

CARAWAY



Plant/Part: Dried Ripe Seeds (Source: Europe and Africa)

Latin Name: Carum carvi, Apium carvi

Family: Umbelliferae

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: Caraway oil has a sweet spicy odor with a slight peppery smell.

PROPERTIES: The therapeutic properties of Caraway oil include anti-histaminic, antispasmodic, antiseptic, aperitif, astringent, cardiac, carminative, digestive, disinfectant, diuretic, emmenagogue, galactagogue, expectorant, parasiticide, stimulant, stomachic, tonic and vermifuge.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Acetaldehyde, Cumuninic aldehyde, Furfurol, Carvone and Limonene.

PRECAUTIONS: Although it is non-toxic and non-sensitizing, it may cause skin irritation if used in high concentration.

BLENDS: Basil, Camomile, Coriander, Frankincense, Ginger, Lavender and Orange.

Aromatherapy Uses

Caraway oil is extracted from Carum carvi (also known as Apium carvi) of the Umbelliferae family and is also known as carum. Caraway essential oil is a warming essential oil, which helps to relieve mental strain and emotional fatigue, while aiding the digestive and urinary system and clearing the respiratory system. At the same time it also fights skin and scalp conditions.

The Umbelliferae family of plants contains over 3000 species dispersed throughout the world. This plant family is well known for its spices which contain fabulous healing properties. Some of the more well known plants in this family are Angelica, Anise, Carrot, and Parsley.

It is a bi-annual herb that originated from Asia Minor, but is now cultivated in Northern Europe, Africa and Russia. It grows up to 60cm (2 feet) and has soft fern-like leaves, umbels of white/pink flowers and small brown fruit. This warming essential oil helps to relieve mental strain and emotional fatigue, while aiding the digestive and urinary system and clearing the respiratory system. At the same time it also fights skin and scalp conditions.

Also known as Meadow Cumin, it is a very old, well known spice, used as far back as the Stone Age, while the Egyptians used it as food flavoring, the Romans in bread-making and in the Middle Ages the Germans and Austrians used it in their cooking. Traditionally this herb is associated with sharp eyesight and a sweet breath. Caraway oil calms the nerves and soothes



mental fatigue, while settling the stomach, nervous digestion, colic, flatulence and gastric spasms.

The herb Caraway is traditionally used to treat dyspepsia, intestinal colic, **menstrual cramps**, **poor appetite**, **laryngitis**, and **bronchitis**. It is known to promote milk secretion and is considered specific for flatulent **colic** in children. The essential oil from the seed may benefit cases of bronchitis and colds (through inhalation and chest massages of the oil in a carrier), and may support healing of digestive troubles, particularly weak digestion or difficulty due to nervous tension. Ingestion of the oil in small amounts should be safe; it is considered non-toxic and non-sensitizing, though it should not be used undiluted on the skin undiluted.

As an expectorant it helps clear bronchitis, bronchial asthma and coughs. It is also helpful in cases of sore throats and laryngitis and beneficial to the urinary system, helping to flush toxins out. Nursing mothers also use it to increase milk and women in general find that it helps to relieve period pains. Caraway essential oil is a warming essential oil, which helps to relieve mental strain and emotional fatigue, while aiding the digestive and urinary system and clearing the respiratory system. It is also used to help clear skin and scalp conditions.

Herbal Uses

Caraway is one of the most effective of all carminative herbs and the seeds have excellent carminative as well as stomachic properties, while the oil has spasmolytic and antimicrobial activity.

Nicholas Culpeper says of Caraway:

Caraway seed hath a moderate sharp quality, whereby it breaketh wind, and provoketh urine, which also the herb doth. The root is better food than the parsnips; it is pleasant and comfortable to the stomach and helpeth digestion. The seed is conducing to all cold griefs of the stomach, bowels, or mother; as also the wind in them. The powder of the seed put into a poultice, taketh away black and blue spots of blows and bruises. The herb itself, or with some of the seed bruised and fried, laid hot in a bag or double cloth, to the lower parts of the belly, easeth the pains of the wind cholick.



Caraway has a history of at least 5000 years of use as a seasoning and digestive aid and was mentioned in the Ebers Papyrus dating to 1500 BC. It was once considered so valuable by 6th century Persians that they paid their taxes with bags of seeds. Ann Boleyn was reputed to have given Henry the VIII caraway seed comfits to alleviate his indigestion at dinner. It must have been considerable, since he imbibed quite a bit of Aqua Compositis, a wine made from Caraway which should have had the same effect.

The Ancient Egyptians buried their dead with caraway to ward off evil spirits. It was also used as a food and a medicine in Ancient Greece and Rome. Greek physician, **Dioscorides** prescribed oil of caraway to young ladies to rub into their skin and restore a healthy glow. Julius Caesar's army ate a bread made of caraway root (chara). During the middle ages the use of caraway spread up from the Arabian peninsula and into Northern Europe. Old herbal legends describe caraway's power to keep things from getting lost or stolen. It was used in an ancient love potion, and it was also believed that if you tucked some into your possessions they would be protected from theft. As well it is known to be attractive to fowl and is used to keep chickens and pigeons from straying

Caraway is safe and effective for relief of colic in young children. Bruise an ounce of seed and let sit in cold water for about 6 hours. Sweeten with sugar or honey, if desired, and give 1-2 teaspoons up

to 4 times per day. For earache, mash the seeds and place in a hot cloth to be held against the ear. The seeds can also be pounded into a paste to help heal bruises.

See [Caraway Cheese Spread](#) and [Caraway Seed Cake](#)