



Monographs Modules 6 & 7

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Black Pepper (Piper nigrum)

Overview:

Black pepper is a perennial, vine-like, flowering plant belonging to the Piperaceae family cultivated for its fruit, which is usually dried and used as a condiment. Black pepper originates from Asia where it spontaneously grows in warm and humid weather and a sandy soil. Due to its popularity as a spice, black pepper is now agriculturally cultivated. Pepper has been a revered spice all over the world, even since ancient times, when it was traded for its weight in gold. Besides its culinary use black pepper was also used in religious rituals (for example, it was used in the mummification process). Due to its warming, stimulating properties, black pepper is and was used as a therapeutic agent in various cultures all over the world, especially in the Asian traditional medicines such as Ayurveda, Tibetan and Chinese. The black pepper fruit was used in treating various digestive problems, to soothe pain, to warm tissues and as an aphrodisiac.

Black pepper essential oil is distilled from unripe fruits that have been previously cooked and dried. The essential oil is clear of color and has a thin consistency with a complex scent reminding of cloves, yet more delicate and subtle.

Therapeutic Actions and Benefits:

Black pepper oil is warming and stimulating and has analgesic, antidepressant, antiseptic, antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, carminative, deodorant, digestive, decongestant, diuretic, diaphoretic, stimulant and tonic properties. Due to its properties black pepper has an affinity for the musculoskeletal system. Topically applied it stimulates peripheral circulation and relieves joints and muscle pain. Massaged on the upper abdomen, it stimulates digestion and considered an adjuvant in supporting the digestive transit. When massaged in the lower abdomen it warms and soothes menstrual pain. In the respiratory system it decongests and encourages expectoration and boosts oxygen intake. Black pepper is particularly effective in the respiratory system during the cold seasons, when it supports the respiratory function and warms the sinuses and airways. Due to its warming and stimulating properties, as well as its effects on enhancing peripheral circulation, black pepper is also considered an aphrodisiac. Used in aromatherapy it has stimulating, uplifting and tonic effects supporting emotional balance and encouraging mental alertness.

List Of Specific Therapeutic Actions

Endocrine / reproductive: soothes menstrual pain, has aphrodisiac properties

Respiratory: clears airways and sinuses, decongestant, boosts oxygen intake

Circulatory: stimulates peripheral circulation, protects blood vessels

Immune: tonic, antibacterial, antifungal, boosts immunity during seasonal changes

Musculoskeletal: relieves joints and muscular pain, soothes sore muscles

Nervous: alleviates anxiety, calms nervousness, strengthens nerves, helps in sleeping disorders and insomnia, boosts alertness and mental clarity

Energetic: uplifting, energizing, fights fatigue and strain, helps in mood swings, clears the mind, enhances the mental focus, encourages clear thinking, reduces negative thoughts, cleanses energies, increases relaxation, encourages romantic moods.

Aromatic profile:

Scent: peppercorn, warm, sharp, spicy, crisp, fresh, woody, green, slightly floral

Note: middle

Blends well with: geranium, clary sage, lavender, sandalwood, citrus, frankincense, sage, cardamom, clove

Safety: non-toxic, irritant if undiluted on the skin

Ayurveda:

In Ayurveda black pepper is considered one of the most important herbs, with warming and energizing properties. It is spicy, pungent, with hot potency and a sharp, oily quality. It calms and soothes Vata, pacifies Kapha and increases Pitta.

Traditional Chinese Medicine:

In TCM, black pepper is considered a catalyst herb, meaning that it enhances the properties of other herbs. It is usually used along other ingredients that have warming properties to treat diseases associated with cold. It balances the Qi energy and it encourages its flow.

Important Scientific Data

The majority of the research involving black pepper is focused on one of its active ingredients called piperine (up to 6% of the dried fruit). Piperine is a strong alkaline antioxidant with numerous clinical applications – from antibacterial to anti-cancer. Several studies covered piperine's influence in enhancing peripheral circulation and supporting the capillary system. The results showed relevant results in increasing the circulatory functions, with effects in cold limbs and the tendency to develop peripheral edema.

The same effects are responsible for pepper's action in the respiratory system.

Piperine, one of the black pepper active ingredients also has showed anti-depressant and anti-anxiety properties in several in vitro studies.

Black pepper also has antibacterial and antifungal agent in the food and when applied to contaminated surfaces.

