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Aromatic Wisdom Podcast Episode #027 Ravensara versus Ravintsara

This is the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast, Episode 27. If you've ever wondered what is the difference between Ravensara and Ravintsara essential oils, wonder no more. Today I'm going to explain the difference and how you use each one.

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 <http://www.AromaticWisdomInstitute.com>. Now sit back. Relax. Take a deep breath and enjoy as Liz shares a dose of Aromatic Wisdom.

Hello Everyone! Thanks again for being here for the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast. As you heard in the intro, my name is Liz Fulcher. I am a Clinical Aromatherapist with over 25 years of experience. Today is another "Ask Liz" episode. What that means is that someone wrote to me and asked a question that I am going to answer publicly on the air rather than just sending back the email. And this is a good one! I get asked this one a lot, so I'm going to go ahead and answer it in the podcast so everyone can learn.

Here is the email that I received: *Hi, Liz. I love your podcasts and am learning so much with each new episode. (That's nice!) Can you please help me clarify some name confusion: I have an essential oil called Ravensara, but you mentioned Ravintsara in your podcast #14 about 1,8 cineole. Is that the same oil with a different spelling or are they two different essential oils?*

Thank you very much,

*Theresa Melman
San Diego, California*



Such a great question and I do get asked this one quite a bit, so thank you for writing Theresa, first and foremost and thank you for asking a super-duper question!

And, any of you can write to me—just go to the website [contact page](#), which I'll put in the show notes, and in the subject line put “**Ask Liz**”; ask me a question, and if I haven't already answered it, I'll go ahead and answer it on the air.

Let me get down to this business of trying to explain the difference. When I do this in the classroom it's very easy because I draw pictures on the board most aromatherapists, and most people really I think, learn well visually, so I draw pictures—it does seem to help. I have some pictures for you that I will talk to you about at the end of the podcast.

There are two separate essential oils: Ravensara and Ravintsara. They are very often confused because they come from the same country but different trees and I'll get more in depth with that in a second. When they are said quickly they sound very much alike; Ravensara—Ravintsara. It could even sound like tomatoyes/tomahtoes—like you are just pronouncing them differently. They sound alike but they are from different trees and very different therapeutically and chemically.

Let's travel in our minds to the beautiful, lush, tropical island called Madagascar. Madagascar is located in the Indian Ocean, off of southeast Africa, just off the coast of Mozambique. It is stunning. It is a beautiful country with different and diverse agriculture, plant life, and foliage and is also very big for tourists because of its aquamarine water, white sand, and beautiful palm trees that sort of lean out over the ocean. That could be Madagascar. Personally, it's on my bucket list of places to vacation. Okay. I just went down a tropical vacation rabbit hole!

Back to the trees! There are two trees in Madagascar that produce essential oils. The first is Ravensara and the Latin binomial is *Ravensara aromatica*. The second is Ravintsara, also known as Ho Leaf, and that comes a tree called *Cinnamomum camphora ct 1,8 cineole*.

Before I get in to more specifics about these trees, what we're really talking about here is **taxonomy**; the name of the plant the essential oil was drawn from. If you know the name of the plant, then you have a better sense of which oil you have. As you can see, by what I've just shared with you about Ravensara and Ravintsara, they have common names—the names we use in conversation and sound very similar—but their Latin names *Ravensara aromatica* and *Cinnamomum camphor ct 1,8 cineole* indicate that they come from really different trees. Is that clear so far? I have a blog posted on “all about taxonomy” and I'm going to put that in the show notes to give you a better understanding about Latin names.



But that's the bottom line. When you are confused about the name of an essential oil, stop, and look at the scientific name. It's that fancy name that's written under the common name. If you have Lavender, you'll have, most likely, *Lavendula angustifolia*. If you have Spike Lavender you'll have *Lavendula latifolia*--different plant sources. Always look at the Latin binomial, Theresa, whenever you are not sure about the common names.

Chamomile is another big one that a lot of people are not sure of: the difference between German Chamomile and Roman Chamomile. Are they the same oil? Are they used for the same thing? They have way different Latin binomials.

Let me continue on now about the difference between these two trees. Actually, let me start with the similarities. Both the essential oil of Ravensara and the essential oil of Ravintsara, aka Ho Leaf—there's another thing: Ravintsara has two common names, Ravintsara or Ho Leaf—and, actually Ho Leaf is a less confusing name to call it as it doesn't sound like Ravensara.

Anyway, Ravensara and Ravintsara, the essential oil of both of those are extracted from the leaves. For that, there is a similarity. However, that's where the similarity ends. There is a lot of difference in their chemical constituents.

