Aromatic News from The Aromatic Plant Project • Autumn 2005

Essential Oils for the Endocrine Glands
Exotic Uses by Jeanne Rose

HYPOTHALAMUS — regulates autonomic nervous system and the metabolism, the 'supreme head' of the system

Cabezuea Essential Oil • Myocarpus fastigiatus
Plant Part: Wood
Extraction Method: Steam Distillation
Origin: Paraguay
Description: A tall tropical tree, 12-15 m high, with a very hard wood, extremely resistant to moisture and mold growth.
Common Uses: In skin care, it is used to treat cuts, scars, and wounds. It is also used to treat chills, coughs, and colds. Antiseptic, balsamic, cicatrizing.

• Exotic Use: Considered to have an effect upon the hypothalamus gland and thus on the HPA axis.
Blends well with: Rose, Cassia, Cedrus atlantica, Mimosa, and other woody and oriental bases.
Aromatic Scent: Cabezuea has a sweet, woody, very delicate and slightly floral aroma.
History: Native to Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and north Argentina, the oil has been used since ancient times by natives to heal wounds, ulcers, and to obviate scars.
Cautions: Non-toxic, non-irritant, non-sensitizing.

PITUITARY/PINEAL/THYMUS — Pituitary hormone regulates growth and seems to control the secretions of the other endocrine glands, especially the thyroid and the adrenals. Pineal gland is considered the seat of the soul, the vestigial third eye, has clairvoyant potential and is important for brain and sex development, for adolescence and puberty.

Agnus castus Essential Oil: Vitex agnus castus
Plant Part: Seed
Extraction Method: Steam Distillation
Origins: Arabic verse
Description: A small tree or bush, 8 feet high, with long stems of flowers. Grows well in many places, including San Francisco. Vitex agnus castus consists of the dried ripe fruits of a densely branched shrub that is indigenous to the Mediterranean and Central Asia. The plant blooms in the height of the summer and after pollination develops dark reddish brown to black fruits about the size of a peppercorn. This dried fruit is used in medicine today.

Common Uses: There is evidence that aqueous-alcoholic extracts of chaste berry inhibits secretion of prolactin. Hyperprolactinaemia is associated with amenorrhea (lack of a menstrual cycle); therefore, Chaste berry can be used to cure amenorrhea if increased levels of prolactin are the cause.
Key Constituents: • Volatile oils: 1,8-cineol, 1 alpha-pinene and beta-pinene. The fruits were found to have 1) .3–1.64% yield of essential oil, 22% sabinene, 20% 1.8 cineole, and 6% alpha-Pinene. The essential oil has an antibacterial activity. 2) The fruits also contain flavonoids and iridoid glycosides. The iridoid glycosides have recently been quantified and consist of 0.3% acubin, 0.6% agnoside and 0.07% eurostoside. • Iridoid glycosides: agnoside, acubin, eurostoside. • Flavonoids: casticin, 3,6,7,4'-tetramethylyether of 6-hydroxy-camphor oil; • Alkaloids: viticine.

• Exotic Use: By inhalation this essential oil may work to stimulate the pituitary/pineal area and should be used with Sandalwood, and Rosemary verbenone.
Blends Well with: Probably not as a perfume or synergy blend but only in the category as a therapeutic medicinal application.
Aromatic Scent: Meaty, herbaceous, spicy

History: The commercial crops mainly come from Albania and Morocco. Vitex agnus castus has been used in medicine for centuries, one of the first specific records of its medical use is by Hippocrates in the 4th Century BC. Both Hippocrates and later Dioscorides in his De Materia Medica written in AD 77 talk about using Vitex as a sitz bath for diseases of the uterus. Throughout the middle Ages, medical writers in Europe simply recopied the ancient Greek and Roman sources, and Vitex was used to treat female disorders. Gerard, one of the great Renaissance herbalists, gathered information about herbs from both Greek and Roman sources as well as from folk and professional Herbalists at the time. He and other writers on Herbal Medicine such as Turner, Dodoen and Parkinson recommend Vitex for inflammation of the uterus and as an emmenagogue.

After the early 1700s, Vitex fell out of popularity in England where it was not rediscovered until it gathered new interest as an herb for female reproductive imbalances in the mid 1900s. The modern interest in Vitex began in Germany, where in 1930 Dr Gerhard Madaus conducted some of the first scientific research on the plant's effects on the female hormonal system. Madaus developed a patent medicine from an extract of dried Vitex fruits. This medicine trademarked as Agnolyt has subsequently been used in almost all scientific studies on Vitex. However, no individual constituent of Vitex has been shown to have an intrinsic hormonal activity, and the chemical composition responsible for its action has not yet been isolated.

