategic planning retreat. That doesn't sound very sexy, but it was awesome. I have a dear, dear friend who's name is Annie Michel, I have known her for almost 20 years. She is a very dynamic life coach and a dear friend. We each have online businesses, and we wanted to support each other last week. So I went to her house for 2 days and for 2 days we had kind of a quiet retreat, we ate all good, natural foods, and we worked in separate offices on our 2015 calendar, for our businesses, for the year. So Saturday evening, after supper, I was helping her clean up and I did the dishes and wiped off the countertop, and spontaneously I said 'I really have the strong urge to sprinkle some essential oil on your countertop' because that's what I do at my home, after I wash the dishes and wipe things down, I sprinkle my counters with lemongrass or lemon, and I said to her 'I feel like I'd like to use some Siberian fir on your counter, is that okay with you?' and she said 'Absolutely!' I put a couple of drops on, wiped them down - she came into the room a little later and she loved the way it smelled. So I left the bottle next to her sink and told her she could have it and to use it.

I would love to share with you Annie's website information. She's a life coach, her business is called YourSpiritedLife.com - please check her out. She's a remarkable writer and a really brilliant woman and a great, loving friend. I will put the link to her website also in the show notes.

And that is it for episode no.3. I hope you enjoyed it! And I will see you next Thursday. Bye-bye!