



Marjoram, Sweet

(*Origanum majorana*)

Stock #3896-3 (5 ml.)

People of many Western cultures, from the ancient Greeks onward through history, have regarded sweet marjoram as a symbol of happiness, love and bliss. Marjoram oil's sweet, woody aroma, which includes hints of lilac, mint, rose and cloves, has a comforting, warming quality. Consequently, marjoram seems to be particularly useful with individuals who dislike "flowery" scents.¹⁻⁵

Marjoram oil contains the same alcohol (terpinen-4-ol) that makes tea tree oil such an effective antiseptic. Marjoram also contains spasmolytic esters (substances that relax muscle spasms and convulsions), which make the oil especially useful for respiratory ailments such as whooping cough and acute bronchitis with accompanying cough. In addition, marjoram demonstrates antibacterial, antifungal, antimicrobial and antiviral activity, and acts as an expectorant to help eliminate mucus. Thus, marjoram is used for a variety of upper respiratory infections and complaints, including head congestion, catarrh, colds, flu and sinusitis. Marjoram is even thought to be effective against *Streptococcus aureus* infection, which is common in coughs and colds. Furthermore, marjoram may be helpful for preventing cross-infection or for complementing orthodox treatment of TB (tuberculosis)—marjoram is effective against the TB bacillus at 0.4%. When treating respiratory infections in children, marjoram oil is best used in the bath—five drops for a small child is sufficient. For children older than three, two to three drops of marjoram oil can be added to a pot of hot water for steam inhalation.²⁻⁹

Marjoram oil's antiseptic properties are beneficial when dealing with wounds and other skin problems. For example, in one case study, a 5% solution of sweet marjoram in sterile water was directly applied as a compress (3 times daily) to a chronically infected bedsore. The sore had previously been treated with systemic antibiotics, but there had been no effect. A wound swab revealed that the infection was caused by *Clostridium*. After 24 hours of marjoram compresses, a dramatic improvement was noted, and within 5 days, the wound was nearly healed. Thus, marjoram is considered a suitable essential oil for the treatment of infected pressure sores, sometimes called decubitus ulcers (bed sores), caused by *Clostridium*, *Streptococcus*, *Proteus*, *E. coli* and *Salmonella*. Marjoram is also used topically to disperse bruises and heal chilblains (one of the mildest forms of injury from exposure to moist cold, characterized by recurrent localized itching, swelling, painful erythema (redness of the skin), and sometimes blistering and ulceration). Furthermore, individuals with lymphedema (swelling under the skin caused by obstruction of lymphatic vessels or lymph nodes) following mastectomy (surgical removal of all or part of a breast) or lumpectomy (removal of a tumor from the breast, also known as tylectomy), can use marjoram oil with a lymphatic drainage massage technique to help protect an engorged (swollen to excess) limb from bacterial or fungal infection.²⁻⁸

Marjoram oil is well-known as an effective analgesic (pain-reliever) for soothing nerve pain, sprains, strains and toothache; alleviating general muscular aches and pains, as well as pain associated with arthritis and rheumatism; and, relieving headaches and migraines, especially when massaged into the temples. It is interesting to note that the structural requirements of morphine-like analgesics are similar to the structure of thymol ether, a constituent of marjoram oil. Given its analgesic and antispasmodic activity, marjoram is also recommended for relieving painful menstrual cramps and muscle tension.¹⁻⁸

Additionally, marjoram acts as a nervous system tonic, calming sedative, and mild antidepressant, thus proving beneficial for the treatment of anxiety, depression, feelings of loneliness or grief, nervous irritability, nervous tension, PMS, stress-related disorders, and associated insomnia. Marjoram may even help lower high blood pressure, especially considering that animal research shows that thymol, a substance found in marjoram oil, exhibits significant central nervous system depressant activity (sedation).¹⁻⁸

Marjoram's carminative (settles the digestive system) and laxative properties are valuable for aiding digestive problems such as bloating, colic, constipation, flatulence (gas), and indigestion, and for increasing peristalsis. Applying marjoram oil topically via abdominal massage can help relieve early onset constipation (of a few days' duration).^{2-5,7,8}

Furthermore, marjoram is unique in that it is classified as an aphrodisiac, a substance that reduces compulsive, excessive sexual behavior or overactive libido (sexual desire).^{3,4,7,8}

Sweet marjoram oil is considered non-irritant, non-sensitizing and non-toxic. However, marjoram oil contains terpineol, a substance that is thought to enhance prednisolone (a steroid medication) absorption through the skin. In addition, marjoram oil should not be used during pregnancy.^{2-5,7,8}

References:

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