

PETITGRAIN



Plant/Part: Orange Tree/Leaves and young shoots
(Source: Central Asia, Italy, Spain)

Latin Name: Citrus Vulgaris/aurantium

Family: Rutaceae

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: A rather haunting fragrance alternately woody and floral.

PROPERTIES: Revitalising yet relaxing. It has a toning effect on the skin. From the same trees as Neroli/orange blossom though Petitgrain is distilled from the leaves rather than the petals. Similar properties to Neroli, it has deodorant properties and helps to relieve anxiety and stress. Lovely aroma. Good in final rinse for healthy hair, (two drops). Helpful in debilitated states after illness since it seems to act as a mild immuno-stimulant, encouraging

general resistance to illness. At the same time, its deodorising properties could help refresh and revive the body. Reputedly helpful with painful digestion by calming stomach muscles.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Linalyl Acetate, Geranyl Acetate, Linalol, Nerol, Terpineol.

BLENDS: Blends well with: citrus oils, Clary Sage, Rosemary, Geranium, Lavender, Orange and Neroli.

Essential oil of Petitgrain is obtained from the bitter orange tree (*Citrus bigaradia*) which also gives us Neroli, and in fact there is a 'family' resemblance between the two oils. Petitgrain is distilled from leaves and/or the young tips of twigs but in earlier centuries the oil was extracted from the unripe oranges, picked when they were still green and no bigger than a cherry, hence the name 'Petit Grains', meaning little grains. This source of oil proved uneconomic, as to produce enough to warrant the effort reduced the later crop of mature oranges drastically, and the old name was gradually transferred to the oil from the leaves/twigs.

The best Petitgrain comes from the Mediterranean region, like the other citrus oils. A cheaper grade is imported from Paraguay. Occasionally, a variety of Petitgrain may be distilled from lemon-tree leaves, but this is rare. Good Petitgrain oil has a fresh, flowery light perfume, resembling that of Neroli although less bitter. It has been compared to a good Eau de Cologne, and in fact Petitgrain enters into the formulae of some colognes. Chemically, it shares many of the constituents of Neroli, though with a higher proportion of Linalol and linalyl acetate.

Therapeutically, Petitgrain also resembles Neroli, though it is less sedative. It appears, in fact, to hold a middle position between sedative and stimulant, though a few people have reported being unable to sleep after using this oil. Being a fairly neutral oil in this respect, it can be blended equally well with sedative or stimulant oils, depending on the effect that is being sought. From the fragrance point of view, it blends very well with Rosemary, Lavender, Geranium and Bergamot,



and a delicious blend of Neroli, Orange and Petitgrain oils, have a wonderful aroma bringing together the fruit, flowers and leaves of the orange.

Petitgrain is a wonderfully refreshing bath oil, with deodorant properties, and can be used in a final rinse after shampooing to give the hair a delicate aroma. It is particularly refreshing blended with Rosemary for both these uses.

It is a very good massage oil, and most people like the aroma very much. Although you should not use Petitgrain as a substitute where there is a serious indication that Neroli is needed, such as in panic and anxiety states, tachycardia, insomnia or sexual problems, it can be used in place of the more costly oil for depression, less acute anxiety and so forth, and you can use these two oils blended together.