

ESSENTENTIAL

OILS

Plants produce essential oils to attract pollinators, as a defence mechanism against animals, insects, microbial pathogens such as bacteria, fungi, parasites also for their own tissue repair. Essential oils anti-pathogenic properties makes them a great aid to turn to in protecting ourselves in the early stages of disease, lessening the load on the over use of antibiotics.

As plants are rooted they cannot run away from a predator or pathogen, they have had to devise clever ways to protect themselves, even communicate with each other in order to insure their survival. Think of the majestic Cedar tree, with reports of individual trees surviving for over a 1,000 years.

It is some of these same chemical components that the plant uses to its advantage that we utilize in aromatherapy. For example (*Lavendula angustifolia*) Lavender's Esters Linalyl acetate - ability to calm the nervous system and Rosemary's 1,8-cineole ability to stimulate and aid memory.

The earliest known use of essential oils is a wound salve which contained Myrrh, recorded in an ancient Egyptian papyrus in 1550 BCE. The Egyptians had a long history of using aromatics in fragrant oils, balms, and incense. Egyptians loved to use fragrances in their daily lives, celebrations and festivals. Women wore perfumed cones on their heads which would melt under the heat, they became the early masters of perfumery and cosmetology.

Think of Cleopatra who was renowned for her beauty, she would bathe in fermented milk infused with essences of jasmine, myrrh and rose.

Essential oils are absorbed into the blood stream due to their small molecular weight and their composition of mainly lipophilic (oil loving) and partly hydrophilic (water loving), a composition that enables them to pass more readily through the skins outer barrier. They then diffuse all around the body to various organs especially those areas of high blood flow like skeletal muscle, the liver and kidneys and some fat tissue.

However it is thought that they do not stay in circulation for long before they are excreted, a study showed Lavender oil present in the blood after 20mins and after 90mins most of the Lavender oil had been eliminated from the blood.

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