

Essential Oil of the Month: Spruce

-By. Kathy Padecky, Aromatherapist, HHP

Spruce

Botanical Name: Spruce or Black Spruce, *Picea mariana*.

Why I love this essential oil: I love its woody scent. I feel transported into a forest, my lungs feel alive and I am oxygenated. The scent of spruce reminds me of happy Christmas memories. Spruce is my escape into nature while in the city.

Scent and aroma: Spruce's scent is fresh, clean and earthy, with balsamic undertones.

Native to and history: is Canada's best kept essential oil secret. It is grown in Canada mainly for the paper industry. It is found in wet, marshy areas. Its reddish-brown trunk grows from twelve to eighteen inches in diameter to a height of thirty-five feet. Its pyramid shape has blue-green leaves with wispy branches. It is a hearty evergreen in Canada, the north region of the United States, Alaska, Labrador and Newfoundland.

Native Americans used the resin as a chewing gum. They used the resin as caulking and glue. They ate the young inner shoots for food. The spruce strips made watertight baskets for food storage, cooking and sleeping mats.



In the seventeenth century, Captain Cook brewed spruce tea to ward off scurvy. In 1849, gold miners ate spruce to prevent scurvy. Spruce was used in leather tanning. Spruce is a soft lumber. It is used in making stringed instruments. Spruce resin was used to hold false teeth in place.

Chemistry: Spruce essential oil is 45-55% monoterpenes. They penetrate the skin very easily. Monoterpenes absorb quickly into the bloodstream and have the quickest

physiological effect to the body. They boost the immune system by increasing white blood cell activity. Monoterpenes are volatile and have a small molecule making them highly effective for respiratory issues. Spruce oil is cortisone-like and effective for hyperthyroidism. Spruce essential oil is 30-37% esters. Esters are anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory and sedative. Esters are adaptogenic meaning they assist the body return to homeostasis. Spruce oil has a small percentage of sesquiterpenes. They provide a calming effect on the body. Sesquiterpenes are anti-cancerous.



Part of the plant:

The needles are harvested between January through April producing the highest essential oil yield. A twenty-five year old tree produces twice as much essential oil than a forty-five old tree. This steamed distilled essential oil is clear to pale yellow.

Spruce may help the body recover from the following:

adrenal exhaustion	anxiety	arthritis
asthma	athlete's feet	backaches
bronchial decongestant	bursitis	carpal tunnel
cellulite	chronic fatigue	colds
dermatitis	eczema	headaches
hormone balancer	hyperthyroidism	psoriasis
respiratory issues	rheumatism	sciatica
stomach aches	stress	tuberculosis

Essential Oil Recipes:

Stress Less Body Lotion blend

8 drops of lavender
4 drops geranium
2 drops clary sage
2 drops spruce
2 oz. of your favorite unscented body lotion

Mix the oils in the lotion. You may substitute a vegetable (almond, jojoba, grapeseed) oil to make a massage blend. It will help reduce stress and keep you relaxed, yet alert.

Ant Rid

1 sponge, cut into small pieces
Spruce essential oil

Sprinkle a few drop of spruce on small sponge pieces. Place a piece of sponge in each corner of your cupboards. The scent of spruce interferes with their scent trails. Refresh the sponge with drops of spruce every week.

Love those adrenal glands

Your favorite unscented lotion, cream, gel or vegetable oil base
3 drops of spruce

Mix the above ingredients in the palm of your hand. Apply to your kidney area, (above your waistline) to revive depleted or exhausted adrenals.

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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.



**The practitioners and staff at the IPSB Massage Therapy Center
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