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## **Aromatic Wisdom Podcast Episode #013** **The Two Worst Fall Allergens** **Essential Oils To The Rescue!**

This is the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast, Episode 13. In today's show I'm going to be talking about Fall allergies. I'm going to share with you the two biggest sources of allergies in the Autumn, then I'm going to give you a list of Essential Oils to help give you relief from their effects.

You're listening to the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast with your host, Liz Fulcher.

If you're interested 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 [www.AromaticWisdomInstitute.com](http://www.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. My name is Liz Fulcher and I am a clinical aromatherapist and a long-time Essential Oil educator and I am your host for the podcast.

Today I'm going to jump right in to the content because I have a lot I'd like to cover with you. I live in Pennsylvania which is in the Northern Hemisphere, and in the Northern Hemisphere it is early, early Fall; it's not really Fall since that won't happen until the Solstice, but we are already starting to have Fall happen around us with the changing of the leaves, and pollen and so forth.



People are already starting to experience Fall allergies and what I'm going to talk about are the unique environmental issues that happen in the Fall that actually wreak havoc with our bodies and manifest those nasty and uncomfortable allergic reactions.

I'm going to give you an outline of what I'm going to be covering:

1. What is an allergy?
2. What are the symptoms of allergies?
3. The two big allergens that we get in the Fall—Ragweed and mold
4. Finally, I'm going to wrap up with a list of Essential Oils that will help address the allergic reactions that we get from Ragweed and mold.

There will be specific Essential Oils with specific properties of being anti-histaminic and decongestant.

So, go ahead and get yourself comfy and you might want to grab a pencil and paper to take notes, maybe a glass of water or a cup of tea.

### **1. What is an allergy?**

Let's get started with what is an allergy? We all think we know what it is, but I thought, for the sake of a foundation, let's just start right at the beginning. So here's the textbook definition:

An allergy is an overreaction of our immune system to substances like dust, pollen, animal dander, synthetic materials or foods.

### **2. What are the symptoms of allergy?**

If you have a reaction to any of those or something else, I'm sure you already know it. Some common allergic reactions you will experience in the Fall are runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing, coughing, itchy eyes, itchy nose, headaches, you might get a rash—you feel miserable. You feel sick without actually being sick or contagious.

### **3. The two big allergens—Ragweed and mold**

There are several things that cause allergies in the Fall, but there are two that are really big and two that are unique to Fall and those are the two that I'm going to talk about now.



The first is Ragweed. I'm starting with Ragweed because it is the number one allergy trigger in the Autumn months. It is an invasive plant that is native to North America, where I live, so the United States and Canada, but it's also widespread in Australia, South America, Eurasia—so if you're listening and in any of those countries, this will apply to you as well.

The Latin binomial for Ragweed is *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, and I'll put the Latin binomial in the show notes so you can see how it is spelled and I'll include a picture of it as well, because I bet you'll take a look at that picture and say, "Oh my word. I know exactly what that is. I have it all over my yard," or I've seen it on the roadside or I've seen it in fields. It is really everywhere. Ragweed likes to bloom August to November; it starts to bloom in August and starts to peter out toward the end of October, so the month of September it is at its highest, at its most ferocious for allergies. It blooms and then it releases a fine powder called—you already know it—pollen. So the pollen level for Ragweed is highest right about now. If you are allergic to spring plants, you are also likely to be allergic to Ragweed.

So you've got this little plant that's minding its own business out there, hanging out, doing its thing, pollenating the world, trying to make plants. How does it cause your allergies? First of all, just like all allergies, a Ragweed allergy happens when your body's immune system turns into Ninja mode. Basically it mounts this huge response to a foreign substance that is actually harmless—pollen is harmless—except for when you are allergic to it. You've got these maturing Ragweed flowers that are releasing pollen, and you're outside just doing your thing, breathing the air, and Ragweed pollen in the air enters your nose and throat and your immune system freaks out as if it was under threat. I'm speaking to those who have the allergic reaction. Most of us breathe it in and then our body gets rid of it; it just excretes it in the way that bodies do.

If you are a person who is allergic to Ragweed pollen, you've breathed it in, it's in your nose, it's your throat and now you've got these specialized immune cells that start producing anti-bodies to proteins in the pollen. Now your bloodstream is getting flooded with histamine, and it's those histamines that make you feel so uncomfortable: sneezing, sniffing, nasal congestion, puffy eyes—look at what is generally prescribed over the counter or even by prescription is anti-histamine. So what we're going to look at in a little bit are anti-histamine and decongesting oils.



If you are someone who does have an allergy to Ragweed, I invite you to start paying attention to the pollen count. Pollen count is one of those terms you hear on the news or with the weather, but do we really know what that is? The pollen count is the measurement of the number of grains of pollen in a cubic meter of air—usually for a 24-hour period. I don't know how they do it. I'm sure they have some scientific instrument that can measure that. As the pollen number increases, people with allergies are going to start to have an increase in their allergic reaction, so it's really important to be aware of the pollen count.

