

**Sent to a Russian blog site in 2006 following a request. The exact group name is lost.**

Dear Nika,

I would like to take the opportunity to explain to those who only speak Russian, some information on others and myself that has been discussed on English language newsgroups. I am sure many of you are not aware of the extensive exchanges on these newsgroups going back years.

I have been involved with the aromatherapy trade for around 15 years. I also learnt the **real** trade in essential oils from big oil importers and analysts. Never forget that aromatherapy is small in terms of the world trade in essential oils. The big oil traders supplying the food and fragrance trades were around long before aromatherapy was invented. For example, some of the nicest Silver fir oil comes from Russia in Tonne lots, not in 10 ml. Bottles! Most aromatherapy suppliers started off as kitchen sink operations without any prior knowledge of the subject. **In those days most aromatherapy suppliers were sold fragrance blends as real oils and many still are.**

During my early days I got to know some leading figures and also had the opportunity to evaluate their writings. What is clear is that the vast majority of aromatherapy books are semi fictitious works. The authors had no sound training in what they wrote about and few had the abilities necessary to evaluate any research they came across. The whole of the aromatherapy world has evolved around the works of semi fiction and the writings of these authors have been accepted as facts - far from it!

My early work was to introduce to the trade some facts on essential oils safety. This was at the request of a UK oils trade association. It was during the research for that work (Plant Aromatics) that I soon realised how inaccurate most aromatherapy education was. I decided to follow up on this by carefully investigating the claims made by various authors. The attached article on skin absorption was part of that investigation. Despite many theories being discussed since that was written, no one has come up with conclusive evidence that essential oils can be absorbed by the skin in clinically effective volumes in the way they are used diluted in massage.

Worse was to come when I started investigating therapeutic uses and found there was no evidence to support many claims, and most were in fact the known effects of herbs taken internally. The anecdotal or so called traditional use claims were often badly flawed or none existent. The claims made based on the chemical profile of the oil were pure invention based on incorrect chemistry from certain French therapists. Yet even worse, were the convincing professional confidence tricksters I discovered in the aromatherapy trade organisations and among oil suppliers. These are people who got into the trade in the early days simply as a way of making money from gullible people. This trade has grown on the basis of hype and misinformation and that continues throughout the world today, **it is being made worse by dishonest multi level marketing techniques.**

I would like to point out here that I am a trained herbalist and have the highest respect for Shamanism. However, due to that background, I know that many of the claims made for aromatherapy are not based on true traditional medicine but are modern inventions. I have to go back here to the fact that most of the books you may have read are not written by people trained in traditional medicine and therefore their fundamental knowledge on what they wrote about was very weak. Those works have been taken to be accurate information written by experts - sorry not so.

Aromatherapy can be superb either with massage or on its own, but often not for the conditions you will find in the books. People in the greater Russian area have used the therapeutic properties of aromatic plants for thousands of years. In some cases the traditional knowledge in that part of the world has come down in a purer form than in Western countries. Also some of your scientists have done superb investigations on aromatic plants. So please do not assume the West is your best source for information on aromatherapy, much of the good stuff is in your backyards.

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