

## WINTERGREEN



**Plant/Part:** Leaves, which have been previously macerated in water by steam distillation

**Latin Name:** *Gaultheria procumbens*

**Extraction:** Extraction

**AROMA:** It has an intense sweet-woody aroma.

**PROPERTIES:** The plant has been used for respiratory conditions such as chronic mucous discharge, but is mainly employed for joint and muscular pain relief from conditions such as lumbago, sciatica, neuralgia, gout, fibromyalgia, etc. Wintergreen is often added to liniments and ointments to help ease muscle and joint pains.

**CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS:** The main chemical components of wintergreen oil are methyl salicylate and gaultherilene.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Wintergreen oil is toxic and when taken internally can be fatal.

**BLENDS:** Blends well with: Oregano, Peppermint, Thyme, Cajuput, Eucalyptus, Niaoli and Ylang Ylang

It has been suggested that Wintergreen Oil should not be used in Aromatherapy because of its highly toxic properties, but this could be said of many Essential Oils. The main argument is that it can be fatal if taken internally, we at Oilsncures.com don't recommend that ANY Essential Oils are taken internally.

Oil of Wintergreen is extracted from the leaves of a small evergreen herb that grows up to 15 cm. In late spring the plant forms small white flowers. In summer red cherry shaped berries grow and last until the following spring. The crushed leaves have a lovely medicinal smell. Traditionally Wintergreen was chewed by the natives of the Americas in order to increase lung capacity and assist in healing respiratory conditions. Early settlers chewed on Wintergreen to help prevent tooth decay. The dried leaf and stem are current in the British Herbal Pharmacopoeia as a specific for rheumatoid arthritis. It is often blended to a 10% concentration in the carrier oil of your choice, and used as an effective pain-relieving massage oil.

Wintergreen is a traditional native North American remedy, used for aches and pains and to help breathing while hunting or carrying heavy loads. It is a small evergreen herb which grows up to 15cm (6 in) high, with slender stems, leathery serrated leaves and drooping white flowers, followed by fleshy scarlet berries. Methyl salicylate is the principal constituent of this plant and has been incorporated in liniments and ointments for muscular skeletal problems. Ingesting methyl salicylate even in small amounts may result in fatal poisoning. As a herb, it must not be given to patients sensitive to aspirin (salicylates) and wintergreen oil is toxic in excess and can cause liver and kidney damage.

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The essential oil of Wintergreen, being made up almost exclusively of methyl salicylate, a precursor to common aspirin; Wintergreen should NOT be used by people who are allergic to aspirin. Further, Wintergreen should NEVER be ingested, and only used topically in dilutions of 25% or less to limit the transdermal absorption to safe levels. The salicylates pass through the skin, entering the tissues to inhibit the formation of prostaglandins, thereby reducing inflammation and pain.



Along with its analgesic effects, Wintergreen also has anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, antitussive, astringent, carminative, diuretic, emmenagogue, galactagogue and stimulant properties. Wintergreen is often included in formulas to open the breathing passages; deep inhalation of its bright aroma can clear the sinuses and stimulate the mind. Wintergreen blends nicely with Ravensara and/or Eucalyptus for this effect.

This pale yellow oil with an intense sweet-woody aroma should be diluted significantly before topical application - it would be a fine addition to any formulas for supporting joint and muscular aches and pains. Care must be taken to use Wintergreen in modest amounts, and to always keep the oil away from children. One should consider it a bottle of liquid aspirin in this regard.