

BAY



Plant/Part: Tree/Leaf (Source: Morocco and Spain)

Latin Name: Laurus Nobilis

Family: Lauracea

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: Sweet and spicy, a little like Cinnamon

PROPERTIES: A good scalp and hair tonic, and for Respiratory disorders and depression. Can be stimulating to the memory. Stimulating, energising. Expels wind, settles stomach pain and has a tonic effect on the liver and kidneys. Promotes the flow of urine. Has a tonic action on the reproductive system, regulates scanty periods and speeds up delivery in childbirth. May also help to ease ear infections thereby mitigating feelings of dizziness and restoring balance.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Geraniol, Linalool, Terpineol (Alcohol), Cineole (Ketone), Eugenol (Phenol), Phellandrene, Pinene (Terpenes)

PRECAUTIONS: Use less than recommended dilution; can cause skin irritation.

BLENDS: Coriander, Eucalyptus, Ginger, Juniper, Lavender, Lemon, Marjoram, Orange, Rose, Rosemary, Thyme, Ylang Ylang.

AROMATHERAPY USES

This warming oil is often used in aromatherapy since it is a good antiseptic for the respiratory system, perks up the digestive system, settles stomach pain and expels wind, while promoting confidence, courage and insight. Topically, it is most often used to combat hair loss and to improve the health of the scalp in general.

This sturdy evergreen tree is a native of West Indies, Venezuela and the Guianas. Nowadays the oil is obtained mostly from Morocco and Spain. The bay tree grows to about 10 meters (30 feet), has long aromatic lance-shaped leaves, small white-yellow flowers and black berries.

Bay oil was very popular with the Romans, who thought that the herb was symbolic of wisdom, peace and protection. The Latin 'Laudis' means 'to praise', which is why the victors at the Olympic games were presented with a laurel (bay) wreath. In the past, bay leaves were distilled with rum and the "bay-rum" so obtained was a famous hair tonic and body rub for colds and muscle pains.

Bay oil can be used in the treatment of rheumatism, neuralgia, muscular pain, circulation problems, colds, flu, dental infection, hair growth, general health of the scalp, diarrhea and skin infections.

HERBAL USES



As mentioned above, the ancient Romans used the bay leaves to create bay leaf crowns to be worn by athletes, poets and warriors as crowns of distinction. Today the Bay Leaf is mainly used for cooking and is removed from the dish before serving. Bay leaves are not poisonous. Bay leaves themselves are safe to eat, however bitter tasting and remains stiff even after cooking creating the possibility of choking or cutting the mouth and throat and therefore is not recommended to eat, but

to use to enhance flavour and then remove the bay leaves from the tea or food prior to serving.



Aromatic Bay Leaf has been used for centuries as an herbal remedy for headaches. It contains chemical compounds called parthenolides, which have proven useful as an herbal treatment for migraines. Bay Leaf is a bitter, stimulant herb that has a gentle tonic effect that is considered warming and drying and aids the digestive organs. This great culinary herb is an aromatic bitter that stimulates the appetite, improves digestion, helps expel gas from the stomach and bowels, and it relieves stomach pain, bowel pain, gastric ulcers and colic.

By helping the body process insulin more efficiently, Bay Leaf has been shown to regulate blood sugar levels. Bay Leaf is a potent antiseptic and was considered indispensable in earlier days during epidemics of contagious disease, such as smallpox, typhoid fever, measles and diphtheria. Since Bay Leaf is regarded as a uterine stimulant, it may be helpful in cases of amenorrhea (absence of menstruation). With powerful antibacterial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antifungal properties, Bay Leaf is useful in treating infections, sore throat, rheumatism, tonsillitis and bladder problems. Topically applied, Bay Leaf is an antiseptic and has been an effective treatment for dandruff, rheumatic joints, sprains, bruises and scabies.

A mild tea can be made with Bay Leaves by boiling two leaves in a pint of water for 10 to 15 minutes. This tea can be drunk warm or added to bath water for a soothing and fragrant treat. See the article on How to Make Herbal Infusions for more details.

Bay Leaf Herbal Supplement is not recommended for pregnant or nursing women, nor for those who are taking medication for diabetes. As a uterine stimulant, it has been called an abortifacient. Although an herb to calm the digestive tract, taken in large doses, Bay Leaf is considered an emetic that produces vomiting.

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