

AN ARGUMENT FOR THE FREE AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL OILS TO THE PUBLIC.

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The use of essential oils for their relaxant or stimulant effects on the emotions, for relieving symptoms of ailments such as coughs, colds, flu, catarrh, sinusitis etc. can be an extremely simple process and requires little if any training to achieve excellent results. The simple addition of a few drops of Lavender oil to a bath IS IN FACT AROMATHERAPY. Of course, in certain cases, the desired effects can be substantially enhanced by the additional use of massage for which training is necessary. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong with most essential oils being available for retail to the public in shops, provided simple safety precautions and simple instructions are provided with the oils.

Many governments around the world are permitting, or actively promoting self-medication for simple ailments. This has been forced on them because of the huge escalation in the costs of government funded health care programs. I am certain that if essential oils were available in many more shops that the result would be a significant reduction in unnecessary visits to the doctor for self limiting ailments. Particularly for flu, coughs, colds, mild depression, etc. Of course in America some private doctors would not want to lose business, but for many people on income support programs, a reduction in federal health care costs would be welcome by government and overworked medics.

An excellent example of how self-medication using essential oils can be beneficial is mild depression; this starts as generally feeling pissed-off with everyone, your life, the world etc. If the simple use of some wonderful fragrant oil in a bath can lift that depression, even if only for a few hours, then this may prevent a drift into deeper clinical depression with all its associated drug and ultimately hospitalisation costs. Perhaps Lavender oil should be given away **free** by health care authorities !! it would save them a fortune in drugs and medical fees.

If a limited range of safe essential oils were available on the toiletries shelves in supermarkets, we could well end up with one or two deaths due to silly people who did crazy things like drinking a whole bottle. However, this extremely slim chance must always be weighed against the thousands of deaths and severe illness resulting from misuse of over the counter drugs, from prescribed medication, or from ordinary household products. On the other hand, I would bet the attempted suicide rate would decline, and the people who pop the bottle or two of booze in the shopping trolley for emotional support may also drop in number.

Many Aromatherapists will of course insist that essential oils are only safe in their hands. This attitude is patent nonsense as the vast majority of essential oils have been approved as G.R.A.S. substances in the U.S.A. This classification means 'generally regarded as safe' when used by various trades at their normal levels of use. Some of the oils aromatherapists are told are "dangerous" are in fact permitted food flavours at higher concentrations than are used in massage. Whereas other oils recommended on many aromatherapy courses are in fact quite hazardous when applied to the skin. Clearly therefore, before essential oils were made more freely available, there is a big education job to be done among retailers to prevent them marketing hazardous oils.

Aromatherapists should not be afraid of the general public using essential oils; I believe it to be a misconception that such an action would put aromatherapists out of business. The reason is because once people learn about how beneficial essential oils can be, a percentage will want to take this further and perhaps go for a massage.

I have encountered several people (particularly men), who would say "I don't like smelly perfumes,"

but once persuaded to have a bath with some oil, or have a back massage, 9 times out of 10 they were hooked and the fear of someone unknown touching them with one of these 'effeminate oils' was swiftly forgotten. I am sure many therapists will have had similar experiences. I know that the way I got interested in Herbal medicine years ago was because I purchased some anti-hayfever herbal tablets in a health food store. When I realised that they seemed to be helping my severe hayfever better than the drugs, my next action was not to go out and get some more, but to look in the phone book for a qualified herbalist who I hoped (rightly) could help me even more.

All aromatherapists should arm themselves with accurate referenced information on the hazards associated with using essential oils. They can then promote, or defend the free availability of the safer oils.

Addendum: Since writing this a few years ago, things have moved at an alarmingly fast pace to get traditional remedies restricted. Around the world various regulatory bodies (driven by pharmaceutical interests), are persuading legislators to restrict the publics access to traditional remedies. Many restrictions being imposed are **not based on sound scientific evidence** of adverse effects, but rather are on the advice of trade committees whose members tend to be all people trained in the chemical sciences. I do not know of any advisory committees in the European community that have any traditional healers sitting with them. **Only you the general public can do anything to stop this insidious take-over of natural medicines by the International pharmaceutical interests.**

Lobby your politicians, tell them you will not vote for them if they allow your freedoms to be restricted by people who have no interest in your rights. Already in Europe only a minute percentage of the population vote at EEC elections. **The politicians really are so ignorant they do not accept it is because the general population simply do not want them.**

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