



CARDAMON

Plant/Part: Herb Roots

Latin Name: *Ellettaria cardamomum*

Family: Zingiberaceae

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: Fiery and fortifying.

PROPERTIES: A very good digestive aid, good for nausea heartburn and flatulence, and is helpful for diarrhoea, easing the griping pains that often accompany it.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: terpineol, cineol, limonene and zingiberene.

PRECAUTIONS: There is no evidence that Cardamon is a skin irritant, you should exercise caution, as with all the spicy oils, and use small amounts, well diluted, for anybody with a sensitive skin.

BLENDS: Cinnamon, Coriander, Clove, Elemi, Eucalyptus, Geranium, Lemon, Lime, Myrtle, Orange, Rosemary, Spearmint.

Ellettaria cardamomum, the Cardamon plant, belongs to the same plant family as Ginger (Zingiberaceae) and they exhibit much of the same warming quality. Several varieties of the plant are found growing in India, Sri Lanka, China and also parts of the Middle East. The oil may be colourless or yellow, and has a sweet, warm aromatic aroma. Its main chemical constituents include terpineol and cineol, with a little limonene and zingiberene.

The plant has been used in Eastern traditional medicine for over 3,000 years, being mentioned in Vedic medical texts. Via the Middle East Cardamon was imported into ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome and the Egyptians used it both in perfumes and incenses. Both Hippocrates and Dioscorides mention it, the latter describing it as good for sciatica, coughs, spasms, abdominal pains and retention of urine. In India Cardamon is used very widely as a digestive aid, both in the form of a spice added to food, and as a medicament. Indian use also confirms some of Dioscorides' descriptions, particularly for coughs, and as a diuretic. But the most important and widespread use in India is as an aphrodisiac. There is no real evidence that Cardamon has any physiological effect, but it is both tonic and stimulant so may act indirectly.

It is certainly a very good digestive aid, good for nausea heartburn and flatulence, and is helpful for diarrhoea, easing the griping pains that often accompany it.

It can be used as a refreshing, tonic and invigorating bath oil perhaps better in a blend than alone. Although there is no evidence that Cardamon is a skin irritant, you should exercise caution, as with all the spicy oils, and use small amounts, well diluted, for anybody with a sensitive skin.