

Carrier Oils



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

Wheat germ

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

Wheat is a cereal plant, which originated in West Asia, but is now cultivated throughout the world. The wheat grain consists of three parts - the husk, the germ and the endosperm - and it is the germ that is used in the manufacture of the oil. Although the germ only accounts for 3% of the wheat grain's weight, it contains nearly 25% of the plant's protein, vitamins and minerals.

When wheat is milled in order to produce white flour, the wheat germ is separated in the process. The oil is then extracted from the germ, though it is not possible to do this by cold press as this would only produce marginal amounts. The oil is therefore extracted by a process similar to maceration, with the wheat germ being mixed into a good quality, cold pressed oil (usually sunflower or soya), which the germ soaks up. The end product is then cold pressed, yielding a form of macerated oil, which contains one third wheat germ and two thirds base oil. Solvent and hot pressing extraction methods are also used.

Oil Name:
Wheat germ

Origin:
West Asia

Family:
Graminae

Made From:
The germ

Latin Name:
Triticum vulgare

Main therapeutic uses said to be:

The oil's emollient and antioxidant properties make it a popular ingredient in a wide range of moisturising products for the body and face. It is said to be particularly good for dry skin, and may also help to relieve the symptoms of dermatitis. It is also believed that the oil can assist in healing scar tissue and stretch marks.

Main constituents:

Myristic acid; palmitic acid; stearic acid; arachidic acid; lignoceric acid; palmitoleic acid; oleic acid; linoleum acid; linoleic acid; linolenic acid.

Other comments:

✿ The oil is a rich, yellowy orange colour, and has a relatively strong aroma

- ✿ Those allergic to wheat flour should be tested for possible skin allergy before the oil is used
- ✿ 'Triticum' means to grind, which refers to the flour making process
- ✿ Dilute 5-10% with other carrier oils.