Anti-tumor and anti-proliferation properties in cancer treatment are being investigated in several preliminary studies, with encouraging results.

How To Use Black pepper Essential Oil:

Black pepper essential oil can be applied (always diluted) topically as a massage oil or compress, in the bath, through direct inhalation, or diffuser.

Add 1 drop of black pepper essential oil in a carrier oil to create a massage oil ideal for soothing musculoskeletal aches. Gently massage in the troubled area to soothe pain, relax muscles and encourage peripheral circulation.

Add a couple of drops in the bathwater for an energizing, uplifting experience.

Use 1-2 drops in the diffuser or diluted for direct palm inhalation to uplift spirit, energize, encourage communication, fight stress, calm anxiety and support the respiratory function

Black Pepper Essential Oil Recipes:

Muscle Relaxing Massage Blend:

- 4 drops black pepper
- 4 drops frankincense
- 2 drops clary sage
- 1 drop peppermint

Dilute the blend in $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1oz. carrier oil and use it as a massage oil to soothe and relax muscles and stimulate circulation

Aphrodisiac Blend:

- 2 drops black pepper
- 2 drops jasmine
- 2 drops ylang ylang

Add a couple drops of the blend in the bathwater or mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1oz. carrier oil and use it as a massage oil.

Exotic perfume:

- 2 drops black pepper
- 10 drops sandalwood
- 5 drops jasmine

Dilute the blend in 2 oz. scentless carrier oil and use it on pulse points as perfume for an uplifted and energized mood.

Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*)

Part of plant used

Seeds, essential oil

Short description/Overview:

Cardamom is a widely used spice produced from the seeds of several perennial leafy plants in the *Elettaria* and *Amomum* genera, belonging to the Zingiberaceae family (that also holds ginger, turmeric and galangal). There are several cardamom plants varieties, usually named after their region of origin. It is the third most expensive spice in the world. Cardamom is used as a spice or aromatic plant in several oriental cuisines and it is included in the daily diet. In traditional medicine it has been used as a therapeutic for various conditions – mainly digestive and respiratory – in several parts of the world.

Cardamom essential oil is produced through steam distillation of pods. The minty scent is one of the most popular and easily recognizable scents all over the world, and its benefits for the mind and spirit are undeniable. Cardamom essential oil has a clear, light yellow, with mid to base notes, with a spicy, lightly camphorous, sweet, balsamic, woody and lingering aromatic profile with floral undertones. It blends well with other fresh aromas such as rose, bergamot, orange, cedarwood, black pepper, cinnamon, clove, ginger. Cardamom essential oil has numerous therapeutic properties. On the mind and spirit, it has a tonic yet calming effect, promoting emotional balance.

Brief description of the therapeutic functions

Herb:

Cardamom is extensively used as a therapeutic in several regions, in folk medicine to treat oral infections, teeth and gums problems, bad breath, throat sores, lung congestions, colds, flu, dyspepsia, gas, indigestion, nausea, vomiting, constipation, bloating and other digestive symptoms.

Modern herbal medicine usually uses cardamom primarily as a basis and a flavoring agent for medicinal preparation for indigestion, flatulence or respiratory infections.

Essential oil:

Cardamom essential oil is rich in monoterpenes, sesquiterpenes and esters, and alcohols. The essential oil is known to have antibacterial, antiseptic, antifungal, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, carminative, decongestant, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, nervine, stimulant, stomachic, tonic properties. Because of its warming effects cardamom oil is effective in the musculoskeletal system, where it soothes and relieves pain while stimulating peripheral circulation. In the respiratory system, cardamom clears and decongests sinuses and airways, boosting oxygen intake and protecting the body from respiratory infections. Cardamom essential oil also stimulates libido, being considered aphrodisiac. Applied locally, in proper

dilution, the essential oil has multiple effects: rubbed on the chest it clears sinuses and airways, on the upper abdomen it supports digestion and on the lower abdomen it soothes menstrual pain. In the nervous system it has a relaxing yet energizing effect, fighting anxiety and promoting emotional equilibrium.

