

**A warning to people in Canada seeking a training course.  
Also, beware of any other courses who are teaching the trash below!**

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Also see the second file 'Canadian claims+general errors'

Beware of web sites where it is claimed the teacher has "20 years experience in aromatherapy," that can mean little in a trade which has no sound quality control mechanisms, that's assuming the statement is even true!

What follows below is an illustration of what all aromatherapy students need to be wary of. These course notes from Canada were sent to me by a worried student who wanted another opinion on what he was being taught.

About a year before the article below, I had an email from the author of the course suggesting I "stop my disparaging remarks about the CFA" as I was "misinformed" about their standards. Perhaps the course review below, coming exactly a year after those comments, will now fully vindicate my disparaging remarks.

The get-out clause below used to be on the CFA website 'instructors' page. Now (2006) a similar one is to be found on their code of ethics page:

**"Neither the Canadian Federation of Aromatherapists (CFA) nor members of its board of directors assumes any responsibility for the actions and/or activities of an instructor/educator in conforming with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice".** Therefore, if an instructor breaches the CFA's codes of conduct, the organisation may not take any responsibility, expel the teacher or make amends to their students. Such a clause gives rogue elements a free hand to do whatever they like.

**I have 5 separate sets of course notes sent by worried students from Canada.** Most of these notes have the same mistakes as are itemised below.

Be aware that certain Canadian schools are putting out misinformation verbally and sometimes in their literature about the status of their Aromatherapy organisations. People are told that these organisations are either "working with the government" or "are close to getting government recognition". In both cases these statements are designed to mislead people into thinking schools in these organisations are the best. (See the file on 'Incorrect safety') and of course the other review [mentioned at the top](#).

In the case of the Office of Natural Products, the CFA & BCA made submissions in the same manner as other complementary medicine associations, likewise so did IATA.

In the case of the BCAA they now claim recognition from the British Columbia Government. Please refer to my page on 'Incorrect safety' for just a taster of what this Government department have approved!!

**Some of the worlds worst aromatherapy schools and teacher are based in Canada. Many teach information based on the French style of aromatherapy much of which is dangerous and inaccurate.**

Continued:

## A report on essential oil monographs in a course approved by the CFA.

Also the author claims approval by NAHA in the USA.

Notes supplied Feb. 2003.

### General impressions:

Since most of the therapeutic uses below are taken out of popular aromatherapy books/novels, this review can also be applied to those books, most of which themselves contain gross errors.

These notes prove that the CFA and NAHA **are incompetent** at assessing the **quality** of their approved training courses. This is particularly relevant when the objective of that training is for therapists to help people with a variety of health problems. Even if the problem were of a minor psychological nature, essential oils and the methods employed have potential to cause harm. If someone is emotionally vulnerable and they get skin damage as the result of these therapists activities, then that can be sufficient to tip them over the edge to suicide attempts.

There has been no attempt to distinguish between the uses of the plants as herbal medicines in a water or alcohol base taken internally, compared to the use of the same plants oil used in massage.

There has been no attempt to distinguish between effects that can only occur from the internal use of the oil versus its external application.

There has been no attempt in these notes to distinguish between the historical uses of a particular extract, or that it should not be used nowadays for that condition, i.e. Gonorrhoea. Likewise no attempt to explain any legal restrictions on what a complementary therapies practitioner can and can't do, or claim.

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### KEY:

Bold text with quote marks are the Canadian teachers notes.

Text beginning with - are my comments.

Red or Pink text are extremely dangerous claims.

### BAY OIL.

**"Active: phenols-monoterpenes"**. - Both terms are generic covering thousands of chemicals. Without knowing exactly which chemical is being referred to then the information is next to worthless. The indications from all these notes is that the author simply does not know the chemical profile of most of the oils she is writing about.

**"Uses: Wound healing-use before scarring"**. - I have never seen any traditional or modern use for such a condition. Also, as most therapists are advised not to put essential oils onto fresh wounds, I find the statement contradictory.

