

# Essential Oil of the Month: Bergamot

By Kathy Padecky, Aromatherapist, HHP, CBS

## Bergamot

In the 1960's, a friend used to go to Disneyland for family outings. In the surrounding area, called Orange County were thousands of orange trees. When she smells oranges, it reminds her of the fun times of being a child at Disneyland. Scents evoke emotions and feelings. Candace Pert said "...your mind is in every cell of your body." When we observe and feel the body as a whole, every cell and organ communicates with each other. Our cellular memories are stored in our DNA.



Aromatherapy used topically or inhaled can assist with healing those aspects of our selves. Bergamot, Citrus Bergamia helps us rebalance our emotions and feelings. It puts a smile on your face and warmth in your heart. It is a stress releaser. When I taught a 100-hour Massage Technician class ten hours a day for 11 days, students were exhausted from the strenuous yet invigorating days. The students were drawn to Earl Grey tea. Most of them were unaware that it contained bergamot. Whether you are awaiting your tax return or sending in a check, Earl Grey tea is an excellent idea.

Each day we breathe 23,000 times. We breathe 440 cubic feet of air in a day. Everything from dust to man has an odor. Aroma molecules cause essential oils to react in the receptor sites in the nose. In the nose, we have 5-10 million olfactory cells. In the nose, we have layers of mucus with hair-like projections called cilia. These receptor sites have sensory neurons. There are 10 million neurons in each nostril. This produces an electrical/chemical response impulse to the olfactory bulb in the brain. This response triggers the limbic system. Have you ever had an experience smelling an aroma that triggered emotion? At the time, you may have been unaware of the key hidden emotion. The limbic system is the seat of our emotions. It carries a collection of emotions, fear, moods, learning behaviors, rage, motivation and memories. The limbic system is a lock and key system. You have the experience and scent will unlock the emotion. This is why inhalation of

essential oils is so effective because it is closest to the brain. Our nose can detect 2,000 to 4,000 aromas. Inhalation of essential oils affects us emotionally, physiologically, physically and spiritually. A hound dog olfactory system is three times stronger than humans. Rabbits have 100 million olfactory cells.

We hold emotional tension from past and present memories at various muscular sites on our body. For people who suffer from tension, stress or depression may benefit from applying bergamot. Apply Bergamot with a lotion or carrier oil on the scalp, back of the ankles, lower lumbar back and chest area (near the heart) and stomach area. For those unable to express their feelings



applying bergamot with lotion or carrier oil at the base, side and front of their neck is effective. For those laden with too much responsibility apply the mixture to the sides of the hips.

Bergamot is a delicate, refreshing citrus scent. Christopher Columbus found the tree in the Canary Islands and introduced it to Spain and Italy. Bergamot is named after a small town in Italy called Bergamo where it was originally cultivated. The bergamot tree is fifteen feet tall with long green leaves and white flowers. The fruit of the tree is inedible. The essential oil is expressed from the peel. In the 16th century, Italian folklore used bergamot for fevers and infections.

The best quality bergamot is expressed from a ripen fruit. A less desirable quality of bergamot is distilled from fallen unripe fruit. As with all essential oils, particularly citrus oils, a therapeutic Grade A is the best choice. Bergamot contains a furanocoumarin compound called bergaptine that is phototoxic to the skin when exposed to the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Exposure to the sun within 72 hours after application may cause a dark pigment to appear on the skin, especially if combined with alcohol. Bergatine gives the skin the ability to tan. All bergatine sunscreens in Europe are banned. The bergatine gives bergamot its green tinge color. You may see on a label listed as Bergamot BF or Bergamot FCC, it is bergatine free.

Bergamot is considered to be one of the most effective essential oils for mental, emotional and psychological problems. This is my first choice for anyone experiencing depression, anxiety and nervous tension. A respected Italian scholar Dr. Paolo Rovesti has written 500 publications on phytochemistry, essential oils and medicinal plants. In the 1950's, he researched the effects of bergamot on anxiety and depression. In EEG brain wave testing, it showed that bergamot, a citrus aroma reduced medication in depressed patients. As with any chronic stressful situation, bergamot lowers depression and reduces a heightened Sympathetic Nervous System. Bergamot was found to boost a suppressed immune system. I would encourage anyone lethargic and depressed from a mild seasonal affective disorder (SAD) to rub bergamot on their chest with their favorite carrier oil or lotion. Bergamot encourages strength, joy, harmony, concentration and confidence. Bergamot puts a smile on my face. It is a tremendous facilitator for creativity and it boosts a person's self esteem. It is effective for infection, inflammation especially cystitis. It soothes the digestive tract. Patchouli suppresses an appetite while bergamot regulates it. Its antiseptic and healing qualities benefit herpes, cold sores, shingles, acne, psoriasis, eczema and scalp conditions.



#### **Bergamot Blends with:**

Bergamot blends with black pepper, Roman and German Chamomile, clary sage, cypress, eucalyptus, frankincense, geranium, helichyrsum, juniper, jasmine, lemon, marjoram, neroli, nutmeg, orange, palmarosa, patchouli, rosemary, vetiver, and ylang ylang.

#### **Essential Oil Recipes:**

##### *Stress, tension and depression blend:*

Your favorite carrier oil  
1 drop of bergamot

Mix a small amount of carrier oil and bergamot in the palm of your hand and apply to the scalp, back of ankles, soles of feet, chest area or lower lumbar back.

##### *Body Powder:\**

White clay - 1 cup  
Cornstarch - 1 cup  
Bergamot essential oil - 8-15 drops

This is a great and safe gift idea for any occasion. Cornstarch deodorizes, absorbs and absorbs moisture. You can use any essential oil in place of bergamot. Sift the powders in a food processor to remove any lumps.

Most body powders including feminine spray powders contain talc or French chalk, which is ground magnesium silicate. With prolonged inhalation, it will cause serious lung

problems. This chemical compound is similar to asbestos which is well known lung irritant and carcinogenic.

##### *Compress for varicose veins:*

Cypress essential oil - 8 drops  
Lavender essential oil - 10 drops  
Bergamot essential oil - 5 drops  
Water - 1 cup

Mix the oils into cool, boiled water. Wring out a square of soft cotton in the mixture and place over area. Leave compress on for at least 15 minutes, then replace.

##### *Indigestion formula:\**

Grapeseed oil - 1 oz.  
Bergamot essential oil - 5 drops  
Ginger essential oil - 3 drops  
Roman Chamomile - 3 drops

Blend oils and massage stomach and intestinal area in a clockwise direction using small, circular movements.

##### *Sunshine Relaxing bath:*

Bergamot essential oil - 5 drops  
Jojoba carrier oil - 1 tablespoon

Mix ingredients together. Add to bath water after you enter the bath tub. If you add the mixture while the water is running, guess where the oils go? You will make a fine bath tub ring.

##### *Cold sore remedy:*

Bergamot essential oil - 1 drop  
Organic almond/jojoba oil - dab

Mix together in palm of your hand and dab on location with a Q-Tip.

\* Australasian College of Herbal Studies, Lake Oswego, Oregon, Lesson Manual

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**About the Author:** Kathy Padecky is an Aromatherapist and a Holistic Health Practitioner (HHP). She began working in the holistic health field in 1981 and teaches various massage modalities, aromatherapy, and hydrotherapy at the International Professional School of Bodywork (IPSB). Ms. Padecky is also publisher of the "Sacred Scents" Newsletter.

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