

Floral Notes

WINTER REPOSE

As we turn our faces to the sun with the anticipation of warm spring days, shadows are shortening; the excitement of the next stirring of nature is in the air. We are compelled to glance back in awe of the force of winter. A moment of repose is upon us.

The winds of March build the roots, encouraging them to go deeper, broader, and become the foundation of the bounty of summer. It is the way of all life and spirit. Our futures depend upon the depth and breadth of our roots.

We have compiled a few notes to recognize the incredible oils and extracts from roots, the base notes.

—Marianne Griffeth

VETIVER

Vetiveria zizanioides

Of the Poaceae family, vetiver is a native of South India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. It presently thrives cultivated and wild in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide. The oil is produced in the countries of India, Java, Haiti, the Philippines, Madagascar, and Jamaica to name a few.

The name, Vetiver is a French version of a Tamil word meaning “a root dug up” for it is the root of the plant that contains the essential oil. Production of oil requires the arduous task of planting, waiting at least two years for maturity of the root systems, pulling the roots up by hand, washing, cleaning, chopping, drying, and soaking before the steam distillation procedure can begin.

Prima Fleur vetiver is from Java where it is called Akar Wangi meaning fragrant root. Good quality mature dried Java vetiver root yields from 1.5 - 2% essential oil. Oils derived from older roots produce a richer, fuller quality of oil.



Adaptable and sturdy, vetiver is widely used to make fragrant blinds which infuse the room with earthy notes. Fans formed from the roots and embellished with embroidery provide blissful fragrance and cool relief when dipped in water and wafted on steamy tropical days.

For more substantial needs, the plant is used as material to make thatched huts, floor mats, and provide protection from soil erosion.

Vetiver is used extensively in perfumery for its sweet, balsamic, woody notes and as an effective fixative.

In massage and aromatherapy, the oil is most often used to help reconnect to earth energy and calm the central nervous system of one who feels “uprooted”. In skincare, vetiver is a moisturizing humectant for dry irritated (winter) skin.

The main constituents of vetiver essential oil are: vetiverone (bitter earthiness), vetiverol (sweet woody odor) and zizanol, an insect repellent.

Blending Tips: Blends well with lemongrass, grapefruit, evergreens, frankincense, myrrh, mimosa, rose, sandalwood. Used primarily as a base note having tenacity and a richly-distinctive masculinity.

GINGER

Zingiber officinale

Ginger is a spice with a history reaching back thousands of years to India, China, and the Malay Peninsula where traditional uses ranged from culinary to medicinal. Prized for its multiple uses, it naturally became a valued item of trade. It adapted well to other tropical and subtropical regions of the world and as it was traded became rooted in countries such as Jamaica, Ceylon, Zanzibar, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, the West Indies, and Madagascar. The name, Ginger is from Sanskrit srngaveram, referring to the antler shape of the rhizome. This evolved to the Greek, ziggiberis, and the Roman, zinziberi. There is mention of ginger throughout the history of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, and Assyrians. Although “African ginger” typically refers to Nigerian ginger, it is the African island-continent of Madagascar where Prima Fleur purchases our ginger oil: Madagascar Ginger.

Although the ginger flower is quite fragrant the oil is steam distilled from the fresh or dried rhizome. It is the fresh-rhizome oil from Madagascar that has a sweet, warm, clean scent with lemony-peppery notes suitable for perfume, aromatherapy, and culinary delights. It is cultivated in and around the highlands and central eastern Beforna districts of Madagascar where it finds its preferred hot, moist climate

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with shading during the midday. Mulching is often employed to maintain moisture for the rhizomes. In this setting, it enjoys the nutritious potash, nitrogen and minerals required to induce the best oil. Because it is a greedy plant, it requires rotation to ensure the soil is replenished. The yield of essential oil is fairly high at 1.6-3%. To prepare the rhizome for distillation, it has to be peeled or scraped to remove the outer skin and expose the essential oil laden flesh. The peeling is done carefully by hand so just the thin skin is taken. The most important elements lie just beneath the skin.

