

**A selection of emails to newsgroups such as: IDMA; ATFE; oils\_herbs\_etc.  
Not in dated order. There are many others buried in my files and still to be dug out.**

**There are many emails in the zip file 'oldemails' which you can download.**

October 2000

**To those that feel despair and despondency after reading my articles.**

Do not despair about the effects of essential oils. They can be wonderful healing agents in a number of ways.

Do not despair and think aromatherapy does not work, it does, but not necessarily in the ways you have been taught, or for the conditions you are told it will help.

Do not despair and think you can't help friends, family and clients by utilising aromatherapy. You can, and they will be enormously grateful.

I hope that helps the despondency a little.

**The despair comes in with:**

Aromatherapy book publishers who don't give a damn if what they publish is accurate as long as they are making big bucks. A few aromatherapy books have made a small fortune for certain publishers; writers of course are lucky to get 10% of the cover price.

The trades associations who cannot get to grips with quality control on what teachers are telling students. This is because most of their teachers have not got a clue themselves.

The aromatherapy journal publishers who prefer to print the pretty poetic articles, because they know that is what most of their readers really want.

The teachers who just read aromatherapy books and regurgitate their contents without a second thought.

The well-known figures who take snippets of sound science, and weave a whole load of inaccurate pseudo-science around it to make themselves look knowledgeable.

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**How can a student sort the wheat from the chaff?**

See if an aromatherapy book contains references to scientific articles and books, or just to other aromatherapy books. Are those references to the use of the oil, or another herbal extract and not relevant.

Purchase **sound referenced safety information**, never accept such information from unreferenced aromatherapy sources. I do get very irate with the numbers of people who ask safety questions that could be properly answered, if only they took the bother to purchase one of the 3 or so publications on the subject.

Do your best to check-out references for yourself. Major libraries can obtain copies of research articles. Yes of course this costs money, but if you are involved in a profession that is dealing with health care issues, **you owe it to your clients and yourself to make sure that what you do is safe and effective.**

Stop being lazy and think you can learn all you need to know from taking a few weekends classes and reading a few books - you can't. The study of essential oils is a lifetimes learning. I will never stop learning myself about this vast subject. I have never taken an aromatherapy course, only

massage. OK I trained as a herbalist which equipped me with a basic knowledge. However, I found out most I know about aromatherapy by ferreting it out from all kinds of places. No reason others can't do this if they have a reasonable level of intelligence. And yes I do share my knowledge with others via IATA, but I will not under any circumstances share everything I have got via the current aromatherapy set-up.

Ask your teachers pertinent questions. If they can't give you an answer and particularly if they try to demean you, then think twice about if you wish to waste more money on their classes.

Get angry if you find out the wool has been pulled over your eyes. Don't just give up and put it behind you. Get evidence if you think you have been lied to and cheated. Only by gathering EVIDENCE can you have any hope of turning this trade around from its long history of gross dishonesty.

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### **Trade censorship.**

In the past, and to a degree still so, the aromatherapy press has been the subject of self-censorship. Journals have not dared print certain articles criticising the icons of the trade and of course they did not want to loose revenue from their advertisers. Only a couple of Journals had the guts to publish such articles; when they did, they immediately came under fire from 'trade interests'. This is what is so great about the internet-uncensored views, like it, lump it, or sue me!

My articles give a different picture of this trade than the rose tinted fairy tails that are the norm. Aggressive they are, yes, **I always get angry when I know people are being swindled out of their hard-earned cash by confidence tricksters.** I will never tone down my material "because you can hook more people with honey", that's not my style. I just hope those that read my materials have enough brainpower to read the stuff, even if they don't like what they hear, and then to check out what I say for themselves.

I have little financial gain from attacking bad education. The gain is exposing the trades endemic poor standards to public scrutiny. *Martin Watt.*

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### **My harsh words.**

I have been involved with this trade in various capacities since 1985. During that period I have known many of the leading members both personally and indirectly from their work. I have also had a pretty good exposure to the supply side of the oils trade. So when I come out with statements like con artists, fraudsters, etc. I know exactly what I am talking about, and I am **not referring to people like this just because they have different opinions to me.** Such people have made certain they get themselves into positions of influence within the trade by charming the pants off people. There is nothing different in that respect between aromatherapy and many other trades. However what is different (as I have said time and time again) is that aromatherapy treats **health problems.** In that case we should try and ensure we get the finest information resources and products possible. Sadly that has historically not been the case, and the market is flooded with false products and appallingly inaccurate and dangerous education.

It is also true that in the essential oils trade, and aromatherapy education, are many people who do not know what the word 'truth' means. **In some cases they have become such expert liars I am sure they believe themselves.** One reason has been that until this newsgroup was formed, rarely were their statements ever challenged.

Now my position is this: I am always ready to help and support people who have been misled and genuinely want to get their act together. Several people on this group can confirm that. However what I have always steadfastly refused to do is to help re educate people that for years have been extracting cash from gullible people by selling rubbish services.

That is where I part company with people who seem to think that you can make honest people out of crooks by re educating them. For example as soon as I saw suggestions on this group that people should help educate Young Living distributors, and give Gary Young a voice at a conference, then I cut my ties with those promoting these ideas. In my opinion, trying to re-educate people with a consistent history of lying and cheating just gives them greater professional standing and a license to print money.