**"Pneumonia"**. - **a serious and life threatening condition**. Is she seriously suggesting this oil can be used to treat such a major illness? **This has the potential to be dangerous quack medicine**.

### BENZOIN RESIN IN SOLVENT.

**"Active: 70% esters"**. -No attempt to define volumes or explain the huge differences between the different species yielding benzoin.

**"Uses. Urinary tract-stimulates flow of urine"**. -This is taken from past traditional uses of benzoin tincture given internally. It most definitely does not apply to the oil when used in massage.

**"Circulation"**. - Comments as previous sentence **"Expels flatulence"**. - Comments as previous.

**"Skin rejuvenation; dry, cracked, redness, itching, dermatitis"**. -**To use a known sensitising agent**

on such damaged skin is **reckless and irresponsible**, particularly as most pourable benzoin resin contains a variety of petro-chemical solvents.

### BERGAMOT OIL.

**"Active. Esters and alcohols"**. - Comments same as Bay, useless information and potentially dangerous if it implies that all alcohols are soothing.

**"Main properties. Antiviral"**. It is NOT.

**"Uses: TB"**. - This is serious stuff, if she is suggesting this oil can treat that condition. Possibly illegal as well - it would be in the UK.

**"Cautions"**: The information provided is totally inadequate.

### BLACK PEPPER OIL.

**"Main properties: antiviral"**. - I am not aware of any research indicating that the essential oil is antiviral. **"Stomachic"**: -This is taken from internal use of pepper as a digestive herb.

**"Uses: Flatulence; antiseptic to urinary tract"**: - Both only achievable from internal use.

**"Intermittent fever"**: - Clearly a term from an old herbal. **"Tonic to the spleen"**. - Likewise an ancient concept of herbal medicine, nothing at all to do with essential oils.

**"Caution may irritate the kidneys"**: -What when used in massage????

### CAJEPUT OIL.

Incorrect name copied over and over again in aromatherapy books.

**"Being tested as a natural pesticide"**. - Probably she means the use of an aqueous extract of the leaves rather than the essential oil which would be far too expensive to use this way.

### CARROT SEED OIL.

**"Characteristics-vit A;C;B1;B2 "**: - What have the nutritive effect of carrots got to do with its essential oil which contains **no vitamins?**

**"Main properties: hormone like"** - what does this mean? Internal use or does it do that via massage; strange since essential oils are not absorbed by the skin!

**"Antiaging"**: - Classic beauty therapy hype and nonsense.

**"Uses: rejuvenation"** - as above comment. **"Aids digestion"**: - How? **"Jaundice"**: - **a serious and life threatening condition which no aromatherapist is competent to treat.**

**"Accumulation of toxins"**: - Classic beauty therapy hype and nonsense. **"Urine retention, diuretic"**: - Again the traditional use of a tea taken internally, NOT the use of the oil rubbed in externally. **"Tonic to hormone production"** - how? **"Aids conception"**: - Oh boy what rubbish!

**"Lowers blood pressure"**: - Since most aromatherapy writers have never taken a blood pressure, I wonder how they know?

### CEDARWOOD OIL-ATLAS.

Chemical composition is wrong.

**"Uses: lymph tonic"**. - How on earth does it do that? **"Cellulite"** - beauty therapy hype.

**"Glandular system"** - meaningless. **"Urinary infections"** - How?

### CHAMOMILE GERMAN OIL.

**"Active-sequiterpenes, oxides, alcohols"**: - Again meaningless chemical groups with no composition data.

**"Uses: Female disorders; painful or irregular periods"**. - As a qualified medical herbalist I can say with certainty that these are the effects caused by the herbal tea, **not the essential oil.**

**"Excessive loss of blood"**. - **This is highly dangerous advice to give to students and the oil will NOT have such an effect.**

### CHAMOMILE ROMAN OIL.

"Active. Esters" - no attempt to define which.

"Main properties: Emmenagogue" - this is herbal use **not the essential oil**.

