

Essential Oil of the Month: Lemongrass

-By. Kathy Padecky, Aromatherapist, HHP

Lemongrass

Botanical Name: *Cymbopogon flexuosus*. Cymbo means cup or cup-like. Pogon means bearded racemes. A raceme is a way of describing flowers in botany, in Lemongrass the flowers are permanent, unbranched, and on a short stalk. Lemongrass is in the Gramineae or Grass Family of plants. *Cymbopogon* is the lemongrass family of plants including *citratatus*. *Flexuosus* means full of bends or curves.

Why I love this essential oil: I love the aromatic scent of Lemongrass. It brings me back to Thailand with memories of the wonderful people and cuisine. Authentic Thai food is one of my favorite foods. Many of the Thai dishes are flavored with Lemongrass. Lemongrass is soothing and invigorating. When my feet are tired after a day of standing and teaching, I put a drop of lemongrass in a dab of Young Living's Genesis Hand and Body Lotion © and massage my feet. This soothes my tired achy feet. My feet smell wonderful and they soon feel great. The scent of lemongrass puts a smile on my face. If you love Thai food, you will love using lemongrass essential oil.

Scent and aroma: Strong herbal undertones, lemon scented

Native to and history: This plant is native to Africa, Guatemala, India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Lemongrass has a unique taste and it is traditionally found in Thailand dishes and soups. Essential oil derived from Lemongrass has long been used in the Thai and East Indian culture. Lemongrass has been used in India to cure fevers and infectious diseases. It was used as a paste to combat ringworm. In the Caribbean, lemongrass is used as a fever reducing herb and for congestion. It is used as a poultice to ease the pain of arthritis. It is a powerful antiseptic and bactericide.

Chemistry: Its main chemical component is aldehydes, 55 to 80%, with smaller amounts of alcohols, sesquiterpenols,

esters, monoterpenes, with minor amounts of sesquiterpenes, oxides and ketones. This sounds overwhelming and what it means is the aldehydes are antimicrobial, antiviral, anti-bacterial, and sedative. Alcohols are antimicrobial and support the immune system. Sesquiterpenols are sedative, anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic. Esters are sedative, antispasmodic, adaptogenic and anti-inflammatory. Monoterpenes are immune stimulating and antiseptic. Sesquiterpenes are anti-inflammatory and calming. Oxides are a stimulant, antispasmodic and expectorant. Ketones are skin healing, mucolytic and antimicrobial.

Part of the plant: Dried leaves are used to keep people focused and alert. This essential oil is derived from an aromatic grass that grows 5 feet tall. It has narrow leaf



blades and branches into stalks of flowers. The color is a golden-yellow with a sweet, pungent aroma. Lemongrass is steam distilled from the leaves and partially dried grass. When the oil is diffused into the air, it deodorizes and freshens a room. The room soon has a beautiful lemony aroma.

Lemongrass may help the body heal itself from the following: Acne, Athlete's feet, Balances excessive perspiration, Boils, Bruises, Colitis, Cystitis, Digestive issues, Edema, Headaches, Improve eyesight, Inability to concentrate, Intestinal infections, Ligament repair, Lymphatic cleanser, Nervous exhaustion, Stimulates appetite, Supports the spleen and thymus gland as an immune stimulant, Tones and repairs tendon and ligament issues (remarkable)

Body, Mind, Spirit Connection: Lemongrass is a tonic and strengthener to the immune system and the Central Nervous system. It is a nervine to the Parasympathetic Nervous System. It helps cleanse and purify the physical,



emotional and spiritual aspects of the body. It improves circulation and it helps the body to heal varicose veins.

Lemongrass works on a subtle level with the emotional body. "It clears regrets or shame, encouraging forgiveness of those who has dishonored and discredited us.

Lemongrass illuminates what has been with the statement 'forgive

and forget'. It reminds us who we are and that all our life experiences make us whole." © Valerie Ann Worwood. I find that Lemongrass brings calmness to the soul and it uplifts our whole persona.