List of specific therapeutic actions

Herb:

Digestive: regulates digestive functions, relieves gas and bloating, treats indigestion and dyspepsia, stimulates bile production, fights nausea

Respiratory: clears airways (especially as aromatherapy), aids expectoration, adjuvant in colds and flu

Topical: supports wound healing, has antibacterial and antifungal properties

Essential oil:

Circulatory: stimulates peripheral circulation, protects blood vessels, helps in treating broken capillaries

Digestive: supports digestive system, relieves gas and bloating, regulates bowel movements, soothes nausea

Musculoskeletal: relieves joints and muscular pain, soothes sore muscles, helps in stiff and painful joints, helps in arthritis, promotes musculoskeletal health

Endocrine/Reproductive: enhances libido, aphrodisiac, soothes menstrual pain

Respiratory: clears airways, aids expectoration, adjuvant in colds and flu, decongestant, helps in treating respiratory infections

Topical: antibacterial, antifungal, has antiseptic properties, promotes wound healing, has antioxidant properties

Nervous: alleviates anxiety, calms nervousness, helps in depression, aids in insomnia and sleep disorders, promotes mental clarity and enables mental focus.

Energetic: fights mental fatigue, clears sluggishness, stimulates the mind, enables clarity, supports intellectual functions, uplifts spirits, boosts self-esteem, enhances libido, soothes depression, energizes, fights apathy, supports emotional balance

Ayurvedic medicine:

Taste: spicy, sweet, pungent

Post digestive: pungent

Potency: warm

Quality: light, oily, blunt

Tissues: digestive, circulatory

Channels: digestive, respiratory

Due to its warming properties, cardamom is used to support and regulate digestion, increase sexual stamina and libido, and to soothe muscles and joint soreness. It is especially used to address nausea, vomiting, morning sickness.

Traditional Chinese Medicine:

In TCM cardamom is considered dry and warming, entering the liver and spleen meridians.

It is used to stimulate and circulate the digestive Qi. It stimulates the digestive function, treats nausea, and regulates appetite. It also stimulates mental clarity and supports thinking.

Important scientific data:

Herb:

The therapeutic use of cardamom is related to its content of essential oil. Several volatile oils, up to 8% of the whole seed are available; amongst the most notable are: alpha-terpineol, limonene, menthone, cineol, sabinene and heptane.

Several studies revealed that cardamom acts both in protecting the digestive system and in regulating its activity. In vitro research showed relevant effects in indigestion, colic, gas, bloating, constipation and diarrhea.

In the respiratory system the volatile oils from cardamom act as a decongestant, clearing airways and enabling breathing. While it's not a direct therapeutic in respiratory infections and inflammations, cardamom is an effective adjuvant, clearing the pathways for other active ingredients.

In aromatherapy, cardamom oil has soothing, calming and sedative effects that can be of help in stress, anxiety, insomnia and depression.

Essential oil:

The main chemical components of cardamom oil are a-pinene, b-pinene, sabinene, myrcene and limonene. The monoterpenes such as sabinene, alpha and gamma pinene have very potent antioxidant and antimutagen properties with great potential in anti-cancer therapy

Studies also shown that several active ingredients in cardamom essential oil have potent anti-inflammatory properties with relevant effects in inhibiting pre-inflammatory cytokines.

In a study assessing the effects of aromatherapy on inhibiting nausea in post-operative patients, cardamom ranked among the highest of 25 essential oils. Another study on using aromatherapy and massage therapy as a complementary treatment for chronic pains showed cardamom essential oil to be as effective as aspirin and indomethacin.

How To Use

Herb:

- Powder: ½ - 1 teaspoon for adults and ¼ - ½ teaspoon for children, dissolved in a glass of warm water, sweetened (preferably with honey) 3-4 times/day
- In case of vomiting an infusion is recommended: 1-2 teaspoonful of powder in 1oz. hot water covered for 30 minutes, strained, in regular intervals throughout the day
- Tincture: 1-2 teaspoon/day preferably split in 2-3 doses

Essential oil:

- **Massage Oil:** dilute cardamom in a carrier oil and massage into sore muscles and joints to stimulate peripheral circulation. Massaged onto the chest it decongests airways and supports respiration and rubbed onto the abdomen it stimulates digestion and aids the digestive transit. Massaged in the lower abdomen it can help soothe menstrual pain
- **Diffuser:** diffuse cardamom to support respiratory system, detoxify the environment, uplift the mind and enhance romantic moods.
- Two-three drops in an aromatic bath to uplift spirits and mood

Popular therapeutic recipes:

Herb:

Immune system booster/anti-colds and flu drink:

- 2 cups water
- 4 crushed cardamom pods
- 4 black peppercorns
- 4 cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- a few slices of fresh ginger

Place all ingredients in the water, heat to boiling point, and leave it covered for 20-30 minutes. Strain. Sweeten with honey. Drink 1-2 cups a day.