I am often accused of being negative, my reply to that is my **positive contributions** to this trade have been bigger than many people know. For many years I have been banging the drum of safety and I know that has influenced some of the associations and companies. I also have a huge amount of information resources that I use selectively for education purposes.

So what is the answer? To be honest the easiest one for me is to get out of the trade and let the con artists carry on unchallenged. If I could find myself a job I liked, I would do that tomorrow.

It seems to me most of the trade associations in the UK and the USA have no real desire to turn aromatherapy into the respectable and useful profession it should be. All they do is tinker around with things like length of training, subjects taught, exams and desperately trying to win influence and power at all costs. All of this is setting the cart before the horses. You can never hope to have a truly professional trade until you ensure that tuition is accurate and goods being used are genuine. You also need to ensure that there is a limited intake of students. Of course in the UK this would mean probably 70% of schools having to close-great! Historically aromatherapy schools have only continued in existence because of the massive numbers of practitioners leaving it. People qualify, but soon realise few can make a good living because of all the hot competition-uncontrolled by any trade associations.

Yes this is all gloomy and negative, I do not see any significant changes coming along and I really do not know how aromatherapy will end up. It is a real shame because aromatherapy has got so much to offer with treating a wide range of health problems. For my part all I can do is continue producing materials that I shall from now on be mainly targeting at the medical profession. The only reason being because only they have got the kind of training necessary to treat some of the conditions essential oils are ideal for. Believe me I have no love of the medical profession, but on the other hand I can't see the average aromatherapist being competently trained in health matters in the foreseeable future.

I have been delighted to see on this group a huge growth in people willing to challenge trade organisations and the way they function. It is only by the members continually challenging these people that the trade has any hope. Keep it up, and to those that curl up and die when they hear dissent, I would say you should not be in the business of helping people with health problems. Suppressing whistle blowers is what has lead to thousands of cases of medical negligence. Regretfully suppressing dissent is also very common in the whole of complementary health care.  
*Martin Watt, UK.*

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Date May 2004  
to: ATFE or Oils-Herbs?

#### **Academic studies on plant extracts.**

Just a few words of caution for those not familiar with evaluating scientific studies such as those Liz Tams pointed you to.

When reading such papers it is critically important to *\*not take at face value\** what they say. Time and time again I have come across major errors that make the authors conclusions of academic interest only. Here I have thousands of copies of studies which on first glance look convincing, but upon closer examination I have not included them in my own database on oils for a variety of reasons.

Here are just a few factors to examine:

1) Has the trial been done using an essential oil or another type of plant extract?

It is very common for aromatherapy authors and teachers to confuse this. A superb trial on a herbal extract used internally, suddenly gets turned into "this essential oil does the same thing if rubbed onto someone's skin in aromatherapy".

You will often find tests where hexane or chloroform is used to extract the oil from a plant. In such a case any results may not be applicable to the distilled oil. With the cooking process of distillation new chemicals are produced and other important ones are destroyed. Therefore you cannot assume one type of extract will give similar results to another.

2) Is the essential oil used in testing the real thing?

It is common to see in scientific studies that the oil has either been supplied by a laboratory reagent company, by purchase in a local market, or from a trial distillation from plants grown in the local botanic garden. In all these circumstances the results may well not have any connection with the use of a commercial oil.

3) Has the researcher had the oil they are using analysed?

Frequently not and therefore they have no idea on what they are using. Please do not forget that such tests are often done by undergraduates who main interest is getting a convincing set of results for their degree and then getting out to the local bar asap :)

4) Have the tests been conducted on cell cultures and then assumptions made of activity within a living body?

This is becoming increasingly common and I have grave doubts that you can extrapolate such results to real people. This is particularly so where anti viral actions are being tested. This type of testing is why increasingly the scientific community are misleading the legislators over the toxicity of herbs and other so called "toxins".

5) Has the research been conducted just using individual chemicals that occur in an oil?

Again increasingly common and sometimes is valid, but not always because it leaves out of the picture the other 300 plus chemicals occurring in the whole oil. Such research can be a useful guide to the efficacy of an oil, but it flies in the face of what ought to be considered 'natural medicine'.

6) Has the chemical used in the tests been extracted from the oil, or is it from a laboratory chemicals supplier?

That one is very common indeed. Lab. grade chemicals are often impure and any results drawn using them are most unreliable when compared to the natural extracted chemical. To get purified synthetic chemicals is possible, but they are very costly indeed and therefore most labs use the cheaper grades with all their impurities.

Do not be fooled that a paper has been "peer reviewed". That system is only as good as the "peers" doing the reviews, often such people do not have the first clue about the trades involved with essential oils. I have seen several articles in nursing journals that were not worth the paper they were printed on simply because the publishers chose reviewers who they thought knew their subject but did not.

The above are just a few of the things I have to be on the look out for when adding scientific studies to my database. At least I try my hardest to get it right while others just throw together irrelevant studies to bulk out what they publish or give to students on their courses. *Martin Watt*

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<http://www.aromamedical.org>