Like all lemon-scented oils, lemongrass is an excellent choice as a natural insect repellent. It is used to protect animals from fleas and ticks. It attacks fungus and retards mold growth. Researchers have found it to be more effective against staph infection than penicillin or streptomycin.

Lemongrass has astringent qualities. This is why it is found in cosmetics, lotions, shampoos and other body products.

Contraindications and Precautions: Lemongrass must be diluted with a carrier oil, gel or lotion. It is a stimulant and should be avoided during pregnancy. It is odoriferous and should be used in lower concentrations. As with all essential oils, please keep away from your eyes. Avoid lemongrass if you are prone to allergies or have sensitive skin. Lemongrass is photosensitive. Avoid applying lemongrass to skin exposed to direct sunlight or ultraviolet rays.

Lemongrass Blends with: Basil, bergamot, cardamom, cedarwood, Roman chamomile, cinnamon, clove, eucalyptus, frankincense, geranium, ginger, hyssop, lavender, Melaleuca (Tea Tree), myrrh, nutmeg, orange, palmarosa, patchouli, petitgrain, rosemary, spikenard, thyme, vetiver and yarrow

Lemongrass Essential Oil Recipes:

Lemongrass Sea Salt inhaler

Use an empty amber essential oil bottle (preferably lemongrass). Fill the bottle with sea salt. Add 1 or 2 drops of lemongrass oil. Replace the plastic reducer to prevent accidental spillage. This inhaler is sedating to the nervous system. It can soothe a headache and it stimulates the thyroid gland.

Cleaning your kitchen cutting board

1 drop Kitchen soap

1 drop of lemongrass essential oil

Add the lemongrass to your soap and scrub to disinfect your cutting board.

Respiratory Blend

4 drops of lemongrass essential oil

4 drops of Eucalyptus radiata essential oil

3 drops of sandalwood essential oil

Mix the oils into a 2 oz. bottle of your favorite carrier oil.

Massage into the chest and back. Cover the area with a warm shirt.

Cellulite massage blend

7 drops of grapefruit essential oil

2 drops of lemongrass essential oil

4 drops of cypress essential oil

3 drops of cedarwood essential oil

2 drops of rosewood essential oil

Add to 1 oz. jojoba carrier oil. Massage to the affected area.

Athlete's foot powder

3 Tablespoons cornstarch

10 drops of lavender essential oil

3 drops of lemongrass essential oil

10 drops of tea tree oil essential oil

Put the cornstarch into a glass jar, add the oils and shake.

Cover the jar with a tight-fitting lid and allow the oils to permeate the cornstarch for 24 hours before using. Apply the powder daily on the affected areas. It is helpful to sprinkle the powder inside shoes to help prevent re-infection and to deodorize the footwear.

Oily Skin facial toner

3 drops of lemongrass essential oil

3 drops of bergamot essential oil

3 drops of lavender essential oil

3 drops of juniper essential oil

3 drops of lemon essential oil

Mix the oils with 4 oz. of distilled water. Spray on your hand and rub your face avoiding the eyes.

Swollen feet

3 drops of tangerine essential oil
2 drops of cypress essential oil
1 drop of lemongrass essential oil
1 oz. unscented lotion (suggested brand Zen Organics © or Santa Barbara Lotion ©)

Combine the oils in the unscented lotion. Gently apply the mixture to lower leg, calf muscles, ankles and feet. Massage or stroke the area in an upward direction toward the heart.

Balancing the emotions

4 drops of orange essential oil
4 drops of lemongrass essential oil
2 drops of basil essential oil
1 oz. of your favorite carrier oil

Combine the oils with your favorite carrier oil in a glass amber bottle. Shake before using. This blend is purifying and it stimulates awareness. It refreshes the mind and helps with mental fatigue and loss of concentration.

Aromatherapy Glossary:

Mucolytic: Breaks down catarrh (accumulated mucous of the mucous membrane)

Disclaimer: This information is for educational purposes only. It is not provided to diagnose, prescribe or treat any condition of the body. This information is no substitute for medical counseling with a qualified health care professional.

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.