"Uses: Diarrhea" - this is herbal use **not the essential oil**.

"Other disorders: dissolves kidney stones": -**THIS IS QUACK MEDICINE and there is not a shred of evidence to back such a claim. It is doubtful for the herbal use and is not correct for the essential oil.**

### CINNAMON LEAF OIL.

"Main properties: anti viral". - I know of no research to justify such a dubious claim.

"Uses: sluggish digestion; digestive spasm" - both internal uses. "Diarrhea; constipation" - comment as previous.

### CLARY SAGE OIL.

"Main properties: Lowers blood pressure". - No evidence specific to this oil.

"Caution: Hormone related cancers". - Why since not enough oil gets into the body via the skin to have any such pharmacological effect?

### CLOVE BUD OIL.

"Main properties: Raises blood pressure". - No evidence specific to this oil.

"Uses: Balances thyroid problems". - **This is highly dangerous advice** and is nonsense anyway. "Uterine tonic" - how, by what method; herbal use perhaps?

### CYPRESS OIL.

"Main properties: Vasoconstrictor". - This is the classic aromatherapy nonsense based on the traditional use of a water based herbal decoction, which is nothing like an essential oil.

"Uses: Ovarian disorders; endometriosis (heavy bleeding)". - **This is highly dangerous advice** to give to students. These are the therapeutic uses of herbal extracts as previously mentioned. However, most medical herbalists are trained for several years in medical diagnosis, pathology, etc. Aromatherapists get no such vital medical training.

### EUCALYPTUS (various) OILS.

E. globulus.

"Uses: Diabetes (lowers high blood sugar)". -**This is highly dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway.

### FENNEL OIL.

"Uses: Sluggish digestion" - internal use. "Tonic to liver and spleen" - herbal medicine maybe, but seriously out of date. "Kidney stones" -**This is highly dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway.

### FRANKINCENSE OIL.

"Uses: Gonorrhea" - **probably illegal, certainly is in the UK**. Taken from ancient herbal uses of the resin given as a medicine, not the oil.

"Disorders of the uterus" - what disorders and how?

### GERANIUM OIL.

"Origin. Island in the Indian Ocean". - Such a comment indicates a complete lack of knowledge of the International trade in essential oils.

"Uses: Stimulant to liver and pancreas" -nonsense. "Diabetes - jaundice" - **This is highly dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway. "Uterus (pregnancy)" - to do what?

**"Heart conditions (Angina)".** - Comment as above. **"Kidney stones"** - this comes from the error made years ago by a popular aromatherapy author in attributing the herbal properties of the herb called Herb Robert, to geranium oil. A major blunder copied continuously since.

#### GRAPEFRUIT OIL.

**"Main properties. Circulatory"** - nonsense. **"Diuretic"** - how???

**"Uses: Tonic for lymphatic system"** - nonsense. **"Cellulite; obesity"** - both beauty hype designed to capture gullible minds. **"Liver problems; breaks up gallstones"**. - **This is highly dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway.

#### HELICHRYSUM OIL.

**"Active"**: - Usual nonsense on chemical groups.

**"Main properties: anti-hematoma; anti-phlebitis"**. - **This is highly dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway. **"Liver and pancreatic stimulant"** - traditional use of the herbal preparation, not the oil.

**"Uses: Hepatitis; cirrhosis"**. - **This is highly dangerous advice** and ludicrous.

#### HYSSOP OIL.

**"Main properties: Emmenagogue"**. - Only if used internally, but mainly herb use.

**"Uses: TB"**. - **This is highly dangerous advice** and probably illegal, it would be in the UK.

**"Urinary stones"**. - Just ludicrous. **"Regulates Blood pressure"**. - How used? **"Multiple sclerosis"**. - I know of no research suggesting this essential oil can do anything for this condition. In addition, since Hyssop contains a lot of ketones which are supposed to be "neurotoxic" this advice is contradictory to all earlier advice about the dangers of such essential oils. With MS the myelin sheaths are damaged, therefore should one use an oil that is reputed to have nerve-damaging effects?????