Ginger is used today in many of the same ways it was used in the days when Alexander the Great brought it to Europe from Persia and Romans flavored their wine with ginger. Emperor Shen Nung of China prescribed ginger for colds and even leprosy. The farther it traveled, the more varied its uses became. One of the many spices which was carried on the Silk Roads, it quickly became popular among the great chefs of Europe and was utilized in recipes for cakes, sweetmeats, and the great British treat, Gingerbread. Ginger beer, ginger ale, gingerbread man, "treat it gingerly", "ginger-up!" and J.P. Donleavy's fantastic book, *THE GINGER MAN* are examples of how infused our language is with ginger and the idea of ginger.

In Aromatherapy, ginger is used for relaxation, nurturing comfort, fighting fatigue, muscle and joint ailments, and indigestion. It is said to be an aphrodisiac. It is used to stimulate circulation, and generally add vitality.

The main constituents are: zingiberene, bisabolene, geraniol, limonene, and nerol.

Blending Tips: It blends well with lemongrass, orange, grapefruit, rose, jasmine, cedarwood, coriander, and frankincense.

ORRIS ROOT

(*Iris pallida*, [*Iris germanica*])

Orris root is the aged and dried rhizome of the cherished flower, the Iris. Named for the Greek goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods, it bursts to life each spring in a variety of vibrant hues, including yellow, salmon-pink, white, and the deep violet-blue so perfectly depicted in Vincent Van Gogh's stunning painting, *Irises* (1889).

To the French, the three petals of the flower symbolize faith, wisdom and valor. The flower itself is often used symbolically in ceremony. This eye of heaven as it has been referred to, is a wonder of nature and appreciated for its beauty, fragrance and exquisiteness.

The sweet scent of iris flowers is indeed heavenly, but it is the luscious scent of violets and woods that characterize the extract of the root. It is the rhizome which contains the highest concentration of the desired irones. The Prima Fleur orris root is of the *Iris germanica* variety which is used for perfumery, food and flavoring. This variety of sword lily iris is also known as "orris of Verona." Material, mainly from Morocco, is processed by super critical carbon dioxide extraction yielding one kilo from thirty-three to fifty-five kilos of raw material. Though the petals reach the height of their beauty by the second year, the root must age for two to three years to reach full maturity. During this time, slow oxidation of triterpenoid creates the active ingredients and odorants. In the final year, the plant can grow as tall as an adult human. It is necessary for the ground to be carefully weeded and maintained throughout this period. Often whole families assume this task and when the plant has arrived at maturity, they tend to the pulling, cutting and drying process, which is time-consuming and labor-intensive.

Although orris may have, at one time, been used medicinally, its chief uses are in perfumery, soap-making, and to flavor liqueurs from vermouth to gin. While the *Iris pallida* of Italy and China has direct floral and green notes, the *Iris germanica* boasts fruitier, richer, strong berry notes suited for these multiple industries. The distinctive violet-like odor is the definition of luxury and of an era of romantic indulgence. Included in Henri Robert's meticulously hand-picked tribute perfume of Gabrielle Chanel, Chanel N° 19, it was orris root that distinguished this last great contribution to femininity.

The main constituents of the extract are myristic acid, .9-1.1% irones, mainly cis-alpha-iron and cis-gamma-iron. The extract is standardized to 1% irones by the addition of caprylic/capric triglycerides.

Blending Tips: Orris root blends well with florals of neroli, rose, and geranium as well as green notes of violet leaf and galbanum.

SPIKENARD

(*Nardostachys jatamansi* specifically: *Nardostachys grandiflora* DC, or the variety *Nardostachys chinensis*)

Spikenard is an oil derived from the roots of a plant native to China, India and Nepal. In Sanskrit, *Nardostachys Jatamansi* translates to "a braid of hair". The English word spikenard is derived from the Latin term *Spica Nardi*. Other names speak of its rare and precious value. In Sanskrit, *Jatila*, meaning 'difficult', and *Tapasvini*, meaning 'concentration and devotion', suggest that spikenard is a challenge to find and a chore to harvest, but a treasure when attained.

