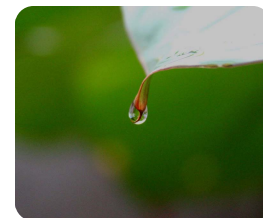


Essential Oils

Then & Now Newsletter

- By Joanna Barrett, RN, CNHP



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YLANG YLANG - flower of flowers

I believe in celebrating life whenever I can and in the cold of winter I look forward to my birthday in January and Valentine's Day in February. My family knows me to even celebrate, for example, "happy day before Thanksgiving Eve," or "I want to be the first to wish you a happy 8 days before your anniversary." I don't know the day of the month you read this article but let me be the first to wish you a happy that many days before (or after) Valentine's Day.

During the Medieval times when doctors practiced bloodletting to cure their patients, those who practiced herb lore (generally women) were regarded warily and thought to be witches. Though many of the herb concoctions did cure ailments, perhaps almost as many were used superstitiously to ward off evil and for "love potions." Apple blossoms, aster, bay leaves, bittersweet, cinnamon, cloves, columbine, crocus, coriander, maiden fern, marjoram, jasmine, laurel, and ylang ylang were some of the plants used to make those potions. Many of these spices and oils are not native to Europe and were probably brought back by the crusaders or by spice traders. At the turn of the century, ylang ylang was used to treat malaria and other tropical fevers. In Indonesia, native ylang ylang petals were strewn upon the bed on wedding nights. It is used in men's fragrances today. Among other things, Ylang Ylang is considered, an aphrodisiac. It is reputed to influence sexual energy, sex drive problems, impotence, frigidity and other sexual dysfunctions.

Aromatically, unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on whether you are the wearer or inhaler, it can't make someone love you who does not want to love you. Ylang Ylang does however seem to enhance relationships and self-esteem, bringing back feelings of self-love, joy and peace. Yelling, depression, stress, insomnia, irritability, illness, and tears of frustration can be expressions of anger. Use Ylang Ylang. By combating shyness and fear, it helps you reach out and relate to others with warmth, friendliness and optimism. If not used in moderation, due to its strong scent, it can cause headaches or nausea.

Historically, it has been used for skin treatments, to sooth insect bites, in hair preparations to promote thick shiny lustrous hair, to treat colic, constipation, indigestion, stomachaches, palpitations, tachycardia and rapid breathing. Medically, the French have used it for anxiety, hypertension, depression, diabetes, mental fatigue, hair loss, insomnia, rapid breathing, treating arrhythmias and strengthening the heart. Because of the euphoric and sedative effect ylang ylang has on the nervous system, it can help with anxiety, tension, shock, fear and panic. It is normalizing hormonally and helpful for women with PMS, menstrual cramps, and menopausal mood swings especially when mixed with clary sage. It is useful to ease muscle spasms and tense muscles and promotes healing of wounds and smooth clear skin.

Happy Anniversary to Steve and Suzanne. Everyone else, celebrate Valentine's Day!

LOVE,

Joanna