



## [Spotlight on Bergamot](#)

### **Welcome to Spotlight on Bergamot**

This is the third issue of our 'spotlight' series, and one I hope you will enjoy reading as much as I have writing it. As before I have chosen a botanical and the essential oil it produces, and will explore the highlights and benefits, contraindications and much more. I hope you find this post and future spotlights interesting and informative. Past spotlights featured so far have been *Eucalyptus globulus* and *Lavandula angustifolia*, all designed to help you to understand why aromatherapy is so much more than just 'aroma'. You can find these, along with this blog, under their own '[spotlight](#)' category [here](#).



**Our spotlight today, is on *Citrus aurantium* var. *bergamia*, commonly called Bergamot.**

This beautiful essential oil has a light, delicate and refreshing aroma. Genetics indicate that Bergamot was a natural hybrid of the Lemon and Bitter Orange citrus species, which produces something like orange and lemon with slight floral overtones. It is thought this connection biologically mutated to form the distinct fruit bearing Bergamot tree offering its different properties both in aroma and flavour.

The true origins of Bergamot are often disputed but it is believed to have first been used for its essential oil in Reggio, Calabria, Italy in the early 1700's.

Reggio, Calabria has the perfect microclimate for growing Bergamot. Calabria is renowned for its beautiful coastline and warm sunshine, however this stretch of land, Reggio, approximately 120 kilometres in length is one of the only places in the world where Bergamot trees grow heartily and bear the sweet tangy fruit, rich with desirable [Bergamot essential oil](#).

It is good to know that all parts of the Bergamot fruit are utilised; while the delicate essential oil is extracted from the peel, the juice from the flesh is used to flavour gelato, soft drinks and even liqueurs! In the late 1700's, in the French city of Nancy, a candy was produced called "le bonbons à la bergamotte". The candy was flavoured with Bergamot oil from Calabria and became a very popular sweet. It is also Bergamot that imparts the unusual flavour in Earl Grey Tea.

Today the essential oil from this pear-like shaped fruit is usually produced in Italy and Morocco.

Bergamot essential oil is also probably one of the most common ingredients in Eau de Cologne, with it being highly sought after by many perfume houses for its delicate aroma. World famous design houses such as Chanel, Dior and Shisheido have all utilised the scent to create best selling fragrances.

Aside from being a great choice for vapourising in your home for its beautiful aroma, therapeutically, Bergamot has some great benefits. Its sedative yet uplifting characteristics make it excellent for anxiety, depression and nervous tension. It has a combined cooling and refreshing quality that seems to allay anger and frustration.

This essential oil is a valuable antiseptic for the urinary tract and is effective with infection and inflammation, especially good for cystitis.

[Bergamot essential oil](#) also works well on the digestive tract and relieves conditions such as painful digestion, dyspepsia, flatulence, colic, indigestion and loss of appetite. This antiseptic is also been known to cast out intestinal parasites and apparently diminish gallstones.

But Bergamot's antiseptic qualities don't stop there...respiratory infections, including those with symptoms of difficult breathing, and tonsillitis, bronchitis and tuberculosis are helped with this essential oil. Its healing action also seems to benefit skin conditions linked to stress, which may include eczema, psoriasis, acne, and other stress related skin conditions. It was once used to heal sexually transmitted diseases.

Adding Bergamot essential oil to water in a spray bottle will arm you with an excellent insect repellent, and you can use it to keep pets away from plants.

**SAFETY DATA:** Strong sunlight should be avoided after using Bergamot oil as it increases photosensitivity of the skin. It may also irritate sensitive skin, so you should be mindful of dilution rates when using in a massage oil, cream or lotion. Of course, no essential oil should be applied to the skin undiluted, nor should it be ingested.

As with most essential oils too, it is best avoided in the early months of pregnancy.

Another essential oil not only sought after by the perfume industry, but don't be fooled by its delicate aroma and underestimate Bergamot essential oil. It is also a powerful and highly effective oil used for many therapeutic applications.