Ravintsara, the one with the "T" in it, *Cinnamomum camphora ct 1,8 cineole*, contains about, depending on the batch, half or 50% 1,8 cineole. 1,8 cineole is the name of a molecule (chemical constituent), that some plants produce. It's actually easy to know when an essential oil is high in 1,8 cineole because it has a Eucalyptus/camphoraceous smell. So, when you smell Eucalyptus and you get that [deep breath/intake and exhale] head opening kind of property when you sinus passages feel cleared, it's probably the 1,8 cineole that is doing that.

If you smell Ravintsara essential oil you will find that it smells similar to Eucalyptus. Another one is Rosemary. Some Rosemary essential oils have 1,8 cineole molecules present in that oil, and often it has that same head opening quality. So 1,8 cineole is actually easy to recognize in an essential oil. If you smell an essential oil and it has a Eucalyptus undertone, no doubt what you are smelling is the 1,8 cineole. Going back to our friend to Ravintsara essential oil that smells a lot like Eucalyptus. It has this high 1,8 cineole content.

Let's talk a little bit about 1,8 cineole. It is in the oxide chemical family and here are some of the therapeutic properties of an oil high in 1,8 cineole like Ravintsara. 1,8 cineole will kill air born bacteria; it is analgesic so it's very good for pain; it's anti-inflammatory; it is anti-viral. That's really important. Dopaminergic— isn't that a great word!? 1,8 cineole will help to stimulate the brain in the sense that it will help to increase your focus and concentration and that is because of the dopaminergic properties of this 1,8 cineole molecule. So, it also increases cerebral blood flow, again,



gets the blood flowing, and it's mucolytic. 1,8 cineole again has a Eucalyptus smell and will help to thin the mucous in your system.

That was Ravintsara. Now, let's take a look at the second essential oil Ravensara—no "T" in the name and whose Latin binomial is *Ravensara aromatica*. It has about three percent 1,8 cineole. It depends on the batch, again, but look at the difference that is about three percent 1,8 cineole. Right away, you know what? That it's going to smell different; it's not going to have that strong Eucalyptus kind of smell. It's also not going to have a lot of the strong properties that 1,8 cineole offers in the Ravintsara. Right off the bat, it's not going to be as strong of a mucolytic for the respiratory system and it's also NOT going to have that dopaminergic property which helps the focus and concentration.

Let's take a look at what it does have. Again, Ravensara essential oil is distilled from the *Ravensara aromatica* tree; is strongly anti-viral, and this is my go-to for Shingles. I like to blend, and I learned this from my friend, Marge Clark of NaturesGift.com. She carries a terrific Ravensara, and the carrier that I'm going to recommend, Tamanu oil. If you blend Tamanu oil and Ravensara essential oil together it is a terrific remedy for Shingles to help relieve the pain and the inflammation and to basically, overall, heal it. You want a good anti-viral when dealing with something like Shingles and Ravensara is super.

Just as an aside, I did a really good blog post on the Tamanu carrier oil. I'll put a link to that in the show notes for today as well.

Chemically, Ravensara has—as always, it depends on the batch. It's hard to generalize and this is why I strongly recommend that you do learn essential oil chemistry and learn what the chemical words mean. When you are working with an essential oil go with a specific batch so that the GC/MS report matches that batch. Ravensara is high in Monoterpenes, and in particular in the component, limonene. Limonene is really good for boosting the immune system, so it's a great immunity oil. Ravensara does have a molecule that is concerning, but once again, and I'm going to keep stressing it, check your batch. Ravensara can contain a component called methyl chavicol. Methyl chavicol, also known as estragole, at about 10-12% has some serious safety concerns because it is an ether and ethers can be a concern especially in pregnancy. If you are going to use *Ravensara aromatica* essential oil please do learn about the safety precautions specific to that oil.

Aromatically, Ravensara is softer; it doesn't have that sharp edge that you get from the 1,8 cineole in the Ravintsara. Ravensara can have almost a licoricey undertone, it depends on how much ethyl chavicol is in it, because that molecule will give it a licoricey type of an aroma, but it's a little more earthy, softer, and it has quite a nice scent.



You also want to be careful with Ravensara in a high dilution it can be irritating to the skin. But we don't use high dilutions, do we? I'd say 3-5% dilution is as high as you need to go.

So to re-cap their uses:

Ravintsara—known as *Cinnamomum camphora ct 1,8 cineole*, is great for the respiratory system. That is one of my go to essential oils for clearing mucus, as it thins the mucus and will help you expel it. It's great in a steam inhalation: one drop of essential oil in a bowl of hot water, put your head down, and put a towel over your head; breathe it in, it's great for any kind of a cold or flu thing going on. Ravintsara is also good to boost immunity and it's great to diffuse in the house if someone is unwell. It's great for aching, sore muscles, a soothing sports rub. I actually use it for a sore throat.

