



Essential Oils – Quick Guide

Traditional Uses, Fragrance, Pairings & Pet Safety



Top 25 Essential Oils for Home Use

A Guide to Traditional Uses, Fragrance, Pairings & Pet Safety

1. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Traditional Uses: A staple of European linen sprays, sachets and bath salts, and the classic bedtime-routine scent. It blends with almost everything and softens sharp citrus and mint notes.

Color: Pale yellow to colorless

Fragrance: Sweet, floral, herbaceous

Pairs With: Frankincense, Lemon, Peppermint, Chamomile

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

2. Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)

Traditional Uses: Steam-distilled from the leaves. Popular in cooling foot balms, lip and body products and wake-up diffuser blends; its sharp top note lifts heavier woody and floral scents.

Color: Clear

Fragrance: Sharp, minty, cooling

Pairs With: Lemon, Rosemary, Lavender

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

3. Tea Tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*)

Traditional Uses: Native to eastern Australia, where the Bundjalung people have long used the leaves. Today a staple in natural soaps, shampoos and cleaning sprays for its clean, medicinal scent.

Color: Pale yellow to clear

Fragrance: Medicinal, fresh, earthy

Pairs With: Lavender, Lemon, Clove

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

4. Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*)

Traditional Uses: Steam-distilled from the leaves of the Australian blue gum. A classic in shower steamers, bath blends and fresh-scented cleaning sprays; its sharp camphor note pairs well with mint and citrus.

Color: Colorless to pale yellow

Fragrance: Camphorous, fresh

Pairs With: Peppermint, Lemon, Tea Tree

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

5. Lemon (*Citrus limon*)

Traditional Uses: Cold-pressed from the peel. A go-to for natural cleaning sprays, hand soaps and bright daytime diffuser blends, adding a clean top note to floral and herbal scents.

Color: Light yellow

Fragrance: Bright citrus, clean

Pairs With: Lavender, Rosemary, Tea Tree

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Skin Note: Can increase sun sensitivity: avoid direct sun on skin after use.

6. Frankincense (*Boswellia carterii*)

Traditional Uses: A tree resin burned as incense in religious ceremonies across Africa, the Middle East and Asia for thousands of years. Today found in facial oils, balms and meditation-style diffuser blends.

Color: Pale yellow

Fragrance: Woody, earthy, balsamic

Pairs With: Myrrh, Lavender, Bergamot

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

7. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Traditional Uses: A Mediterranean kitchen herb long used in European herbal hair rinses. Popular in scalp and hair-care blends and in study-time diffuser blends for its fresh, herbal scent.

Color: Clear

Fragrance: Herbal, woody

Pairs With: Peppermint, Lemon, Lavender

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

8. Chamomile (Roman) (*Chamaemelum nobile*)

Traditional Uses: The flowers have been steeped as tea in European herbal traditions for centuries. The oil's sweet, apple-like scent is popular in bedtime blends and gentle-feeling skincare products.

Color: Light blue to yellow

Fragrance: Sweet, apple-like

Pairs With: Lavender, Geranium, Bergamot

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

9. Sweet Orange (*Citrus sinensis*)

Traditional Uses: Cold-pressed from the peel, a by-product of the orange juice industry, which keeps it one of the most affordable citrus oils. Popular in cleaning sprays and in holiday blends with cinnamon and clove.

Color: Orange to yellow

Fragrance: Sweet citrus

Pairs With: Cinnamon, Lavender, Clove

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

10. Clove (*Syzygium aromaticum*)

Traditional Uses: Dried flower buds from Indonesia's Spice Islands, traded around the world for centuries. A holiday favorite in simmer-pot style scent blends, potpourri and spiced seasonal products.

Color: Deep yellow to brown

Fragrance: Warm, spicy

Pairs With: Orange, Cinnamon, Lemon

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Skin Note: Skin-sensitizing: use only at very low dilution.

11. Cedarwood (*Cedrus atlantica*)

Traditional Uses: Cedar wood has long lined closets and chests to keep linens fresh. Its dry, woody scent is popular in grooming products, candles and grounding diffuser blends.

Color: Light amber

Fragrance: Woody, balsamic

Pairs With: Lavender, Patchouli, Rosemary

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

12. Geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*)

Traditional Uses: Distilled from the leaves of a rose-scented garden geranium and often used as a budget-friendly stand-in for rose in perfumery. Common in facial oils, lotions and soaps.

Color: Greenish

Fragrance: Sweet floral

Pairs With: Lavender, Bergamot, Patchouli

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

13. Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*)

Traditional Uses: Distilled from the flowers of a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, where the blossoms are traditionally scattered on the beds of newlyweds. A cornerstone of fine floral perfumery and used in hair and body products.

Color: Pale yellow

Fragrance: Exotic, sweet floral

Pairs With: Bergamot, Lavender, Patchouli

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

14. Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)

Traditional Uses: A Mediterranean kitchen herb. The essential oil is extremely strong and is used in tiny amounts in herbal-style aromatic blends and natural household recipes.

Color: Brownish to dark yellow

Fragrance: Sharp, herbal

Pairs With: Tea Tree, Lemon, Thyme

Dogs: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Skin Note: Very concentrated and skin-irritating: not for direct skin use.

15. Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*)

Traditional Uses: Cold-pressed from a citrus fruit grown mainly in Calabria, Italy. It gives Earl Grey tea its signature flavor and is a key note in classic eau de cologne perfumery.

