

Tony Burfield

I was sad to hear of Tony passing in May 2023. We first met around 20 years ago when he came to my then home in the wilds of Essex. That meeting was prompted by his contacts with Sylla in the USA that I also knew. It soon emerged that we were both big fans of Jimi Hendrix and Tony had a big collection of his tapes.

I had already discovered that Tony was an essential oils analyst and checked oils for large suppliers. Therefore, he had an excellent knowledge of the trade and what was on the market. Like myself he was also interested in the safety issues of using the oils for therapy.

Subsequently we had numerous exchanges on the old newsgroups where Tony had started posting the tricks of the trade. That aspect put him at odds with many suppliers who did not like their long held secrets being made public.

I was delighted when he started helping Chrissie Wildwood over her campaigns against the UK Soil Association supplying certification of organic growth for essential oils by just relying on suspect documentation. Tony was also a prime mover in trying to get the European safety committees to revise their inept proposals on consumer safety based on weak or suspect research papers.

I had the greatest respect for Tony and his work in setting up 'Cropwatch' with his numerous articles on threatened aromatic plants and trees, geographical source reports, chemical analysis of oils and other important information. This all helped to provide people with accurate information on the trade in essential oils and other plants. It also exposed the misrepresentation of suppliers about their sources and purity of oils. Sadly that still remains to this day.

Tony has left behind him a fantastic body of work that those using and selling essential oils should get hold of and use in their work. For example his book National Aromatic Materials: Odours and Origins, first published 2000, second edition 2016 as well as his numerous articles.

Aromatherapy associations in particular should ensure their students gain accurate knowledge and not rely mainly on trade hype. Tony's work provides much of that fact based education.

In respect.
Martin Watt
aromamedical.org