

CLEARWATER SOAP WORKS

Essential Oil Descriptions



Anise Star Essential Oil

Illicium verum - China

This powerfully scented essential oil is steam distilled from the seeds. The seeds are collected as fruits from the small evergreen tree before they are ripe and are allowed to dry. The oil is clear or slightly yellow in colour and its licorice-like scent blends well with Lavender, Pine, Clove leaf, Cinnamon Leaf and other spices. Anise Star from China is generally considered to be non-toxic and non-irritating, unlike *Illicium anisatum* from Japan. Anise Star essential oil has carminative, stimulant and diuretic qualities, and has been used to combat rheumatism. Anise Star is used to flavor teas, cough remedies and candies.

Basil Essential Oil

Ocimum basilicum - Italy

Basil essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the leaves and flowers of the herb. The oil has a golden yellow colour with a hint of green. Basil essential oil is a stimulating oil and has moderate to good action against bacteria and fungi. Compared to exotic basil oils from the Comoro Island and Reunion Island, this essential oil has a fresher, less harsh scent. According to some references, Basil (the herb) has a long history of use throughout the world. For example, Plinius used it for epilepsy, Arabians used it for gonorrhoea and mouth sores, Europeans use Basil against depression, and in India it is used in Ayurveda. Chartreuse is also made using Basil. Basil essential oil has a strong scent that can be described as fresh, sweet and spicy with a slight balsamic undertone and a longer lasting sweetness. It blends well with Bergamot, Clary Sage, Clove Bud, Lime, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Lemon, Neroli, and Rosemary. This oil may irritate sensitive skin so use in low concentrations and avoid this oil during pregnancy.

Sweet Birch Essential Oil

Betula lenta - Russia

This oil is obtained from the steam distillation of the bark of the tree. Sweet Birch essential oil is clear and colourless and has a very refreshing light scent reminiscent of bubblegum, and similar to Wintergreen. Sweet Birch essential oil is added to a massage oil for sore muscles and joints because of its anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic effects. This oil blends well with Cedarwood, Fir Needle, Rosewood and Thyme. This oil may irritate sensitive skin so use in low concentrations.

Benzoin Essential Oil

Styrax benzoin - Sumatra

This essential oil is obtained from the resin exuded by the tree using a food grade solvent. It is a golden-brown viscous oil with a sweet, Vanilla like scent. Benzoin is commonly used in creams and lotions for its antiseptic and bleaching properties, and as a fixative in perfumes. It has also been used as incense and a treatment for coughs and bronchitis. Bergamot, Coriander, Frankincense, Juniper, Lavender, Lemon, Myrrh, Orange, Petitgrain, Rose and Sandalwood are oils that work well with Benzoin.

Bergamot Essential Oil

Citrus Bergamia - Italy

This essential oil is cold pressed from the rind of the fruit and is pale green in colour. Since the bergamot tree is a hybrid of lemon and orange trees, the essential oil maintains both these components. However, it is a complex citrus with spice and floral tones, making this a nice oil for use on its own. It is an uplifting and relaxing scent that can be enjoyed by almost everyone. Bergamot blends well with most other essential oils: Himalayan Cedarwood, Geranium, Lavender, Lemon, Lime, Neroli, Chamomile, Coriander, & Ylang Ylang I. Bergamot oil has been used as an antiseptic, fever-reducer, appetite stimulant, cramp reliever and as a digestive stimulant. Bergamot essential oil is used in Earl Grey tea to give it its distinct flavour. Do not apply this oil to the skin in concentrations greater than 0.5-1% to avoid discolouration of the skin when exposed to the sun.

Cardamom Essential Oil

Eleteria cardamomum - India

This oil is obtained from the seeds by steam distillation. Cardamom essential oil can be described as soft, warm, and spicy, but is best greatly diluted so as not to be overpowering. This oil is very true to the spice, and when fresh has a hint of eucalyptus. Oils that work well with Cardamom are Black Pepper, Eucalyptus, Frankincense, Geranium, Ginger, Lime, Pine, Tea Tree, Vetiver and Ylang Ylang I. This oil is used to help stimulate memory and concentration, digestive problems, and mental fatigue. Cardamom is recommended for PMS symptoms when used in a massage oil.