Essential oil:

Digestive Soothe:

- 4 drops cardamom
- 6 drops clary sage
- 2 drops ginger
- 4 drops chamomile

Dilute the blend in 1 oz. carrier oil and massage on the abdomen to soothe pain and promote digestion.

Romantic blend:

- 4 drops jasmine
- 4 drops sandalwood
- 2 drops rose
- 2 drops cardamom

Diffuse the blend, or use it diluted in ½ oz carrier oil for massage or applied on pulse points.

Cautions, Warnings and Contraindications:

Herb:

Caution:

Cautious use is recommended in gastritis, ulcer and other ulcerous intestinal diseases, open wounds and ulcerations.

Warnings:

Oral overdose can lead to mild stomach and intestinal irritation.

Essential oil:

Caution:

Always use diluted in carrier oil. Before using it for the first time, a patch test is highly recommended. Topical overdose of essential oil can lead to contact dermatitis.

Warnings:

Do not take cardamom essential oil internally.

Contraindications:

Pregnant women and infants should avoid use of the essential oil

Possible herb / drug interactions:

Cardamom is considered generally safe when following normal dosages

Chamomile

Anthemis nobilis (Roman chamomile) and *Matricaria chamomila* (German chamomile)

Overview:

Chamomile is a daisy-like perennial plant belonging to the Asteraceae family and native to Europe some parts of Asia. Chamomile is one of the most popular therapeutic plants. Its medical properties were highly revered by ancient civilizations. There are several chamomile species and cultivars that have medicinal properties. However, two of them, Roman Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) and German Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomila*) are the most widespread and most used.

Roman chamomile is a compact, low growing shrubby plant native to the Mediterranean region. It has feathery leaves and a daisy-like floescence that lasts from spring to autumn. Its scent, that some associate with apples, is unique and easily recognizable. Roman chamomile was used since ancient time to treat internal conditions (especially digestive) and topical problems, especially for its antiseptic, wound healing properties. The whole Roman chamomile plant contains its unique aroma, due to its essential oil.

German chamomile is an annual, herbaceous plant that spontaneously grows in various regions of Europe and Asia. Unlike Roman chamomile, in *Matricaria chamomila* only the flowers are scented. That is why various forms of preparation of the flowers were used to treat a wide range of ailments. German chamomile is less bitter, hence better tolerated for human consumption in the form of infusion or decoction.

Therapeutic Actions and Benefits:

Chamomile contains a wide variety of active ingredients: bisabolol and its derivatives with strong anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory, flavonoids such as quercetin, apigenin with antioxidant and nervine action, fatty acids, polysaccharides and vitamins – particularly B2 that have benefic therapeutic properties. Roman and German chamomile have almost identical active constituents, but the concentration is different. German chamomile has more bisabolol and chamazulene (gives the oil the blue color) while the Roman chamomile has more fatty and phenolic acids.

Both types of chamomile are used to treat and alleviate a wide range of illnesses and symptoms such as inflammatory digestive problems, diarrhea, constipation, colic, flatulence, distension, heartburn, acidity, gastroenteritis, peptic gastritis and ulcers, colitis, IBS, hyperactivity, ADHD, teething, febrile convulsions, insomnia, nervousness, anxiety, irritability, eczema, acne, hives, rashes, dermatitis, inflammatory eye problems, catarrh, sinusitis, conjunctivitis, dysmenorrhea, mastitis, PMS, migraines, tension, menopausal symptoms, arthritis, gout, carpal tunnel syndrome, fevers, infections, sore throats, colds, flu, asthma, inflamed bladder, cystitis and urinary infections.