#### JASMINE absolute.

**"Active-54% esters, 24% alcohols"**: - Ridiculous chemical groups again with no compositional data.

**"Uses: Stimulates milk production"**. - NO IT DOES NOT, this is another aromatherapy book error. In reality clinical trials have proven the opposite action. Shrivastav P. et al. 1988. Aust. NZ. J. Obstet. Gynaecol. 28. 68-71. Abrsham M. 1979. Ind. J. Med. Res. 69. 88-92.

#### JUNIPER BERRY OIL.

**"Main properties: Diuretic"**. - but only from internal use.

**"Uses: excretes uric acid"** - what via skin absorption?? **"Arteriosclerosis"** - how used?

**"Cellulite"** - How come since no oil is absorbed via the skin into the fat beneath? **"Urinary stones"** - Crazy, this was a past use of juniper berry herbal infusion which is not the essential oil applied in massage.

#### LEMON OIL.

**"Uses: Urinary and gallstones"** - a complete corruption of the traditional uses for lemon JUICE and a classic error of most aromatherapy authors. **"Stomach ulcers"** - **Seriously dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway. **"Great for the liver"** - what the juice or the essential oil applied to the skin??

**"Hemorrhage (nasal gastric, intestinal, renal)"**. - **THIS IS SERIOUSLY CRAZY AND ANYONE PROMOTING SUCH DANGEROUS ADVICE SHOULD BE PROSECUTED FOR FRAUD.**

#### LIME OIL.

**"Lymphatic system stimulant"** - what by external application?

### MANDARIN OIL.

"**Lymphatic system stimulant**" - what by external application?

"**Obesity; water retention**" - two completely different conditions neither of which Mandarin oil used externally or internally is likely to do anything for. Indeed the fragrance of most citrus fruit oils will stimulate the stomach juices to demand more food not less.

### MARJORAM SWEET OIL.

"**Main properties: Antiviral**" - I know of no evidence for this. "**Emmenagogue**" - a very old herbal reputation, nothing to do with the oil. "**Lowers blood pressure**" - unlikely.

### MELISSA OIL.

"**Active**": chemical groups again, clearly the author has not a clue on the chemistry.

"**Uses: Heart tonic**" - classic herbal use, not the essential oil. "**Herpes**" - research has shown this plant has anti viral activity in its water soluble phase, but this does not occur in the oil phase which is antibacterial rather than antiviral. There is no published skin safety data on this oil.

### MYRRH OIL.

"**Main properties: Antiviral**" - no evidence and unlikely.

"**Uses: Urinary tract antiseptic**" - only if used internally.

### NIAOULI OIL.

"**Main properties: antiviral**" - no evidence and unlikely.

"**TB**" - **DANGEROUS AND PROBABLY ILLEGAL ADVICE.**

"**Recommended for serious conditions such as AIDS and non-hormonal cancer**". - **DANGEROUS AND PROBABLY ILLEGAL ADVICE.**

This oil is not the subject of any published skin safety data.

### NUTMEG OIL.

"**Characteristics: Uterine tonic**" - what the oil in massage, could that be the herb in water perhaps??

"**Uses: Chronic diarrhea**" - classic use of nutmeg POWDER not the oil!! "**Gallstones**" - **Seriously dangerous advice** and is nonsense anyway.

### ORANGE bitter OIL.

"**Main properties: Cell regenerator**". - Beauty hype again. Since d-limonene in orange oil is a powerful degreaser, the most likely effect of exposing living skin cells to this oil is to kill them, not "regenerate" them.

"**Uses: Liver stimulant; lymphatic stimulant**". - Since there is no evidence that essential oils can get through the skin into the circulation, then these claims are foolish and unjustified. Same comments on the claims under Orange sweet plus there it is suggested the oil can treat obesity. Perhaps that is because the d-limonene dissolves the fat cells!!!