Prima Fleur offers two spikenard oils of the Valerianaceae family. *Nardostachys grandiflora* DC and *Nardostachys chinensis*. The prior one is native to Nepal, particularly Jumla District, is green in color with lighter scent. The later is dark brown, thicker, with a more earthy scent. This raw material is imported from Tibet.

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The government of Nepal lists spikenard as an endangered species. While it is not under extinction, it needs sustainable harvesting to promote biodiversity conservation. Our distiller's company is very responsible regarding these issues and has carried out many campaigns to promote harvesting techniques and awareness programs among collectors. The Jatamansi value chain employs about 17,500 people in Nepal. The plant is banned for export product meaning one cannot directly export its roots; under Nepali law, it must be processed into essential oil to be exported. The government allocates certain amounts of raw material to be harvested for specific periods of time granting permits to distillers and collectors while a liaison officer keeps a close eye on the facility, keeping records of the production. The product from Tibet, on the other hand, is in abundance. Safeguarding the natural heritage of this plant is of utmost importance.

Spikenard is one of the twelve essential oils of ancient times reportedly used by Mary of Bethany to anoint the feet of Jesus in the story of the Bible. Considered a sacred salve, Hebrews and Romans, kings and priests used the oil in burial rituals, religious rites and ceremonies. More common today, spikenard is considered an herbal relaxant and natural sleep aid, a medicine and perfume. An excerpt from the Saturday, November 12, 1825 edition of the National Intelligencer states:

"Cream of Nardus, The Ancient Spikenard. One of the most efficacious and innocent productions ever yet discovered, for making the hair grow thick, long, and glossy, while at the same time it effectually prevents it from turning grey. Ladies and Gentlemen who are desirous of preserving or acquiring that beautiful ornament, a fine head of hair, have only to afford this preparation a fair trial, to be fully convinced of its really being one of the most powerful auxiliaries they could possibly employ for the attainment of their purpose; as it not only admirably promotes the rapid growth of the hair, and prevents it from falling off, but at

the same time it perfectly preserves its natural gloss, color, and beauty, even to extreme old age."

Harvested between October through December, the long rhizomes are pulled out by hand, de-leafed and de-rooted, dried and transported to a distillery. Quality spikenard is recognized for its heavy, sweet-woody, spicy-animal odor, with hints of ginger, cardamom and Atlas cedar and a unique pea-like vegetal scent.

The main constituents are Jatamanson and Valcranone.

Blending Tips: Excellent in Oriental florals, blending well with rose, tuberose, and sandalwood. Also blends well with cedar wood, patchouli, lavender and vetiver.

WEATHERING THE WEATHER

This time of the year it is extremely important to consider weather conditions when consigning your freight shipments. We advise checking with your carrier to get the route then checking the temperature your product will have to sustain while in transit. Not shipping on Fridays unless the truck is going straight through and/or using temperature-controlled trucks if there is the likelihood your product will be going through "heat wave" conditions during summer months or freezing temperatures during winter months will give you extra protection.

We remind you that small parcel carriers such as UPS may encounter extreme weather conditions as well. Please consider the same details when you ship to your customers.

The optimal temperature range for cosmetic products is 50-75 degrees Fahrenheit. Higher temperatures can be sustained for short periods of time; however, vitamins and precious oils are at their best when kept at cool or ambient temperatures.

—Wendi Jo Nadler

STATEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND FAIR TRADE

Prima Fleur products are made in the San Francisco Bay Area. Whenever possible, we select ingredients from locally grown crops such as lavender, melissa, verbena, peppermint, rosemary, beeswax, and olive oil. Other ingredients, unavailable locally, are sourced from various countries as remote as Madagascar, Nepal and Uganda. They are carefully chosen for their therapeutic value and to support the sustainable harvesting of indigenous crops. The suppliers of these ingredients are mostly family owned farms and distilleries.

Our Fair Trade organic shea butter which is a critical component of several products including our shave crème, comes to us directly from an all-women co-operative in Uganda where the women grow, harvest, and process the butter themselves. Our purchases help support the community with payments going from our production facility into their account.

Our production facility is certified by Ecocert®, a globally-recognized organization which inspects, audits, and validates all aspects of product creation from material farming practices to ingredient biodegradability to machinery cleaning methods. This ensures the consumer will be buying a product which is clean and all representations of its naturalness and purity are verified.