ROMAN CHAMOMILE (*Anthemis nobilis*)

List of specific therapeutic actions

Respiratory / ENT: helps in respiratory and ENT infections, soothes sore throat, aids in airway decongestion, relieves toothaches and earaches, soothes teething pain

Digestive: controls acidity, prevents heartburns, soothes colic, supports gastroenteritis healing, regulates peristalsis, treats constipation, treats diarrhea, relieves gastritis and ulcer related pains, prevents IBS episodes, stimulate bile production

Skin: promotes wound healing, especially in slow healing ulcerations, helps in skin infection and inflammations, alleviates eczema, rashes and dermatitis, mild on the skin, highly compatible with all skin types, helps in the treatment of broken capillaries and varicose veins, treats diaper rash

Urinary: alleviates cystitis, reduces bladder inflammation

Reproductive: regulates menstrual flow, reduces menstrual pain

Immune: has antiseptic, antibacterial and antifungal properties, relieves fever, promotes natural healing

Musculoskeletal: relieves muscular and joint pains, aids in rheumatism, relieves neuralgias, soothes sore muscles, aids in carpal tunnel and restless leg syndrome

Nervous: fights stress and anxiety, reduces nervousness, has soothing and calming properties, supports a positive, aids in sleep disorders and insomnia, helps in migraines and headaches, helps in AD/HD

Energetic: has relaxing properties, soothes emotions and calms nerves, induces euphoria, supports clarity, encourages connection with the higher conscience gives peace of mind, promotes emotional balance, helps in children's hyperactivity and lack of concentration

Ayurveda:

Roman chamomile is calming and soothing, useful for pitta excess – fever, infection, anger, and impulsivity. It also balances vata and has cooling properties.

Traditional Chinese Medicine:

In TCM Roman chamomile encourage and regulates the Qi energy flow through the body. It is used to ease pain, relieve spasms and as a calming, soothing herb.

Aromatic profile:

Scent: Sweet, fruity, herbaceous, tea-like, apple-like, strong

Note: mid to top

Blends well with: Bergamot, Clary sage, Frankincense, Rose geranium, Chamomile, Lemon, Mandarin, Ylang ylang, patchouli, neroli

Safety: Non-toxic, non-irritating, a patch test is recommended for individuals allergic to hay, flowers and plants

GERMAN CHAMOMILE (*Matricaria chamomile*)

List of specific therapeutic actions

Respiratory / ENT: helps in respiratory and ENT infections and inflammations (especially the superior tract), soothes sore throat, aids in airway decongestion, relieves toothaches and earaches, soothes teething pain

Digestive: calms stress-related digestive problems, attenuates heartburn and acidity, soothes colic, treats swollen and sore gums, regulates peristalsis, treats constipation, treats diarrhea, relieves gastritis and ulcer related pains, prevents IBS episodes, stimulate bile production

Skin: promotes wound healing, especially in slow healing ulcerations, helps in skin infection and inflammations, alleviates eczema, rashes and dermatitis, mild on the skin, highly compatible with all skin types, helps in the treatment of broken capillaries and varicose veins, treats diaper rash

Urinary: alleviates cystitis, reduces bladder inflammation

Reproductive: regulates menstrual flow, reduces menstrual pain, aids in PMS and menopause, helps in post-partum depression

Immune: has antiseptic, antibacterial and antifungal properties, promotes natural healing

Musculoskeletal: relieves muscular and joint pains, aids in rheumatism, relieves neuralgias, soothes sore muscles, aids in carpal tunnel, reduces inflammations

Nervous: fights stress and anxiety, reduces nervousness, has soothing and calming properties, supports a positive, aids in sleep disorders and insomnia, helps in migraines and headaches, and helps in ADHD

Energetic: has relaxing properties, soothes the mind, balances emotions and calms nerves, induces euphoria, supports clarity, encourages connection with the higher conscience gives peace of mind, promotes emotional balance, helps in children's hyperactivity and lack of concentration

Ayurveda:

Chamomile is calming and soothing, useful for pitta excess – fever, infection, anger, impulsivity, recklessness. It also balances vata and has cooling properties.

Traditional Chinese Medicine:

It is considered calming and soothing for the shen (mind). It cools the heat in the liver and supports the Liver Qi. German chamomile is also used in yang excess ailments that are associated with anxiety, restlessness or insomnia.

Aromatic profile:

Scent: Sweet, strong, similar to hay, herby aroma, tea-like

Note: mid to top

Blends well with: Bergamot, Clary sage, Frankincense, Rose geranium, Chamomile, Lemon, Mandarin, Ylang ylang, patchouli, neroli

Safety: Non-toxic, non-irritating, a patch test is recommended for individuals allergic to hay, flowers and plants

How To Use Chamomile Essential Oil:

Chamomile oil can be used directly on the skin, in a diffuser, in bath water, and added in to various lotions and ointments.

