

CYPRESS



Plant/Part: Tree/Leaves/Cones (Source: Spain, Mediterranean)

Latin Name: Cupressus sempervirens

Family: Cupresaceae

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: Woody and slightly spicy, yet clear and refreshing.

PROPERTIES: Cypress is a soothing oil that eases aches and pains and coughs. It has a sweet, smoky, balsamic odour. With its smoky woody fragrance it refreshes, restores and tones. An astringent oil useful for refreshing and caring for oily and blemished skin, As an antiperspirant it is good for sweaty feet. Massage on abdomen during menstruation and where there is cellulite. Good menopausal oil. Natural deodorant.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Pinene, Champhene, Sylvestrene, Cymene, Sabinol.

PRECAUTIONS: Flammable. Regulates the menstrual cycle so best not to use in Pregnancy. Its effect on varicose veins is well known, but care should be exercised in applying the oil - actual massage might be too heavy.

BLENDS: Blends well with: Bergamot, Clary Sage, Juniper Berry, Lavender, Lemon, Orange, Rosemary, Sandalwood.

Digestive: tones the liver and aids its function, especially when there is excessive production of bile. decreases excessive flow of fluids, thus relieving diarrhoea.

Genito-Urinary: stimulates the flow of urine (diuretic). prostatic decongestant. gently stimulates the flow of menstrual blood (emmenagogue), relieves cramps, used for menstrual disorders. very good for difficult menopause with hot flushes. when massaged over the area above the ovaries, it is said to inhibit the growth of cysts.

Respiratory: antispasmodic, mucolytic. used for flu, asthma, bronchitis, spasmodic coughing.

Circulation: causes the narrowing of blood vessels (thus helps to stop bleeding). improves circulation, a venous decongestant, helps to remove toxins from the blood, used for haemorrhoids and varicose veins.

Immune System: stimulates. not suited to acute or serious infections, best for chronic complaints.

Muscles/Joints: used to treat muscular cramp and rheumatism.

Skin/Hair: regulates oil production, best for oily and over-hydrated skin. used to treat excessive perspiration (especially due to over-excitability), wounds, frostbite, acne and cellulite (strengthens



weak connective tissues, improves circulation and helps release toxins). stops bleeding and can be used for pyorrhoea (bleeding of the gums). constricts blood vessels, and is used in the treatment of broken capillaries.

Emotions/Mind: sedative, rebalancing, used to treat nervous tension and stress-related conditions, including insomnia. mailhebiau recommends a mixture of myrtle and cypress to "encourage the interiorisation of individuals with too flighty a spirit". improves concentration and helps to focus thoughts.



Caution: not to be used by people suffering from hypertension.

This is the familiar cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) which is such an inextricable feature of the Mediterranean landscape, familiar through the paintings of Cezanne and Van Gogh. It is also the tree associated with cemeteries, a use which may derive from the fact that both the ancient Egyptians and the Romans dedicated the tree to their gods of death and the underworld. The word 'sempervirens' in its name means 'ever-living' - referring to the evergreen nature of the leaves, but the perpetual greenness of the trees may also have been used as a symbol of life after death.

The essential oil is distilled from the leaves and the cones, and contains d-pinene, d-camphene, d-sylvcstrene, cymene, sabinol, terpenic alcohol and camphor of cypress. The oil varies from colourless to yellowy, and has a pleasantly smoky, woody smell, reminiscent of turpentine but less so than the oil of Juniper. It is very astringent, and is used wherever there is a condition involving an excess of fluid, from oedema, incontinence and excessive perspiration to bleeding gums, bilious attacks and over-heavy menstruation. It is also very

useful in skin care, for oily and over-hydrated skins. It is used quite often in men's toiletries for its antiseptic and astringent properties - useful in an aftershave, for example - and its woody smell. It is a very good deodorant, too.

The astringent action is also helpful for piles, used as a bath oil, local wash or in an ointment (1% to 2% strength). Haemorrhoids are symptomatic of a poor circulation, and cypress is a tonic to the circulatory system. This makes it helpful in treating varicose veins. It can be applied locally to varicose areas - very gently. Never massage directly over varicose veins, and apply oils or creams with light strokes in an upward direction. Cypress is antispasmodic, acting especially on the bronchi, so it is one of the oils to think of when treating asthma. A drop or two inhaled from a hankie or tissue will help to relieve an asthma attack and the spasmodic coughing of whooping cough. As a preventive measure against attacks, a few drops of Cypress can be put on a saucer of water in the bedroom, or in an essential oil burner. This is specially valuable for asthmatic children, because many of them are very frightened when an attack happens during the night.

Another important use of Cypress is in regulating the menstrual cycle. It helps to relieve painful periods and reduces abnormally heavy loss, particularly when this happens in the early stages of the menopause. Valnet suggests that Cypress might be of help in some forms of cancer, but he places a query after this information, indicating that he has no proof of this possible use. It is an area that might be rewarding to investigate.

A humble but very welcome use of Cypress is for excessive sweating of the feet. It is both deodorant and astringent, so will reduce both the amount of perspiration and unpleasant odour. Use it in footbaths as needed. This is



another insect-repellent oil. I have in the past used it to keep a dog free from fleas; and because it is deodorant, too, it helped to reduce doggy odours, particularly in summer when these can be rather noxious.