

# BAY HOUSE AROMATICS

## Newsletter 50

## Summer 2005



Welcome to our Summer newsletter. This is our fiftieth newsletter and although we no longer have any records of when the first one came out (Issue no.2 was in April/June 1992) it seems like a very long time ago. In those days our newsletter was a very humble affair with no dtp formatting or pictures. (Not that it is exactly glossy or state of the art now!) And although the internet had been invented, we were a long way from making use of it to promote our business or to sell our products. Nowadays, even if you aren't reading this online, you are very likely to have access to a computer and the internet. Interest in aromatherapy has continued growing during this time so we thought that now would be a good opportunity to look at some of the web sites that deal with aromatherapy in one way or another. We didn't want to focus on sites selling essential oils, as that is what we do and we didn't think you'd be very interested in our opinion of our competitors. What we have tried to do is to see how good the internet is if we were looking for details of training courses or information about the raw materials used in aromatherapy – essential oils etc. If you know of any other, non-commercial sites, that you think Bay House customers might be interested in, please let us know and we will either mention them in our next newsletter or add them to the links page on our web site. We apologise to our non-UK readers who might find what follows irrelevant to their needs. For the purposes of this survey we confined our search to UK web sites. (Most of the information we got through Google UK pages)

We started our trawl of useful sites by looking at two that included a basic guide to aromatherapy as part of their range of guides for the general public. These were BUPA at [http://hcd2.bupa.co.uk/fact\\_sheets/html/aromatherapy.html](http://hcd2.bupa.co.uk/fact_sheets/html/aromatherapy.html) and the BBC [http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy\\_living/complementary\\_medicine/therapies\\_aromatherapy.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/complementary_medicine/therapies_aromatherapy.shtml). Both these sites defined aromatherapy according to the way it is practised in the UK and the BUPA site was quite critical at what it sees as the lack of evidence as to whether aromatherapy *works*. For more information both these sites provided a link to the Aromatherapy Consortium <http://www.aromatherapy-regulation.org.uk/>, which purports to be the main regulatory body for training in the profession and used to be called the Aromatherapy Organisations Council. Unfortunately that site was considerably less than comprehensive – we asked it to find us an aromatherapist in Brighton and it came up with one name, when we know personally of hundreds! This touches on a problem with many of the sites we visited – their layout makes them appear to be comprehensive and useful, but in reality they may be very new and incomplete, or even worse no longer active and with out of date information. We found ourselves listed in one directory at an address we left five years ago!

Two of the national organizations which validate aromatherapy training in the UK are the IFPA at <http://www.ifparoma.org/> and ITEC at <http://www.itecworld.co.uk/>. Both these sites we found helpful and inviting, with good search facilities to locate a nearby training school. Something similar is provided by the Internet Health Library (which is the information provider of the British Complementary Medical Association) at <http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/Colleges/ComplementaryTherapies-colleges.htm>.

As well as these organizations which claim to provide an umbrella under which you will find reputable training, there are many independent schools which prefer to operate on their own. Probably the best known is the Tisserand Institute <http://www.tisserand.com/training/training.html>, which comes top of the first page if you type in "aromatherapy training" into Google. Unfortunately this page is dedicated to "continuing education for the professional" and it doesn't tell you whether the company provides any introductory courses. But there is a phone number and email address so presumably you could soon find out. One of the features of the internet is that every web page is only as big as your computer monitor, a site might have many pages, but a well designed home page can make a company appear much bigger than it is. A couple of clicks from Tisserand led us to the Essence Aromatherapy school in Heathfield, West Sussex. The web site <http://www.essencearomatherapy.co.uk/> was initially very smart looking but in the long run not very informative. It doesn't even tell you where it is based!

With aromatherapy being such a hands-on activity, it might seem strange that it can be learnt by correspondence ("distance learning") but the British School of Yoga

([http://www.bsygroup.co.uk/section\\_details.asp?section\\_id=n](http://www.bsygroup.co.uk/section_details.asp?section_id=n).) offers a range of aromatherapy courses by correspondence (but with obligatory study days at their HQ in Devon).

