

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

In response to the letter from Sheryll G, Ryan in your last issue, I find it peculiar that someone would consider cancelling such an excellent journal simply because they did not agree with the views of a single writer.

"Bent on discrediting 90% of aromatherapy teachers," not true, but yes for some 'leaders in the trade', as I have the **evidence** that some have been promoting dangerous and misleading information for years. Several have established their 'credibility' by such methods as clever marketing, churning out poorly researched books and setting up trade associations, rather than by their depth of knowledge. I feel very sorry for the people who have paid them hard earned cash in return for education of extremely doubtful merit, and furious when ill people are parted from their money, by being misled into thinking that the external application of essential oil can help cancer, diabetes, anemia, etc. Oh yes, I have the **evidence** from 'recognized course providers.' **Note: since this old article, some of that evidence has been put in other articles on this site.**

The aromatherapy trade has indeed made great advances over the last 10-15 years, but so have several other forms of complimentary and mainstream medicine who made that progress on the basis of honesty and integrity. You know the saying "You can con some of the public all of the time but not all of them all of the time." That saying may at last be coming home to roost in aromatherapy.

I did NOT say that the chemical information on chemotypes was "useless information", but I am adamant that chemotypes should not be used in aromatherapy until such time as they have been tested by the R.1.F.M, and similar organizations. Dermal testing is even more important when the chemotypes have no history of use in traditional medicine.

Years ago, I gave up trying to help trade organizations and journals uncover the truth about aromatherapy services when I realized that the teachings of the gods and goddesses were 'not open to discussion.' Ever heard of "vested interests?" I also suggested to the U.K. Research Council for Complimentary Medicine, some years ago, that they should set up a scheme to peer review books on complimentary medicine because so much dangerous rubbish is being churned out. I never got a reply. Misleading literature compromises public safety and can lead to our useful therapy having to suffer over-reactions from pharmaceutical industry interests. The information in my reference manuals which attempts to correct some inaccuracies, has been around for over 30 years. Yet, over that period, how many aromatherapy authors and course providers have spent time and money on adequately establishing if the essential oils they recommend can cause adverse reactions? Oils like Verbena are still being recommended and, yet, RIFM has advised their members not to use the untreated oils for around 20 years!

As to the pennyroyal case, anyone using **any** essential oil or conventional medication for such long periods could end up getting liver damage. Incidentally, this case, to the best of my knowledge, has not been reported in the medical literature and it is exactly such unsubstantiated anecdotal reports that abound in aromatherapy and lead to so much misinformation.

Your sincerely, Martin Watt, England.