

Essential Oils

Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Abortifacient	Inducing an abortion.
Adaptogenic	Having a positive general effect on the body.
Alcohols	Group of hydrocarbon compounds found in volatile oils.
Aldehydes	Class of organic compounds between alcohols and acids.
Allopathic	System which uses drugs with effects opposing the symptoms produced by the disease.
Amenorrhoea	Absence of menstruation outside pregnancy in pre-menopausal women.
Analgesic	Relieving pain.
Anaphrodisiac	Decreasing sexual desire.
Anthelmintic	Expelling intestinal worms.
Anticariuous	Preventing decay of teeth.
Anticonvulsive	Preventing convulsions.
Antidepressive	Alleviating depression.
Antiphlogistic	Reducing inflammation.
Antiseptic	Inhibiting the growth of bacteria.
Antispasmodic	Relieves muscle spasm, especially of smooth muscles.
Antisudorific	Reduces perspiration.
Antiureal	Preventing the formation of excess urea.
Antithermic	Cooling; antipyretic.
Antitoxic	Counteracting poisons.
Antitussive	Relieving or preventing coughing.
Anxiolytic	Relieving anxiety and tension.
Aperient	Mildly laxative.
Aperitive	Stimulating the appetite.
Aphrodisiac	Increasing sexual desire.
Aromatic	Organic chemical compound derived from benzene; also called aromatic compound.
Astringent	Causing constriction of tissues locally.
Bacteriostatic	Inhibits growth of bacteria.
Bechic	Reduces or relieves coughing.
Balneotherapy	Treatment by medicinal baths.
Bitters	Botanical drugs with bitter taste used to stimulate the digestive tract.
Calmative	Mildly sedative.
Cardiotonic	Having a tonic effect on the heart.
Carminative	Easing colic and flatulence.
Cathartic	Strongly laxative.
Cephalic	Mental stimulants, especially for poor concentration, etc.
Chemotype	Visually identical plants with significantly different chemical components, resulting in different therapeutic properties; abbreviated to ct.
Cholagogic	Stimulating the flow of bile into the intestine.



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Choleretic	Increasing the production of bile.
Cicatrisant	Promoting healing and the formation of scar tissue.
Coumarin	A chemical compound with a high boiling point within the lactones found mainly in expressed oils.
Cultivar	Cultivated variety: a plant produced by horticulture or agriculture not normally occurring naturally; labelled by adding a 'name' to the species as in <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> 'Maillette'.
Cytophylactic	Stimulating the production of new cells.
Decongestant	Helps diminish blockage, e.g. catarrhal, lymphatic, etc.
Deodorant	Preventing odour.
Depurative	Cleansing, particularly in relation to purifying the blood.
Diaphoretic	Promoting sweating.
Digestive	Aiding the digestion.
Diuretic	Stimulating the secretion of urine.
Dysmenorrhoea	Painful or difficult menstruation.
Dyspepsia	Disturbed digestion.
Emmenagogic	Inducing menstruation.
Erethism	Abnormal irritability or sensitivity.
Essential oil	Plant volatile oil obtained by distillation.
Eubiotic	Brings about conditions favourable to life and healing.
Expectorant	Helps removal of phlegm and catarrh.
Fixed oil	Non-volatile oil.
Forma	Lowest botanical rank in general use, denoting trivial differences within species.
Galatogogic	Increases the secretion of breast-milk; lactogenic.
Genus	Important botanical classification of related but distinct species given a common name.
Hallucinogenic	Agent affecting any or all the senses producing a wide range of distorted perceptions and reactions.
Haemostatic	Stops bleeding.
Herb	Non-woody soft leafy plant; plant used in medicine and cooking.
Hepatic	Tonic to the liver.
Homeopathy	System of medicine using tiny amounts of drugs which would produce in a healthy body symptoms similar to those of the disease.
Hybrid	Natural or man made plant produced by fertilisation of one species by another, indicated by x as in <i>Lavandula x intermedia</i> .
Hypertensive	Raises blood pressure.
Hypotensive	Lowers blood pressure.
Laxative	Loosening the bowel contents, promoting evacuation.
Lipid	A fat or fat like substance insoluble in water and soluble in fat solvents.
Lipolytic	Breaks down fat.
Maceration	The extraction of substance from plants by steeping in a fixed oil.
Menorrhagia	Excessive periods.
Metrorrhagia	Uterine haemorrhage occurring outside menstrual periods.
Narcotic	Inducing insensibility (sleep) and relieving pain in small doses, toxic in high doses.
Nervine	A nerve tonic.



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Oestrogenic	Stimulating the action of female hormones.
Officinalis	Used in medicine; recognised in the pharmacopoeia.
Organic	Something that contains carbon, that is or has once
Parturient	Aids childbirth.
Percutaneous	Applied through the skin.
Pharmacokinetics	Study of absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination of drugs.
Photosensitisation	Abnormally increased sensitivity of the skin to ultraviolet radiation or natural sunlight; can follow ingestion or contact with various substances.
Phytotherapy	Treatment of disease by the use of plants and plant extracts.
Polymenorrhea	Unusually short menstrual cycles.
Probiotic	Favouring the beneficial bacteria in the body, while inhibiting harmful microbes; literally 'for life' as distinct from antibiotic, 'against' life.
Prophylactic	Preventing disease.
Psychopharmaceutical	Pertains to drugs affecting the mind and mood.
Psychotropic	Of a drug, affecting the brain and influencing behaviour.
Purgative	Strongly laxative.
Rhizome	Underground stem bearing roots, scales and nodes.
Rubefacient	Stimulates circulation locally. Has a warming effect locally.
Sedative	Calming, including sleep.
Spasmolytic	Relieving convulsions, spasmodic pains and cramp.
Splenetic	Strengthening or tonifying the spleen.
Stimulant	Increasing activity and wakefulness.
Stomachic	Tonifies the stomach.
Styptic	Arrests bleeding.
Subspecies	Subdivision of a species, often denoting a geographic variation; structure or colour are peculiar to subspecies and are more definite than characteristics identifying varieties; subspecies can interbreed; abbreviated to subsp.
Sudorific	Promoting perspiration.
Synergy	Increased effect of two or more medicinal substances working together.
Taxonomy	Scientific classification of living things.
Thymoleptic	Antiseptic.
Tonic	Invigorating - either locally or generally.
Trichome	Hair like structure on the epidermis of a plant.
Uterotonic	Giving tone to the uterus.
Variety	Indicates a botanical rank between subspecies and forma; abbreviated to var. as in <i>Citrus aurantium</i> var. <i>amara</i>
Vasoconstrictor	Causing constriction of blood vessels, locally or generally.
Vermifuge	Eliminating intestinal worm.
Vulnerary	Helps healing of wounds (applied externally).

