



Bay House Aromatics

Newsletter 54

Sept 2006

What, another newsletter already, we can hear you saying. Getting a Bay House Newsletter is a bit like waiting for a bus. The scheduled ones don't appear and then along come two almost at the same time. However we do have a special reason for issuing this one.

If you are a long-standing customer of Bay House you will know that we have been selling essential oils and other aromatherapy products since the 1980s. (This is Michael writing now!) I wasn't exactly a young man when I started the business then, and I'm certainly no younger now. Well, to cut a long story short, I am retiring from work this year and Bay House has been sold. Some of you I know even remember the days in Lewes when I had the shop *Sussex Herbs* and essential oils were a very small and insignificant part of it all. And then there was the mail order business from the building in Seaford where Bay House got its name, followed in October 1991 by the move to the shop in Ditchling Road, Brighton. And then two years later we had outgrown that shop and moved to our present premises in Kemp Town. And here we have been ever since, serving local customers and an ever increasing number from around the world thanks to the success of our web site. One of the highspots of the last few years has been our trip to Japan in 1999. We had a wonderful time there meeting some of our Japanese customers.

The first thing we want to emphasize about the future is that this is very much a positive move. The new owner is committed to taking Bay House "onwards and upwards". You will still be able to buy all the high quality oils you have been used to, in fact the new owner is the company who has been the main supplier of our essential oils for many years. There will be a larger range of organic essential oils and of vegetable oils. The shop in Brighton will still be here and the new shop manager is Val, who is a qualified aromatherapist and has many years experience in the business.



We will try to make the transition period as smooth as possible. We are aiming at a handover day of October 1st but see no reason why orders should not continue to be received and processed as if nothing has happened. Any changes that are made will be made gradually over a period of months and you can rest assured that no new corporate image or impersonal working practices are going to be stamped on the Bay House you know.



The other thing that we (Steph and Michael) would like to say, is to thank you all very much for your loyal custom over so many years. We have never gone in much for marketing, just relying on the quality of our products, and perhaps that is why we are not as well known as we might be. But we've always tried to provide a first class personal service and we think this is why so many of our customers have stayed with us. So thank you all again, and we are sure you will be very happy with both the products and the service of the new improved Bay House starting in October.

cropwatch

Whatever we are getting up to here at Bay House, the world of aromatherapy goes on turning, increasingly being led or harassed by government legislation and journalists trying to get a story. On April 1st we saw a "news item" in a national UK newspaper about how lemon oil didn't calm people who had had their forearms plunged into icy water, and therefore "aromatherapy doesn't work" At the time we assumed that this was one of those "April Fool" stories that newspapers often print on that date. In a word, they are meant as a joke, and that is how we read this report. We were going to feature it in an earlier newsletter but unfortunately we lost our copy of the paper. Imagine our surprise when we saw a discussion in the ***cropwatch*** electronic newsletter discussing the "research" that led to this report. It wasn't a joke at all, someone had actually got volunteers to plunge their arms in icy cold water and then compared the reactions of those who were asked to smell lemon oil with those who were not. Not surprisingly ***cropwatch*** was highly critical of everything to do with this report.

Which is all by way of introducing the excellent newsletter that ***cropwatch*** produces. Who is ***cropwatch***? We don't know, except that they describe themselves as "The independent watchdog for endangered and vulnerable natural aromatic products used in the aroma (perfumes, flavours, aromatherapy, cosmetics) herbal, traditional medicine and phytochemical industries."

The latest newsletter (No. 3), as well as having an editorial on the bad science as shown in the lemon oil story, contains articles on reports that four to seven year old boys had started developing breasts as a result of exposure to lavender and tea tree oil, an update on the tea tree oil controversy, coumarin, argan oil – is it a sustainable commodity, a critical review of an article about essential oil oils in the journal *Green Chemistry and the Consumer*, the IFRA, Melissa oil, santolina oil, tiger parts used in traditional Chinese medicine, plus other smaller items. One interesting nugget is the news that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (yes, *the* Bill Gates) has donated \$13.6 million to York University to develop a "fast track breeding programme for the plant *Artemisia annua*. Closely related to the wormwood known in the West, this is a common plant in the Far East, used in Chinese Traditional Medicine as *qing hao*. A sesquiterpene lactone known as artemisinin can be extracted from the oil and has proven very effective in the fight against malaria. But there isn't much of this drug in the plant so it is usually too expensive. Thus the search for ways to produce it cheaply. Another interesting feature in ***cropwatch*** probably of more interest to most aromatherapists is an article entitled "Toxic and harmful substances in essential oils and other frequently required information

from essential oil traders.” In other words, how do you answer those tricky questions about what the oils contain, are they “toxic”, how do you know they’re organic, which EU legislation is relevant, etc. There is some very good basic information here, and links to web sites where you can get further information.

We recommend **cropwatch** to all our customers who are engaged in the sale or serious use of essential oils. Send an email to info@cropwatch.org and ask to join their mailing list. The more that informed and interested users of aromatherapy and essential oils add their voices to the debate, the less will bad science and bad products continue to appear and damage *real* aromatherapy.

Sometimes (this Michael speaking again), I feel quite sad at the thought of leaving behind the essential oil community and the issues it faces. But then I think of all your capable hands and how you will carry on, probably not even noticing I’ve gone, and I feel better already! And what a herb garden I’m going to build, I’ve already got over 20 species of artemisias. . .

