

In this newsletter we will try to help you further your knowledge and use of essential oils.

## Physical

### OLFACTORY FATIGUE -What is it? How it affects the use of Essential oils & Why don't the Scents Last?

by Penny Keay

Everyone loves to smell essential oils. In fact, the first thing many people do, is open the bottles and take a long smell. Although this is not the proper way to smell an essential oil, it is a fairly common practice.

Diffusing essential oils can make for a very pleasant and wonderful smelling room, but if you put too much or too little oil into the air pretty soon you cannot smell them.

The oils are still in the air - cleaning, disinfecting and scenting, but as you stay in the room you may no longer smell the oil.

What happened? Well, your body and olfactory sensors have become accustomed to the smell. You have what is called 'Olfactory fatigue'. The olfactory senses have blocked the smell of that particular scent.

What is "OLFACTORY FATIGUE". This is a very normal body response with the sense of smell.

It is a part of your primordial brain. It involves the Fright and Flight response of animals and 'humans' too. Your nose constantly smells the air for 'threats'. For most humans it smells for fire, burned toast, skunks or other stinky smells. But wild animal noses are searching smells for other predators. Just ask any hunter - why do they want to stay 'down wind' when they are hunting? You got it, they don't want the animal to know they are hunting to smell them. Wild animals will almost always smell humans as a threat.

Just realize your nose and body cannot tell the difference (threat wise) between a sweet smelling essential oil and a fire.

AFTER your body has determined that the essential oils or the smell of smoke is not a threat - your bodies sense of smell will then BLOCK that odor. You will not be able to smell the essential oil nor the smoke after anywhere from 5-30 minutes depending on how quickly your body will dismiss the smell as a threat.

Unless you leave the building for several minutes (usually needs to be at least 15 minutes) to reset your sense of smell, you will not be able to smell them again. But just like before - once your body determines its not a threat your sense of smell will block it again. This time and each subsequent time it will block the smells more quickly.

As stated above: To smell the scent again you will need to 'reset' your sense of smell. Simply leave the room for 15-30 minutes - step out doors and get some fresh air if possible.

When you re-enter the room you will smell the scent again. If not, maybe you do need to add more essential oils to your diffuser. If you do smell the scent, realize that within an hour or so, (sometimes less). We know there is folks whose sense of smell will block the scent out within 10 -15 minutes. It is possible even your body will again block the smell and you will think the oils are all gone.

So, there is nothing wrong with you, just your sense of smell getting used to the scents or odors that are present.

Don't add more scenting until you have done the "leave the room" test. Once you have done that and you smell the scent again you won't necessarily need to add more. This is to prevent the potential to overdose or over use the oils. Just realize they are there but you just can't smell them due to olfactory fatigue (unless you leave the room and re-enter later).

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The essential oils are still there doing their thing whether it be for physical, psychological or spiritual needs.

NEXT: We are often asked how long are the essential oils going to last in the air (room)?

There are a few factors that need to be considered to help determine how long the essential oil may last when you diffuse them.

First is the viscosity of the essential oils. Viscosity is the thick and thinness of the essential oil itself. You can easily tell by how fast they will pour or drop from the container. Thin oils of course will pour just like water. Thick are so thick you can't even pour them until you heat them slightly.

Top note oils are the most volatile and will disperse into the air quickly and are often times the thin oils. Oils like orange, lemon, and other citrus will not last long and if you want to smell them after a couple hours you will need to reapply more to your diffuser.

Heavier and more viscous oils like Patchouli, Vetiver and Sandalwood are considered base notes and have the longest lasting capabilities of up to several days.

Many oils fall in between the top (thin) and base (thick) oils and will have varying degrees of the length of time they will last. Meaning they will last from 3 hours to 24 hours but usually not too much longer than that.

To help the scent last longer when diffusing the Top and Middle note essential oils blend them with a little of a base note essential oil. The blend will often times be very pleasant and will linger longer.

The Second reason they may not last long is the room temperature along with the Third Reason - the room's air currents.

As the temperatures rise the molecules are excited more and will evaporate more quickly. Also any air movement will help them to dissipate quickly too.