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Cedarwood Essential Oil

Cedrus deodora - India

Cedarwood oil is obtained by the steam distillation of wood chips. This oil is lightly viscous and has a medium brown colour. Cedarwood oil adds depth and sweetness to other oils, and works to blend other oils together smoothly. Good partners are Rose, Bergamot, Jasmine, Neroli, Juniper, Lavender, Ylang Ylang I and Patchouli. Cedarwood oil is best described as earthy and sweet. It must be used in moderation and is best when used as a background for other oils. Cedarwood oil has a reputation as an effective insect repellent, but it also stimulates sexuality, and is beneficial for the respiratory system. This particular Himalayan Cedarwood is much sweeter than other cedarwood essential oils, and is perfect for rounding out essential oil blends.

Cinnamon Leaf Essential Oil

Cinnamomum verum - France

This oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the leaves. Cinnamon has been used for many centuries, being documented in China since 2700 BC for use with breathing problems. These days it is being rediscovered as a potent insect repellent and germicide. Cinnamon oil is not only effective against bacteria, but also fungi. This oil blends well with other spices, and citrus, adding depth and staying power to lighter oils. Good partners for Cinnamon Leaf are Bergamot, Cardamom, Coriander, Orange and Patchouli. Cinnamon leaf oil is best described as warm, spicy, sweet like cinnamon, somewhat like a rich, mulled wine. Besides its very strong antiseptic qualities, it is warming for muscles and skin, stimulating yet soothing and calming. This oil does tend to sensitize the skin if applied in sufficient concentration (>5%), or if applied repeatedly to the skin and is therefore better used in soaps, vapourisers or incense.

Citronella Essential Oil

Cymbopogon nardus - Sri Lanka

Citronella is steam distilled from grass. Although this oil can be blended with other oils, its main purpose has been as an insect repellent. Therefore, other oils to use with Citronella are those that share this property, such as Lemon Eucalyptus and Cinnamon Leaf oils. Most people are familiar with the scent of this oil, which can be described as an herbal lemon. Can cause contact sensitization and dermatitis in sensitive individuals.

Clary Sage Essential Oil

Salvia sclarea - Bulgaria

Clary Sage oil is steam distilled from leaves and flowers. It has a distinct fragrance, quite different from regular sage. Clary Sage has been described as strongly herbal with floral and even nutty notes. Some individuals experience a light-headedness or euphoria, but mainly it seems to energize and motivate. Clary Sage is also a reputed aphrodisiac. This oil blends well with many others including Bergamot, Orange, Cypress, Geranium, Jasmine, Lavender, and Sandalwood.

Clove Leaf Essential Oil

Syzygium aromaticum - India

Clove Leaf oil is obtained by the steam distillation of leaves. This oil is cloudy and dark brown in colour. Clove Leaf oil is reputed as being beneficial for skin irritations, digestive problems, and tooth aches. Rose, Lavender, Clary Sage, Bergamot, Tea Tree, Vetiver, Ylang Ylang I, and citrus oils can all blend nicely with Clove Leaf oil. This oil has the characteristic Clove smell, but is sharper than Clove Bud and has some woody tones. This oil should always be diluted before use.

Coriander Essential Oil

Coriandrum sativum - Russia

This oil is obtained from the steam distillation of the seeds. Coriander is one of the oldest known herbs and has been cultivated for over 3000 years. It has been used to treat colds, flu, infectious diseases, impotence, frigidity, infertility, muscle aches and pains, and arthritis. This oil can be described as soft, warm, and spicy, but it is best greatly diluted so as not to be overpowering. Coriander oil blends well with other spices and citrus oils. Do not use if allergic to fennel or anise.

Cypress Essential Oil

Cupressus sempervirens - Austria

This essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of needles and twigs. Cypress essential oil has a typical fresh evergreen scent, that is more sophisticated than Fir Needle, and blends well with Bergamot, Clary Sage, Lavender, Pine & Eucalyptus. Cypress is known for use in skin care, acne, menstrual and menopausal problems, tension & stress. It is known as a cooling and relaxing oil.