Use the chamomile in the diffuser to obtain calm, soothing atmosphere. Chamomile aroma is excellent for relaxing and calming children. Chamomile is also a great scent addition in any aromatherapy blend.

Dilute chamomile essential oil in a carrier and also add yarrow and helichrysum. The oil can be used to cool and calm rashes, burns and wounds.

A couple drops in the bathwater will induce a relaxed, calm mood and will promote a deep restful sleep. It is a feature particularly useful for small children and infants.

Apply pure oil on the palms, soles of the feet or diffuse to attain a superior state of calmness and to soothe frayed nerves.

Chamomile Oil Recipes:

Soothing Body Blend:

- 3 drops Roman chamomile
- 3 drops helichrysum
- 2 drops birch

Dilute the blend in ½ oz. carrier oil and apply topically for aches and pains

Children's Winter Relief Blend:

- 2 drops roman chamomile
- 2 drops silver fir
- 2 drops lavender

Use as diffuser blend

Soothing Aromatic Bath For All Ages:

- 2 drops Roman chamomile
- 2 drops lavender

Add the blend in the bath water to calm, relax and promote a deep restful sleep

Cautions, Warnings and Contraindications:

People with allergies to the ragweed family of plants may be sensitive to chamomile tea and essential oil.

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

Overview:

Fennel is a hardy, perennial, herbaceous plant with feathery leaves and yellow flowers belonging to the Apiaceae family and native to the Mediterranean basin. Fennel leaves and seeds have been used since antiquity as a food spice and food preservative. Fennel root is a popular Mediterranean food ingredient, and is used as a vegetable. Its taste resembles anise and dill. Various forms of fennel preparations such as decoction and poultice have been used for hundreds of years to treat digestive ailments, respiratory diseases and topical conditions. Fennel was considered a beneficial herb for women and it was used to boost milk production, soothe menstrual pain and prevent false labor. Ancient peoples also used fennel to freshen their breath or to odorize and cleanse their houses. Later on, scientific research showed that due to its nutrient profile fennel is considered highly beneficial for the skin, eyes, respiratory and digestive systems.

Fennel oil is obtained through distillation of dried seeds. Its color varies from clear to pale yellow. Fennel essential oil is effective in the same systems as the herb. It is great for the skin, where it balances the sebum production and prevents premature aging by fighting free radicals. Used in massage and inhalation it is an indirect, yet efficient way to address the reproductive, digestive and respiratory system. The key words describing fennel essential oil are cleansing and soothing. When included in a blend, fennel has the versatility to enhance the other scents, increasing their presence and boosting their dryout.

Therapeutic Actions and Benefits:

Fennel is a highly regarded therapeutic oil. When topically applied it soothes and slightly warms. Its antispasmodic properties are efficient in the musculoskeletal system where it relieves muscular spasms and relaxes muscles and joints. Furthermore, the antispasmodic effects are also effective in the reproductive and digestive system, by massaging the troubled area with fennel essential oil in a carrier oil. Applied on the skin it has antioxidant and regenerative properties that balance the skin, prevents premature aging, fights rashes, eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis and other skin problems. Fennel oil also promotes wound healing, due to its antibacterial and antiseptic properties. Fennel oil also supports peripheral circulation and capillary health, which prevents water retention. The oil also supports the respiratory system by encouraging airflow and decongesting airways, when inhaled or massaged on the chest. In aromatherapy fennel oil is considered calming, soothing and supports courage and action. It also works on relieving stress and anxiety and promoting a deep, restful sleep.

List Of Specific Therapeutic Actions

Circulatory: helps in cellulite reduction, stimulates peripheral circulation, protects capillaries, fights edema

Musculoskeletal: relieves joint pain, soothes sore muscles, reduces muscle and joint inflammation, relieves spasm

Endocrine/Reproductive: soothes menstrual pain, relieves pelvic spasms, helps in hormonal related mood swings

Skin: promotes wound healing, balances sebum production, has antioxidant properties, fights premature aging of the skin, helps in psoriasis, eczema, rash, dermatitis, promotes healthy skin, hair and nails.

Nervous: alleviates anxiety, fights stress, soothes nerves, helps in sleeping disorders and insomnia, and promotes restful sleep.

