

Carrier Oils



This month in our continuing series of oils, we take a look at the carrier oil

Apricot kernel

With thanks to Purple Flame Aromatherapy, St John's Spinney, Gun Hill, New Arley, CV7 8IT

This deciduous fruit tree, which can grow up to 9 metres in height, produces white flowers tinged with red in February and March time. The apricot tree is said to have originated in China, though it has been extensively cultivated since Roman times. The plant was first introduced to the USA in the 18th century, where its fruit is very popular due to its sweet taste and high-fibre content. It is also grown commercially in southern France.

The oil, extracted from the kernel, is frequently used in skin preparations, as it is believed to have a softening action.

Sadly, it is not uncommon for apricot oil to be adulterated with almond oil, as the former is relatively expensive to produce. For this reason, therapists are encouraged to find a reputable supplier of oils.

Oil Name:

Apricot kernel

Origin:

China

Family:

Rosaceae

Made From:

Kernels

Latin Name:

Prunus armeniaca

Main therapeutic uses said to be:

It is believed that the various properties of apricot oil make it a good emollient, with both nourishing and protective qualities. It is suitable in particular for sensitive, dry and mature skins. It is also said to relieve the itching often caused by skin conditions such as eczema.

Main constituents:

Myristic acid; palmitic acid; stearic acid; arachidic acid; behenic acid; lignoceric acid;

palmitoleic acid; oleic acid; eicosenoic acid; linoleic acid; alpha linoleic acid.

Other comments:

- ✿ Method of extraction: cold pressed
- ✿ Traditionally, the crushed fruit has been used as a face mask to soften the skin
- ✿ Finely milled kernel shells are sometimes used in facial scrubs
- ✿ The oil is readily absorbed by the skin and its light texture makes it an ideal medium for facial massage

- ✿ The oil is light to dark yellow in colour, and can have a strong odour if it has not been refined
- ✿ "Prunus" is Latin for plum tree
- ✿ Apricot kernel has been used in laxative preparations
- ✿ Traditional Chinese medicine has used apricot kernels for treating tumours and as an anti-asthmatic.