### PALMAROSA OIL.

"**Main properties: Strongly anti viral**" - see previous comments, no evidence. "**Cell regenerator**" - likewise no evidence.

"**Uses: Cystitis**" - what external application? "**Assists childbirth**" - how?

### PATCHOULI OIL.

"**Main properties: Anti viral**" - it is not. "**Diuretic**" - that is ridiculous as not even the herb was used for that.

"**Uses: Tissue regenerator**" -evidence?

### PEPPERMINT OIL.

"Main properties: Anti viral" - There is no evidence whatsoever that peppermint OIL has such an action although the herb tea might.

"Uses: Ulcers" - **dangerous advice** and is nonsense anyway.

### PINE OIL.

"Main properties: Diuretic" - how?

"Uses: Urinary diseases; prostatitis". **Seriously dangerous advice** and utterly ludicrous anyway. "Antiseptic for the liver; Gallstones; good for adrenals" - All nonsense.

### ROSEMARY OIL.

"Main properties: Antiviral" - There is no evidence whatsoever that rosemary OIL has such an action although the herb tea might. "Diuretic" - only as a herb tea.

"Uses: Adrenal tonic; Induces and regulates periods; Heart tonic" - what the heck does heart tonic mean? "Liver disorders" - While rosemary as herbal medication has many uses, few of these can be achieved via the external application of the essential oil.

### ROSEWOOD OIL.

All therapeutic uses for this oil are **the inventions of modern aromatherapists**. It has no traditional use. The trees are severely endangered and there is no such thing as oil from plantation trees as many suppliers claim.

### SAGE OIL.

"Main properties: Anti viral" - it is not! "Emmenagogue" - the oil is not only the herbal infusion might be.

"Uses: Regulates menstrual flow" - what external use of the oil ??? "Gets rid of lactic acid" - how? "People who sweat a lot" - a classic aromatherapy error taken from the use of the **herb**. The oil cannot possibly do that because if anything it heats the skin and therefore opens pores, whereas the herb is highly astringent and closes pores. "Purifies blood" - wow, better let the blood transfusion service know then! "Diuretic" - yes if the oil was taken internally, externally no. "Digestive problems" - yes if the oil was taken internally, externally no.

### SANDALWOOD OIL.

"Uses: Antiseptic to the urinary tract" - yes if the oil was taken internally, externally no. "Fluid retention" - maybe if the oil was taken internally, externally no. "genito urinary conditions" - as above. "Diarrhea" - as above.

### TEA TREE OIL.

"Main properties: Anti viral" - It is NOT only the water soluble components are.

"Uses: Genital Herpes" - **ILLEGAL IN MANY COUNTRIES FOR A COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE PRACTITIONER TO TREAT THIS CONDITION**.

"Vaginal infections (tampons)" - **Simply outrageously dangerous advice**. "Black widow and funnel web spider bites" - maybe if you were in the bush with no medical attention and miles from a hospital, otherwise highly **dangerous advice** and anyway tea tree oil is NOT an antivenom!!

"Less irritating than most oils". - It is not, there are many less irritating oils. Also tea tree is emerging as a skin sensitizing oil.

### THYME OIL.

"Uses: Intestinal infections, parasites" - only if used internally, otherwise nonsense.

### VETIVER OIL.

"Main properties: Stimulates blood flow" - how?? "Emmenagogue" - it is not.

"Promotes pancreatic secretions" - if that advice was given to a diabetic **IT COULD HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES**. It is nonsense anyway. "Coronary arteries, veins (stimulates blood flow)". - This is plain crazy!

### YLANG OIL.

"Uses: Intestinal infection" - what used externally or given internally. Since a lot of ylang essential oil is adulterated with synthetic chemicals the consequences of advocating its internal use are mind boggling.

**Summary: A shameful indictment of the level of education approved by organisations such as the CFA in Canada, NAHA in the USA and even some courses in the UK. Such errors are commonplace throughout this trade. Also a shameful indictment of Government departments who allow such dangerous trash to be taught in their colleges.**

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