

NUTMEG



Plant/Part: Tree/Fruit (Source: Java and West Indies)

Latin Name: Myristica Aromata/Fragrans/officinalis

Family: Myristicaceae

Extraction: Steam Distillation

AROMA: Sharp, spicy, rather musky and warming.

PROPERTIES: Its main action appears to be on the digestive system and particularly useful in breaking down fats and starchy foods as well as encouraging appetite. May have an effect on wind, nausea, chronic vomiting, bad breath and diarrhoea - though apparently averts constipation too. Can act as an intestinal antiseptic and said to dissolve gall stones. A very stimulating oil invigorating the heart and circulation. Good for the digestion and calming to promote a restful sleep with dreams. Its rather warming quality is a balm to muscular

aches and pains as well as rheumatism, especially of the chronic kind. Also said to lessen the sharp stabbing pain associated with neuralgia. A very stimulating oil invigorating the heart and circulation.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Borneol, Camphene, Cymol, Dipentene, Eugenol, Geraniol, Linalol, Pinene, Sapol, Terpeneol, Myristicin, Safrol.

PRECAUTIONS: Warning: Nutmeg oil is toxic if used in large quantities, and can be stupefying. Use sparingly as this is a rather potent oil. Best avoided in pregnancy. Safety Information: use half recommended dilution or less.

BLENDS: Bay, Orange, Geranium, Clary Sage, Rosemary, Lime, Petitgrain, Mandarin, Coriander.

Digestive: antispasmodic, stimulates the production of gastric juices (carminative), aids digestion, used for flatulence, indigestion, nausea.

Genito/urinary: increases the production of menstrual blood.

Muscles/joints: analgesic, antirheumatic, used for arthritis, gout, muscular aches and pains, rheumatism.

Emotions/mind: used for nervous fatigue.

Other: often considered an aphrodisiac and used for frigidity and impotence.

Caution: might cause sensitization. also, in large doses nutmeg oil might cause nausea, stupor and tachycardia or even be hallucinogenic (british herbal pharmacopeia). personally, i already feel slightly dizzy after a few good whiffs (the effect is not unlike sniffing glue) - which is a pity, because i love the smell. it should be used in moderation and is contraindicated in pregnancy.

Nutmeg (*Myristica Fragrans*) is the kernel of the fruit of a tree native to India, Java and Sumatra, and which is also grown in the West Indies. The outer layer of the same fruit also yields a spice, mace, and you can sometimes buy nutmegs complete with the outer layer of mace surrounding them. The oil is extracted from the 'nut' by steam distillation, and its active principles include borneol, geraniol, linalol, eugenol, safrol and myrislicin.



There is a great deal of overlap in the properties and uses of all the oils derived from warming spices, and in many respects Nutmeg duplicates the properties of Cinnamon. Nutmeg can be used as an alternative to Cinnamon, when you wish to vary the oils being used. You should use it less than Cinnamon however, as caution is needed for Nutmeg in high doses, or over a long period of time, can cause mental or nervous disturbances. It is said that you can kill somebody with one whole Nutmeg - but the intended victim would probably start vomiting long before the fatal dose was reached.

JEAN VALNET recommends Nutmeg combined with Clove and Rosemary for relieving rheumatic pain. This is certainly a powerful and effective blend, but it should be used with care, as it is very stimulating. Nutmeg is also a stimulant of the heart and circulation, but again should be used with care.

Nutmeg makes an agreeable addition to winter blends of oils for warming and generally toning up the body, and strengthening its resistance to cold. In the bath 3 drops is enough, and more can give rise to skin problems.

This is another oil which I you can diffuse in the air by evaporating it in an essential oil 'burner' (you can buy versions that have a tiny electric element, and others that derive heat from a nightlight). It makes a particularly enjoyable scent when used with oil of Orange.