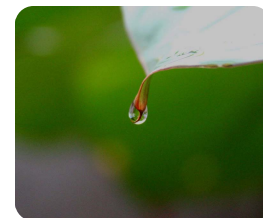


Essential Oils Then & Now Newsletter

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PATCHOULI

Patchouli is an oil people seem to like or else vehemently dislike. In researching for these articles I use the many aromatherapy books in my library and the web. Patchouli has been called “the scent of the 60’s hippies.” While pure aromatherapists extol the virtues of this oil, I was appalled by the many vulgar negative writings of acknowledged present-day haters of “Patchouli stinking hippies“. Admittedly, the first couple of times Mer came home from a massage smelling like Patchouli, I did not like it; but I like it now - this oil that lets the little child in us come out and play. What was 40 years ago is history and I’d like to think that the people of that era are the people seeking natural health, living naturally, simply, perhaps more vegetarian or vegan. I don’t believe they greatly comprise the criminal sect of our society. They don’t even wear tie-dye any more....

Ayurveda (Sanskrit for “science of life”) is the oldest form of medicine in the world, dating back 5000 years in India. In the Ayurvedic tradition, Patchouli and over 700 other herbs and aromatics, were an important part of healing. It has a long history of medicinal use in China, Japan, and Malaysia as a stimulant, antiseptic, febrifuge, in treating snake bites and the stings of poisonous insects and has always been used in the countries of it’s origin as a perfume. For centuries Asian people used Patchouli to fight infections, cool fevers, tone the skin and entire body, to treat colds, headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and halitosis. Its aroma and use as a moth repellent provided Victorian England customers the assurance that the imported shawls, silks, linens and clothing were genuinely oriental and protected from moths. In 1844 the first shipments of dried Patchouli leaves reached London where unscrupulous local merchants used the plant to scent their fraudulent versions of expensive “oriental” goods. It wasn’t long after that, because of the oil’s viscosity, it was and still is used as a fixitive in perfumes (blending with a less evaporative oil the fragrances of perfumes last longer.) The increased demand helped create an industry of Patchouli farming and distillation in tropical Asia that persists to today.

Since Patchouli is antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal, and cell re-generative, it’s good for skin conditions such as acne, some forms of eczema, cracked skin, some skin allergies, athlete’s foot, dandruff and seborrhea. It prevents wrinkles, chapped skin, and alleviates itching. It’s a decongestant and a digester of toxic material in the body. It is able to decrease the appetite and help with fluid retention and weight loss.

Patchouli is helpful for all types of depression, anxiety and stress-related conditions. It’s used aromatherapeutically (is that a word?) as a relaxant and comforter, clarifying thoughts, and allowing the discarding of jealousies, obsessions and insecurities. Patchouli brings peace of mind, and eases confusion and indecision. Its well known for its aphrodisiac properties - though, I suppose...

Only to those who like its fragrance!

Joanna