

Melaleuca alternifolia
TEA TREE

This species of paperbark tree, native to the subtropical coast of New South Wales and parts of Queensland, Australia, has a long history of use as a potent antiseptic. Aboriginal peoples used poultices of the leaves on wounds and cuts, and smoked the leaves to clear congestion. Tea tree oil remains one of aromatherapy's most powerful tools in the fight against bacteria, fungi, yeast and viruses.

SCENT
Medicinal, spicy, fresh

NOTE
BASE MIDDLE TOP

EXPENSE RATING
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CAUTIONS
For sensitive skin, use a normal dilution (2½%). See page 16.



Main constituents: terpineol, terpinene, cineol, cymene, pinene

THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES

The name tea tree first appeared in Captain Cook's "Voyage towards the South Pole and around the World 1772–5". Its properties were again recognized in 1923 by Arthur Penfold, a New South Wales chemist, and several papers were published in the 1930s describing its use as a wide-spectrum antiseptic with very low toxicity. During World War II, Australian soldiers were issued with the oil, but its use declined with the advent of antibiotics after the war. From the 1970s it became popular again. Often referred to as the first-aid kit in a bottle, tea tree oil is invaluable for treating minor wounds, infections, cuts, stings and acne.

THE ESSENTIAL OIL is extracted from the leaves using steam distillation.

with a cotton wool bud, or use diluted in a skin tonic. For bites, stings, cuts, wounds and cold sores, apply neat oil. For athlete's foot, callouses, corns or smelly feet, add 5–10 drops to a daily foot bath. Cool minor burns with cold water, then apply neat oil.

— RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS —

To relieve sore throats, coughs, sinusitis and chest congestion, place a couple of drops of tea tree oil on a handkerchief, and inhale.

— GYNAECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS —

Add diluted oil to the bath to treat cystitis, a urinary problem, and *Candida albicans*, which causes thrush.

— SKIN & BEAUTY —

For acne, dab one drop of undiluted oil on isolated spots 1–2 times a day



FOOT MASSAGE



Tea tree is antiseptic and anti-fungal and so ideal for the feet (see pages 66–67).

OIL COMBINATIONS

Geranium



Lemon



Scot's pine



TEA TREE is hard to blend, but geranium sweetens its scent, Scot's pine emphasizes its spicy, medicinal aroma and lemon brings out its freshness.