JEANNE ROSE SPEAKS

SUNFLOWER —

THE GOOD SKIN OIL

By Jeanne Rose



Sunflower is an ancient native-American plant that has many uses in our world. It was probably in use in the Middle Americas by 1000 BCE (3000 years ago) as a food and oil plant. There is some indication that the Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) was domesticated in eastern North America before the arrival of corn and beans from Mexico.

Sunflower seed oil has many fine qualities; especially that it is light in texture, supremely adaptable for eye care and delicate skin care, it is inexpensive, it is locally-grown, and usually grown without pesticides and fungicides as the flowers are high in the air and well-away from soil borne fungus or bugs. It is adapted to dry-farming and thus ecologically and earth friendly, it is stable in skin products and creates a skin smoothing feel that your skin will love. This is oil that is healthy for the skin and healthy for the planet.

Sunflower seed oil is fine-quality oil, especially for normal to oily skin. It is especially nice for aromatherapy uses because it has very little scent and is very light in texture on the skin. In skin care you will want to use Sunflower oil, and herbal infused oils that are cold-processed, and unrefined oils to absorb the benefits of these oils into your skin.

FACIAL OIL FOR THE SKIN

Make a blend of therapeutic essential oils such as Lavender and Owyhee or use the reading and the chapter on Blending of the Aromatherapy Studies Course by Jeanne Rose.

Add 4-6 drops of your E.O. mixture to 1 oz of herbal infused vegetable or Sunflower seed oil. Particularly recommended is a mixture of Sunflower and Calendula Infused Oil with your added essential Oils. Or use Sunflower oil for normal or dry skin.

BOTTLE, LABEL AND USE.

Make only one ounce of facial oil at a time because as you treat your skin condition, it will change and so will your choice of essential oils.

EYE CREAM - LIGHT

A mixture of Sunflower oil, a bit of Argan oil, in a cream with the addition of a drop of *Helichrysum* makes an exceptionally suitable application for the eyes. This is a stable application due to the Sunflower seed oil as an ingredient. It will smooth the under eye area and reduce the appearance of dry skin or wrinkles. Your skin will be smoother and will like this as a daily application.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

As an anti-aging substance for men, the Sunflower seeds, when eaten, aid in the health of the prostate gland. Additionally, linoleic acid is found in Sunflower seeds and safflower oil. There is some evidence that taking an oral supplement of linoleic acid from Sunflower seeds may slightly improve symptoms associated with MS.

RESOURCE

Herbs & Things and The Herbal Body Book by Jeanne Rose

BIOGRAPHY

Jeanne Rose has 40 years experience with the use of herbs and essential oils. See her website

At <http://www.jeannerose.net>. She has 24 books as well as a vibrant Herbal Studies Course and Aromatherapy Studies Course by distance learning and home-study.

I LEARNED FROM

JEANNE ROSE—

I spent the weekend in the legendary Jeanne Rose “Blending/Perfumery Essential Oils” class in San Francisco. What an amazing learning experience it was. One of the first and most important things we learned was “succusion”. **Noun:** The act or process of shaking violently. suc-cus-sion.

Something as basic as shaking the oils (100 times) before you add them to the carrier oils and then shaking them again (100 times) became the most important key in the mastery of successful blending.

—Teri Stroul, *Inside Sales*



Potpouri

Did you know we've lowered our minimums on Premiere Stock Products? You can now place an order for only \$150!

Tell your professional friends and colleagues to sign up for our newsletter on our website.

We'll be sending monthly specials to all registered clients during 2010.

For continued education in aromatherapy studies, visit www.jeannerose.net to view her wide selection of classes and certification courses.

FEATURED PRODUCT SAMPHIRE EYE CREME

The first sensation upon application is a dramatic feeling of soothing, cooling relaxation of the eye area. It is provided by our namesake ingredient, *Crithmum maritimum*, a sturdy variety of sea fennel that thrives in rocky, salt-sprayed regions along the pristine North Atlantic sea coast. Its common name, Samphire, is a variation of the name, St. Peter, patron saint of fishermen. This speaks of its protective, restorative, salvific properties.

