

The Essential Oil of Fragonia™

Fragonia (Agonis fragrans) is a relatively new essential oil from Australia, which first came to our attention at the end of 2005, at a seminar conducted by Dr Daniel Péroël, the leading French aromatherapist.

Dr Péroël described how Fragonia has wonderful healing properties akin to Tea Tree, and is especially effective in treating respiratory conditions and different types of infections. It is also a very “balanced” oil, and is especially good for helping one attain a balanced emotional state. According to Dr Péroël, Fragonia literally helps the person who uses it to make peace within themselves, and in their life in general.

Unlike many of its Aussie “cousins”, Fragonia has a lovely, appealing scent, which makes it ideal for use in an oil burner or vaporiser. I like to blend it with a couple of my favourite citrus oils for a balancing and energising lift.

Fragonia is also a “gentle” oil that is extremely mild on the skin, even when used at full (100%) strength. This makes it an excellent oil to use with children.

Since its introduction to New Zealand, Fragonia has quickly become very popular in aromatherapy circles for its versatility and amazing effectiveness in treating a wide variety of different conditions.

The essential oil of Fragonia is distilled from the leaves and twigs of the *Agonis fragrans* bush, and grown and distilled by Paperbark Oils in Western Australia.

History of Fragonia

Fragonia was first “discovered” by John and Peta Day of Paperbark Oils in Western Australia. They had originally set up their property to produce Tea Tree, but when the price of Tea Tree started dropping worldwide, they looked for alternative oil-producing plants that would grow in their location. As a result of their search they also now produce small quantities of Rosalina, Lemon Tea Tree, Lavandula, Australian Sandalwood, Eucalyptus plenissima, and another new oil that they are pioneering, Honey Myrtle.

It was an article in a journal that first brought Fragonia to their attention. At that stage the plant had not yet formally been named, and was simply known as a species of *Agonis*. A botanist with the Department of Agriculture in Western Australia had identified it as a wild-growing aromatic shrub. John and Peta decided to take the risk of planting sufficient *Agonis* seedlings to fully test its potential as a therapeutic essential oil.

John and Peta also discovered that there were considerable variations between the samples of *Agonis* that they had collected from different locations, and with no outside expertise available to them, they made their final selection on what “smelt and felt right” to them. And of course, as mentioned above, their choice proved to be the ideal one.

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The plant variety they selected was officially named *Agonis fragrans* in 2001. The Days then decided to trademark the essential oil as Fragonia™, to protect their investment in the costly process of planting, distilling and testing an unknown oil. The trademark also protects you, as a purchaser, in that you have the assurance that a bottle marked Fragonia has the expected chemical constituents. This is not necessarily true of generic oils such as Lavender and Tea Tree.

Properties of Fragonia

Fragonia has a wide range of therapeutic uses, including the following:

1. Microbial Infections (bacterial, fungal and viral)

Testing of Fragonia as an antimicrobial agent was performed initially at the Microbiology Dept. of the University of Western Australia. The tests were carried out on four different types of bacteria and on the fungus *Candida albicans*. Test results indicate that Fragonia has a similar antimicrobial activity to Tea Tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*), with the added benefit of possessing a more pleasing fragrance.

Clinical trials by aromatherapists have confirmed Fragonia's antibacterial and antifungal properties, while strong anecdotal evidence exists for its antiviral action. This is backed up by our own experience of finding Fragonia a very effective first-line defence against the initial symptoms of the common cold. If used early enough — that is, as soon as the first cold symptoms present themselves — Fragonia can be effective in stopping the cold in its tracks. And if you don't manage to prevent the cold fully, continued use of Fragonia will speed up the cold's progress and ameliorate the symptoms.

For respiratory and throat infections, you can use Fragonia in a throat gargle or steam inhalation. It is also possible to place a drop of the neat Fragonia oil on the finger and rub it around the inside of the mucous membranes of the mouth, for even greater effect. Use sparingly and ease off if there is any sensitisation of the mucous membranes.

2. Expectorant

Fragonia has very good expectorant properties. While it is not as powerful and aggressive as Eucalyptus in this particular area, it is good enough to be very useful in a steam inhalation treatment for colds, flu, and other head and chest infections.

Fragonia has distinct advantages over Eucalyptus in breaking up mucous, in that it:

- Attacks the infection causing the mucous formation
- Soothes the irritation and nervous reactions to the respiratory inflammation
- Strengthens and balances the immune system
- Is extremely gentle on the skin and is readily absorbed through it
- Has a pleasant fragrance.

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Its gentle action means that it is especially good for use with children, and its balancing properties help the patient at the emotional level.

3. Inflammation

Research and clinical trials have shown Fragonia to have very good anti-inflammatory properties. One scientific study reported that Fragonia inhibits secretion of the interferon IFN γ , involved in the inflammatory response to tissue injury or infection.