Cautions: Key Actions. They inhibit the action of male androgens (sex hormones), therefore, it was used to reduce sexual desire.
**Adrenal** — the cortex produces cortisol, is important in acid regulation, the medulla produces adrenaline, also important in menopause. Adrenal glands produce the hormones that help you cope with danger and the stress of everyday life. Too much stress can exhaust the adrenals.

**Ambrette Essential Oil**

- *Hibiscus Abelmoschus*

*Abelmoschus moschatus* L. (syn. *Hibiscus abelmoschus* L., family Malvaceae) is a plant native to India

**Plant Part**: Seed

**Extraction Method**: Steam distillation

**Origin**: India

**Description**: Annual, tropical herbaceous plant. The seeds are in a hairy, cornered pyramid capsule.

**Common Uses**: these seeds have medicinal applications; as an antidote for snakebites; an emulsion from the seeds is considered to be anti-spasmodic. In India, The bitter, sweet, acrid, aromatic seeds are used as a tonic and are considered "cooling, aphrodisiac, ophthalmic, cardio-tonic, digestive, stomachic, constipating, carminative, pectoral, diuretic, stimulant, antispasmodic, deodorant, and effective against "kapha" and "vata," intestinal complaints, stomatitis; and diseases of the heart, allays thirst and checks vomiting."

**Exotic Use**: Considered to have an effect on the adrenal glands along with true Borneol working well with Rose Geranium and Black Spruce as an inhalant to stimulate function.

**Blends well with**: The musky odor makes it a base or fixative note, as a vegetable substitute for true Musk, lends itself well with any floral and resin such as Cistus.

**Aromatic Scent**: The seeds, with a strong musk odor, are used in the perfume industry and it is noted for its rich, sweet floral-musky, distinctly wine-like odor with a bouquet and 'roundness' rarely found in other perfumery materials.

**History**: (1) The seed oil is widely used as a fixative in fragrance formulations and is a valuable adjunct to high-grade perfume compositions to which it imparts a strong and characteristic musk note (2). It has a much smoother odor than synthetic musk compounds.

**Caution**: Strong powerful odor can make one dizzy.

**Thyroid/Thymus** — Thyroid is the gland of energy production, controls growth of specialized organs and tissues. The Parathyroid is the controller of calcium metabolism and the excitability of muscle and nerve. The Thymus is the controller of growth in childhood, and has other important function such as building immunity. The thymus gland functions as the site of maturation of T-lymphocytes (T-cells), which confer cell-mediated immunity on the host organism; thus, removal or malfunction of the thymus can lead to absence of cell-mediated immunity, and a consequent loss of resistance to infection.

**Myrrh Essential Oil**

- *Commiphora molmol* or other spp. from family Burseraceae

**Plant Part**: Gum Resin collected from bushes

**Extraction Method**: Steam and Vacuum distillation

**Origin**: NE Africa and Arabia

**Description**: Myrrh is the resinous exudation of a particular wild tree.

**Common Uses and Properties**: Astringent and healer of gum tissue, Anti-microbial, astringent, carminative, anti-catarrhal, expectorant, vulnerary. Myrrh is an effective anti-microbial agent that has been shown to work in two complementary ways. Primarily it stimulates the production of white blood corpuscles (with their anti-pathogenic actions) and secondarily it has a direct anti-microbial effect. Myrrh may be used in a wide range of conditions where an anti-microbial agent is needed. It finds specific use in the treatment of infections in the mouth such as mouth ulcers, gingivitis, pyorrhea, as well as the catarrhal problems of pharyngitis and sinusitis. For a hyperthyroid or to tone the thyroid.

**Exotic Use**: For the thyroid, inhale Myrrh and for the thymus add *Thyme serpyllum* (Mother-of-Thyme or Creeping Thyme) or *Thyme mastichina* (also called Spanish wild Marjoram) with Elemi and Palmarosa. Myrrh helps expands awareness and visualize the future.

**Blends well with**: Palmarosa, Lavender, Frankincense, Juniper, Geranium, Cypress and other woody odors.

**Aromatic Scent**: Hot, smoky, woody, herbaceous and dry.

**History**: In use for over 3000 years, carried by Solomon's fleet in 1000 BC, used as church incense.

**Caution**: Non-toxic

**AND**

**Elemi Essential Oil**

- *Canarium luzonicum* from family Burseraceae

**Plant Part**: Gum Elemi is a soft, fragrant, and pathological exudation of a tree.

**Extraction Method**: Gum is steam-distilled.

**Origin**: The tree grows wild in the Philippine Islands.

**Description**: Manila elemi, when recent, occurs in transparent, soft, granular masses, consisting of a solution of
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solid resin in essential oil. Externally it has a light, canary-yellow color, and, as found in commerce, is largely solidified, presenting an opaque and granular fracture, due to the crystallization of the resin. Chips and other foreign substances are often found in the solid fragments. When wetted with a little alcohol, elemi readily disintegrates, showing a multitude of small, crystalline needles. It melts easily, a transparent fluid resulting. It has an aromatic, warm, acrid taste, and a fragrant odor, resembling that of the terebinthinates, the drug in many respects closely resembling the latter class of substances. It is insoluble in water, partly soluble in cold, and completely soluble in hot alcohol; easily soluble also in oil of turpentine and ether. Common Uses: Used to help wounds close, indicated for diarrhea, bronchitis, and ulcers.

