

HYDROSOLS

BY SANDRA SHUFF

Hydrosols have been used for thousands of years. They were distilled and used throughout Antiquity. They have been known as Floral Waters, Flower Water, Herbal Water, Rose Water etc. Cleopatra was said to use it for her skin. Hydrosols are produced through the process of distillation. Essential oils are produced during the distillation process also, however, the two separate and are both captured as individual products. Although Hydrosols contain micro droplets of Essential Oils, they can not be made by adding Essential Oil to water. It can only be made by the distillation process. The use of a Hydrosol in Aromatherapy as a formal health modality, relative to history, has been a renewed and current additional option. In history these beautiful distillate waters have been used since antiquity. For approximately the past 150 years Essential oils have been the primary focus for Modern Aromatherapy. Essential Oils are usually blended with a lipid oil such as Olive oil, Almond oil, Fractionated coconut oil etc. However, a trained certified Aromatherapist will offer a wholistic approach to an individuals' conditions and will incorporate tinctures, macerations, poultices in addition to Essential oil blends, diffusers, nose inhalers and Hydrosols, etc. for a more comprehensive approach. Hydrosols today are fast becoming a most valuable part of an Aromatherapists approach to health and wellness.

A Hydrosol is a term that is used in other industries to mean things other than the product used for Aromatherapy. At its base definition it would be a water solution. The distillate waters that come from distillation we call Hydrosol today in the United States or Hydrolat in Europe. Botanical waters are completely transformed during Steam Distillation into a Hydrosol. This transformation becomes a product that is about 1000th the concentration of an Essential oil. Jeanne Rose first called the distillate waters Hydrosol in 1989. Her site jeannerose.net says the following:

“Hydrosol was first used and defined in the production of gold in 1864. Jeanne Rose was the first person to use this word for the first part of the liquid distillate when freshly-picked plant material was distilled. Jeanne Rose says ‘hydro’ means water and ‘sol’ means solution – the new liquid that results from plant distillation. It is the aromatic non-alcoholic distillate left from the distillation process of organically grown plants that contains water-soluble parts of the plant material and micro-drops of the essential oil. Organoleptically, it has strong taste, strong scent and a pH of less than 5.5.” Jeanne Rose ²

In an article in the International Journal of Aromatherapy, Ann Harman's explains it this way: “Hydrosols, also known as hydrolats, are the aqueous product of distillation and carry the hydrophilic properties (water-soluble components) of the plant in solution as well as microscopic droplets of essential oils in suspension.”³

Distillation is the only method of capturing the benefits of botanicals for a Hydrosol. The process is the same in many ways as capturing the Essential oils. However, for a quality Hydrosol the distillation is different. The use of only fresh botanicals is the most important difference. The temperatures must be lower which means it is a slower and longer process. The reason is that some of the hydrophilic molecules that make for a beautiful and effective Hydrosol take more time to release from the botanical in order to bring it through the distillation process into the Hydrosol.

This brings up the point that the chemistry of a Hydrosol and the chemistry of an Essential oil will be somewhat different even when distilled together. There are ten chemistry families that are found in Essential oils and Hydrosols. Just as the Hydrosol has some Hydrophilic molecules exclusive to it the Essential Oil will have molecules that are lipophilic. In many ways, the Aromatherapy uses of the same botanical as an Essential oil and a Hydrosol are the same. But, due to the chemistry being somewhat different the uses can vary as well. Currently, Circle H Institute does research on the chemistry of Hydrosols because there is much to still learn about the Hydrosols and their benefits. The testing is more involved and specialized for the Hydrosols.

Due to this new research and testing we are learning new benefits all the time. Most Hydrosols are steam distilled from botanicals with essential oil glands or sacs. However, as distillers are branching out in experimentations it is becoming clear that distillate waters can come from non-aromatic botanicals as well. More research, over time, will reveal the benefits of these non-aromatic botanicals along with the traditionally distilled botanicals.

The uses of Hydrosols can span age groups that cannot use most essential oils. Many essential oils cannot be used for the elderly, infirmed or children due to how powerful they are. Some essential oils in some instances can be too powerful for their organs. Sensitization to some essential oils can develop also, because essential oils are so powerful. Hydrosols are approximately one-thousandth the strength of an Essential oil. This strength makes it perfect for people of all ages, race, health conditions etc. to use them without safety issues or contraindications.

