

# Truly “Essential” Oil of Lavender

Lyn Belisle

“Lavender” is the answer. Want to know the question? It’s “Which herbal essential oil would you choose to have with you if you were stranded on the proverbial desert island?”

The amazing healing and balancing power of essential oil of lavender makes it the most versatile and important oil in aromatherapy, and a virtual medicine kit in a small bottle. Lavender (*lavandula officinalis*) has been grown since the beginning of recorded time. The Romans used the plant and flowers extensively in their bathing rituals, and the word itself is derived from the Latin word *lavare*, to wash. Today, the cultivated plant can be found world-wide in all but the harshest climates.

Modern aromatherapists and herbalist agree that the uses for its essential oil (EO) are extensive – in fact, its nickname is “the universal oil.” The EO is steam distilled and readily available through most good health food stores and natural food providers, as well as on the Internet. It is user-friendly. Both men and women like the fresh scent of lavender. And it is a reasonably priced essential oil with stress-relieving therapeutic properties and few, if any, contraindications.

Here in the Texas Hill Country, there is a Lavender Renaissance in progress. Ten years ago, Jeannie Ralston and her photographer husband Rob Kendrick discovered that the climate conditions here are remarkably similar to those in Provence, France, so they

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established Hill Country Lavender Farm. Because of their success, almost a dozen area farmers have turned to lavender as their main cash crop, and much of that becomes essential oil.

Some area lavender farms distill their own lavender EO using large commercial stills that sit in their fields. According to Jeannie, 100 pounds of fresh lavender flowers and leaves are needed to distill one liquid pound of the essential oil. Like all essential herbal oils, it is incredibly concentrated.

Anyone who is familiar with EOs knows that it is important to dilute them at a rate of about 10 drops to every ounce of carrier liquid, but also knows that lavender oil is one of the few that can safely be used “neat” in small quantities on minor burns and insect bites.

To celebrate this remarkable plant and its oil, a Lavender Festival is held every May in the town of Blanco, Texas where most of the nearby farms cluster along the “Lavender Trail”. This is only one of many lavender festivals held nationwide. I love teaching

workshops at the Blanco festival,  
sharing formulas and recipes that include  
essential oil of lavender as a main

ingredient for everything from personal  
care to housekeeping.

Here are some formulas from those lavender EO workshops to help get you started:

### **Linen Spray**

(A wonderful gift for friends who are ill or in the hospital)

20 drops Lavender EO  
15 drops Lemon EO

Mix the EOs in 4 ounces distilled water in a spray mist bottle – shake well before spraying lightly on linens, particularly pillow cases. Lavender is calming and promotes rest, and Lemon, like all the citrus EOs, is bright and uplifting.

### **Stinky Sneaker Zapper**

2 Tablespoons Bicarbonate of Soda  
10 drops Lavender EO  
8 drops Rosemary EO  
5 drops Sage EO

Mix dry powder and EOs together in small Ziploc bag. Sprinkle half the mixture in each stinky sneaker. Leave overnight and tap out and discard mixture next morning (or leave longer for extra-stinky sneakers).

### **Wrinkle Formula for Mature Skin**

12 drops Lavender EO  
4 drops Frankincense EO  
4 drops Carrotseed EO

Mix the EOs in two ounces Hazelnut Carrier Oil and use one or two drops on neck, crow's feet, or anyplace on face that results are desired

### **Insect Repellant**

10 drops Lavender  
5 drops Citronella  
5 drops Geranium or Cedarwood

Blend into two ounces of Sweet Almond Oil for a skin-softening repellant, or into two ounces Vodka for an alcohol-based repellent. If using vodka, keep away from eyes and broken skin.

For more information:

Nationwide Lavender Festivals

<http://www.apinchof.com/lavenderfestival06.htm>

Organic Lavender Products

<http://www.frontiercoop.com/auracacia/acindex.htm>