

## NATURAL ESSENTIAL OILS USE IN INCENSE STICKS

The earth's biosphere comprises all regions of the earth's supporting living things. It is richly endowed with odor producing plants, ranging from simple bacteria, yeast and microscopic fungi, such as those which are responsible for fermentation, to flowering plants of great complexity, where essential oils are manufactured and stored only in particular locations, or are distributed more generally throughout the arid plant or root system.

About 2500 plants are known to have essential oils. Some plants like Cistus, Labdanum, extrude sticky resinous products, some other trees like Olibanum, Myrrh do so only in response to injury to the Cambium, just beneath the inner bark, thus effectively preventing water loss.

Some Essential oils and source are listed below:

1. Amyris – heartwood
2. Benzoin – extrude from tree trunk
3. Basil – flowery tops
4. Bergamot – outer ring of fruit
5. Cedar wood – saw dust
6. Cinnamon bark – dried inner bark of tree
7. Cyprus oil – needles and twigs
8. Eucalyptus – leaves
9. Lavender- flower and stakes
10. Oak moss – entire lichen
11. Rose – fresh gathers flowers
12. Sandalwood – heartwood
13. Ailanthus – exudes of tree trunk
14. Tonka – seeds
15. Vativer – roots

Essential oils are mixtures of volatile organic compounds produced by certain plants, to attract bees for pollination or as a repellent to some insects, or a waste product of the plants. It is not clear about the functional process and a lot has to be still discovered.

Essential oils are unsaturated hydrocarbons called terpenoids, and terpenes oils are widely distributed in nature.

Essential oils has been used by our ancestors, in incense, correlating the benefits of oils in Aroma therapy. Oils or raw natural available form are used in Dasangam, a mixture of herbs, stems, roots, leaves, flowers, barks, etc., and is practiced since Vedic times.

Indian Incense generally contain ingredients mentioned in Ayurveda. For example:

1. Aniseed
2. Star anise
3. Sandalwood
4. Agar wood
5. Cedar wood
6. Turmeric
7. Cassia
8. Costus root
9. Valerian

10. Clove
11. Patchouli
12. Rose
13. Jasmine
14. Borneol
15. Jata masi

All the above said materials are powdered, added with essential oils like sandalwood, agar wood, rose, jasmine and allowed to marinate, ghee is added to soften the mixture, and then used as incense by placing it on a Cinder/burning coal.

The aroma surrounds the atmosphere, to enrich our surroundings. It is an important part of our daily puja ritual.

- KASHINATH PATWARDHAN

(Author: "AGARBATHI MANUFACTURE MADE SIMPLE")

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