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Eucalyptus Essential Oil

Eucalyptus globulus - China

Eucalyptus oil is obtained from the steam distillation of the wood & leaves. This oil is widely known and used in many cold and flu remedies. Its cool, head clearing camphorous scent is instantly recognizable. Eucalyptus blends well with Niaouli, Pine, Hyssop, Angelica, Lemon, Verbena, Melissa, Peppermint, Lavender and Thyme. Although Eucalyptus is often used with fevers, infections, rheumatism, muscle pain, and neuralgia, it is also an effective insect repellent and air cleanser when vaporized. Its effects are refreshing and stimulating. Do not use with small children.

Sweet Fennel Essential Oil

Foeniculum vulgare dulce - France

Sweet Fennel Essential oil is obtained from crushed seeds through steam distillation. It is a clear colourless liquid with a strong licorice scent that is sweet and warm. Fennel blends well with Rose, Sandalwood, Ylang Ylang I, Lavender, Eucalyptus and Clary Sage. Useful for treating PMS and painful menstruation. It is calming to the body and the mind. Used in massage oil for sore muscles, in the bath for a hangover, for firming up sagging skin, treating cellulite, moisturizing the skin, deodorizing bad breath and encouraging milk flow in nursing mothers. Fennel is also used to flavour licorice and toothpaste.

Fir Needle Essential Oil

Abies siberica - Siberia

This oil is obtained by the steam distillation of fir needles. This clear, colourless oil retains the characteristic scent of the needles, and is best described in words as resinous and woody and more pleasant than Tea Tree. Fir needle oil blends well with other wood oils such as Cedarwood, Eucalyptus, Pine and Cypress, but works equally well with Patchouli, Lavender, and citrus oils. It has been used as an expectorant, anti-tussive and deodorant, but is also effective at creating a relaxed and fresh atmosphere in the home when vaporized.

Ginger Essential Oil

Zingiber officinalis - France

This oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the dried roots. Ginger oil is warming, earthy and fresh, but not exactly like the fresh root because of the distillation. Patchouli, Ylang Ylang I, citrus and other spice oils blend well with Ginger. If applied to the skin expect a warming sensation. Traditional uses for Ginger essential oil include as a treatment for colds, flus, rheumatism, and muscle tension. Ginger reduces morning sickness and motion sickness. It is also reputed to be an aphrodisiac. Do not use this oil if you are allergic to Peru Balsam.

Grapefruit Essential Oil

Citrus racemosa - France

This oil is obtained by cold pressing of the rind. White Grapefruit essential oil is another oil that blends well with just about any other oil. It adds a fresh fruity top note without dominating. Light and fruity, Grapefruit essential oil is very uplifting and relieves stress, anxiety and depression. Best partners for blending are Lavender and other citrus oils, but just as easily synergizes with spices and woody type oils. Grapefruit increases circulation and controls greasy skin or hair when added to toner or shampoo. Although some references claim Grapefruit essential oil is not photo-toxic, others claim it is actually the most photo-toxic citrus oil. Therefore, do not apply to the skin in concentrations greater than 0.5-1% to avoid discolouration of the skin when exposed to the sun. White grapefruit essential oil is very similar to the very slightly sweeter pink variety.

Ho Wood Essential Oil

Cinnamomum camphora - China

Ho Wood essential oil is produced by steam distillation of twigs and bark. Ho Wood essential oil is an ecologically responsible alternative to Rosewood oil, with a very similar scent and similar therapeutic properties. If you are familiar with Rosewood, you will find that Ho Wood maintains that soft, delicate, feminine scent, and adds an extra fresh & green tone to the initial impression. The overall feeling Ho Wood essential oil gives is one of vitality, youth and creativity. Even without considering the antifungal and antibacterial properties of Ho Wood oil, this oil is so attractive that it should be tried by everyone. It blends well with other floral notes such as Lavender, Ylang Ylang & Bergamot, and other woods, such as Cedarwood.

