

## BLOG – Aromatic Extraction Methods (Part 1 of 2)

This is a two-part blog on how the aromas of Aromatic Botanicals are captured. Aromatic Botanical aromas can be captured in several different ways. In general, each method best serves the needs of particular industries. These industries are not limited by this but do gravitate toward the extraction method that works for their botanicals, uses and purposes. Steam distillation is the most widely used for essential oils. Cold press method of extraction is predominately used for citrus fruits. CO2 extraction is a great option for the food industry. Solvent extraction for Absolutes and Enfleurage are both effective for the perfume industry. These five most common methods of extraction have various purposes and uses.

Before we get into the methods of extraction, let's look at the reason aromatic plants have essential oil in the first place. For the survival of the plants it protects and hydrates the plants, attracts pollinators and insects for reproduction and provides plant sustainability. When competing for pollinators the aromas help draw them. When hydration is needed additional essential oil is produced to meet the need. When defense is needed an aroma that deters the perpetrator can be produced. Plants also produce subtle differences in their aromas that send signals to other plants. The plant then produces the essential oil that provides the needed survival and communication.

Most botanicals need to be extracted in a way that works based on the characteristics of that botanical. Steam Distillation is a very common method but is not always an option. For example, fragile flowers like Lilac are aromatic, but do not have an essential oil. Therefore, their aroma cannot be captured using steam distillation.

Essential oils are located in various plant parts. Each botanical has a different location for essential oils and some have several locations (such as Orange). Some essential oils are located on the surface of the plants while others are located deep inside the plant. We can start with roots and rhizomes, and then move up the plant structure to the stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits. Trees also have essential oils that can be found in the bark, wood, or resins. Orange trees are especially fun because they have essential oil in the leaves and green twigs, the fruit itself, and orange blossoms.

Now that the foundation has been laid, my next Blog we will begin to explore the various methods of extraction. In the meantime, look to your Essential Oils for all the beautiful qualities and benefits they offer. Use them safely for a lifetime of use. Stay connected for the “rest of the story”!