

# Essential Oil of the Month: Clove

-By. Kathy Padecky, Aromatherapist, HHP

## Clove

**Botanical Name:** *Eugenia caryophyllata* or *Syzygium aromaticum*.

**Why I love this essential oil:** My first experience with of the aroma of clove was my family Easter Sunday dinners. As a child my mom let me pierce the ham with cloves (along with cherries and pineapple) on a spiral ham. Every time I smell clove it reminds me of childhood Sunday dinners. Today, I am a vegetarian and clove reminds me of happy times in the kitchen with my mom. Clove is a MUST in any aromatherapy first aid kit. In this newsletter you will read about its many healing qualities.

**Scent and aroma:** Its aroma is sweet and spicy with a pleasant fragrance. Clove essential oil is warm and stimulating. Clove's scent is recognized by many cultures as an aphrodisiac.

**Native to and history:** The clove tree is an evergreen with bright green leaves. Clove has been cultivated as a spice for over 2000 years. The clove tree grows to 30 feet tall. Clove is native to Madagascar, the Moluccas, the Antilles, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Indonesia and Brazil. At the beginning of the rainy season the clove buds appear. They are initially pink and they turn red when dried.



The flowers are picked before they bud. The island of Zanzibar promotes the ideal sea level growing conditions. Clove buds are dried on palm-leaf mats. They are crushed before distillation to facilitate the extraction of the essential oil.

In parts of Central America, clove is believed to dispel disease. During the sixteenth century, Dutch conquerors maliciously destroyed the clove trees on the Spice Island of Penang. After the conquest, the islanders were plagued with illnesses. Until the destruction of the clove trees, the habitants were free of diseases and epidemics.

Clove oil is a powerful antibacterial, antiseptic essential oil used to sterilize surgical instruments.

During Medieval times, doctors would breathe through clove-filled leather beaks to ward off the plague. As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, Clove was part of the original thieves' vinegar formula. The spice merchants used their formula to steal from victims of the plague to strengthen their immunity.

Many dental preparations especially toothpaste contains clove oil. It is a powerful germ fighter and antifungal. It is ideal for such conditions as the flu, cold, bronchitis and athlete's feet. If you experience pain, its heating relieves muscular and arthritic discomfort.

Traditionally, oranges were studded with cloves to repel insects.

**Chemistry:** Clove's main chemical constituent is eugenol which is a phenol alcohol. Phenols are very aromatic and are the strongest antiseptics in aromatherapy use. Traditionally, they were used as a disinfectant. When you feel your immune system is stressed or you feel you are



coming down with a cold or flu, my choice is to select an essential oil that contains phenol like clove, thyme or oregano. However, you must exercise caution since it is irritating to the skin. That is the reason why clove must be diluted when applied to the skin. It numbs the area of the mouth it is applied on. It relieves the pain of toothaches. It is useful for relieving teething pain and it stops infections. Dr. Paul Sherman and evolutionary biologist at Cornell University in New York studied 4,164 traditional recipes from 36 countries and found the hotter the climate, the spicier the food and the faster the food turns bad. In cooler climates the recipes lean toward less antiseptic flavoring, such as celery and caraway seeds. He tested 43 spices including clove which killed 30 different types of bacteria.

In other study, the essential oil of clove along with bay, cinnamon and thyme destroyed the common sources of food poisoning: E. coli, Salmonella, Staphylococcus and Listeria. Kansas State University found that by adding clove to tainted hamburgers, almost completely destroyed E. coli bacteria.

Clove oil is used in many dental preparations particularly toothpaste, soaps, toiletries, cosmetics and perfumes.

**Part of the plant:** The clove bud distills the finest quality essential oil. It is a pale yellow liquid. Lower grade oils distill the leaf or the stem. There is very little sweet fragrance to these oils. The clove leaf distills a dark amber liquid with a harsh dry odor. The reddish-brown dried clove bud yields an ample amount of essential oil.

**Clove may help the body to recover from the following:**

aching joints	athlete's feet	asthma
anxiety	bruises	candida
colds	indigestion	infections
insect repellent	nausea	parasites
relieves tension	restores appetite	sprains
rheumatism		

**Essential Oil Recipes:**

**Remove the desire to smoke**

1 drop of clove  
Your favorite vegetable oil  
Mix a drop of vegetable oil and 1 drop of clove on the back of your tongue. It has been reported to remove the desire to smoke. Also, people have reported to chew on dried **clove** buds to loose their desire to smoke.

**Toothache or thrush (mouth)**

Mix 1 drop of **clove** oil and couple of drops of vegetable oil (i.e. coconut, grapeseed or olive oil).  
Swab the inside of your mouth with clove essential oil. It will ward off a painful toothache or thrush.

Also, a plug of cotton wool soaked in clove oil can be inserted into a cavity to temporarily relieve the pain.

**Household deodorizer**

3 drops bergamot oil  
3 drops clove oil  
2 oz. spring water

Use a glass atomizer and combine the bergamot and **clove** drops in 2 oz. of spring water. It is used as a room spray that kills germs and keeps insects at bay. Shake well before each use.

**Disinfectant mouthwash**

1 drop **clove** oil  
Dilute ONE drop of **clove** in a glass of water. Drink slowly to disinfect the mouth and freshen the breath.

**Teething**

2-3 drops **clove**  
1/2 tsp. of vegetable oil  
Apply diluted to the gums using a cotton swab. Use 2-3 drops in 1/2 tsp. of vegetable oil. It produces a cold analgesic effect that is also effective for a tooth ache.

**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.

**About the Author:** Kathy Padecky is an Aromatherapist and a Holistic Health Practitioners (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.