

# BASIL

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## *OCIMUM BASILICUM*



I LOVE the aroma of basil. Right this moment I have a vase of basil fresh picked from my herb garden on my kitchen table. Brushing against it as I set the table for dinner and again when I clear the table it just makes me smile. Often I find myself just standing there in the middle of the kitchen inhaling deeply just for the sheer pleasure of it.

When I'm working in the garden I bury my face in a basil plant to take a break from the heat, the sun, the back breaking work of tending large gardens. I plant basil not only in the herb garden, but in the vegetable garden alongside tomatoes. Tomatoes love basil, too.

It is no accident that I have this response to basil. Part of it's therapeutic value is it's ability to clear the mind and calm anxiety. Is it any wonder it makes me smile when it's constituents are known to release nervous tension, reduce mental fatigue and lift the spirits.

But, what if you don't grow basil? Or you don't have a mom who grows basil? What if it's winter?



The answer lies in tiny fluid droplets: essential oil.

Basil essential oil is the ESSENCE of the basil plant; it's the very life blood of the plant. The essential oil can be used in cooking--just add a couple drops and enjoy the fresh taste and health benefits of garden grown basil. It's great in salad dressings to splash on tomatoes--it makes them happy and you, too!

Some of basil's actions are antidepressant, antiseptic, carminative, febrifuge and expectorant. In other words it lifts the spirit, kills germs, soothes tummy pains, calms a fever and gets the phlegm out.

Basil actively works to inhibit the identical enzymes that anti-inflammatory drugs like Ibuprofen and Tylenol do. It's antibacterial action protects against pathogens, even those that are resistant to antibiotics. That's a lot of ACTION for a drop of oil or a few leaves.

Basil essential oil can be diffused, applied topically or taken internally. (NOTE: not all

essential oils can be taken internally. YOUNG LIVING is my oil of choice for a basketful of reasons and can safely be used as a dietary supplement.)

To use the plant, infuse in hot water to make a kind of "tea" or infuse in a carrier oil to make massage oil or salves, or chop the leaves to retrieve the "juice". To use the essential oil simply put drops in the water or the carrier oil.

**Here are a few ideas:**

- Diffuse basil into the air by using an essential oil diffuser or put a handful of fresh leaves into boiling water and simmer. This is good for any respiratory problem like bronchitis, coughs or sinusitis.
- For the digestive system: dyspepsia, flatulence or nausea. Dilute a drop or two of basil essential oil in a Tablespoon of carrier oil (Young Living V6 or coconut oil or olive oil) and massage into tummy and abdomen.
- Apply essential oil to tip of nose, on temples and on location of stings and bites. Or, rub leaf directly on bite.
- For mental fatigue, inhale first, and then apply to crown of head, forehead, heart and navel.
- Essential oil may be added to food or rice milk as a dietary supplement.
- For muscular and joint aches and pains, gout or arthritis apply dilution of couple drops basil essential oil in carrier oil. Or, infuse leaves in carrier oil for 2 weeks, strain and use oil.
- Dilution recommended for both topical and internal use. Dilute before using on sensitive areas such as the face, neck, genital area, etc. Keep out of reach of children. Avoid using on infants and very small children.
- Contraindications: Because of the multicultural use of basil to promote menstruation, pregnant women may be wise to limit their use of basil to culinary amounts. Do not use if you have nephritis or acute kidney inflammation.