

CAMOMILE



Roman Chamomile

Plant/Part: Herb/Dried Flowers (Source: France and Morocco)

Latin Name: Anthemis nobilis

Family: Asteraceae Compositae

Extraction: Distillation

AROMA: Roman Chamomile has a warm, sweet, herbaceous scent that is relaxing and calming.

PROPERTIES: It is soothing to all types of skin and is a wonderful addition to a massage oil for sore muscles. Known for its strong soothing effect on mind and body. The Roman and German are excellent for protecting dry skin. They have many uses e.g. can be used to treat nerve, headache, insomnia, menstrual disorders and the Roman is a comforting oil during high pollen count. (Unless you have an allergy to the ragweeds).

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Main constituents: Esters, Pinene, Fanesol, Nerolidol, Chamazulene, Pinocarvone, Cineol.

PRECAUTIONS: A gentle oil suitable for the young and fragile. One of the few essential oils that can be used on inflamed skin conditions, although high concentrations may further irritate. Best avoided in pregnancy.

BLENDS: Blends well with Lavender, Bergamot, Jasmine, Neroli, and Clary Sage, Rosemary, Ylang Ylang.

German Chamomile:

Plant/Part: Dried Flowers/Herb (Source: Germany)

Latin Name: Matricaria chamomilla or M. recutia

Family: Asteraceae [Compositae])

Extraction: Steam Distillation

AROMA: The odor is sweet and adds a warm, long-lasting undertone in perfumes. Spicy, sharp, sweet and musky.

PROPERTIES: German chamomile AKA blue chamomile or chamomile matricaria. The blue colour is from azulene which is formed during the distillation of the oil. All the Chamomiles are used in massage oils and herbal mixtures. Its analgesic action eases dull muscular pain particularly when connected to nervous conditions. Low back pain seems to respond well. In the same way useful for headaches, neuralgia, toothache and earache. Useful with menstrual problems since helps to regulate the menstrual cycle and eases period pain. Seems to be a popular choice for calming irritable effects of pre menstrual tension and the menopause. Soothes the stomach and often



relieves gastritis, diarrhoea, colitis, peptic ulcers, vomiting, wind, inflammation of the bowels - may be useful for irritable bowel syndrome. Also said to be helpful with liver problems, jaundice as well as disorders of the genito-urinary tract. Indicated for use with repeated infections since stimulates production of hire corpuscles which help to fight bacteria and fortify the defence system. Could be effective against anaemia

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Main constituents: Chamazulene, (Produced during steam distillation, not present in the fresh plant), Bisabolol oxide, Enyndicycloether, Farnesene.



PRECAUTIONS: A gentle oil suitable for the young and fragile. One of the few essential oils that can be used on inflamed skin conditions, although high concentrations may further irritate. Best avoided in pregnancy.

BLENDS: Blends well with: Bergamot, Jasmine, Neroli, Clary Sage, Rose.

USES:

The plants are related and the oils very similar. German chamomile oil contains more azulene, and its anti-inflammatory properties are somewhat stronger.

Digestive: stimulates the flow of gastric juices (carminative) and bile, tones the stomach, improves appetite, tones the liver, relaxes digestive muscles, thus relieving flatulence. used

for dyspepsia, colic, indigestion, gastritis, diarrhoea, ulcers, colitis, nausea.

Genito-Urinary: stimulates the production of urine (diuretic) and menstrual blood (emmenagogue). has an antiseptic effect, and is used to treat infections in the area. pain-relieving and relaxing, relieves menstrual cramps and pms. for similar reasons, as well as its anti-inflammatory properties, it is used for urinary stones.

Muscles/Joints: relaxes and relieves pain. used for muscular pains (also due to over-exertion), rheumatism, arthritis, inflamed joints, sprains, neuralgia.

This entry might more properly be headed 'Camomiles' as there are several varieties used in aromatherapy and herbal medicine. Three or four kinds grow wild in the British Isles, and will be familiar to most people, with their daisy-like flowers and feather leaves, as well as the distinctive, apple-like scent. The varieties used in aromatherapy are *Anthemis nobilis*, the Roman Camomile, and *Matricaria Chamomilla*, or German Camomile. The medicinal properties of the two overlap to a large extent.

Camomile is one of the plants that has been recognised both in folk medicine and official pharmacopoeias. Camomile tea (or tisane) is one of the most widespread herbal remedies in popular use; for stomach upsets, cystitis, children's ailments and simply as a refreshing and relaxing drink. Camomile tea can be drunk as a back-up to aromatherapy treatment with the essential oil.

