

Cupressus sempervirens

CYPRESS

In many cultures, the cypress tree has represented eternal life, and Plato (c.429–347BC) referred to it as the symbol of immortality. The oil has a fresh, spicy aroma that many people find refreshing, and in Ancient Greece it was customary to send tuberculosis patients into a cypress grove to breathe the air and ease their symptoms. Cypress oil is still used to treat respiratory complaints.

SCENT
Spicy, sweet, balsamic, refreshing

NOTE
BASE MIDDLE TOP

EXPENSE RATING
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CAUTIONS
Avoid in the first three months of pregnancy. See page 16.



Main constituents: pinene, carene, myrcene, camphene, sylvestrene

THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES

Cypress was burned as incense in the ancient world for purification, and was used because of its anti-spasmodic properties to treat respiratory problems. In traditional Chinese and Indian Ayurvedic medicine, it was recognized for its astringent effects.

In 1597 John Gerard, herbalist to King James I of England, wrote in *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* that “the leaves and nuts are good to cure the rupture” and today the oil is used to treat haemorrhoids, varicose veins, broken capillaries and bruising. Since the 16th century, cypress has been advocated as an insect repellent. Gerard also advised people to “use the smoke of the leaves to drive away gnats... and the wood laid amongst garments preserveth against the moths”.

—ACHES & PAINS—

I have found it useful in massage blends to treat rheumatic aches; or in a cold compress when massage is inadvisable, for example in reducing the spread of recent bruising, on varicose veins, or when rheumatic joints are inflamed.

FOOT MASSAGE



Cypress oil helps to inhibit sweat and revitalize tired feet (see pages 66–67).

OIL COMBINATIONS

Citrus oils

Rose

Frankincense



CYPRESS OIL blends well with all citrus oils in tonics and with rose oil for facial massage blends, while frankincense brings out the incense-like nature of the aroma.

THE NEEDLES and twigs of the tree are distilled to extract the oil.

— RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS —

Anti-spasmodic. Eases coughs, asthma, bronchitis and sore throats. Put a couple of drops on a handkerchief and inhale deeply.

— SKIN & BEAUTY —

Astringent; good for oily skin. I find the aroma of cypress oil appeals particularly to men. Use in facial steaming, skin tonics or aftershaves. Often included in anti-cellulite blends (see pages 106–7). Helpful for people who suffer from sweaty feet. Add a couple of drops to a daily foot bath, or massage the feet with diluted oil.

