

Carrier Oils



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

Borage Oil

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

Also known as the Starflower, Borage originated in the Middle East, but is now cultivated worldwide. The plant grows to approximately 60cm in height, with hairy stems and pretty sky blue, star-shaped flowers (hence its alternative name).

In the Middle Ages, an ability to cheer the melancholic was recorded, whilst poultices were used topically to treat inflammation and swellings. Indeed, one of the main reasons Borage Oil has grown in popularity in recent years is because it contains twice as much gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) as Evening Primrose Oil. The body converts GLA into prostaglandins, which have anti-inflammatory properties, and are particularly useful in the treatment of hormone related conditions such as tender breasts, menstrual cramps, and water retention.

Oil Name:

Borage Oil

Origin:

Middle East

Family:

Boraginaceae

Made From:

Seeds

Latin Name:

Borago officinalis

Main therapeutic uses:

Borage Oil has been shown to improve skin function in the elderly in particular. Not surprisingly, it is thus found in many anti-aging products. Clinical trials strongly indicate that the plant is also successful in the treatment of topical eczema and dermatitis. Traditionally, the leaves and seeds were used to promote milk supply in nursing mothers, and herbalists still consider the seeds of this plant to be beneficial to lactating women.

Main constituents:

Linoleic acid; gamma-linolenic acid (GLA); glycerides of oleic acid; palmitic acid; stearic acid.

Other comments:

- ✿ The oil used for massage is extracted from the seeds which are cold pressed
- ✿ Borage is also referred to as Bee Bread or Bee Plant, as its flowers are rich in nectar and thus attract honey bees

- ✿ *Borago* may be from the Latin *burra*, meaning a hairy garment
- ✿ The young leaves of this plant are eaten in salads, producing a taste similar to cucumber. The flowers can be candied (impregnated or encrusted in sugar).
- ✿ The Health Supplements Information Service (www.hsis.org) recommend that epileptics should check with their Doctor before taking supplements containing Borage.