

ANISEED



Plant/Part: Herbs/seeds (Source: North Africa, Europe, USA)

Latin Name : Pimpinella Anisum

Family : Umbelliferae

Extraction : Distillation

AROMA: Pungent, Licorice like, very warming

PROPERTIES: Antispasmodic, Aphrodisiac, Cardiac, Carminative, Digestive, Diuretic, Expectorant, Insecticide, Laxative, Stimulant, Stomachic.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Anisic (Aldehyde), Anethole, Methylchavicol (Phenols), Limonene (Terpene).

PRECAUTIONS: A very potent oil, not often used in massage as skin sensitisation may occur. Generally a stimulant but excessive use, could cause sluggishness. In extreme cases possibility of circulatory problems and cerebral congestion. Certainly should be avoided in pregnancy and perhaps altogether.

BLENDS: Bay, Cardoman, Caraway, Cedarwood, Coriander; Dill, Fennel, Mandarin, Petitgrain, Rosewood.

Aniseed originated from the Middle East and is now cultivated in Europe, USA and North Africa. It is an annual herb, about 80 cm (2 feet) high with delicate feathery leaves, tiny white flowers and grayish-brown seeds.

AROMATHERAPY USES

Aniseed oil was revered by ancient civilizations, especially by the Romans, Egyptians and Greeks. The Romans used it in a spicy cake know as 'mustaceus', the Egyptians used it in bread, while the Greeks used it for its calming influence on the digestive tract. Aniseed is used in liqueurs and cordials, toothpastes and mouthwashes. In India it is used as a breath sweetener and in Turkey, a popular alcoholic drink called 'raki ' is made from the seeds.

Aniseed oil is a very potent and the anethole contained in it can cause dermatitis in some individuals. It is best avoided in problem skin conditions. In large doses it can also slow down the circulation and can cause cerebral congestion.

Aniseed oil can be useful in the treatment of muscular aches and pains, rheumatism, bronchitis, whooping cough, colic, cramp, flatulence, indigestion, catarrh and hangovers. Aniseed oil is not only helpful for its effect on the digestive system, it is also a general tonic to the circulatory system and the respiratory tract. It helps to calm the nerves of tense and anxiety ridden people. It



also calms menstrual pains and eases nauseous migraines, while stimulating the lungs to expel phlegm.

Burners and vaporizers: In vapor therapy, aniseed oil is useful for asthma, colds and all breathing problems, as well as quelling nausea and vomiting. Drops of oil on a handkerchief to smell at, is useful for settling digestive problems and can also benefit migraine and vertigo sufferers.

The Essential oil of Aniseed is seldom used, on account of its high toxicity. In high doses or taken over a long time, it is a narcotic which slows the circulation, damages the brain and is addictive, as seen by the high addiction rates to Absinthe in 19th century France. Theoretically it can be used to calm digestive or menstrual pain, stimulate the flow of breast milk, or treat heart and lung disease. As there are many other safer Essential Oils available, you might do better to leave this one alone.

HERBAL USES

Aniseed is recorded as early as the sixth century as an herbal remedy. Hippocrates prescribed anise for coughs. Pliny recommended it as an herbal remedy for bad breath. Anise was such a popular herb King Edward levied an import tax on anise in the 1300's.

Aniseed is to dogs what cat nip is to cats. It is used to scent the "rabbit" in gray hound races and the lay a scent down for fox hound training. Anethole is the active ingredient that gives anise its distinct smell and flavor. Anise has a long history as a medicinal herb used in herbal remedies and as a spice and aromatic.

For infantile catarrh, Aniseed tea is very helpful. It is made by pouring half a pint of boiling water on 2 teaspoonsful of bruised seed. This, sweetened, is given cold in doses of 1 to 3 teaspoonsful frequently.

Gerard said:

'Aniseed helpeth the yeoxing or hicket (hiccough) and should be given to young children to eat, which are like to have the falling sickness (epilepsy), or to/such as have it by patrimony or succession.'



Anise seeds can be chewed as an herbal remedy to relieve bad breath. The seeds can be crushed and steeped in hot water to make an herbal tea that can relieve coughs. The essential oils of anise have expectorant properties. Anise has antimicrobial properties and its pleasant flavor can be used to mask other less pleasant medications. Anise tea is also felt to be good for relieving indigestion and flatulence. It helps prevent fermentation in the gastric tract.

The safest way to use anise as an herbal remedy is in a tea. One to two teaspoons of crushed seeds steeped for ten to fifteen minutes in boiling water will make a nice herbal tea for indigestion and cough relief.

Alternatively it can be found as an herbal tincture in many health food stores or in capsule form which should be used according to the directions on the bottle.

Anise is a versatile herb which has been used in herbal and folk remedies for centuries. As with any herbal remedy, it's important to be aware allergic reactions can occur and interactions with medications you may be taking are possible. Use caution and good sense when using herbal remedies.

