

HOW TO CHOOSE *Essential Oils*

Because there is no regulating agency for the purity or quality of essential oils, there is no telling what you may be getting in your bottles unless you know what to look for and the key questions to ask.

Step One **Decide what your needs are**

- ◆ Will you use them for baking/cooking? Home fragrance? DIY beauty and healthcare products? Health supplements?
- ◆ “Adulterated” is a word you need to know when it comes to essential oils. Just think of it as meaning “tainted” or “corrupted” because that would be what you are getting.
- ◆ Why are they so expensive? Quantity of plant material to produce the essential oil (105 lbs of rose petals to produce 5 mL EO - 10,000 lbs petals to make 1 lb. of EO) Cheaper = synthetic knock-off with similar chemical constituents (rose-geranium heavily diluted) - Fragrance oil in the perfume industry

Step Two **Understand the Grades of Oils**

- ◆ 98% of essential oils produced today are food- or perfume-grade (used in flavorings or cosmetics) - heavily adulterated with additives or solvents to achieve a standardized scent (unchanging scent) - synthetic, chemically-engineered oils to standardize scent

| NAME | % ESSENTIAL OIL | BLENDED WITH | PACKAGING |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Eau de cologne | 2% to 5% pure | Alcohol and water | Spray/Rollerball |
| Eau de toilette | 4% to 15% pure | Alcohol and water | Spray bottle |
| Eau de parfum/ Perfume | 10% to 20% pure | Alcohol and water | Spray bottle |
| Perfume | 15% to 40% pure | Alcohol | Bottle with stopper |

- ◆ Food-grade - GRAS/expiration date/check with a doctor before internal consumption
- ◆ Perfume-grade EOs - 90% of what is sold as “pure” essential oils in the US is fragrance grade and diluted - could potentially adversely-affect your health depending on the solvents or additives used

Step Three **Know your experts**

- ◆ Dr. Robert Pappas - renowned chemist and EO expert
- ◆ Robert Tisserand

Step Four **Therapeutic Grade Essential Oils High-Quality Essential Oils**

- ◆ No universal standard, but therapeutic refers to the purity and efficacy of the EO constituents and health benefits
- ◆ “An oil can be pure...but still be low quality.” - Dr. Pappas
- ◆ Detailed growing, harvesting, and distilling practices
- ◆ Quality control and Testing procedures



Step Five Do Your Company Research

- ◆ Does the company source their plants from indigenous regions?
- ◆ Are the plants harvested at peak times for highest quality product?
- ◆ Do they use pesticides on their plants or claim to be organic?
- ◆ Do they use both gas chromatography and mass spectrometry testing for quality? (Both are needed to ensure correct compounds are present and to validate absence of impurities/pesticides)
- ◆ Do they test for microbial properties, use Fourier transform infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) to ensure potency and consistency of each batch, or do chirality testing to ensure no synthetic elements are present?
- ◆ Is there a process of organoleptic testing, where expert distillers use their senses as a first-line of quality testing?
- ◆ Do they work with the people of the countries of plant origin to develop growing partnerships?
- ◆ Are their business practices and the leaders of their company trustworthy?
- ◆ **Essential Oil Research** - Research the oil that you are interested in to see if they list the label information below, as well as the primary constituents, where the plant material is harvested, and how the oils are extracted (cold-pressed, steam distilled, solvent extraction, or CO2 extraction). Use [Smart Mom's Guide to Essential Oils](#) to see if the information matches up with our carefully researched information about high-quality oils and their origins and production.

Step Six Check the label

- ◆ Scientific name of plant(s)
- ◆ Carrier oil clearly identified
- ◆ Amber/Cobalt/Dark glass bottle fitted with orifice reducer (no dropper tops until you buy)
- ◆ Varying price per different oils (some oils require far more work to extract than others)
- ◆ Expiration date - approved for use in cooking/indication of production date

Step Seven Check for Adulteration (if you already have some essential oils)

- ◆ Paper Test - drop on paper and let evaporate for an hour; should be completely evaporated and not leave any residue; adulterated oils leave a ring behind; works for most except myrrh and patchouli, and rare absolutes like rose, jasmine, and vanilla

Step Eight Do your own sniff test

- ◆ Smell - Overbearing or crystal clean and balanced?
- ◆ Feel - oily or leave a residue? Absorb quickly and completely leaving only a clean scent?
- ◆ See - Is the oil cloudy or separated? Does the color look off?
- ◆ Drugstore bottle vs. respected company bottle - sniff test
- ◆ One or two drops of high quality vs. several drops of watered down version