

ROSEWOOD OIL

**Why you do not need it.
Why you should not use it.**

Introduction:

Despite the overwhelming ecological evidence against supplying Rosewood oil, many aromatherapy companies continue to do so **because of the demand from therapists**. The vast majority of aromatherapy training courses and books also promote its use.

In mid December 2003 the body of a 27 year old Greenpeace activist was found floating in the Amazon. Emily Craddock was investigating the activities of the illegal loggers operating throughout the Amazon basin. It is believed that she may have fallen overboard. However, as it is believed that loggers had threatened this expedition, investigations are ongoing. It is known that Brazilian campaigners against illegal logging have been threatened with their lives. My respects to Emily and her family, a sad loss to the world at such a young age.

I would just ask those who insist on selling and using rosewood oil to consider this: What you have done is **indirectly** contribute to the death of the young lady mentioned above. All the excuses the trade come up with about "we only use the sawdust" "we only use the leaves" "we are only tiny users compared to other trades" etc. **are hogwash to cover them continuing to trade in endangered species and helping support criminals.**

The aromatherapy world is purported to be holistic and caring - how can this be reconciled with using such products? Although the volume of oil used in aromatherapy is not large compared to other trades, it is up to everyone to play their part in raising awareness of environmental issues. It has been proved that public awareness - no matter how small - can have an impact on those traders who over-exploit natural resources.

Endangered status.

UPDATE: CITES at their 2013 conference upgraded the protection of trees with the common name "Rosewood". This includes Aniba and Dalbergia nigra trees. It now becomes illegal for member nations to import the timber and finished products. If the essential oil is classified as a "finished product" is not so clear.

Here are some links for you to check on conservation and protection:

<http://news.mongabay.com/2013/0211-stott-rosewood-ban.html>
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/32985/0>

Many species of the so called 'rosewoods' are on the C.I.T.E.S (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) lists which prohibits importation of the *wood* into all signatory countries including the USA. However, as is often the case with ecological issues, **the US Government in their efforts to protect trade above everything, permit the importation of *finished goods* from these trees.** Therefore, that is how the oil gets into the USA legally despite the the oil being obtained illegally in its country of origin.

In the UK, our incompetent Civil Service do not bother to enforce laws such as the CITES treaties as we still import large amounts of illegally cut woods and other endangered species

One of the species grown for the extraction of essential oil is aniba rosaeodora. To quote the Species Unit at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, UK "The species aniba

rosaeodora is found in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Peru and Surinam. **It is endangered in all these distributions and is in the global threat category."**

In a perfumery trade journal - Perfumery and Essential Oils Record as early as 1959 it concluded that "the existence of Rosewood trees was severely threatened".

A report on Brazilian rosewood production concluded that severe ecological harm was being caused by the "mining" of wild forest trees. Ohashi S. et al. 1997. Perfumer & Flavorist. Vol.22. 1-5.

In 1992 the Natural Resource Institute, UK, published a survey showing that illegal crude stills for Rosewood extraction were being floated down the rivers on rafts in order to access remote jungle areas where immature trees were being cut and the oil distilled on site.

Its production & traders lies.

On the sites of many aromatherapy suppliers you will still see this oil being promoted along with a whole bunch of misinformation taken out of the popular aromatherapy novels. This one in India is about the worst: <http://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/essential-oils/health-benefits-of-rosewood-essential-oil.html> **Their claims are a bunch of trash!** I should add you will find numerous sites claiming their oil is from sustainable sources, but what most are selling is rosewood **leaf oil** which is nothing like the wood oil.

It is never as simple as cutting down the trees required. Surrounding forest cover has to be cleared in order to get at and remove the timber causing massive ecological damage. We are all aware of the severe affect this can have on global warming. Reflect also on the destruction of endangered and unknown medicinal plants growing on and around these trees.

Rosewood trees do not yield sufficient essential oils in their heartwood until they are at least 40 years old. Therefore, to be a sustainable source now, the trees had to be planted at least 40 years ago - **they were not!** However, the most important issue is as follows: If the oil being sold is rosewood LEAF oil, then it should be described as such. It is false marketing to call an oil traditionally derived from the heartwood of a 40 year old tree, by the same name as the oil from the leaves. This is like saying petitgrain oil is the same as neroli - well it comes from the same tree.

The trades lies:

An Internet search of aromatherapy suppliers will quickly come across those claiming their oil comes from environmentally sustainable sources such as the **leaves** of plantation trees. These companies are simply passing on to their customers the lies told by the big dealers in rosewood oil. Likewise, past aromatherapy journals dating back over 10 years contain those same lies. Some of the first claims in this respect came from a UK supplier that many aromatherapists think is reputable.

It is now clear that the essential oil traders have been lying for years about the origin of Rosewood oil. There has **never** been any ecologically sustainable production of this oil.

Since the major chemical in Rosewood Oil is linalool - a readily available cheap fragrance chemical - it is easy to manufacture a fake oil. Only analysis done by an expert can detect clever adulteration with synthetic linalool. The oil was always produced for the perfume and tobacco flavouring trades. The Tobacco flavouring chemicals are around 1% of the oil. That leaves 99% of the oil as a by-product. Guess where this cheap by-product ended up? In the aromatherapy trade of course as "pure natural rosewood oil".

Therapeutic uses.

I have always been against the use of rosewood oil in aromatherapy not only because of the environmental issues, but also on the basis that **95% of the therapeutics are the inventions of aromatherapy authors.** The early aromatherapy writers guessed the uses of this oil based on the

fact it contains a lot of linalool which they considered made rosewood oil a relaxant. However, linalool isomers differ a lot between species and have different effects.

Most of the claimed therapeutic uses for rosewood oil are only around 25-30 years old - except for the handful of medicinal uses reported by French authors in the late 1800s. The modern 'invented' uses have simply become accepted as the norm by therapists who suck in everything the novel writers and oil suppliers tell them. These same authors and teachers will claim they found out about the uses of rosewood by using it on their clients. However, I know this is not correct because rarely are single oils used in therapy and also there is no mechanism within aromatherapy - other than the popular novels - to collate and check claimed therapeutic effects. As these authors have never taken into account the placebo effect in their observed results, then their observations are highly debatable as to their accuracy.

Rosewood oil was originally produced solely for the fragrance trade. **The indigenous tribes never cut the trees down, distilled the wood and then used the oil in their traditional medicines. Therefore there is absolutely no traditional information to draw on in regards the medicinal uses for this oil.**

We can get plenty of relaxing effects from lavender, mentha citrata and many other oils that are grown as commercial crops in a sustainable manner.

My attitude has always been why use rosewood oil at all? We have plenty of other relaxing oils that will do the job far better.

See also:

Chrissie Wildwood articles now here:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20060711194031/http://www.chrissie-wildwood.com/>

<http://www.cropwatch.org.uk>

BBC world news report 1: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3024636.stm>

BBC world news report 2: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2193172.stm>

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