Energetic: soothing, grounding, balancing, induces optimism, boosts courage, filters unproductive and negative thinking, supports creativity, encourages expression of emotions.

Ayurveda:

In Ayurveda fennel is considered astringent, pungent and slightly sweet, primarily used to balance agni, the digestive fire. It is a tonic for the digestive system. It is also recommended in conditions associated with high pitta.

Traditional Chinese Medicine:

In TCM, fennel is considered warm, pungent and astringent, entering the liver, kidney and spleen meridians. It is used in conditions associated with cold, to alleviate pain and to strengthen the stomach.

Aromatic profile:

Scent: warm, sweet, licorice-like, anise-like, earthy, green, herbaceous

Note: top to middle

Blends well with: geranium rose, rose, ylang-ylang, lavender, grapefruit, orange, lime, bergamot, mandarin, sandalwood, cypress, sage

Safety: non-toxic, might be irritant in pure form

Important Scientific Data

Fennel essential oil is high in flavones, alcohols, monoterpenes, sesquiterpenes and esters that contribute to its therapeutic properties. Fennel essential oil is one of the most researched essential oil being the subject of several clinical studies.

Its main active components are trans-anethole, fenchone and estragole as well as other active constituents present in lesser percentages.

In vitro research showed that fennel essential oil is a potent antibacterial and antiseptic agent, with results against pathogens such as E. coli. Results against pathogen fungi such as Candida albicans were also relevant.

Research on fennel essential oil as an alternative for NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) in the treatment of uterine cramping showed that the oil's effects are comparable with the NSAIDs but without any of the side effects. Furthermore, by stimulating and regulating the uterine contractions fennel supports a normal, regular menstruation.

Other study showed that fennel essential oil has hepato-protective effects. Fennel essential oil also showed antioxidant and anti-mutagen properties in vivo, which makes it a promising candidate for further anti-aging and anti-cancer research.

How To Use Fennel Essential Oil:

Fennel essential oil can be applied (always diluted) topically as a massage or compress, in the bath, through direct inhalation, or diffuser.

Add 1-2 drops of fennel oil in the skin lotion or ointment to promote a healthy, young-looking skin and to address premature skin aging.

Add 1-3 drops of fennel essential oil in a carrier oil to create a massage oil ideal for soothing musculoskeletal aches and to address chronic rheumatic pains. Gently massage in the troubled area to soothe pain, relax muscles and encourage peripheral circulation. Use 3-5 drops in carrier oil and massage in the lower abdomen to soothe menstrual pain. When massaged in the upper abdomen it promotes a healthy digestion.

Add a couple of drops in the bathwater for a soothing, calming and cleansing experience.

Use 1-2 drops in the diffuser or diluted for direct palm inhalation to soothe, calm, uplift and relieve stress and anxiety.

Fennel Essential Oil Recipes:

Abdominal Comfort Blend:

- 4 drops fennel
- 2 drops peppermint
- 2 drops ginger

Dilute the blend in ½ - 1oz. carrier oil and gently yet thoroughly massage in an anti-clockwise motion on the abdomen to soothe abdominal cramps and regulate digestion.

Stress Reduction Blend:

- 4 drops fennel
- 4 drops clary sage
- 2 drops geranium
- 2 drops melissa

Dilute the blend in a diffuser whenever dealing with stress, to calm, ground and lift spirits.

Women's Menstrual Blend:

- 2 drops fennel
- 2 drops clary sage
- 2 drops rose

- 3 drops bergamot
- 2 drops neroli

Dilute the blend in $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1oz. carrier oil and gently massage on the lower abdomen to soothe menstrual cramps and to regulate menstruation.

Ginger (Zingiber officinale)

Overview:

Ginger is a perennial, shrubby, rhizomatous flowering plant belonging to the Zingiberaceae family and native to South China and other Asian regions. It favors humid areas, with rich precipitations and high temperatures. Due to its popularity as a spice and a therapeutic herb ginger is now cultivated all over the world for both its spice and medicinal uses. The plant's rhizomes are aromatic, thick, lobed, pale yellowish, varying in shape and size with maturity and the different cultivated types.

