

Tea tree

Melaleuca alternifolia - Myrtaceae

Native to Australia, tea tree grows to a height of 7 metres and flourishes in swampy, wetland areas. The leaves are soft and narrow, the flowers yellow and shaped like bottlebrushes. A relative of niaouli and cajeput, tea tree has long been used by aboriginal people in their traditional remedies.

<u>Place of Origin</u>	<u>Part of plant used</u>	leaves
Australia	<u>Method of Extraction</u>	Steam Distillation
<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Yield</u>	2-3%
Colour: Light clear	<u>BF</u>	3-5
Perfume notes: Top	<u>TR</u>	D
Aroma		

Chemical Composition

Monoterpenes	pinenes	%	Sesquiterpenes	viridiflorene	%
	limonene	2-5			0-6
	terpinolene	1-3			
	terpinene	2-5	Monoterpenols	terpinen-4-ol	30-58
		15-20		alpha-terineol	5
Oxides	1,8 cineole	3			

The Australian standard for tea tree oil requires a level of 1,8 cineole not in excess of 15% and the content of terpinen-4-ol to be greater than 30% - concentrations of more than 15% 1,8 cineole are undesirable because this reduces the terpinen-4-ol content. This monoterpenol is responsible for the powerful antimicrobial activity of tea tree.

Properties:

Antimicrobial, antifungal, antiviral, expectorant, immunostimulant, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, cicatrisant, vulnerary, general tonic

Precautions:

Non-toxic, non-sensitising, non-irritant. Tea tree oil has become so widely used in preparations that sensitisation may occur in hypersensitive individuals

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Indications

Circulatory system

Musculo Skeletal System

Muscular Pain

Digestive System

Cystitis, leucorrhoea, vaginitis, thrush

Nervous System

Anxiety, tension, insomnia, stress related conditions

Genito Urinary/Gynaecological

Cystitis, leucorrhoea, vaginitis, thrush

Respiratory System

asthma, excessive catarrh, acute & chronic bronchitis, sinusitis, coughs colds, chills & fever, chest infections

Immune system

Immunostimulant, combats infectious diseases

Skin/Hair

Insect bites, abscess, boils, athlete's foot, herpes, verrucae, warts, impetigo, skin infections acne, oily skin

Clinical Research

Tea tree has been the subject of much research, listed below is a selection of available data: Proven activity against a range of microbes including: Candida species, dermatophyte species, MRSA, E. Coli and Pseudomonas species.

1996, case report of individual developing acute oedematous dermatitis of the face, eyelids and trunk after inhaling a hot aqueous solution of tea tree oils several times a day to help with his bronchitis - patch tests proved positive to lemon, lavender, peppermint and tea tree oils.

There have been positive results from numerous studies into the topical treatment of acne with dilutions of tea tree oil. 100% concentrations have also been used, but there are several reports of contact dermatitis developing with overuse of the oil.

Psychological uses

Tea tree is not an oil that is primarily indicated for use in the psychological realm, there are much better oils to use in this area.

Summary

Powerful antimicrobial, immune system stimulant