

Aromatherapy and palliative cancer care

There is an interesting article by L J Bowers in a recent copy of the *International Journal of Aromatherapy*. The article is basically a literature review of 10 studies that have been made of the use of aromatherapy in palliative and terminal care of cancer patients.

One interesting feature of this care, which could be interpreted as a side effect and not directly related to the properties of individual essential oils, is the opportunity it gave the patients to talk without being seen as a "cancer patient" or someone needing counselling. As the author said, they "found that many of the patients didn't talk about their cancer and found aromatherapy treatment gave them the space to discuss other issues and forget about the disease and its implications." The collaborative aspect was also important, "The patients enjoyed choosing the oils and the fact that they had a say whether or not to have the treatment unlike chemotherapy, where they had no choice, and the medics made all the decisions"

What effect did the oils themselves make? Studies found patients reporting a general improvement in ability to sleep, alleviation of pain and emotional distress. 94% of one study reported a significant improvement in symptoms of stress.

This literature review provides a very good overview of the range of studies that have been done in this field. It also discusses the ethical and practical problems of setting up this kind of research study. Overall the author concluded that while the scientific understanding we have of palliative care is rather sketchy, "palliative care cancer patients are often vulnerable physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually, and if aromatherapy can address these aspects of their care plan" it should compensate for the lack of scientific data.

If you would like a photocopy of this article please contact any of us at Bay House.

What is rose oil good for? Many, many things, but as Julia Lawless says in her little book *Rose Oil*, it "is so expensive that it would be impractical to use it for complaints that could just as easily be dealt with in a more economical fashion." But that still leaves many uses, which may be divided into: perfumery, skin care, stress-related conditions, and reproduction and sexuality. The perfumery aspect hardly needs mentioning as so many perfumes contain some rose oil (although now usually a synthetic one). If you want to make your rose perfume try adding a very little rose geranium, rosewood and palmarosa with your rose, but mix it one drop at a time to make sure you get the proportions right

Rose oil has a regenerative effect on the skin and is very good for dry, sensitive and ageing skin. You can add it to almost any skin cream – we make what we call a luxury rose *hand* cream with both the rose oils, but there is no reason you shouldn't put it on your face. And don't forget the astringent rose water which is made during the distillation process. As the steam is passed through the rose petals it is condensed out into the rose oil and rose water. That's all, it's a very simple process and all the water contains the rose aroma and many of its skin care properties. It is certainly an excellent toner and skin cleanser.

We are sure many of our customers are aware of the soothing effect of rose oil. It is particularly useful at times of stress when the blood-pressure is rising and muscles are tensing. The oil is anti-spasmodic and has a regulating effect on the heart. It also has what is known as a cephalic effect, that is, "it has an uplifting and clarifying effect on the mind" (Lawless). This is why it is recommended for depression or in times of grief and loss.

Lastly, in reproduction and sexuality, rose oil has a reputation for regulating the menstrual cycle. It is also reputedly aphrodisiac, which is perhaps partly a by-product of the other positive effects it produces on the mind and body. And it is a gentle oil, with no contraindications.

Just to get you started, here are two recipes from a book called *Releasing Aphrodite: Aromatic Aphrodisiacs for Love and Romance* by Elisabeth Millar.

Everlasting Love (a vaporising blend to put in an oil burner)

- 1 drop Vetivert
- 2 drops Rose
- 3 drops Orange

Special Occasions (a vaporising blend to put in an oil burner when you're having a dinner for two)

- 1 drop Clove
- 1 drop Black pepper
- 1 drop Rose
- 4 drops Bergamot

Bay House Aromatics



Newsletter 53

Summer 2006

Welcome to our Summer newsletter of 2006. Sorry this is so long since the last one. We seem to have lost the Spring Newsletter somewhere along the line.

Changes to existing products

We mentioned in the last newsletter that our usual skin cream supplier (not for Vitamin E or hand cream) had recently moved and that they were having trouble fulfilling orders. The situation is still unsettled and although we now have sweet almond cream from them, our other skin cream bases are coming from another source. This currently (mid June) applies to the calendula cream, comfrey cream, arnica cream, chickweed cream, and some of the cream blends. We know that some of you prefer the old cream and some like the new one best. Please bear with us until this issue is resolved.

Summer Holiday

Bay House won't be closed entirely but for the week of July 17th to 21st we will be operating with a skeleton staff. The shop will still be open and you'll be able to make orders by phone or on the web site, but no orders will be sent out between those dates.

Rose Otto Special Offer

We've recently bought some Rose Otto oil at a very good price so we thought for this newsletter we'd offer it at an equally good price. An amazing price in fact, as we are selling it at *HALF PRICE!* That's right, folks, as the Looney Tunes cartoon used to say, half whatever price you have in your catalogue or see on the Web Site. This offer applies to all sizes and will last until the end of August. . (This offer does not apply to rose otto blended oil – at this price you can afford to make your own blend! This offer cannot be added to any other discounts or special offers – such as large order or multiple discount)

So, if you have ever put off buying rose otto because of its price, here is your opportunity to acquire some at an amazing price. Rest assured it is the same pure quality that we have always sold, with the lovely calming honey top note. All the rose oils have similar therapeutic properties but the aromas are quite different. The rose otto *smells* expensive and is made by steam distillation so contains not even a molecule of solvent, unlike the rose absolute.