However sketchy the above list is, we felt that after trawling the net for half an hour or so that we had got a pretty good idea of types of training available. Or maybe we hadn't, for we saw no references to the local authority colleges that are producing "aromatherapists" with every intake.

Our next project was to find out about the raw materials of aromatherapy. What are they and what are their properties? Is it possible to find out without being bombarded with requests to buy? The CAM Therapy Directory offers a useful one page account of aromatherapy <http://www.camtherapy.co.uk/Aromatherapy%20Information.htm> with links to the IFPA, the AOC and the ATC. A more personal approach is at <http://www.sniffingmoose.co.uk/info.htm>, with descriptions of most oils and their properties. There are links to commercial sites but this is a nice example of a purely personal website written by an enthusiast. Unfortunately we could find very few of these enthusiast pages (specifically on aromatherapy) on the internet. (At least in the UK, Americans are not so restrained!)

The easiest way to reach a lot of sites quickly is probably to go to one of the sites which have set themselves a primary purpose of providing an extended list or index of useful sites in a particular field. When it comes to cyberaromatherapy two of the best are Agora at <http://users.erols.com/sisakson/pages/agoindex.htm> and Ability at <http://www.ability.org.uk/Aromatherapy.html>. Another list, nominally for people caring with special needs clients, is provided by Aromacaring at <http://www.aromacaring.co.uk/index.htm> but it has a lot of other good links as well. The trouble with so many of these sites is that they mix information provided by enthusiasts with purely commercial sites which have a tenuous link, if any, with aromatherapy. This same caveat can be made for the interest discussion groups. A search for aromatherapy groups with Google brought up 28, but they were nearly all totally unrelated to the subject or were started by a trader trying to promote his or her products.

It is easy to become cynical about the commercial nature of information on the internet. Why should anyone go to the trouble of making a web site unless they have something to sell which they want to promote? Of course there are sites where knowledge itself is the product. Its worth having a look at the World Wide Health site at <http://www.worldwidehealth.com/Library/article.php/WhatisAromatherapy20050322.211.html> where you will find an introductory article by Craig Phillips. We have already mentioned the Internet Health Library and they provide a list of articles on research in aromatherapy (with links to synopses of them) at <http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/Therapies/Aromatherapy-Research.htm#top>.

Rather more scholarly is the International Journal of Aromatherapy with abstracts of some recently published papers of interest to aromatherapists is at <http://www.intl.elsevierhealth.com/journals/ijar/>. A site devoted to the interests of nurses has a library where we found an article from the British Journal of Midwifery [http://www.internurse.com/cgi-bin/go.pl/library/contents.html?uid=554&journal\\_uid=12](http://www.internurse.com/cgi-bin/go.pl/library/contents.html?uid=554&journal_uid=12) to the effect that aromatherapy classes help promote natural childbirth. But it has to be said that most of these links take you only as far as an abstract of the article. To read the whole article you have to subscribe to the Journal involved.

Finally, we would like to mention two sites we found who introduce real debate into the world of cyberaromatherapy. Contrary to the impression given by most sites we looked at, aromatherapy is not entirely without its critics. And by critics we don't mean the mainstream medical opinion which looks down on nearly all "alternative" approaches. For some very informed and radical views have a look at Martin Watt's site at <http://www.aromamedical.com/index.html> and Andy Barson's at <http://www.andybarson.co.uk/Aroma/menu.htm>. We won't say we agree with what these authors have to say but we are very glad that someone is keeping the spirit of discussion alive on the internet.

### **20% discount**

You may already have seen our leaflet, but this is a reminder of our 2005 20% discount offer. We have been selling essential oils to aromatherapists and the general public since 1985. To celebrate this we are offering all our customers 20% off any one order during 2005. You can order as much or as little as you like. You should already have received the leaflet describing the full terms and conditions, or it should be with this newsletter. The offer lasts until December 31<sup>st</sup> and is limited to one order per customer.