

HELICHRYSUM

Latin Name: *Helichrysum italicum*

Botanical Family: Asteraceae syn. Compositae

Other Common Names: Immortelle, Everlasting

Extraction Information

Country of Origin: France, Italy, Corisca, Bosnia

Part of Plant Used: Flowers/Flowering tops

Extraction Method: Steam Distillation

Oil Content: 0.67%

Color of Oil: Yellowish - Reddish

Blending Information

Odor Description: Spicy, Warm, Herbaceous

Blending Factor: 5

Note: Middle

Energy: Cooling

Blends Well With: Carrot seed, German Chamomile, Rosemary ct. verbenone, Sage (*Salvia officinalis*), Lavender, Roman Chamomile, Cistus/Rockrose, Lavandin

Indicated For: Acne, chronic dermatitis, eczema, scar tissue reduction/to support healthy scar tissue formation, burns, dermal inflammation, cuts and wounds, bruises, radiation burns, Herpes simplex, tissue trauma, broken capillaries, stretch marks, dry itchy skin, varicose veins, rosacea, psoriasis, aging skin.

Safety Information: Considered Safe Neat or Diluted, No known Hazards

Contraindications: None known

GRAS status:

Botany:

There are over 600 species in the *Helichrysum* genus occurring in temperate regions throughout the world. The genus includes annuals, herbaceous perennials and shrubs. *Helichrysum* species thrives in sunshine, and enjoys growing in arid, sandy, stoney areas and



along mountainsides. Over 250 different species of Helichrysum reside in S. Africa. The name Helichrysum is derived from the Greek “helios” meaning sun and “chrysos” meaning gold, referring to the color of many of the flowers of species in this genus. The name ‘Immortelle’ or ‘Everlasting’ comes about for this plant as it retains its yellow color even when dried.

Helichrysum italicum is a small perennial shrubby herb with narrow, silver-hairy leaves and small, yellow, dry (straw-like) flowers. The flowers are a cluster of golden yellow ball shaped blossoms, the leaves are delicate and oblong, which when crushed release a distinct aroma. It is a wonderful plant to grow in the garden, for both its curry aroma and simple beauty. The aroma of the essential oil has been exquisitely described by Holmes (n/d), as being “a deeply-saturated sweet, green floral scent.”

History + Myth

Historical uses and writings on Helichrysum are scant although it does appear to enjoy a history of traditional medicinal and culinary use in several cultures. Holmes (n/d) comments that “The plant has been used in herbal medicine since ancient Greece.” A couple of articles have been published recently on the use of Helichrysum in Italy to flavor sauces with a curry-like quality in various food dishes. The flavor is said to be reminiscent of a more delicate rosemary.

According to www.plantzafrica.com/planthij/helichrysumsplend.htm “Helichrysums are well known and very popular as traditional medicine in S. Africa, their uses are often linked to their distribution. Elsa Pooley mentions in the field guide to the Flora of the Drakensberg and Lesotho, that Helichrysum splendidum has been used to treat rheumatism and that it is a good fuel plant in the mountains. It is also used in potpourri and lasts well in a vase as a cut flower. The Afrikaans common name, sewejaartjie is given to most of the helichrysums with papery, everlasting flowers, and is derived from the belief that the flower heads last for seven (sewe) years (jaar) when kept in the house. The prefix ‘geel’ means yellow. Geelsewejaartjie.”

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Therapeutic Actions

Analgesic, Anti-haematomal, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antidepressant, cell regenerative, mucolytic, vulnerary

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Chemical Feature:	Core Aromatic Applications:
<p>Rich in esters, supported by monoterpenes (a-pinene) and diketones</p>	<p>First Aid: First aid remedy for injuries, strains, sprains, tissue trauma (apply undiluted)</p> <p>Circulatory System: Varicose veins, bruises, broken capillaries, Raynaud’s disease</p> <p>Digestive system: hemorrhoids, rectal fissures</p> <p>Musculoskeletal system: joint pain, rheumatoid arthritis, carpal tunnel, arthritis</p> <p>Nervous system: neuralgia, pain, inflammation</p> <p>Respiratory system: sinus infections, ear infections (otitis media), chronic chest ailments, mucolytic, bronchitis, lung congestion, rhinitis</p> <p>Skin: acne, chronic dermatitis, eczema, scar tissue reduction/to support healthy scar tissue formation, burns, dermal inflammation cuts and wounds, bruises, radiation burns, herpes simplex, tissue trauma, broken capillaries, stretch marks, dry itchy skin, varicose veins, rosacea, psoriasis, aging skin.</p>

Chemical Composition

Chemical Composition of *Helichrysum italicum*

Monoterpenes α-pinene (17.2%), camphene (1.6%), β-pinene (0.2%), myrcene (0.04%), limonene (1.7%), terpinolene (0.4%)

Monoterpene alcohols linalool (0.3%), borneol (0.05%), α-terpineol (1.4%), nerol (0.24%)

Sesquiterpene alcohols guaialol (1.5%), β-eudesmol (1.8%), α-eudesmol (6.9%)

Esters **neryl acetate (32.38-51.4%)**, geranyl propionate (3.8%), neryl propionate (4.34%)

Ketones (diketones) 2-nonanone (0.26%), 3,5 dimethyloctane-4,6-dione (0.92%), italidione i mw=210 (8.19%), italidione ii mw=224 (2.59%), italidione iii mw=238 (1.55-1.76%)

Charles D J and Simon J E. (1991). Volatile Compounds Plant of the Curry. HORTSCIENCE 26(1):69-70. and www.aromaticsinternational.com

Psyche/Emotion: mental unrest, irritability, grief and bereavement, inability to heal or overcome adversity, emotional trauma, old emotional scars, anxiety, agitation, acute fear or anger, emotional burnout

Subtle/Energetic Aromatherapy: Helichrysum has the power to break through the deepest, most “stuck” of negative emotions and can restore compassion not only for others but for oneself. Enhances intuition.

Ayurveda: Cooling, soothes and reduces excess pitta, can also relieve vata anxiety

TCM: Helichrysum helps to regulate the flow of Qi-energy and the blood. It is also useful to clear heat and reduce inflammation (Mojay, 1997). Spreads Liver Qi and harmonizes the Shen, nourishes Liver Yin and calms the Shen; activates the Qi, invigorates the blood, opens the meridians and relieves pain.

Affinity: Skin and Wounds

Keywords: Bruises, skin conditions, anti-inflammatory, all around healer, calms the Shen, harmonizing

Research/ Additional Notes:

Modern Popularity

Helichrysum is a relative newcomer to the practice and industry of aromatherapy. According to Schnaubelt (1999) “The story of the essential oil of *Helichrysum italicum* is a perfect example of how a few individuals acting decisively can make a difference in the world. Essential oil catalogs prior to the early 1980’s do not list *Helichrysum italicum*. Today, *Helichrysum* essential oil is offered on virtually every ambitious aromatherapy list.” It could be said, that Kurt Schnaubelt popularized the work of Pierre Franchomme and Daniel Penoel through the aromatherapy courses at the Pacific Institute of Aromatherapy as well as through his (Schnaubelt’s) earlier books: *Advanced Aromatherapy* and *Medical Aromatherapy*. “It’s effects are so convincing that it has never met with any kind of criticism despite the absence of data on its effectiveness. *Helichrysum* oil demonstrates that anecdotal evidence can create a reality without the help of industrially sponsored science. *Helichrysum* is more predictable in its action than almost any other oil and is produced and sold by small enterprises that understand the needs of the aromatherapy market.”