The most important actions of Camomile are soothing, calming and anti-inflammatory, due to the presence in the oil of azulene. Some of the other active principles include



chamazulene, coumarin, heterosides, flavonoids, camphor, terpenes and various esters. The exact chemical composition varies between the various types of Camomile. Azulene is blue in colour, and only appears in the highly-distilled oil. Blue camomile oil is very concentrated, thick and sticky in consistency and gradually turns green with age. Not all Camomile oils are blue, but all have very valuable therapeutic properties.

Camomile is therefore valuable in treating any condition where there is inflammation present, whether internal or external. It can be used in hot **compresses** on **boils**, **abscesses**, infected cuts, splinters, etc. and on tooth abscesses until the sufferer can get to a dentist. Camomile tea, and massage or compresses over the affected area should be used for internal inflammatory conditions, particularly of the digestive tract, such as colitis, gastritis and diarrhoea, especially if the latter is chronic. Tension and anxiety are often at the root of these conditions, and Camomile has a profoundly calming effect on the emotional level. The properties and uses of Camomile often overlap with those of **Lavender**, and if you need to decide whether to use Lavender or Camomile in any particular situation, it may be useful to remember that Camomile is generally better for dull aches and pains, while Lavender may be better for a pain that is sharp and piercing.

Camomile is also an analgesic, and disinfectant, especially of the **urinary tract**. For all urinary infections, such as cystitis, copious amounts of Camomile tea should be taken and massage or compresses of Camomile applied to the lower abdomen. A few drops of essential oil in a warm bath will also help. The tea, taken daily, is also a good preventive measure against bladder or kidney stones. Menstrual pain and menopausal problems can, in many instances, be relieved by the same combination of compresses, massage, baths and teas. For premenstrual tension. Camomile's diuretic properties will reduce fluid retention, while its gently antidepressant action will help with the feelings of stress, depression and irritability that many women suffer premenstrually.



Camomile can be used in **massage** for muscular pain, and for inflamed joints in such conditions as arthritis. It is very effective in treating sprains, inflamed tendons, and swollen painful joints in bursitis (Housemaid's Knee, for example), always remembering that injuries and swellings must not be massaged, but a cold compress applied. Camomile is valuable for many skin problems, especially where the skin is very sensitive, red or dry. Its most important application is in the treatment of allergies, such as eczema, urticaria and all dry, flaky and itchy conditions, or those where patches of redness appear. It is used directly on the skin in aromatic waters, lotions and creams, but baths may be the simplest approach if a very large area of the body is affected. Plenty of Camomile tea should be taken as well. Care must be taken to discover the cause of the rash, whether this is a physical irritant, emotional stress or very often a combination of the two. Otherwise, there is a danger that symptoms are merely being suppressed. Camomile is very calming on the mental/emotional level, and since many allergic reactions arise when the person concerned is under stress, it is far more valuable in treatment than any preparation which attempt to deal with the problem only as a

skin eruption. It is important, though, to remember that there may be a 'healing crisis' in which the skin appears to get worse before it shows any improvement. This phenomenon is common to many forms of natural healing.

The action of Camomile as a local vasoconstrictor (i.e., it causes small blood-vessels to shrink) can help reduce the redness of cheeks due to enlarged **capillaries**, though it may be months before any improvement is seen. As suggested above, the mental and emotional effects of Camomile can be seen to parallel its physical effects, as with so many essential oils, for it is soothing, calming and antidepressant, and particularly helpful where stress or anxiety are inclined to make a person fretful, irritable or nervous. It is best used as a massage oil and in baths - perhaps blended with other oils.

Camomile is one of the gentler oils, and is particularly suitable for treating **children**. Teething infants can be soothed by rubbing a little Camomile, diluted to 1 % into the cheeks. You might try a few teaspoons of weak Camomile tea, sweetened with a little honey, in a spoon or bottle, especially just before bedtime. Earache can be relieved by massaging around the ear, or applying hot compresses of Camomile. If the earache persists, or is recurrent, a doctor must be consulted.

For eye infections, use an infusion of Camomile flowers **(NEVER PUT ESSENTIAL OILS IN THE EYES, EVEN WHEN DILUTED)**. I use Camomile tea bags, soaked in boiling water and allowed to cool, placed over the eyes as a treatment for conjunctivitis. Camomile can be used as an alternative to Lavender, or blended with it, in baths to relieve insomnia, particularly if help is needed over a long period of time. It is never advisable to use one essential oil continuously for more than two or three weeks, so alternating and varying the oils is always a good policy.

