

LEMONGRASS



Plant/Part: Grass/Leaves (Source : India, Sri Lanka, China)

Latin Name: Cymbopogon Citratus/flexuosus

Family: Poaceae (Gramineae)

Extraction: Steam Distillation

AROMA: Strong sweet and lemony.

PROPERTIES: A refreshing, cleansing and stimulating tonic on the body. Added to shampoos to give a shine to the hair. An antiseptic and astringent oil. Sweet powerful 'lemony' aroma which make a good refreshing and deodorising room fragrance. Excellent for aching muscles, relieves pain and makes them more supple since it helps to eliminate lactic acid and stimulates circulation. Its toning effect on muscles may help with loose skin due to dieting or lack of exercise. Seems to relieve tired legs, especially

after standing for long periods of time. Also aids the flow of breast milk in nursing mothers.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Citral, Dipentene, Linalol, Geraniol.

PRECAUTIONS: May cause irritation of the skin, low dosage is best.

BLENDS: Blends well with: Basil, Cedarwood, Coriander, Geranium, Jasmine, Lavender, Neroli, Niaouli, Palmarosa, Rosemary, Tea-Tree.

This is one of the more important members of the family of scented grasses native to India which are also cultivated in other tropical areas, particularly Brazil, Sri Lanka and parts of central Africa. The grass grows to three feet or more in height, and two or more crops may be cut each year. After harvesting the grass is finely chopped to facilitate the extraction of the essential oil by steam distillation.

The major constituent of Lemongrass oil (*Cymbopogon citratus*) is citral, which accounts for between 70% and 85% of its volume. The remaining 15% to 30% varies in composition depending on the freshness of the leaves at the time of distillation, and also according to which of several varieties of the grass is used, but all varieties include geraniol, farnesol, nerol, citronellol and myrcene, with a number of aldehydes and other traces. The oil ranges from yellow to a reddish-brown and has a very strong lemony perfume.

Lemongrass has a very long history of use in traditional Indian medicine, particularly against infectious illnesses and fevers. It is a very powerful antiseptic and bactericide, and a



large number of laboratory trials have given scientific confirmation of its traditional uses.

It has a powerful tonic and stimulating effect on the whole organism and this too is of great value when treating feverish illnesses. Lemongrass has been found to have a soothing effect on HEADACHES, but unlike LAVENDER, should be diluted in a carrier oil before gentle massaging the temples and forehead, as the neat oil would be damaging to the skin.

As a bath oil, Lemongrass is refreshing, antiseptic and deodorant but again, needs to be used with care because of possible skin irritation. Do not use more than 3 drops at a time, and dilute before adding to the water. Another possible way of using the oil is in footbaths - very refreshing for tired feet, and helpful for excessive sweating.



Like all the lemon-scented oils, this is a good insect-repellent. It can be used alone or in any number of possible blends with other insect-repellent oils, and has been used extensively to protect animals from fleas and ticks. It can be used in a blend with Lavender to sponge your dog in summer when fleas become a real problem: the blend also keeps doggy odours to a minimum. You can use Lemongrass in a burner in summertime, too, to keep the flies and other insects away, and sometimes add a drop or two to the water for washing the floor.

The essential oil is sometimes used to adulterate more expensive oils, and occasionally turns up labelled as 'Verbena' which is similarly lemon-scented. Here is another example of why it is so important to insist on knowing the botanical name for all oils you buy and is why we always include them where possible in this database.