

## Fennel, Sweet

### *Foeniculum vulgare* - Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)

Fennel, a tall perennial herb with yellow flowers and feather leaves, grows wild in most parts of temperate Europe but is generally considered indigenous to the shores of the Mediterranean. It can now be found growing wild in many parts of the world on dry soils near the coast and on riverbanks.

<b><u>Place of Origin</u></b>	<b><u>Part of plant used</u></b>	fruits (seeds)
France & Mediterranean, India, USA	<b><u>Method of Extraction</u></b>	steam distillation
<b><u>Characteristics</u></b>	<b><u>Yield</u></b>	3-5%
Colour: Pale yellow - clear Perfume notes: Middle	<b><u>BF</u></b> <b><u>TR</u></b>	1-3 C

Aroma

### **Chemical Composition**

Esters	<b>trans-anethole</b> <b>methyl-chavicol</b>	% <b>60-75</b> <b>4-6</b>	Ketones	<b>fenchone</b>	% <b>2-4</b>
Monoterpenes	limonene pinene	6 1-4	Oxides	1,8 cineole	1,2

### **Properties:**

**Antispasmodic, carminative, emmenagogue, expectorant, oestrogen-like, stomachic, analgesic, diuretic, galactagogue**

### **Precautions:**

Trans-anethole has an oestrogen-like action, which although mild makes fennel an oil to use with caution in cases of: endometriosis and oestrogen-dependent cancers.

Methyl-chavicol is potentially carcinogenic (high, regular doses over long term required, not likely to be hazard associated with aromatherapy use). use low doses only.

Undiluted fennel may produce dermal irritation - caution on sensitive skin. Some texts state fennel to be contraindicated in epilepsy due to fenchone content, however Robert Tisserand (et al) disputes this, claiming this ketone is not harmful in normal aromatherapy doses. Contraindicated in pregnancy, during menstruation, with babies and children.

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### Indications

#### **Circulatory**

#### **Digestive**

Nausea, IBS, Flatulence, colic, indigestion, liver toxicity/congestion, dyspepsia, constipation, abdominal bloating, anorexia

#### **Genito-Urinary / Gynaecological**

PMT, menstrual imbalances, dysmenorrhoea, amenorrhoea, menopausal conditions, lactation difficulties

#### **Immune System**

#### **Musculo-skeletal**

Arthritis, rheumatism, stiffness, spasm

#### **Nervous**

#### **Respiratory**

Bronchitis, asthma, excessive catarrh

#### **Skin**

Cellulite, oedema

### Clinical Research

In 1998 a study confirmed that fennel oil was an effective insecticidal against Yellow Fever vector larvae - this could lead to less reliance on synthetic, toxic insecticidal products being used in developing countries.

Fennel's antispasmodic effect was proven in a 1996 study - confirming its traditional use as an effective treatment for colic and gripe in babies.

### Psychological uses

Fennel is an ideal oil to use with people who are plagued by self-doubt and worry. Just as it has such a settling effect on the digestive system, so it has on the mind, allowing one to put aside obsessive thoughts and concerns, leading to a period of creativity and expression. It is an invaluable support during the menopause, calming and settling the mind as well as the body. Likewise the mood swings of PMS can be greatly alleviated by the hormonal support given by fennel.

### Summary

Digestive system remedy, hormonal action