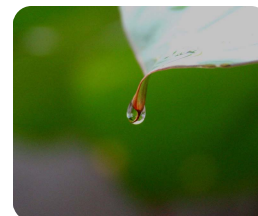


Essential Oils

Then & Now Newsletter

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February 2008

The Test of Constituents

Calamus (sweet-smelling cane) was one of the quality ingredients of the Hebrews holy anointing oil used to anoint the priests, the Tabernacle, the altars and all the implements needed for sacrifice and incense. Whatever touched anything thus consecrated had to be holy. Psalms 133 called the blend “the precious oil” (or ointment) upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. Not a small amount of oil. Calamus was mentioned in romantic Song of Solomon. God grieved that Israel bought Him no sweet cane with money (Isaiah 43:24) and Jeremiah says it comes from a far country.

Calamus, native to the Eastern countries, indigenous to the marshes of the mountains of India, was imported by Ancient Egypt, and by the Hebrews through traders. It wasn’t until the 1500’s that the root was cultivated in Vienna by the famous botanist Clusius who distributed it to other European botanists who planted it. It now grows throughout most European countries. The importance of this is this - Although Calamus was used historically by many peoples, many cultures, many centuries, for digestive complaints especially of the stomach; respiratory conditions such as coughs, bronchitis, sinusitis, and nasal congestion; a parasiticide and insecticide; an emmenagogue to stimulate and regulate menstrual flow; a mild tonic that restores and nourishes the entire body exerting a gentle strengthening effect; a promoter of cerebral circulation for all manner of head conditions including epilepsy, memory problems, shock, and helping to stimulate self-expression and mental sharpness; a restorer of the brain and nervous system, especially after a stroke; externally used to relieve burns; skin problems, eruptions, rheumatic pains, and neuralgia; called the closest thing to a sex stimulant nature has to offer; included in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 through 1916 and the National Formulary from the 1936 through 1950 (Calamus, also called sweet flag, is wide spread in Northern America and was used by native Americans for many of these conditions); Calamus has now fallen into disrepute. It is one of the oils British aroma therapists warn not to be used in any circumstances and as of 1968 not recommended for internal uses by the FDA. Why is that? Because the constituent B-asarone, found in Asian and European Calamus but not in American Calamus is thought to be carcinogenic. That’s like saying if you eat a large amount of baking powder and get sick, cake should be banned. You need all the individual ingredients to make a cake. Is it so hard to believe the Creator of nature put the “ingredients” of the plants and oils together to work synergistically for the good of man? Israel had to import Asian Calamus. Aaron and his sons were anointed with the Holy oil for generations.

How is it that the wisdom of man rejects a plant or oil that was so highly esteemed by God and so historically beneficial? Still exported by India, Nepal, and Canada. Can be found on e-bay.

Joanna