

# Essential Oils Offer Natural Alternative

By Linda Penkala

People are concerned more than ever about nurturing and respecting our earth, global warming, building green homes and recycling. There was a time when only the hippies from the 1960s were concerned with “eco-friendly” products and the government’s policies toward them. Now many of us are choosing personal health care and cleaning products that support, instead of detract, from our health.

Backed by scientific testing and confirmation from 25 U.S. hospitals using them daily, therapeutic grade essential oils are nature’s ultimate answer to the myriad present day health challenges. Essential oils have strong anti-viral effects, and even when diluted kill bacteria that antibiotics do not. They have been used for centuries as antiseptics, and are still used today in oral antiseptics. A mouth rinse with essential oils of thyme, peppermint, wintergreen and eucalyptus is more effective in improving oral

health than a fluoride-based antiseptic, according to the 1999 Journal of Clinical Periodontology.

## History Reveals Effectiveness

The history of modern antiseptics reveals that Dr. Joseph Lister, a British surgeon, was the first to disinfect surgical rooms with eucalyptus oil vapors to stop deaths from infection. His surgical antiseptic that reduced the death rate from 50% to less than 3% during major surgeries contained phenols and other compounds from common essential oils - thymol from thyme, eucalyptol from eucalyptus, methyl salicylate from wintergreen and menthol from peppermint.

Another historical essential oil testimonial is the Legend of the Four Thieves. When the bubonic plague struck Europe, more than 25 million people were wiped out in five years. During this time four thieves (somehow resistant to infection) circulated among the dead and dying to loot and rob their homes. When finally apprehended, and by

threat of death, they were forced to reveal the recipe that kept them immunized. A copy is in the museum of Old Marseille of the “four thieves vinegar” recipe, consisting of white wine vinegar, wormwood, meadowsweet, wild marjoram, 50 cloves, rosemary, horehound and camphor. After 15 days they would rub it on their hands, ears and temples when approaching the plague victims.

## Enhancing Life Today

Dr. Diane Horne of Weber State University confirms the above historical references through her research mentioned in the Journal of Essential Oil Research. She found that the longer the essential oil blend was diffused into the air, the greater the reduction in microbes.

The blend was clove, cinnamon, lemon, eucalyptus and rosemary, which killed over 99% of Staphylococcus (Staph) bacteria in only 12 minutes of diffusion. As anti-biotic-resistant Staph (MRSA) moves from hospitals to the general

community, we can remain hopeful that essential oils in hand wipes, mouthwashes, toothpastes and house-hold cleaning products are a safe and simple delivery system for promoting and sustaining our family’s health.

There is now a clear link between childhood asthma and household cleaning products such as bleach, window cleaner, aerosols, carpet cleaner, chlorine, pesticides and insecticides. In this day and age of indoor allergies, when pet dander, mold, dust and cleaning chemicals routinely affect our health, our awareness of the causative effects will undoubtedly empower us to change.

Health affirming, environmentally sustainable choices for ourselves, our families, our work spaces and our earth will not only benefit us now, but will enhance life for many generations to come.

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