The pollen count can change with the time of day and it can also change with the weather. So, for example, the pollen count is going to be higher on warm, breezy days, which kind of makes sense, and it's going to be lower on chilly, wet days. Again, if you suffer from allergies, you generally know you feel better when it's raining, and when it's dry and breezy, you're all kinds of congested.

The time of day when Ragweed pollen is the highest is usually between ten in the morning and three in the afternoon, which is so stinkin' unfair because that's when we want to be out and doing our errands and enjoying the day. One thing I'd like you to keep in mind is that some places will give a total pollen count rather than a pollen count for a specific plant. Just because there is a reading of a high pollen count does not necessarily mean you're going to have allergy symptoms because the pollen that they are recording may not be from the plant that you are allergic to.

You can find Ragweed pollen counts for your area in two ways. First, check your weather! Check the weather section in your local newspaper or just go to [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) or any weather information website by putting in your zip code and it will tell you the Ragweed pollen count for area.

The discomforts that you're going to feel with a Ragweed allergy are, again, you can have these symptoms and be completely aware, but other people may feel like, "Gheez, I always get a cold in the Fall," or "I always start to feel run down in the Fall." You may not be aware that it's actually a Ragweed allergy. Ragweed allergy symptoms most commonly include sneezing. You have a stuffy nose, a runny nose, and you are sneezing, and it feels just like you have a cold (maybe without the body aches). Your throat might itch, the inside of your ears will itch, you may get hives, and you will probably have swollen eyelids and itchy eyes. It's also sometimes called hay fever or seasonal allergic rhinitis. One way that you can determine if you are allergic to Ragweed, this is very bizarre to me, if you eat certain foods and you feel a tingling in your mouth. So, if you eat honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon or



bananas and feel a tingling or a burning in your mouth, you are probably allergic to Ragweed. These specific fruits can cause these symptoms anytime, but usually only happen during Ragweed season. So if it's Ragweed season and your eating a honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon or banana and you get this tingling in your mouth, just know that you really might want to avoid being outside when the pollen count is really high for Ragweed.

So, we're ten minutes into the podcast and you've probably already figured out if you have a Ragweed allergy or not. Or you already knew before you heard the podcast. What are some ways you can limit your contact with Ragweed pollen? So I've got eight suggestions for you:

1. Wash your hands often. Pollen can actually stick to your hands and your arms and maybe you want to make a nice little hand wash with Castile soap and Siberian Fir Essential Oil. It will also help you feel better and it smells amazing. So, wash your hands often.
2. Limit your time outdoors when Ragweed counts are high. The times would be between 10 a.m. and 3 or 4 p.m. If you are having a really bad allergy attack, try not to go outside.
3. Wear a dust mask, like carpenters use. You can find them in Lowe's or Home Depot in the United States, but any hardware store should carry the cotton masks that cover your nose. I actually have several around the house that I wear whenever I do a big cleaning or if I think there is going to be a lot of dust. I wear one when I change my kitty box and I put one drop of Laurel Leaf Essential Oil inside the mask. Just one drop. Especially wear a mask when you cut the grass or rake the leaves or when you have to be outside and really involved with the environment. It doesn't matter what the neighbors think. What matters is how you feel.
4. Do not wear outdoor clothes in the house because pollen could be actually hanging on the fabric.
5. Shower before bed to remove pollen from your hair. And again, you can make your own aromatherapy body wash with Lavender and Sweet Orange Essential Oils—that will help give you a good night's sleep, but will also help to boost your immunity because Sweet Orange has a molecule in it called di-limonene, which is great for immunity.
6. Clean and replace your air conditioning filters and your furnace filters frequently. You can also use a HEPA filter. HEPA stands for "High Efficiency Particulate Air". HEPA filters will remove a lot, almost 100% of the pollen, and also animal dander, dust, and other particles you could be allergic to. But HEPA filters are awesome for



getting rid of pollens so it's not coming into your system and you're not breathing it in your house.

7. Use a clothes dryer rather than outdoor lines. It kills me to say that because it's so great to have line-dried clothing and saving the planet and electricity, and so forth. But let's be real here, if you're dying from allergies, it's not worth it: a) you don't want to be outside hanging the clothes, and b) you could get pollen on your clothing. So use the clothes dryer.
8. And finally, do a nasal irrigation with a Neti pot just to clear out your sinuses. Do that twice a day. I like to use half water/half Lavender Hydrosol in my Neti pot and that will help rinse out your nostrils. I'm going to be doing an episode soon just on hydrosols and I actually have a video where I'm going to show you how to do a Neti pot rinse.