The rhizome has been used for thousands of years in the oriental traditional cultures – especially Chinese and Indian - in the daily diet and in special preparations in the treatment of various diseases. There are sources claiming that ginger is the most ancient spice used by humans. Therapeutic use of ginger is documented as early as antiquity in Asia. It was one of the spices that travelled to the Roman and Greek empires, where it was considered a warming herb with aphrodisiac properties. Ginger became a popular spice and a medical herb in Europe, where it was used during plagues for its diaphoretic properties.

In aromatherapy, ginger is considered warming and energizing. In medical aromatherapy it is recognized as a potent support for the digestive function if used internally, while topically it alleviates a wide range of conditions. Ginger oil has all the therapeutic properties of the rhizome and it is rich in active ingredients such as gingerol and linalool. Due to its therapeutic properties, the popularity of the ginger essential oil has increased in the last decade.

Therapeutic Actions and Benefits:

Ginger is rich in sesquiterpenes and monoterpenes and other active ingredients such as beneficial alcohols, esters and ketones. In traditional and herbal medicine ginger has been used for centuries as a potent cure for travel sickness, nausea and indigestion, a strong carminative and is used for gas, dyspepsia, colic, irritable bowel, loss of appetite, an immune system booster in chills, cold, flu, treatment in poor circulation, menstrual cramps, cholesterol and blood pressure regulator and topically used for joint pains, dermatitis, rash, allergic skin reactions. Modern scientific research validates its use, confirming that ginger's active ingredients are efficient in addressing a wide spectrum of medical conditions and health issues. Ginger essential oil has tonic and uplifting effects on the nervous system. It is particularly effective during stressful periods associated with fatigue and exhaustion.

List Of Specific Therapeutic Actions (Herb and oil)

Respiratory: has decongestant properties, clears sinuses, aids in sore throat, helps treating colds, flu, sore throat and bronchitis, supports the respiratory system during seasonal changes

Circulatory: has stimulating properties, enhances peripheral circulation

Digestion: promotes a healthy digestive function, relieves gas and bloating, prevents and treats nausea, helps in morning sickness, balances appetite

Immune: boosts immunity, strengthens the immune response, helps in fever

Musculoskeletal: alleviates muscular aches and pains, relieves stiff joints, aids in arthritis and rheumatism, soothes sore muscles

Nervous: neuro-tonic, stimulates and strengthens nerves, helps in exhaustion and fatigue, supports the nervous system

Energetic: has potent tonic effects on the mind and spirit, promotes clarity, boosts confidence, increases self-esteem, has grounding properties

Ayurveda:

Ginger is a fundamental herb in Ayurveda. It is considered beneficial for all, especially for conditions associated with vata imbalance. It is a potent detoxifier, a supporter of the digestive function, and a cleanser of the respiratory system.

Traditional Chinese Medicine:

Ginger is one of the most widely used medicinal herbs in TCM. It is considered warming and used to treat both interior and exterior cold. It also considered a tonic, strengthening and circulating Qi energy. It warms the Lung and Liver meridians, supports circulation of the blood and fortifies the Yang.

Aromatic profile:

Scent: Sharp, warm, spicy, caramel, woody, lemony, with an earthy touch

Note: middle to base

Blends well with: bergamot, lemongrass, helichrysum, lemon, grapefruit, orange, black pepper, cinnamon, clove, cardamom, ylang-ylang

Safety: Non-toxic, non-irritating

How To Use Ginger Essential Oil:

Ginger oil can be applied topically (always diluted 1% or less), as a compress, in the bath, through direct inhalation, or diffuser.

For massage of the muscle and joints, and lymphatic drainage ginger essential oil must be diluted in carrier oil. 1% ginger oil in carrier oil can be used for local massage to enhance peripheral circulation and to relieve muscular and joint pain.

Add 1-2 drops in the bathwater for a both soothing and reinvigorating experience, and to enhance the romantic mood.

Ginger can also be used for inhalations either in a diffuser or few drops on the palm to induce a positive mood, clear negative thinking and boost energy. Diffuse ginger oil (alone or blended with other spice oils) during mealtime to support digestion and appetite.

Ginger Oil Recipes:

Soft Tissue Massage Formula:

- 4 drops ginger
- 2 drops peppermint
- 4 drops eucalyptus
- 2 drops black pepper

Dilute the blend in 1 oz. carrier oil (marula, jojoba) and massage it in areas with poor circulation and to soothe spasms and sore areas

Energy and Alertness Blend:

- 3 drops grapefruit
- 2 drops ginger

Use in diffuser