Color: Greenish-yellow

Fragrance: Fresh citrus with floral hints

Pairs With: Lavender, Frankincense, Geranium

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Skin Note: Increases sun sensitivity: avoid direct sun on skin after use.

16. Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*)

Traditional Uses: A tall tropical grass used throughout Southeast Asian and Indian cooking. The oil's grassy-lemon scent is popular in room sprays, soaps and fresh, energizing diffuser blends.

Color: Yellow to amber

Fragrance: Citrusy-grassy

Pairs With: Lavender, Tea Tree, Peppermint

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

17. Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*)

Traditional Uses: Distilled from the leaves of a tropical plant. A classic base note in perfumery whose scent grows richer with age, used in soaps, candles and solid perfumes.

Color: Dark amber

Fragrance: Earthy, musky

Pairs With: Frankincense, Orange, Geranium

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

18. Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*)

Traditional Uses: Distilled from the needles and twigs of the Mediterranean cypress. A fresh, woody scent common in men's grooming products, massage oils and bath blends; pairs well with citrus and lavender.

Color: Pale yellow

Fragrance: Woody, fresh

Pairs With: Lavender, Lemon, Frankincense

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

19. Grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*)

Traditional Uses: Cold-pressed from the peel. A bright, fresh note used in body scrubs, soaps and daytime diffuser blends, and a lighter alternative to lemon or orange.

Color: Pale yellow to pinkish

Fragrance: Bright, sweet citrus

Pairs With: Peppermint, Rosemary, Lavender

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Skin Note: Can increase sun sensitivity: avoid direct sun on skin after use.

20. Helichrysum (*Helichrysum italicum*)

Traditional Uses: Nicknamed "everlasting" or "immortelle" because the flowers keep their color when dried. A prized, premium oil in Mediterranean skincare and perfumery.

Color: Golden yellow

Fragrance: Sweet, herbaceous

Pairs With: Lavender, Frankincense, Chamomile

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

21. Neem Oil (*Azadirachta indica*)

Traditional Uses: A pressed seed oil, not a steam-distilled essential oil, from the Indian neem tree, central to Ayurvedic and South Asian folk traditions for centuries. Used in handmade soaps, balms and hair oils.

Color: Dark green to brown

Fragrance: Strong, pungent, garlicky-earthy

Pairs With: Tea Tree, Lavender, Lemon, Eucalyptus

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use extreme caution; keep away from skin and fur

Skin Note: Strong odor: patch test before use.

22. Sandalwood (*Santalum album*)

Traditional Uses: Heartwood oil from slow-growing trees native to India, valued for thousands of years in Hindu and Buddhist ceremonies. A creamy base note in perfumery and a premium ingredient in facial oils and solid perfumes.

Color: Pale yellow to gold

Fragrance: Creamy, woody, soft, sweet

Pairs With: Frankincense, Lavender, Bergamot, Ylang Ylang

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Skin Note: Choose sustainably sourced sandalwood.

23. Neroli (*Citrus aurantium var. amara*)

Traditional Uses: Steam-distilled from the blossoms of the bitter orange tree and named for a 17th-century Italian princess of Nerola who made it a fashionable perfume. Orange blossoms have long been tied to weddings; today neroli is prized in fine perfumery and luxury skincare.

Color: Pale yellow to amber

Fragrance: Sweet, floral, citrusy with a honeyed note

Pairs With: Lavender, Chamomile, Frankincense, Sandalwood

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

24. Lime (*Citrus aurantiifolia*)

Traditional Uses: Zesty, sharp citrus that adds a sparkling top note to herbal and mint blends. Favored in fresh-scented cleaning sprays, hand soaps and summery body products.

Color: Pale green to yellow

Fragrance: Sharp, zesty citrus

Pairs With: Peppermint, Eucalyptus, Lemongrass, Rosemary

Dogs: Use extra care: very brief diffusing only; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Not recommended (diffused or on skin and fur)

Skin Note: Cold-pressed lime can increase sun sensitivity: avoid direct sun on skin after use.

25. Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*)

Traditional Uses: A relative of kitchen sage; the flowering tops are steam-distilled. Its sweet, herbal, slightly wine-like scent is a perfumery favorite and a popular base for massage oils and bath blends.

Color: Colorless to pale yellow

Fragrance: Herbal, sweet, musky

Pairs With: Lavender, Bergamot, Frankincense, Cedarwood

Dogs: Diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Cats: Use caution: diffuse briefly in a ventilated space; keep off skin and fur

Important Pet Safety Reminders

The Dogs and Cats notes above cover three kinds of exposure: oils diffused in the air, oils on skin or fur, and oils a pet may lick or swallow. Never allow ingestion.

Dogs: Generally more tolerant of diluted aromas than cats. Never apply essential oils to fur or skin, and diffuse briefly in a well-ventilated room so your dog can leave freely.

Cats: Particularly sensitive to essential oils because they process them very slowly. Not recommended on or near cats. If diffusing, use a well-ventilated room, keep sessions short and let your cat leave freely. Ask your veterinarian before using any oil around pets.

General Usage Notes: For external and aromatic use only. Always dilute essential oils in a carrier oil before applying to skin, and patch test first. Avoid eyes and mucous membranes. Keep out of reach of children and pets. If you are pregnant, nursing, or have a medical condition, check with a health professional before use.

Traditional uses are provided for general information only. These products are cosmetic and aromatic products, not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