What's the answer to help? This is not easy. You can try using diffusers that diffuse more slowly such as Terra Cotta disc type. The Terra Cotta Disc will allow the essential oils to soak into the clay and they are slowly released into the air over a period of several hours to sometimes even a few days. Another hint: Be sure to add a base note essential oil - just a drop or two to the blend you will be applying to your disc. This will help it to disperse the oils more slowly too.

As for any fan style diffuser - you will have to test the oils to see how often you need to reapply. The speed of the fan and room temperatures will again produce an unknown situation for your room whether it is at home or at the office.

Another method that helps to let the scent linger is the use of soy wax tarts. Using a low temperature electric tart warmer and adding your essential oils to the melted wax, stirring slightly after adding the essential oils will help the scent to be released very slowly as compared to other methods.

The Tealight Wax melter /warmers are good too but because that tiny tealight candle can produce more heat than the electric warmers the scent may not last as long, and the oils can be heat damaged changing them chemically and also their scent.

In conclusion, there is nothing wrong with your essential oils when you can't smell them, it's just that they have evaporated into the air and dissipated to a point where your nose may not be able to smell or detect them. Yep, that's Olfactory Fatigue. There is nothing wrong with your nose or your diffuser. It is normal.

The Essential oils are still there and are working for you, but just not detectable by your nose. Add more essential oils to the diffusers if you want and enjoy but be aware that you can use too much of a good thing too.

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Remember to do the “leave the room or building test” before adding more essential oils. You don’t want to overdose or have your house smell like a perfume factory.

For more information concerning the “Variable Factors concerning Choosing a Diffuser” visit the following page: <http://birchhillhappenings.com/diffuserfactor.htm>

### Aromatherapy Tip for the Beginner

#### Drop, Drop, mL, mL, Oh, Can you help me with measuring in Aromatherapy?

by Penny Keay

Measurements when using essential oils can be very confusing for the beginning aromatherapist.

In many aspects of the cosmetic industry we measure by volume and yes “drops” are considered volume. But not all ingredients are measured by volume in our industry. Many ingredients are measured by weight too, especially when adding ingredients that are in a powder form.

In Aromatherapy, most essential oils are measured by volume when they are used in small quantities such as mixing a small amount of essential oils with a carrier whether it is a vegetable oil or a lotion or shampoo.

For most of us it isn’t a problem when you are just measuring a few drops into a tablespoon or two of the carrier solution.

But if you want to make a larger ‘batch’ of goodies to give as gifts or for your own use counting out 200 drops of this or that is just not practical. I’m sure you can count to 200 but . . . .

Using a conversion chart will make it a little more convenient to understand what the drops to mL (milliliters) to ounces for your projects. Another helpful chart is the Percentage chart. For most applications of essential oils for use on the skin (massage oils and lotions) or in hair care (Shampoos, conditioners, scented sprays) you will want to stay within or under the 3% dilution rate of essential oils to your base product.

Following are two very helpful charts: Print them out and keep them with your blending supplies.

Metric measurement	Decimal for ounces	Common Fraction for ounces	By drops (approximately due to viscosity of each essential oil)
1 ml	.0335 oz	1/30 oz	20-25
2 ml	.067 oz	1/15 to 1/16	40-50
4 ml	.135 oz	1/8 oz (approx)	80-100
5 ml	.169 oz	1/6 oz	100-125
10 ml	.33 oz	1/3 oz	Drops should not be counted
15 ml	.5 oz	1/2 oz	for blending large
29.573 ml	1 oz	1 oz	amounts of essential
30 ml	1.014 oz	1 oz	oils therefore no drop values
50 ml	1.69 oz	1 2/3 oz	for these larger volumes
60 ml	2.28 oz	2 oz	are given.

When blending essential oils with carrier oils or lotions for use in massage figuring out percentages can be mind boggling and very hard for those not mathematically inclined.

We always suggest that dilutions for children, the elderly and pregnant women should be about 1%.

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For whole body massages of people 12 years or older you can use a 2 to 3% dilution.

For concentrated massage used in a local area your dilution can be anywhere from 4% to 10%. Of course this latter one is only for spot applications.

Now this is what is recommended and that is the easy part. The actual amount to be used when you make up your recipes is the more difficult part of the blending.