There is also positive clinical feedback, with an aromatherapist and microbiologist in Perth, reporting the following: "Several weeks ago I sprained my left knee and at one stage it felt very hot and sore. I applied Agonis fragrans (Fragonia) oil neat to the knee and within a few minutes it had cooled the knee to almost normal temperature".

4. Menstrual and female health problems

Fragonia can assist in regulating female hormonal imbalances, which come under the control of the pituitary gland, and in bringing the body back in homeostasis. Clinical research has shown Fragonia can bring about a significant improvement relating to pain, depression, anxiety, breast tenderness and bloating in menstruating women, as well as a decrease in the duration of symptoms.

5. Pain

Fragonia is useful for relieving minor pain, including joint and muscle pain, and even mild dental pain.

Bodywork practitioners have reported that a few drops of Fragonia oil, added to a carrier oil, is sufficient to dissipate and drain lactic acid held in sore muscles, and soften fascia and ligaments. Fragonia also has the added benefit of helping bodywork clients to be more focused, grounded, clear and refreshed at the end of their sessions.

Fragonia has also been useful to relieve mild dental pain. For more severe pain, Plai is the best choice, but Fragonia may be used in combination with Plai for its balancing and grounding effects.

6. Immune system

Dr Péroël recommends applying Fragonia on a daily basis to the skin over the lymphatic nodes in the side of the neck, armpits and groin, to strengthen the immune system. Fragonia's gentle action makes it a safe oil to use for this application.

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Note that other essential oils that make excellent immune system enhancers are not suitable for daily use directly on the skin in this way.

7. Jetlag and regulation of the body clock

Several travelers, including Dr Péroël, have reported that Fragonia has a very positive effect in preventing or minimising the symptoms of jet lag. Many shift workers have also reported that Fragonia lessens their requirement to use alcohol (to relax) and coffee (to stimulate), in their attempts to regulate their body clock.

8. Emotional balance and behavioural issues

Several studies have indicated that Fragonia's powerful balancing properties make it ideal for use with children suffering ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), calming and centering them. Practitioners have also reported amazing successes in using Fragonia with autistic children.

As mentioned in the introduction Dr Péroël considers Fragonia to have the ability of "making peace" inside the person who uses it.

One particular case illustrates this point. On the day after starting Fragonia oils, a psychotherapy patient was able to express and release blocked emotions that were never "authorised to be "out" before during a long period of therapy. Later on she explained that she was able to "make peace" during her dreams, even with people who had passed away, and it was quite a healing experience.

Dr Péroël suggests applying one or two drops, neat, on specific chakras of your choice before going to bed, and seeing what dreams or experiences occur for you during the night. He also comments that if you apply a few drops to your skin after your shower in the morning, you will notice that most people are attracted to you like "magic" and they think that you are wearing a new kind of perfume.

Fragonia's Unique Chemical Composition

It is Fragonia's unique molecular balance that gives Fragonia its power of harmonisation and rebalancing, and helps to release many old blockages from an emotional perspective.

Fragonia's biochemical makeup includes equal quantities of the oxide 1,8 cineole, hydrocarbons (pinene), and alcohols (linalool, geraniol, terpinen-4-ol). These three main constituent molecular groups are present in Agonis fragrans in an almost perfect proportional balance of one third each.

Dr Péroël commented on his amazement at finding out that the sacred number known as the "golden proportion" was expressed almost perfectly through the chemistry of this essential oil.

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This provides a more holistic understanding of this unique oil as a very versatile and effective “all-rounder”.

Fragonia also has a unique synergy with another new Australian essential oil, Kunzea. They are both very well balanced oils in their biochemistry, have similar properties, and have been found to work very synergistically when used together in combination.

Using Essential Oils for Massage

When using essential oils in massage, it is important to dilute them in a carrier oil. If you are applying the essential oils to a large area of the body of healthy adults, the general rule is not to exceed a 5% concentration of essential oils.

To make a 5% dilution, add 20 drops total of essential oils to 20 ml of carrier oil. If you are blending several oils, the total amount of essential oil should add up to no more than 20 drops in 20 ml of the carrier oil. If you use a different amount of carrier oil, then vary the number of drops of essential oil accordingly (eg. 10 drops total in 10 ml of carrier oil).

For more information about using Fragonia, or blending it into suitable synergistic blends, please contact the author, Glenys Earle, at info@nmoils.com

Summary

Although Fragonia is still a relatively new essential oil, it is becoming very popular among aromatherapists for its usefulness and versatility, which include its application as an anti-infectious agent, anti-inflammatory, expectorant, immune reinforcer, analgesic for muscles and joints, as well as an emotional balancer.

In addition, Fragonia is safe, even for babies and the elderly, gentle on the skin and has a lovely fragrance that appeals to most people. This oil is fast becoming a “must have” for every essential oil first-aid kit.

By Glenys Earle,
(from source material by Peter Archer, Dip Aromatherapy)

New Millennium Oils
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Note: Fragonia™ is the trademarked name for the essential oil of *Agonis fragrans*, grown in Western Australia.