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Lavender Essential Oil

Lavandula officinalis - France

This Lavender essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of flower heads. Lavender oil is one of the 'must have' essential oils if you are starting out exploring aromatherapy and essential oils. Lavender essential oil blends well with just about any other oil, just like Grapefruit EO, and is said to round out mixtures of very different oils and harmonize them. It has an easily recognized fresh floral scent. Lavender essential has many beneficial uses, but has received a reputation as the best first aid for burns and stings, and some people carry it along in their first aid kit for this reason. Lavender has special significance for many older people and is a popular oil to use for aromatherapy in nursing homes, hospitals and hospices with the elderly. This oil can be applied without dilution with most individuals, although years of constant use can probably lead to sensitization.

Lemon Essential Oil

Citrus limonum - Italy

This oil is obtained by cold pressing the rind of the fruit. Lemon oil blends well with most other oils, adding a fresh lemony top note. Light and fruity, Lemon is useful for many applications such as colds, flu and fever, and skin problems such as cellulite, acne, boils, warts, and oily skin. Lemon is also highly effective in refreshing stale air when used in a vapouriser or diffuser. Do not apply to the skin in concentrations greater than 0.5-1% to avoid discolouration of the skin when exposed to the sun.

Lemon Eucalyptus Essential Oil

Eucalyptus citriodora - Australia

This oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the leaves and twigs of the tree. Lemon Eucalyptus blends well with Orange, Citronella, Lemongrass and Palmarosa. Its lemony scent with camphor overtones, make it similar to Citronella but gentler. Lemon Eucalyptus oil is a powerful antiseptic, analgesic, and has anti-viral properties. This oil may help lower blood pressure and aid hypertension. Because of the antiseptic properties and the soothing and calming effects, Lemon Eucalyptus is often used around children, along with Sweet Orange.

Lemongrass Essential Oil

Cymbopogon flexuosus - India

Lemongrass Oil is obtained by steam distillation of the grass. Some people find the strong lemony scent relaxing while other consider it to be energizing. Lemongrass blends well with Eucalyptus, Geranium, Juniper, Lavender, Lime, Pine and Palmarosa. Lemongrass is reported to be balancing and calming to the nervous system, and may also increase powers of concentration. It has also been used to stimulate digestion and milk production in nursing mothers, and to treat athlete's foot, acne and lice. Lemongrass is also known as an insect repellent, and because it is a possible skin irritant in some people this oil should be used in low concentrations.

Lime Essential Oil

Citrus aurantifolia - Italy

This oil is cold pressed from the rind of the fruit. Lime essential oil has a sweet and tangy citrus scent that blends well with Bergamot, Clary Sage, Cedarwood, Lemongrass, Lavender, Ylang Ylang I, Vetiver and Pine. It refreshes and energizes, and it works as an antidepressant. Lime essential oil also reportedly cleans and purifies the air when used in a vapourizer or diffuser. Lime oil tones oily skin, and may treat cellulite when used for an extended period of time. As with all citrus oils, do not apply to the skin in concentrations greater than 0.5-1% to avoid discolouration when exposed to the sun.

Litsea Cubeba Essential Oil

Litsea cubeba - Philippines

Litsea Cubeba essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of roots and stems. This oil is fairly similar to Lemongrass, but is a fresher, gentler and more pleasant spicy citrus. Litsea Cubeba blends well with other citrus oils, Patchouli, Ginger, and spice oils, and brings an exotic component to a mix. It is reported to be anti-inflammatory and soothing, although some sources claim approximately 1.5% of the population may have possible skin irritation when using this oil. Always dilute essential oils before using on the body.

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Mandarin Essential Oil

Citrus reticulata - Italy

Mandarin essential oil is obtained by the pressing of the fruit peel. Mandarin essential oil is a bright orange. In fact, it is fluorescent! Mandarin oil has a rich, sweet scent that is stronger and fuller than Sweet Orange. Mandarin essential oil is extremely relaxing and uplifting. When used with a touch of Vetiver essential oil, it can make you feel like you're melting into your couch or bed for a most delightful snooze! Try this oil with other citrus oils, Basil & Rosemary for more energetic effect, or try it with Lavender, Ho Wood, Ylang Ylang, Bergamot & Patchouli for a softer, more feminine combination. Mandarin essential oil is definitely one of our favourite oils!