The following table will be of help to those of you blending any massage oil or lotion. The percentages for shampoos, conditioner and shower gel can use these percentages too, but because they are in products that are put on, then washed off you can - in some cases choose to add more (or less) according to your desires.

Massage oil Total Volume	1%	2%	4%
1 tablespoon	3 drops	6 drops	12 drops
1 oz (2 tablespoons)	6 drops	12 drops	24 drops
2 oz (4 TBS)	12 drops	24 drops	48 drops or ½ tsp.
4 oz (1/2 cup)	24 drops	48 drops ( ½ tsp)	96 drops ( 1 tsp)
8 oz (1 cup)	48 drops ( ½ tsp)	96 drops (1 tsp)	10 ml or 2 tsp
16 oz (2 cup)	96 drops (1 tsp)	10 ml (2 tsp)	20 ml (4 tsp)

This is a simplified table to create your massage oil and lotions. The number of DROPS for each percentage is the TOTAL of all essential oil drops in the blend. If the 4% dilution is a total of 12 drops. You can have 4 drops of one oil and 5 drops of another and 3 drops of another for a total of 12 drops.

We suggest when blending your massage oil add the essential oils to the mixing bottle first then fill the bottle with the appropriate amount of carrier oil or lotion.

Using Pipettes (disposable) with graduated marks on it makes it easier when counting out the actual drops. Sometimes drops out of the essential oil bottles are hard to count.

Remembering that one mL is approximately 20 drops will make it easier when blending larger quantities.

You can mix in glass beakers using a stirring rod to mix your blends before pouring into your finished bottle.

Or if you want an even more simple method of blending, add your drops of essential oils to a PET bottle of appropriate size. As an example: say you are going to mix 2 ounces of massage lotion/ oil with 2% essential oils.

Start with an empty 2 ounce PET bottle, next count out your total of essential oil drops to make an 2% dilution (24 drops total) then add your carrier oil - just to the shoulder of the bottle (most bottles volume total is to the shoulder - before it reaches the threaded part of the neck).

If you still need help don't hesitate to e-mail us and we'll be more than happy to help you get the percentages of essential oils correct in your blends. Or if you need help converting a small recipe into a larger batch, we'll be happy to help you there too.

Have fun blending!

## Skin and Hair Care

### What to Use for All those Bug Bites?

by Penny Keay

Oh it is this buggy time of the year! Bees, Gnats, Mosquitoes, Ants, Fleas, Spiders and the 'unknowns' are coming at us from every direction.

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Using a few essential oils to repel these little buggers should be your first course of action, but if you are like most folks you don't think of it until someone is bitten!

So what to do once you are bitten. Most all bug bites can be treated the same way (but not bee stings if the stinger is left in. But you can find information on those in another issue of our past newsletters).

First DON'T Scratch. Next wash the area with a mild soap and warm water. Rinse the area well and dry with a soft cloth. This is basic first aid for any type of wound. Did I mention? DO NOT SCRATCH!!

Next you can add several drops of Lavender essential oil to Jojoba or other carrier oil. I like to use Jojoba as it is the carrier that is most like the oil (sebum) produced by the human skin. Lavender will help to stop the itching, reduce the discomfort and speed the healing process.

Other essential oils that can be used along with Lavender include: Roman Chamomile, German Chamomile, Helichrysum, Peppermint, Eucalyptus, Ravensara, Manuka, Rosemary, Tea Tree, Thyme or Oregano.

Contrary to popular belief do not apply any essential oil including those you have read or heard can be used neatly to any insect bite. Mix the essential oils with water and apply as a cool compress or mix with a lotion or carrier oil and dab to the affected area as often as needed. Remember - DO NOT Scratch!!

To Relieve the Itching:

Soaking in a tub of Epsom salts or Baking soda with a few drops of one to four of the above listed essential oils added will also help to reduce the itchiness often associated with bug bites. You want to keep from scratching the area as scratching and itching can suppress healing. Scratching releases histamines that make the itching worse and cause the tissue to swell. You can also use some of our Allergy Tamer Blend in distilled water or in the Body Spray to make an anti-itch soothing spray. Keep it in the refrigerator as cooler sprays and compresses help to relieve the itchiness too.