Hydrosols can be used with children also for the emotional side of Aromatherapy. Most citrus' are uplifting for all ages but especially resonate with children as they are familiar with them. Therefore, Orange Hydrosol helps to calm a child especially when stressed. Lavender Hydrosol (*Lavandula angustifolia*) is excellent for diaper rash due to its cicatrisant attributes as an Ester but can also be calming when they find it difficult to sleep. My grandchildren use the Hydrosol made from another Lavender (*Lavandula x intermedia* var. Grosso) to keep mosquitos away without chemicals. Yarrow Hydrosol is excellent for cleaning cuts and scrapes for all ages. It coagulates the blood flow, disinfects due to its anti-microbial properties and begins the healing process due to its cicatrisant properties.

Palliative care for the end of life is an area of Clinical Aromatherapy where Hydrosols are invaluable. Madeline Kerkof in the Netherlands published a book in June 2015 on complementary palliative nursing: "Complementary Nursing in End of Life Care. She uses Hydrosols, CO2 extractions and Essential Oils in her Aromacare for the Elderly and those coming to the end of life. In her practical uses of Hydrosols she finds that "Sometimes, the effect of hydrosols is more powerful and subtle or better applicable than the essential oil from the plant of origin".⁴ I particularly agree with her description of Hydrosols as a "complete array of components". She describes it this way:

"A hydrosol does not only contain volatile but also other components of the plant, such as for example bitter compounds. We can therefore say that a hydrosol is like a fingerprint of the complete array of components of the plant."⁵

I use Hydrosols in my everyday personal care. For example: For facial care I use two different Hydrosols each day both morning and evening. Lavender is cell regenerating as mentioned previously. Rose Geranium is anti-wrinkling with the added benefit of Hormone balancing which makes this a great way to begin my morning. I have no need for commercial skin toners. The hydrosols I use are 100% Certified Organic with nothing else added. Therefore, my skin readily accepts them without the use of "facial toners" with ingredients that I find undesirable for my health. My daughter used Douglas Fir Hydrosol with its anti-bacterial qualities to rid her face of adult on-set acne. It was cleared up in two-weeks without the use of antibiotics. Sandalwood Hydrosol is grounding when the stress' of life come along. Basil Hydrosol settles stomach and intestinal issues. These examples are merely minuscule examples of the many uses of Hydrosols.

Hydrosols can be used in cleaning products, laundry products, body care products, facial care products, as food additives etc. They are useful in nursing, palliative care, dental hygiene to name a few. Hydrosols are exceptional for emotional care. Energetically, we have only begun to discover the many connections we have with the plants and how they can benefit us. Hydrosols for Animal Aromatherapy is effective and can be used when many times Essential Oils can not. Kelly Holland Azzaro "teaches the therapeutic properties and versatile uses of hydrosols with their animal friends." Liz Fulcher, Cathy Skipper, Ann Harman, Jeanne Rose,

Anna Doxie, Madeline Kerkhofr and Kelly Holland Azzaro are some of the educators I've had the privilege to learn from over the years. Gratitude for these educators runs deep. A desire to help others gain appreciation for the beautiful benefits and uses of these beautiful distillate waters is motivating me. Hydrosols are now a part of who I am, how I live and what I do.

References:

- (1) <http://orgchemboulder.com/Technique/Procedures/Distillation/Distillation.shtml>
- (2) Rose, Jeanne. (1990) jeannerose.net
- (3) Harmon, A. (2010) Healing Waters: A spotlight on anti-inflammatory hydrolats. International Journal of Clinical Aromatherapy.
- (4) Kerkof, Madeline (2016): "Complementary Nursing in End of Life Care". Pg. 27
- (5) Kerkof, Madeline (2016): "Complementary Nursing in End of Life Care". Pg. 27
- (6) Azzaro, Kelly <https://www.animalaromatherapy.com>

OUTLINE NOTES:

Hydrosol Paper

Opening

Definition

History

Distillation difference

Chemistry difference

Kinds of Hydrosols

Uses for children

Uses for elderly

Uses for everyday personal care

Uses for household care

Uses for animals

Educators of Hydrosols

Closing