Niaouli Essential Oil

Melaleuca viridiflora - Australia

This essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of leaves & twigs. Niaouli has a camphorous initial impression with added sweetness. Niaouli is strongly antiseptic and has been used to aid in speeding healing of wounds. Anecdotal evidence suggests that its effects on badly healing wounds is most spectacular. Niaouli's abilities to tighten tissues also makes it useful in the treatment of hemorrhoids, and is used to encourage the body's natural immune system by applying it to the body in a massage oil. Try Niaouli with citrus oils, Pine, Eucalyptus, Fir Needle, Cypress, Lavender, Fennel and Thyme.

Sweet Orange Essential Oil

Citrus sinensis - Brazil

Orange essential oil is cold pressed from the rind of the fruit. Orange oil is sweet and fruity and adds a cheery note to blends. Most other essential oils blend well with it, particularly woody and earthy oils that needs a fresh top note. Orange essential oil is credited as being antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, bactericidal, fungicidal, and stimulatory. As with all other citrus oils, do not apply to the skin in concentrations greater than 0.5-1% to avoid discoloration of the skin when exposed to the sun.

Palmarosa Essential Oil

Cymbopogon martini - India

Palmarosa essential oil is steam distilled from grass. This oil is so wonderful everyone should try it! It is amazing that this oil obtained from a grass can smell so much like roses (hence the ~rosa). Palmarosa blends well with citrus oils such as Lemon and Lime, other floral notes such as Lavender and Rosewood, and also Coriander and Patchouli. This oil is used for acne, dermatitis, eczema (dry and wet), scars, and wrinkles. It supposedly works against cellulite and scars over a long period of time. Palmarosa essential oil has a strong antiseptic/antibacterial action, while remaining mild, and is a comforting oil.

Patchouli Essential Oil

Pogostemon cablin - Indonesia

Patchouli essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the leaves. It can be described as having a woody, earthy, musky scent. If you are used to imitation patchouli fragrance oils you may not know what the true oil smells like. Patchouli essential oil blends well with many other oils, and marries the oils together, without being overpowering, adding a smooth base note. Bergamot, Clary Sage, Jasmine, Palmarosa, and Ylang Ylang I are often used in blends with Patchouli, but Ginger, Sweet Orange and spice oils are also good possibilities. Patchouli has a reputation for treating skin conditions such as eczema and acne, as a fixative in perfumes, rejuvenating aging skin, and conditioning dry hair.

Peppermint Essential Oil

Mentha arvensis - China

This essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the entire herb. This peppermint oil is extremely high in Menthol content, which can almost seem to take the breath away. Other oils that blend well with Peppermint essential oil include Melissa, Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit, Eucalyptus, Sweet Fennel, and Clary Sage. Peppermint essential oil is cooling, and head-clearing, and has been used to aid mental concentration, nausea, morning and travel sickness, headaches and hangovers. It is widely used in the food and beverage industries and shampoos. It is also often used for flu and colds as a breathing aid, and is a natural insect repellent. Do not apply to the skin in concentrations greater than 0.5-1%, especially with children and do not use near the eye. Do not use if you have hay fever.

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Peru Balsam Essential Oil

Myroxylon pereira - El Salvador

This essential oil is actually a dark, thick balsam obtained by vacuum. Peru Balsam has a vanilla-like, extremely sweet scent that can be almost intoxicating. It has been used as part of an anointing oil in Christianity when mixed with Olive oil. Peru Balsam is present in many skin creams and diaper rash balms because of its skin care abilities, and has been credited as helping coughs due to colds and flu, and bronchitis. This oil blends best with floral notes such as Ylang Ylang, and balsamic oils.