Each ingredient of the all-botanical formula is selected for efficacy and gentleness, addressing eye area issues of skin wrinkling, loss of elasticity, puffiness, hyper-pigmentation, reversal and prevention of free-radical damage.

The Ecocert®-approved formula contains a high percentage (80.03%) certified organic ingredients without the sacrifice of potent actives. One of the beneficial ingredients able to effect change is *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* extract which increases cellular-oxygen consumption. Combined with *Rhodiola rosea* root extract, it reduces the appearance of puffiness, strengthens and firms the skin, improving microcirculation thereby enhancing other beneficial ingredients.

One such ingredient is a peptide produced from an isolated, low-molecular-weight fraction of peptides of the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Testing shows it up-regulates (reverses process degeneration) various growth factors, matrix proteins, and cell shock/cell stress genes directly related to skin firming, skin renewal and water retention. Up-regulation of the lipid genes indicates the peptide may play a role in improving skin lipid integrity and development.

Maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) provides a high level of natural defense, shielding the skin from damage caused by everyday environmental oxidative stresses. As it fights this degenerative process it stimulates biosynthesis and regenerative processes of skin tissue.

Prima Fleur #1214

PRIMA FLEUR IN 2010 OUR CHALLENGES/GOALS

Our goal is to find something to give, even if only our time. Manufacturers often have over-runs, excess product or product which, although perfect in every other way, may not quite meet specifications. Rather than discarding the product, we have found two very appreciative recipients of our beautiful extras; the Marin Abused Women's Services and Blue Star Moms of Marin. Both have received everything from bath gels to shave crème, and shampoo. Blue Star Moms of Marin, "Proudly Supporting Our Troops," packs the boxes and sends gifts to Iraq, Afghanistan, and anywhere in the world there is a U.S. service person. Roots of Peace is another organization we support. Their work is in war-torn countries, where they un-earth landmines so the land may once again be safely tilled and planted. Their work to establish sustainable crops on once-dangerous land is intended to help bring the peace a healthy economy and environment engenders.

As an Ecocert® and soon-to-be USDA Organic Laboratory, we are challenged to do things in ways which are both environmentally safe and follow rules of Good Manufacturing Procedures. Our systems are continually examined to find ways to operate using less energy and less waste material. We are currently striving to eliminate the plastics made from new petrochemicals by using more glass, PCR materials, and compostable environmentally-sustainable plastics made entirely from plants.

www.aromaticplantproject.com

www.maws.org

www.bluestarmomsofmarin.org

www.rootsofpeace.org

CHAMOMILE IN KATHMANDU

Chamomilla recutita Raushert. syn.
Matricaria chamomilla L.

One of our treasured producers has shared these beautiful photographs with us (see next page). They represent a fascinating pictorial essay of Nepali chamomile production. They are taken during the various stages of their German chamomile planting.

Behind the story of the essential oil is a story of social responsibility so critical to this land.

In their words:

"We believe, in a country like Nepal, sustainable development is only possible through empowerment of people living in the rural areas. We encourage remote farmers for sustainable farming of medicinal and aromatic plants, which have high export potential. We are dedicated to developing a market for such medicinal herbs and establishing parameters for supply and demand economics appropriate for this region of the world. Our mission is to harness economic power in the rural community of Nepal by creating a responsible, socially-just and environmentally-sustainable society."

Their business is particularly involved with protection of the endangered wild herbs which have suffered from over-harvesting and degradation of habitats. They stress the importance of holding the indigenous knowledge of traditional medicinal uses of these precious plants.

Although chamomile is indigenous to Europe, of the eighteen or so crops they distill, most are indigenous to Nepal. It so happens, chamomile thrives in the Nepali flat southern region near the birthplace of Buddha, as well as the middle hills. In Nepali, it is called, Damini Ful and is used for the same purposes as in Europe and other areas of the world: skin care anti-inflammatory, sedative, safe for children, combating anxiety and insomnia. It is an amazing soother of weathered, sun-parched, wind-damaged skin.