**I believe this is also a key essential oil you should have in your basic essential oil kit for home.**

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## **Spotlight on Lavender**

### **Welcome to our “Spotlight” on Lavender**

In these spotlights I feature a botanical and the essential oil it produces. I explore the highlights and benefits, contraindications and much more. I hope you find this post to be interesting and informative and it helps you to understand why aromatherapy is so much more than just scents.

#### **Our spotlight today, is on the Lavender.**

This most popular of essential oils in Aromatherapy has been used for the longest time and today there are quite a few varieties of this beautiful plant. The most odorous of the lavender is said to be the one most commonly used, *Lavendula officinalis*. [Lavender essential oil](#) is distilled from the shrub, with its narrow leaves of a soft grey/green colour, and its tiny violet/blue flowers which sit atop long stems.

This delightful plant is extensively cultivated in England, France and Yugoslavia and many other countries, but actually grows wild in the Mediterranean.

Lavender water was the favourite perfume of Queen Henrietta Maria, who was the wife of King Charles the 1st, and lavender bags were used for centuries to keep moths and insects away. The bags were placed in linen drawers because of lavender's pronounced insecticidal properties. The Romans also revered lavender for its antiseptic qualities, using it to cleanse their wounds and also bathe with it.

It was by accident that the wonderful skin healing properties of lavender were discovered, by a French chemist, named Rene-Maurice Gattefosse, as a result of him sustaining burns in an accident in his laboratory. Needless to say lavender oil was close at hand and provided some amazing healing results.

Lavender is regarded as the most versatile essence therapeutically, and has a place in relieving a wide array of ailments. It is also a valuable essential oil to aid and enhance the effects of other

essential oils, so it is easy to see why it is so highly regarded in the world of aromatherapy.

As discovered by Gattefosse, lavender's healing powers are valuable for most skin conditions, like acne, allergies, burns, bruises, dermatitis and eczema, insect bites and stings and all sorts of wounds.

It is excellent for treating aches, pains and strains, including rheumatism, and is often used in blends to deal with influenza! Other respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, whooping cough and throat infections can benefit from lavender aromatherapy treatment.

Vapourising [lavender essential oil](#) appears to relieve anger and exhaustion, resulting in a calmer approach to life, and it has balancing action on the central nervous system. It has a sedative action that will help to bring down high blood pressure and is known to calm palpitations.

An 'essential' essential oil for insomniacs, often used by aromatherapists in a blend to treat people suffering from insomnia and related sleeping disorders.

This versatile oil also is useful with menstrual problems such as painful periods, in general for abdominal pains, flatulence and nausea. It also may be helpful in childbirth, relieving pain and speeding delivery.

Adding [lavender essential oil](#) to water in a spray bottle will arm you with a versatile tool, such as using it to purify the air (as a room spray), spraying it around windows and doors to keep moths and insects at bay, and because it is an antiseptic, antiviral and a bactericide it is brilliant for cleaning kitchen benches and work areas, plus bathroom and associated surfaces...basically any area that needs purifying.

**SAFETY DATA:** Some people with low blood pressure may feel a bit dull and drowsy after using this oil. As with most essential oils too, it is best avoided in the early months of pregnancy.

It is also interesting to note that this versatile oil is used in pharmaceutical antiseptic ointments and as a fragrance. It is extensively used in many soaps, lotions, cosmetics, perfumes and even detergents. It is also used as a flavouring agent in most categories of food as well as alcoholic and soft drinks.

**So again, another humble essential oil, probably best known for its use in the perfume industry, is a versatile and highly effective oil used for many applications. This is also a key essential oil you should have in your basic essential oil kit for home application.**



# Spotlight on Eucalyptus

## Welcome to our “Spotlight” on Eucalyptus

In these spotlights I feature a botanical and the essential oil it produces. I explore the highlights and benefits, contraindications and much more. I hope you find this series of posts to be interesting and informative and help you to understand why aromatherapy is so much more than just scents.

There are about 300 species of Eucalyptus all belonging to the Myrtaceae family, but there are only a handful from these 300 that actually yield a valuable essential oil.