Okay! I think I've exhausted all I'm going to say about Ragweed and allergies, so now we're going to talk about Fall allergen number two: mold. I can't stand mold! I can't stand to look at it, I can't stand the idea of it—something wet and creepy and crawly and making you sick—if I see a little corner of a basement with a little black in it, I just want to run away. Usually I throw a whole bunch of vinegar on it and hope I've killed it!

Anyway, mold is another Fall trigger that is a little easier to avoid than Ragweed, mostly because Ragweed pollen is everywhere in the air and the Ragweed pollen can travel for miles, actually, on the wind. Mold tends to be contained to specific areas and is created by damp conditions. Now I could do a two-hour podcast on mold in the house and in basements, and so forth, but I'm going to keep this contained to the kind of mold that grows specifically in the Autumn and outside.

So, first of all, mold is a fungus and like all fungi it creates spores that float in the air like pollen and that is how it reproduces. When people who have a mold allergy inhale those spores, the very idea just makes my skin crawl, they get allergy symptoms and those allergy symptoms are going to be very much like the symptoms from Ragweed. As much as I complain, I know that mold spores really aren't bad, they have a job to do; they are a crucial part of nature and their job is to grow on dead organic matter and break it down. The reason that Fall is such a bad time for mold allergies is because we've got leaves falling on the ground. Piles of damp leaves sitting on wet grass, trapping more dampness and underneath it's nasty and that's where the mold tends to grow. If you've ever raked leaves and you've pulled back a big pile of leaves, underneath could be mass of white mold. This is the ideal breeding ground for mold. So, Fall is the HUGE mold producing season of the year. For people who are sensitive to mold this is the worst time of year. Not everyone is



sensitive to mold, and as disgusting as it is, not everyone has an allergy to it. I'm talking specifically to people who have mold sensitivity: you really want to stay away from the wet leaves this time of year. In fact, watch out for the mold "perfect storm" which is a few days of rain followed by warm temperatures, so you've got wet leaves on the ground, you've got moisture and now you've got the warmth which helps the mold grow.

So, what can we do to alleviate mold exposure? It's a lot like the recommendations for pollen.

1. Take showers in the evening before bed to remove any spores that could be on your skin and in your hair. Especially if you are in the yard or working in the garden and you are close to areas where mold spores could actually be in the air.
2. Use a Neti pot. Again, rinse those spores from your nose throughout the day. The idea of having spores in my nose makes my skin crawl.
3. Wear a dust mask if you need to rake the leaves. So, if you are in a position where you've got a pile of leaves that are probably damp and you have mold sensitivity, by all means wear a mask. Again, put a drop of Essential Oil in the dust mask. It'll also help protect the inside of your nose. Just use something gentle like Lavender. Stay clear of piles of wet leaves, hay, and straw if you can avoid it.

We have taken a good close look at two of the major Fall allergens that make us miserable. Let's take a look at how we can get allergy relief with Essential Oils and which Essential Oils you want to be using.

The first two Essential Oils I would put on the top of the list of your allergy relief arsenal kit are German Chamomile and Blue Tansy. The reason I start with these two oils is because they have anti-histamine properties, and if you remember, histamines are what give us so much trouble. When we have histamine release is when we get into the sneezing, and the itchy eyes, and so forth. My first recommendation for using these two anti-histamine Essential Oils is in unscented lotion.

1 oz. jar of 1 oz. unscented/fragrance free lotion

I personally love the fragrance free lotion that is put out by Pompeii Organics. It's all natural, they make it themselves and it doesn't have any aroma and spreads on really well. So, you've got your jar, and you've got your fragrance-free lotion in it, now, go ahead and add:

6 drops of Blue Tansy

OR



6 drops of German Chamomile  
OR 3 drops of each

You want a total of six drops of Essential Oils and stir it together. Both of those oils are a beautiful blue color, so you're going to have a pretty Robin's Egg Blue crème when you are done. Your six drops of Essential Oil to one ounce of lotion is a one percent dilution. Take that crème every day, and before you start your day, rub it into your face, right across your sinuses and over your cheek bones. Rub a little in your chest as well. It's entirely possible you are not going to like the smell. I personally like the smell of both of those oils, but German Chamomile is a crap shoot. Sometimes people like it, sometimes people don't. If you do not like it, you can go ahead and add a couple of drops of something like Sweet Orange or even a little bit of Lavender to make the aroma more pleasant for yourself. And this will help to keep the anti-histamine effect throughout the day. You might want to keep it with you and perhaps add it again later in the day.

Another way you can use these two oils is in a nasal inhaler. I'm going to give you a list of decongest Essential Oils that can help reduce the inflammation in your nose so you can breathe. The list is pretty long, but I'm going to go ahead and read it off. I will also put the list in the show notes because I don't expect you to remember them all. So, if you are going to make a nasal inhaler, you can add any number of Essential Oils, but I would also be sure that you always add a little bit of German Chamomile or Blue Tansy in your nasal inhaler.

