

# Essential Oil of the Month: Myrrh

By Kathy Padecky, Aromatherapist, HHP, CBS

## Myrrh

**Botanical Name:** Commiphora myrrha

**Why I love myrrh:** After inhaling myrrh, I feel an inner peace and tranquility. It stimulates a warm feeling throughout my body. Myrrh has a rich history of uses from ancient times to present day research.

**Aroma and scent:** Myrrh has a unique enduring aroma and consistency like any essential oil that I have ever used. Its aroma is resinous and musky.

**Native to and history:** Myrrh comes from the Arabic word "murr" meaning bitter. This tree grows in semi-desert regions of Iran, Somalia, Yemen, Ethiopia, the Northeastern coast of Africa and Libya. The Egyptians burned myrrh daily at noon as part of their sun-worshipping ritual. They also combined honey, coriander and myrrh to treat herpes. The Egyptians would smear a small coating of myrrh to keep the skin and body tissues intact while preparing a body for mummification. With this knowledge they used myrrh in facial creams, balms and pomades. In ancient civilizations it was used as a perfume and incense. Moses consecrated his priests with myrrh. Israeli women wore myrrh sachets next to their body to release the fragrant aroma of its



scent. Greek soldiers carried a myrrh paste into battle as a healing ointment for wounds. The ancient Hebrews drank myrrh wine to prepare themselves for religious ceremonies. They believed it raised their consciousness to a higher level. Myrrh was one of the three gifts given to the Christ child. Before Christ's crucifixion, it is believed he drank wine mixed with myrrh as a sedative. Alexander the Great was enamored with the scent of myrrh. He burned myrrh incense constantly in his court. Greek and Roman perfumers created perfumes, balms and ointments with myrrh. Its fragrance has a long lasting effect. Myrrh like patchouli improves with age. Chinese doctors treat arthritis, hemorrhoids, wounds and menstrual problems with myrrh. European gynecologists use myrrh oil to treat scanty

menstrual periods, leucorrhea and thrush. The British Pharmacopoeia lists myrrh as a treatment for gingivitis and mouth ulcers.

**Chemistry:** Myrrh is a cousin in the botanical family of frankincense. In *La Medecine Aromatique*, French researchers P. Bardeau and Robert Lafont mention that myrrh is believed it to be effective against cancer.

Myrrh's is 55 to 75% sesquiterpenes. It also contains furanoids, ketones, monoterpenes, triperpenes, aldehydes, arenas, carboxylic acids and phenols. Sesquiterpenes are anti-inflammatory and calming. Phenols are cleansing and detoxifying. Monoterpenes are antimicrobial and immune supportive. Aldehydes are a sedative. Ketones are cleansing and detoxifying. Furanoids, triperpenes, and arenas are groupings of various chemical components. The benefits of these chemical groupings and carboxylic acids are still being researched.

**Part of the plant:** The essential oil of myrrh is extracted from a tiny, tough, spiny tree with knotted branches and white flowers. It grows to the height of nine feet. When its grey bark is cut, a yellowish-white fluid secretes and hardens to a reddish-brown resinous clump. This resin is pulled from the tree. The resin is steam distilled producing the essential oil of myrrh. Some companies distill the resin with a chemical called hexane. The highest quality myrrh is steam distilled.

Myrrh may help the body to restore itself from the following:

appetite	asthma	athlete's foot
bronchitis	Candida	cholesterol (lower)
coughs	diarrhea	digestion
dysentery	eczema	flatulence
flu	fungal infections	gingivitis
grief/rejection (eases)	gum infections	hemorrhoids
immune system	menstrual issues	mouth ulcer
prostate gland (decongest)		ringworm
skin conditions	sore throats	stretch marks
thyroid issues	thrush	toothaches (relieve)
ulcers	wounds	wrinkles

**Myrrh Blends With:** clove, cypress, elemi, frankincense, galbanum, geranium, lavender, lemongrass, patchouli, sandalwood and all spice oils.

**Body, Mind and Spirit Connections:** Myrrh is gentle and calming to the nervous system. It is a powerful essential oil to calm an overactive mind, reduce worry and mental distractions. It facilitates clarity and focus. Myrrh is antibacterial, antifungal and anti-inflammatory. It has traditionally been used for mouth, gum, throat infections, as well as candida albicans. Myrrh is often blended with peppermint in toothpaste preparations. It has a tonifying effect and is effective for diarrhea. Myrrh is widely acclaimed to prevent wrinkles and premature aging. It soothes rough, cracked and chapped skin.

Myrrh is similar to frankincense. It promotes a feeling of stillness and peace. It relieves grief and eases sorrow. It helps a person mend a broken heart, loss and rejection. Myrrh helps one to let go, forgive and move forward in their life. In ancient teachings, myrrh was used to unite the spiritual with the physical. Applying myrrh on the top of the head (crown chakra) is said to strengthen the connection among all energy centers (chakras).



**Contraindications and Precautions:** Avoid using myrrh when pregnant. After delivery, myrrh is a wonderful wound healer (vulnerary).

#### Essential Oil Recipes:

*Especially for YOU:*

2 drops Roman chamomile  
2 drops clary sage  
2 drops of myrrh  
3 drops rosemary  
8 drops geranium  
2 oz. of your favorite carrier oil

Use on your skin at night before bed. Sweet dreams.

*Toothache Oil:*

1/8 oz carrier oil  
6 drops tea tree oil  
4 drops chamomile  
2 drops myrrh  
2 drops peppermint

Place the carrier oil in a clean container and add the therapeutic grade essential oils. Gently turn the closed contain upside down several times or roll it between your hands to blend. Apply 1 drop on the tooth and gum as needed.

*Stretch like a cat:*

4 drops of cedar wood  
1 drop myrrh

3 drops of sandalwood

1 oz. of your favorite carrier oil

Apply to your skin before exercises. It will help warm your skin quickly.

**Disclaimer:** These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. Products and/or techniques mentioned are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information provided is for educational purposes only and is not intended as diagnosis, treatment, or prescription for any disease. The decision to use, or not use, any of this information is the sole responsibility of the reader.

#### Resources:

- *Reference Guide for Essential Oils* by Connie Higley
- *The Fragrant Heavens* by Valerie Ann Worwood
- *The Fragrant Mind* by Valerie Ann Worwood
- *The Aromatherapy Bible* by Gill Farrer-Halls
- *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Essential Oils* by Julia Lawless
- *Aromatherapy Blends and remedies* by Franzesca Watson
- *An A-Z Aromatherapy* by Patricia Davis
- *Aromatherapy Essential Oils for Vibrant Health and Beauty* by Roberta Wilson
- *Aromatherapy for Healing the Spirit* by Gabriel Mojay
- *Aromatherapy for Health Professionals* by Shirley and Len Price
- *The Encyclopedia of Aromatherapy* by Chrissie Wildwood
- *Seasons of Aromatherapy* by Judith Fitzsimmons and Paula M. Bousquet
- *Aromatherapy- a Lifetime Guide to Healing With Essential Oils* by Valerie Gennari Cooksley
- *Aromatherapy for Vibrant Health & Beauty* by Roberta Wilson

**Disclaimer:** These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. Products and/or techniques mentioned are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information provided is or educational purposes only and is not intended as diagnosis, treatment, or prescription for any disease. The decision to use, or not use, any of this information is the sole responsibility of the reader.

**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.