Pine Essential Oil

Pinus pinaster - USA

Pine essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the needles. It blends well with other woody oils such as Cedarwood and Fir Needle, and citrus oils, Eucalyptus and Lemongrass. It may take a little getting used to Pine essential oil, but it can really give that extra special something to woody blends. It is antiseptic, antiviral, and a deodorant. Some sources claim Pine essential oil is good for arthritis, but this oil is most often used as an air freshener or added to cleaning products.

Rosemary Essential Oil

Rosmarinus officinalis - Spain

This essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the entire herb. This Rosemary essential oil can be described as having a fresh, herbal scent with camphor overtones, that is mind clearing and stimulating. Rosemary oil blends well with Lemongrass, Lemon, Grapefruit, Hyssop, Clary Sage and Bergamot oils. Rosemary oil has a reputation as being an antidepressant and revitalizing oil. Some sources claim there is a remote chance of causing an epileptic seizure in prone individuals when using this oil.

Spearmint Essential Oil

Mentha spicata - USA

This essential oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the flowerheads of the herb. As with Peppermint essential oil, spearmint essential oil is considered to be an effective local anesthetic, and relaxing for the digestive system. Spearmint essential oil is sweeter, smoother, and less abrupt than the more popular peppermint, and induces a feeling of rejuvenation and relaxation at the same time. Spearmint works well with Basil, Sweet Birch, Bergamot, Eucalyptus, Lavender and Rosemary essential oils, but is also great on its own.

Tea Tree Essential Oil

Melaleuca alternifolia - Australia

This oil is obtained by the steam distillation of the leaves. Tea Tree essential oil is now almost a household name and is most often used undiluted for anti-fungal applications such as athlete's foot and yeast infections. Stronger action against both fungus and bacteria may be achieved by mixing Tea Tree oil with Lavender, Thyme and Clove Leaf oils. (Always dilute Thyme and Clove oils!). For pleasing blends, try mixing Tea Tree with Lavender, Cinnamon Leaf, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Lemon, Peppermint, Pine, and Rosemary. Tea Tree essential oil can be described as resinous and herbal. Do a patch test before using this oil undiluted.

Thyme Essential Oil

Thymus vulgaris - Hungary

This oil is obtained via Carbon dioxide extraction of the entire herb. This essential oil is very intense and must be diluted many times before it can really be appreciated. Thyme essential oil blends well with Cedarwood, citrus oils and Lavender. Thyme oil is strongly antibacterial and antifungal, and is more effective than many synthetic and toxic antiseptic chemicals even when diluted 1000 times. This oil can be used as a powerful weapon against persistent athlete's foot infections along with Lavender and Tea Tree oil, but be sure to dilute Thyme oil before using on the skin. Avoid if suffering from epilepsy, high blood pressure, and hyperthyroidism. Please Note: This oil tends to form crystals and may require gentle warming before using.

Vetiver Essential Oil

Vetiveria zizanioides - Java

This essential oil is obtained from the steam distillation of the grass roots. Vetiver essential oil is a viscous brown coloured oil that has a dominating presence suggestive of smoky wood. When used in a blend, start with one drop of Vetiver and add the other oils to it to avoid overpowering the blend. Blend with Cedarwood, Clary Sage, Lavender, Patchouli and citrus oils. Vetiver resonates deeply with the senses and brings about a relaxing satisfaction and grounding spirituality in those who like this oil. Vetiver has often been used in the treatment of allergies, eczema, skin disorders and wounds, as well as an insect repellent.

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Ylang Ylang Essential Oil

Cananga odorata - France

Ylang-Ylang essential oil is obtained from the steam distillation of flowers. The name means 'flower of flowers' and the scent certainly does not disappoint. Ylang-Ylang can be described as sweetly floral, almost intoxicating, and most certainly exotic. It is a reputed aphrodisiac. This oil blends well with Rose, Lemon, Orange, Ginger, Geranium, Lavender, Patchouli, Grapefruit and Sweet Fennel, but can easily be used on its own. Ylang-Ylang essential oil has many uses, but it is usually reserved for its fragrance in perfumes, creams, lotions, shampoos etc.