Again, the two recommended methods of addressing your allergy relief are an unscented crème where you are going to put it on your chest and a little bit on your face and a nasal inhaler. You can make many different types of nasal inhalers: some can be uplifting, some can be more calming, but they will all have the affect of helping to reduce congestion in your nose. Here's the list of decongestant Essential Oils:

Cardamom

Cypress

Cedar Wood

Eucalyptus

Laurel Leaf

Spike Lavender

Peppermint

Ravintsara (*Cinnamomum camphora* ct. 1.8 cineole)—be real careful that you are getting the right Latin name with that one. You want Ravintsara NOT Ravensara.



Rosemary  
Scotch Pine  
Siberian Fir  
Tea Tree

They all have a nice decongestant effect. So you want to take your nasal inhaler and add a total of 15 drops on the little cotton wick that comes with it, and then make sure you add one or two drops of either German Chamomile or Blue Tansy in your nasal inhaler. Actually, I just thought of another way you can use these decongesting Essential Oils and it's so easy: in a steam inhalation! Just get a bowl of hot water, hot enough to produce steam, and put in one drop of any of those Essential Oils. My favorite is, actually, probably Eucalyptus. I also like to use Siberian Fir and Tea Tree for this particular exercise.

Put your head over the bowl, maybe put a towel over your head to create kind of a tent. Keep your eyes closed! Breathe in for a few minutes. If you are so congested you cannot breathe in through your nose, breathe in through your mouth. The steam is still getting up into your nose. So that's a nice thing to do when you are really heavily congested.

So, there you go.

That's it for this week's topic on the two Fall allergens: Ragweed and mold, and some Essential Oils to help you feel less congested and help you deal with the histamines that are being released into your system. I hope that that was helpful.

And now we come to the segment, I like to call Smell My Life.

In this little segment, I always like to share some way in which I used Essential Oils in a real life application in the previous week.

About five days ago, I noticed a strange wound on my right knee. We're doing renovations in the house and I am heavily de-cluttering and it's been a busy time, and I've been falling. I've been tripping over a box, things are not where they are supposed to be. I scurry around and suddenly there is something sticking out that wasn't there yesterday. Well, I scraped my knee somehow, and little scrapes don't bother me, I just get over them. But this one scared me a little because it was very itchy and it was pretty infected, I could see it was getting the red ring around it, and I had this bizarre feeling that it could be MRSA. I thought I'm just going to start with Tea Tree undiluted on the wound. And sure enough, I put it on twice a day. I'd wake up in the morning and put one drop of Tea Tree on it and I



would leave it alone and before bed I would put another drop of Tea Tree on it and probably in about three days it started to scab over. Gratefully it was not MRSA, just an infected wound that is no longer infected.

Now we've reached the little segment called Ask Liz, where you get to write to me and ask me questions and I answer them here on the air.

This week's question comes from Julie Morrison who sent me an email and asked about "trauma oil". What is trauma oil and how do you use it?

I'm so glad you asked, and it's one of my favorite carrier oils, Julie. Trauma oil is actually a proprietary name; I've also seen it sold as "anti-trauma oil" and "trauma trio". It's a blend of three organic flowers: Calendula, St. John's Wort, and Arnica that have been infused in organic olive oil. An infused oil is actually a carrier that has been soaked in flowers or in herbs. For example, if you've ever made tea, you've made an infusion. You just take the tea leaves and soaked them in water. You remove the plant material and drink the water. When you make an infusion you take the plant material, soak it in oil, and when you remove the plant material, what you have left is the goodness left behind from the herbs or the flowers. So these three flowers: Calendula, St. John's Wort, and Arnica, are infused in olive oil, the plant material removed and what you have left is an incredibly beautiful and medicinal carrier oil that you can then use to put Essential Oils in and you've got a double dose of therapeutic benefits.

I have a blog post that I wrote about trauma oil and I will put a link to that in the show notes. Trauma oil is great for pain, for muscle and joint pain and it's good for Sciatic discomfort, wound care and inflammation. I was in a car accident a few years ago and I had a really bad bruise on my leg from hip to ankle—my whole leg was black. I used trauma oil on that every day for weeks and it expedited the bruise healing.

I hope that helps to answer your question, Julie. If you, out there, have a question you'd like to ask me, talk to me on Facebook or you can send me an email to: [Liz@aromaticwisdom.com](mailto:Liz@aromaticwisdom.com), and I'd be more than happy to answer it on the podcast here.

That's it for this week's podcast; I hope you've enjoyed it! I really hope that you are in a position now to have some relief from those terrible allergies and share with me if some of these recipes are helpful or useful for you. I'd love to hear from you and I'd love the feedback.



Until next week, be happy. Be well.

Bye, bye.

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