If you suspect the bite is a spider bite, seek medical attention as some spider bites can be very serious and may need more than the use of essential oils. Some spider venom can cause the skin and surrounding tissues to actually die. So seek professional medical attention in the case of a spider bite.

If the bite is actually a sting from a bee or wasp, be sure you remove the stinger first. Again, seek professional help, if you are unsure how to do this correctly.

### **An Antiseptic blend for insect Bites**

Lavender - 30 drops  
Eucalyptus - 30 drops  
Thyme - 30 drops  
Unscented Lotion base - 2 ounces OR  
Sorbolene Cream - 2 ounces

Blend essential oils in an amber bottle or glass beaker. Then add to lotion base. Stir and blend well. Clean the bitten area with warm soap and water, rinse and dry with soft cloth. Apply a thin layer of lotion (or cream) and leave uncovered. (You can cover the area if you desire with a band-aid especially if you feel you won't leave the area alone.)

## **Around the House and Garden**

### **Having a Garden Party (or Bar-B-Q)?**

by Penny Keay

This time of year is great. The weather has finally settled a bit and the evenings are great for dinner with friends (and relatives too). Crank up the Bar-B-Q for fun or just dining outside is very enjoyable too as you visit.

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Diffusing essential oils can be fun, refreshing, exciting, calming and also be helpful at deterring bugs.

As you know the most popular essential oil scent for use on a patio or outdoors is Citronella. But if you are like many folks including Al and me, this smell is simply sickening after a while.

There are many other wonderful smelling essential oils that are more fun to use and will work against those pesky garden intruders. Some of the best essential oils that may be more pleasant and enjoyable for you and your guests include Geranium, Cedarwood, Pennyroyal, Eucalyptus and Peppermint and Lemongrass.

Eucalyptus Lemon (Eucalyptus Citriodora) is a proven insect repellent and although it does have a lemon smell it also has the clean crisp eucalyptus smell. Some folks may enjoy this smell in their patio. For me its still a member of the Eucalyptus family and it smells too much like cold medicine!

Diffusing essential oils in any Tart or Oil warmer should work the same way in a larger area such as a patio provided there is too much of a breeze.

If you have a problem with bugs around the Picnic Table again, use a terra cotta disc or maybe even a Tealight tart/oil warmer (as a table center piece) and diffuse some oils to keep the bugs away from the picnic. but because these areas can be large, the effectiveness will be greatly diminished and because you might have to keep reapplying it the evening visit and dinner won't be as fun for you. Of course your guests will appreciate your efforts.

Summer is way to short to have evenings and dinners ruined by those annoying little critters.

Try this **Outdoor Dinner Diffuser Blend** in your Favorite Tea Light Oil and Tart Warmer

Lavender - 20 drops

Geranium - 20 drops

Mandarin - 20 drops

Blend these essential oils in a glass bottle. Then add several drops to your tea light diffusers warming bowl. If you are using water in the bowl, you may need to add more after an hour or so. If you pre-melt a soy wax tart in the bowl and add the entire blend and stir into the melted wax, you should be able to enjoy the entire evening without adding more oils.

Please note: that if it is too breezy - the essential oils won't linger in the area but drift into your neighbors' yard! Of course, if it's breezy - the bugs will be over at the neighbors too!

## Recipes to try

by Penny Keay (unless otherwise noted)

### **When Bugs Attack - an Anti-Itch Lotion**

Lavender – 20 drops

German Chamomile – 10 drops

Eucalyptus – 10 drops

Blend the above essential oils in an Amber glass bottle. Then add to 2 ounces of unscented lotion. Blend well, then apply to itchy – insect bitten area as needed. Rub in lightly so as not to increase the itchiness.

### **Another Bug Bite Blend**

Lavender -5 drops

Roman Chamomile - 5 drops

German Chamomile - 3 drops

Peppermint - 3 drops

Baking Soda - 1 cup

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A small basin of cool water

Blend the above essential oils in an Amber glass bottle. Blend well. To the basin of cool water add the Baking soda mix well to dissolve. Then add the essential oils. Using a soft cloth, apply to the bug bitten area as needed to relieve itchiness and give relief.

