

Carrier Oils



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

Sesame

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

Sesame originates from the East Indies, but is now grown in countries throughout the world, including China, India, Africa and South America. The plant grows anywhere between 2 to 8 feet in height, and its white flowers resemble those of the foxglove, with tinges of blue, red or yellow.

Sesame has been cultivated for some 4,000 years, possibly making it one of the first crops to be grown for its edible oil. A sesame plant was even found in the tomb of Tutankhamun - no doubt because the Egyptians believed that its humble seeds contained medicinal properties. Those familiar with the story of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* will also know that 'open sesame' was the magical phrase that opened the entrance to the cave. This is perhaps attributable to the fact that sesame seeds 'magically' burst from their pods when ripe.

Sesame seeds contain up to 55% oil. The ideal method of extraction is cold pressing (followed by refining), which produces a light yellow, virgin oil.

Oil Name: Sesame	Origin: East Indies	Family: Pedaliaceae	Made From: Seed	Latin Name: Sesamum indicum
----------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------

Main therapeutic uses said to be:

Sesame oil is frequently used in Swedish and aromatherapy massage, often making up 20% of the base carrier oil. A good moisturiser, the oil can be found in a number of sunscreens, shampoos, soaps and lubricating creams. Sesame oil is said to be beneficial for rheumatic and skin conditions, and is commonly used for psoriasis, dry eczema and broken veins.

Main constituents:

Linoleic acid; oleic acid; palmitic acid; stearic acid.

Other comments:

- ✿ Blends well with walnut oil
- ✿ Sesame seeds are rich in calcium, vitamins B and E, iron and zinc
- ✿ Sesame seeds and oil are very popular in cooking. Two traditional foods made

from sesame seeds include 'tahini' (a paste made from the seeds) and 'halva' (a mixture of sesame seeds and honey). Women of ancient Babylon are said to have eaten halva in the belief that it would retain their youth and beauty.