



What are **ESSENTIAL OILS?**

ESSENTIAL OILS ARE NATURAL AROMATIC COMPOUNDS FOUND IN THE SEEDS, BARK, stems, roots, flowers and other parts of plants. They can be both beautifully and powerfully fragrant. If you have ever enjoyed the gift of a rose, a walk by a field of lavender, or the smell of freshly cut mint, you have experienced the aromatic qualities of essential oils. Essential oils can lift the mood, calm the senses and elicit powerful emotional responses. Yet the use of essential oils goes well beyond their fragrant appeal.

Essential oils have been used throughout history in many cultures for their medicinal and therapeutic benefits. Modern trends towards more holistic approaches to self care and growing scientific validation of alternative health practices are driving a rediscovery of the profound health benefits of essential oils. Many have powerful cleansing properties and are naturally antimicrobial. Their unique chemical structure allows them to pass directly through the skin for immediate systemic response to topical application. And certain oils may be used as dietary aids to promote vitality and well-being.

Extraction Methods

Therapeutic-grade essential oils are most often extracted via a low-heat steam distillation process in which steam is circulated under pressure through plant material liberating the essential oils into the steam. As the steam mixture cools, the water and oils are separated and the oil is collected in its pure form. To ensure the highest quality oil extract of correct chemical composition, temperature and pressure must be monitored very closely. Too little heat and pressure will not release valuable oil, while too much can fracture an extract's delicate chemical composition and alter its potency.

Equally important to the carefully controlled extraction process, the meticulous selection of correct plant species and plant parts, harvested at the perfect moment when their essential oil compounds are most concentrated, is also required for a quality therapeutic-grade essential oil extract. This complex process is as much an art form as it is a science and requires experienced growers and distillers working together to ensure a superior product.

