

Essential Oil Index

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

Cajuput



Cajuput (*Melaleuca leucadendron*) is an evergreen tree that grows up to 30 meters in height, with white flowers and thick pointed leaves. The bark is spongy and flakes off easily. Cajuput (sometimes spelt 'cajeput') grows wild in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Java, Australia and South Eastern Asia.

The oil, which has a top keynote, is extracted from the leaves and twigs by steam distillation.

A member of the Myrtaceae family, cajuput is used in both Eastern medicine and European herbal traditions.

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

Key constituents

Cineol (up to 65%), nerolidol, pinene, terpineol.

Body systems affected

Immune, respiratory, urinary, structural.

Main therapeutic properties

Antiseptic (pulmonary and urinary), antispasmodic, expectorant [helps to expel phlegm], tonic.

Secondary therapeutic properties

Analgesic, anthelmintic [expels/ destroys parasitic worms, especially of the intestine], antimicrobial, carminative [relieves flatulence], diaphoretic [promotes perspiration], febrifuge [reduces fever], insecticide.

Main therapeutic uses

Asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, cystitis, shallow breathing, sinus problems, sore throats, tuberculosis, urinary infections.

Secondary therapeutic uses

Arthritis, chills, colds and flu, diarrhoea, dysentery, greasy skin conditions, insect bites, muscular aches and pains, rheumatism, roundworm, viral infections.

Blends with

Benzoin, clove, cypress, eucalyptus, juniper berry, lemon, myrrh, niaouli, rosemary, tea tree.

Safety data

Non-toxic and non-sensitising. May cause skin irritation. [Patricia Davis in *Aromatherapy: An A-Z* writes that the oil 'must never be allowed to come in contact with the mucous membranes'.]

Additional comments

Highly regarded for respiratory ailments, this oil is also an effective energy balancer and can quicken the pulse. Used in moderation can be very effective on oily skin.

Cajuput is used as a fragrance and freshening agent in soaps, cosmetics, detergents and perfumes. The oil is sometimes used in dentistry and pharmaceutical work as an antiseptic.