**The Oriental Dinner Party**

Orange - 30 drops

Lemon - 20 drops

Eucalyptus - 10 drops

Cinnamon Leaf - 10 drops

Blend essential oils in a glass bottle to mix well. Then diffuse several drops in your favorite diffusers. Add more as desired throughout your evening event.

**AT the Bar-B- Que Insect repellent**

Pennyroyal - 10 drops

Eucalyptus Lemon - 10 drops

Cedarwood - 10 drops

Geranium - 10 drops

Citronella - 5 drops

Distilled Water - 4 ounces

Blend essential oils well in PET plastic bottle then add 1 teaspoon emulsifier. Mix thoroughly. Then add the distilled water and shake well. Spray around the area as often as needed.

Great places to spray - under chairs, benches and tables. Around plants and their pots, other outdoor garden areas that insects like to hide. Spray around doorways and window openings.

Note: use caution and spray only a light mist. Essential oils have been known to dissolve paint and other finishes and so do not saturate the areas - just a light mist.

**BIRCH HILL HAPPENINGS NEWS**

Hello Everyone,

**SUMMER has finally arrived - I think?**

Wow, not only is summer looking very busy for Al and I, this past Spring just seemed to zoom by.

We apologize for not having a Newsletter last month. But being as busy as we were the next thing we knew we were on vacation and since then we have been playing catch-up!! Not only is our business keeping us busy but with personal projects such as finishing our remodeling and building projects we started last year we are a little behind on things.

You know, in Minnesota and other parts of the northern USA and Canada we have to enjoy the short spring and summer months. And any outdoor projects are also restricted by rain and cold (at times).

As I write this newsletter it appears that summer is finally arriving. It is nearly 70 degrees today and over the next few days it's to be in the mid 70's. Perfect weather for me! Sorry for all of you that live where it's HOT, but summer here is perfect! Even if our summer is rather short we enjoy it while it lasts.

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We hope this newsletter has helped you understand a little bit more about how essential oils are used in Aromatherapy. As you continue to study aromatherapy the information on how your nose works and how essential oils are measured and used in percentages in aromatherapy will undoubtedly be very useful.

One extra personal note about Olfactory fatigue. Since we have been working with essential oils for over 15 years and our home and business is very much saturated with the scents of the oils, we ourselves very rarely smell the oils - unless we spill some or actually inhale them directly from a pad or diffuser (like a personal inhaler). But visitors always comment on how lovely and wonderful our place smells. To us, it is home and work. Just like you are accustomed to your own home, you only smell the bad or good smells when they are more intense than normal. Everyone has experienced olfactory fatigue in your normal everyday living. Just remember in aromatherapy, you will experience it there too.

Our sense of smell has pretty much blocked the smells of essential oils out as we no longer sense them as a threat. Of course our sense of smell is very acute because of the use of essential oils and for us to go down the 'detergent aisle' of any store about (fill in the blank) us - well - it 'stinks' to us. We prefer the more earth and human friendly scents nature has provided.

Now onto what is new: We are still working on the YL Joy replication and hope to have it available soon. We are developing a couple new products too and will announce them on the What's New Page when ready.

During the summer months the "Aromatherapy Tip of the Week" will most likely be biweekly (every 2-3 weeks) and the "Newsletter" may only be every other month. Remember it is just Al and Penny that are here at Birch Hill Happenings and we are still getting orders out within 24-72 hours of you placing them. Yep, we do everything here - we are a Mom and Pop Shop!!

We want you to know we are here for all your Aromatherapy questions and supplies. Don't hesitate to e-mail us with your questions. If you call and get our Voice Mail, be sure to leave your name, number and a message and we will get back to you ASAP too!

Have a great summer and we will too. We are going camping with our Grandkids this weekend! We are testing out a few new products and hope to let you know how they performed while we are out in the North woods!

As always, if you have suggestions, questions or comments please feel free to send us an e-mail to [bhinfo@birchhillhappenings.com](mailto:bhinfo@birchhillhappenings.com) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Yours in Aromatherapy,

Penny & Al

Be sure to visit us on line at

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/aroma1.htm>

for all your Essential oils and Aromatherapy Supplies needs.

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