Ravensara— *Ravensara aromatica* is even more strongly anti-viral. It's good for Shingles. I add it to Tamanu carrier oil to make a blend against Shingles. You could also diffuse Ravensara because it's anti-viral. Again, if someone in the house is ill, you can certainly diffuse it and it may help other people get well. It's a super immunity booster and it just does not have that strong, camphoraceous aroma that you find with Ravintsara.

I hope that explanation helped you to understand that difference between Ravintsara and Ravensara essential oils.

Now, I'm going to throw another essential oil in the mix. Ready?

There is a third tree that can sometimes create confusion as well. Now we're moving to another country—we're going to Asia! To the mystical, beautiful countries of China, Taiwan, and Japan. There is a tree that grows there called, ready?, *Cinnamomum camphora ct linalol*. Linalol is a molecule and linalol has wonderful skin healing properties. Whenever an essential oil is high in the component linalol a member of the monoterpene family, it's all kinds of skin friendly. We love to see linalol in essential oils. Lavender is high in linalol and of course, that's our go to for skin. Rosewood, Palma Rosa, Geranium—those all have linalol in them. Well, *Cinnamomum camphora ct linalol* is a tree that produces a lot of linalol in its wood. That common name is Ho Wood.

So we've got, way over in Madagascar, *Cinnamomum camphora ct 1,8 cineole* also known as Ho Leaf. Then we go over to Asia and you've got *Cinnamomum camphora ct linalol* tree and that common name is Ho Wood. Why in the world we've got the same genus and species with different chemo-types on the other side of the world is a mystery that only Mother Nature can tell us. I don't know—that's what I call the PFM factor of aromatherapy: pure freakin' magic. Probably a botanist could explain it.



You've got the Ravintsara also known as Ho Leaf and you've got Ho Wood and they both come from the *Cinnamomum camphora* tree, but they have different chem-types, which means a different chemical profile. You want to know your Latin binomials and you want to know your chemistry so little things like this don't throw you in a tizzy.

I just want to say thank you again, Theresa, for asking this question. It was a really great opportunity for a good lesson.

Now, I have a little surprise for you guys. I made a visual aid. I call it the Ravensara/Ravintsara Learning Guide and it's just three pages. It's visual aid of the different trees and it's broken down visually so that you can get this concept in another way rather than just hearing me talk about it. To get your learning guide, your going to go to this episode www.aromaticwisdominstitute.com/027 and scroll all the way down to the bottom of the page and you will see where you can download it: The Ravensara/Ravintsara Learning Guide.

I hope you enjoy that and I hope it really helps.

Now it's time to take a second and **Smell My Life!** Smell My Life is quick little segment where I share some way in which I used aromatics in some way in my life.

I was at the beach with my family: my husband, my kids and my grandson. We stayed in a hotel room that smelled stuffy. I always doctor my hotel room with essential oils. I clean the toilet, I clean the sink, I might sprinkle them on the sheets. I bring essential oils with me when I travel and I really do use them a lot to sanitize and to improve the air in the hotel room.

We had an air conditioner in the window in our room and I know that those things can be very stinky and can create more problems in the room by bringing in dust. Now I know people who actually take the filters out of them and wash them. I didn't even think to do that—I might do that next time. But what I did was to take a napkin from a place we had eaten dinner. It was a good, thick piece of paper and I sprinkled it with clove and lemongrass essential oils. Those are anti-viral, antiseptic, and they smell really good. I stuffed it in to the air conditioner.

Now, if you are going to do this, be careful you don't get the essential oil on the plastic slats in the air conditioner because it will corrode. Put the clean part in the slats and sprinkle the essential oils on the part that sticks out. When the air conditioner is on and the fan is blowing, it blows that beautiful smell into your room and does help to keep it sanitized as well.

That's the bulk of what I have to share with you this week. Don't forget to get your free essential oil learning guide by going to the end of the show notes for this episode



www.aromaticwisdominstitute.com/027. Please go to iTunes and leave a review for this podcast. I do so deeply appreciate when people do that because it helps other people find the podcasts. You can go to the www.aromaticwisdominstitute.com/iTunes to do that.

I have an Aromatherapy Teacher Training coming up November 16-19, 2016 in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. That's an outstanding course, if I do say so myself. Four days of immersing you in how to be an Aromatherapy Teacher.

You'll go away with a script, with lots of checklists with everything you need to teach your first class. You'll get all of the notes and everything to go inside the binder to give your students. You can, literally, take the class and the following weekend teach a two-day class and charge \$300 per person and earn back the cost of the tuition, and I've had students who have done that. I will put that link to the teacher training in the show notes as well.

You guys have been great! Thank you so much for always being here and having me in your ear buds. I love all of you very much.

Until next time: Be happy. Be well.

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Transcribed January 2, 2017