

Essential oil index



This month in our continuing series on essential oils, we take a look at lemon

Lemon (*Citrus limonum*)

The lemon is a small evergreen tree that grows up to six metres tall. It produces oval leaves, fragrant flowers and a yellow fruit that is too well known to require description. A native to Asia, lemon (*Citrus limonum*) is now widely cultivated throughout the world.

The oil, which has a top keynote, is extracted from the fruit's rind by cold expression. It is pale greeny yellow in colour and has a very uplifting and refreshing scent. Containing vitamins A, B and C, it is one of the most vitamin-rich essential oils.

Key constituents

A-pinene, a-terpineol, bergamotene, b-pinene, camphene, citronellal, citral, geranial, geranyl acetate, limonene (up to 70 per cent), linalool, linalyl acetate, myrcene, nonanol, octanol, p-cymene, phellandrene, sabinene, terpinolene, y-terpinene.

Main properties

Anti-anaemic, anti-microbial, anti-rheumatic, anti-sclerotic, antiseptic, astringent, bactericidal, cicatrisant, depurative, diaphoretic, febrifuge, hypotensive, rubefacient, stimulant – hepatic, stimulant of leukocytes, tonic.

Secondary properties

Anti-spasmodic, anti-toxic, carminative, diuretic, haemostatic, insecticide, vermifuge.

Main therapeutic uses

Acne, anaemia, arthritis, boils, brittle nails, cellulite, chilblains, colds, corns, cuts, debility, flu, greasy skin conditions, herpes, high blood pressure, infections, mouth ulcers, nosebleeds, poor circulation, rheumatism, varicose veins, warts.

Secondary therapeutic uses

Asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, dyspepsia, ear infections, gastric acid, insect bites, intestinal worms, kidney stones, throat infections.

Blends with

Benzoin, chamomile (German), elemi, frankincense, ginger, jasmine, juniper, lavender, neroli, petitgrain, rose, sandalwood, tagetes, vetiver, ylang ylang.

Safety data

Non-toxic. Possible irritant in high concentrations. Increases photosensitivity – avoid direct sunlight after use. Minor burns can be caused when a sunbed is used immediately after a sauna bath with lemon oil (*Tisserand and Balacs, 1995*).

Other information

Lemon has long been used as a remedy for fevers and infectious diseases, particularly the common cold. It is also said to strengthen the immune system, stimulate kidney and liver function.

Reference: Tisserand R, Balacs T. (1995) *Essential Oil Safety, A Guide for Health Care Professionals*. New York: Churchill Livingstone