* Exotic Uses: For the thyroid, inhale Elemi and Myrrh and for the thymus, Elemi and add Thymus CT serpyllum or Thymus CT mastichina with Palmarosa.
Blends well with: Any citrus scent, any other resin or gum scent; adds body to herbaceous odors.
Aromatic Scent: Citrus, spice and peppery, spicy
History: Several resinous bodies have at various times been placed in the European market under the name Elemi, all of which are believed to have been the products of plants of the natural order Burseraceae. The British Pharmacopoeia recognizes a product from the Philippine Islands known as Manila elemi, thought to be derived from the species above named.
Caution: None known

LUNG, SINUS
Ammi visnaga Essential Oil • Ammi visnaga
Plant Part – seeds; Fresh and dried seeds are used as a tea and the seeds are steam distilled to yield the oil. Oil yield is ?. Components are monoterpenes, esters, and chromones, mainly 1% khelline.

Extraction Method – steam-distilled
Origin - Mediterranean, North Africa, Morocco
Description of plant: The plant is very similar in appearance to the Carrot or Umbelliferaceae family. It is an annual plant growing up to two feet high, with a longish white root. The stem is erect, fluted and round. The plant branches at the top with delicate leaves repeatedly divided. The leaves become thin wisps just like the carrot. The umbel arises from a branching base, often with more than 100 rays or stalks 4-5 cm in length, each with a small umbel of numerous white flowers eventually with small egg-shaped elliptical fruits that are smooth, grayish brown. The leaves have a bitter taste and aromatic scent. "To 2.5 feet; leaves finely divided into linear threadlike segments; umbels spreading in flowers, 60-100 rays borne on a disc, to 4 inches long, as long as the divided involucral bracts, fruits to 3/32 in. long. Southern Europe naturalized in North America. Cultivated for its potential as a drug." (Hortus Third)

Common Uses: Seeds are diuretic, appetizer, carminative, stimulant, emmenagogue, lithotriptic (able to dissolve or release stones from bladder or kidney), and useful for all types of urinary disorders, angina, asthma, or gastric ulcers. An infusion of the seeds is used in all these cases. The essential oil is inhaled or can be taken internally and used as an antispasmodic, coronary dilator, bronchodilator, and anticoagulant. A doctor's recommendation is valuable for internal uses of this oil. The essential oil is indicated for insufficiency of the heart muscle, atherosclerosis, asthma, colitis, and liver disturbance.

* Exotic Uses: For prophylactic use, an inhalant of Ammi visnaga (or cromolyn sodium, Intal®) is used to mask the function of the mast cells to relieve symptoms of allergic asthma. There is much coumarin and cromone in the Mediterranean plant, but these components are detected only in traces in plants grown in the United States.
Blends Well With: As a therapeutic inhalant for allergy or asthma, this plant works well with Blue Tansy. Generally, these are not inhaled but taken internally.
Aromatic Scent: Spicy, earthy, sharp, mulch-like odor.
History: A tea made from the seeds of this plant has been in use for centuries as an anti-asthmatic and for other respiratory problems. In 1897 a major constituent was isolated in crystalline form and called "khellin". This was found on examination to be a relaxant on various types of smooth muscle tissue, i.e., the gut and bronchial tubes. However, the point at which the tea eases an asthmatic attack is also where it causes nausea and vomiting. The oil was studied in India and the noxious element was chemically removed. Ultimately this compound came to be called cromolyn sodium and is used in modern respiratory medicine. When cromolyn sodium is inhaled, it masks the function of the mast cells thereby decreasing attacks of allergic asthma. Ammi visnaga can also be used as an inhalant with other essential oils such as Rosemary pyramidalis and Eucalyptus smithii. The seed is often used in tincture form with other herbs such as turmeric, which acts as an anti-inflammatory. However, too much of the tincture can also result in nausea and vomiting. (Take only 10 drops 3x/day.)
Contraindications: Can cause photosensitization when used externally.

If you wish to receive a copy of the specific formulations, please send $5 and a SASE to the Aromatic Plant Project at our address.