Most [Eucalyptus essential oil](#) is distilled from the Australian Blue Gum, *Eucalyptus globulus*, and this is the most commonly used of the essential oils derived from Eucalyptus.

Eucalyptus is best known as a decongestant inhalation for colds and catarrh, but it has many other less known uses. Most important of these is its very powerful bactericidal and antiviral action. A steam inhalation of Eucalyptus is an effective natural treatment for colds... not only because it eases nasal congestion, but it also inhibits proliferation of the cold virus.

Vapourising Eucalyptus Essential Oil or adding it to distilled water and using it as a room spray is a powerful tool, especially in a home with young children, as it will give a good measure of protection from cold and flu, and many of the infectious childhood diseases.

In North Africa groves of Eucalyptus trees were planted in unhealthy and swampy areas to prevent the spread of malaria. This worked in two ways... the Eucalyptus vapours not only provided bactericidal protection, but they also deter mosquitoes from breeding in the immediate area around the trees. Powerful stuff, hey?

Jean Valnet M.D., a medical doctor and practitioner of aromatherapy for more than 30 years, and who is regarded as one of the world's foremost authorities on essential oil therapy, proved that a spray containing 2% Eucalyptus essential oil will kill 70% of staphylococci in the air. So what that means is that Eucalyptus used like this has a much greater effect than Eucalyptol (its main active principal) which is extracted and used pharmaceutically... indicating once again that essential oils in their natural state are often more effective than the single chemical constituents so revered by chemists!

In epidemics and infectious illnesses Eucalyptus serves to not only help the sufferer but also protects the people who come into contact with them.

Dr Valnet also suggests its use in conditions of fever, to lower the temperature, and as a measure to prevent the spread of infection in cholera, measles, malaria, scarlet fever and typhoid. He also suggests its benefits in treating flu and bronchitis. So as you can see it is a powerful tool for the home, providing endless protection from a number of infections.

Urinary tract infections also respond well to Eucalyptus and its diuretic actions are also very useful with this condition. It also is known to be effective for burns, blisters, cuts, herpes, insect bites, skin

infections and wounds.

The oil can be used in massage to relieve pain in rheumatism, muscular aches, fibrositis, rheumatoid arthritis, sprains and for poor circulation. It is also effective for headaches and neuralgia.

I mentioned earlier that Eucalyptus deters mosquitoes... well it is also a good deterrent to insects in general, so having a room spray with Eucalyptus is valuable, especially in the summer months, to keep flies at bay and out of the home. By the way it is also a great flea deterrent for dogs... but don't forget to dilute it.

**SAFETY DATA :** Externally non-toxic, non-irritant (in dilution) and non-sensitising. When taken internally eucalyptus oil is toxic, so ensure the full strength oil is kept out of reach from children.

### **Other valuable oils procured from the Myrtaceae family are:**

***Eucalyptus smithii*, from the Gully Gum**, which is an extremely gentle oil. It is an excellent antiviral agent and expectorant, making it a very useful essential oil for use over Winter for the whole family. *Eucalyptus smithii* is reputed to be energising and uplifting when used in the morning and relaxing and calming when used in the evening.

***Eucalyptus radiata*, from the narrow-leaved peppermint tree**, is known for its powerful mucolytic action. Often used by aromatherapists in France due to this quality, and nothing is known to contraindicate its use.

***Eucalyptus citriodora*, from the lemon scented gum**, is at the moment, the least used of the powerful Eucalyptus essential oils. This is because this oil can irritate some people with very sensitive skin. If used, it has to be used in very low concentrations, and should be limited to use through a qualified aromatherapist.

***Eucalyptus staigeriana*, is from the lemon scented iron bark**. This essential oil has been found to be invaluable for deep-rooted stress and balancing the emotions. On a more symptomatic level is analgesic and anti-inflammatory.

**So as you can see this humble essential oil, known commonly as “useful for nasal congestion” is so much more, it is a powerful and effective oil for many uses and applications and one to consider as part of your key essential oil kit for home application.**