

Cypress Oil: Benefits of This 'Ever Living' Oil

The cypress tree has long been associated with mortality, grief, and the immortal soul.¹ But aside from its melancholic symbolisms, this tree is also well-known for the fragrant and relaxing oil that it produces. Here are more interesting facts about cypress oil.

What Is Cypress Oil?

Cypress oil comes from *Cupressus sempervirens*, a deciduous, evergreen tree that can be identified by its dark green foliage, small flowers, and round brown-gray cones with seed nuts inside.^{2, 3} It's native to Southern Europe, but has spread to North Africa and North America. It's also widely cultivated in Spain, France, and Morocco.⁴

Cypress trees thrive well in wetlands, growing on cypress "knees" or pneumatophores. This tree is a softwood that's ideal for making vases and other novelty items.⁵ During the early times, Phoenicians and Cretans used it to build houses and ships, while the Egyptians used it to make sarcophagi for burying their deceased. The Greeks also used cypress wood to carve statues of their gods.⁶ The botanical name of this plant comes from the Greek word that means "ever living."⁷ Cypress trees are often cited in art and literature, and are believed to be an emblem of death. Legend also has it that the cross where Jesus was crucified was made from cypress.⁸ This is still a well-known symbolism in many countries, such as in Egypt, where they use the wood to create coffins. In the United States and France, cypress trees are often planted in graveyards. The Chinese also revere cypress and associate it with contemplation, as its roots take the form of a seated man when they grow.⁹

Today, cypress trees are not only valued for lumber, but are also used to produce cypress oil. This greenish or yellowish essential oil has a fresh, herbaceous, and slightly evergreen and woody scent, which is said to be calming and invigorating. It also has many applications.¹⁰

Aside from *Cupressus sempervirens*, other cypress species that are used to produce the essential oils are Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), native only to a coastal strip below Monterey Bay in California; Portuguese cypress (*Cupressus lusitanica*); and the Arizona cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*), native to the Southwestern US mountains and northern Mexico. However, avoid using Arizona cypress oil for aromatherapy, as it contains a toxic ketone that can attack your mucous membranes.¹¹

Uses of Cypress Oil

The cypress tree was valued by ancient civilizations for its medicinal uses. The Chinese chewed the cones to heal their bleeding gums, while Hippocrates

recommended it for treating hemorrhoids. The Greeks loved cypress's comforting smell, and used it to clear their mind and senses.[12](#)

Today, cypress oil is used for industrial and medicinal practices. Perfume and soap industries often use cypress oil, as its fresh evergreen aroma, with a slightly sweet and balsamic undertone, adds a masculine note to men's cologne and aftershaves.[13](#)

Medicinally, cypress oil can be used topically, inhaled via vapor therapy, or ingested in small doses. It's said to help regulate blood flow and alleviate menstrual problems, detoxify and decongest the lymphatic system, reduce water retention, and relax muscles.[14](#) Cypress oil can also have profound effects on your respiratory and digestive systems, especially during cold winter months.[15](#)

Here are some ways to use cypress oil:[16](#)

- **Inhale or vaporize it through a diffuser to calm and relax your mind.** It can also help alleviate breathing disorders, such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis.
- **Use it as a massage oil** to relieve asthma, arthritis, rheumatism, cramps, varicose veins, and heavy menstrual flow. You can also add it to your warm bath.
- **Add it to your favorite lotion or cream to help soothe broken skin and varicose veins.** It also has astringent effects that can help clarify oily and congested skin.
- **If you have a nosebleed, apply a few drops to a cold compress and press against your nose to help stop the bleeding.**
- **Add it to your foot soak to deodorize and clean sweaty feet.**

Composition of Cypress Oil

The medicinal and soothing properties of cypress oil come mainly from terpenes like alpha-pinene, beta-pinene, and alpha-terpinene. These organic hydrocarbons are the main building blocks of any plant resin or essential oil, and contribute to their scent, flavor, colors, as well as medicinal effects.[17](#)

Cypress oil also contains carene, camphene, cadinene, sabinene, myrcene, terpinolene, linalool, and bornyl acetate, all of which are essential to cypress oil's healing effects.[18](#)

Benefits of Cypress Oil

Cypress oil's health benefits are far-reaching, and it has demonstrated properties that are beneficial for your circulatory and respiratory systems. For instance, it can help reduce cellulite and varicose veins, and tighten and reduce pores.[19](#)

Cypress oil can also:

- **Relieve pain** – When massaged over affected body areas, cypress oil can relieve rheumatism, osteoarthritis, and muscle and joint pain. It also helps control spasms, relieves period cramps, and may even be used for injury rehabilitation.[20](#)
- **Strengthen and tighten your tissues** – Cypress oil's astringent properties causes the tissues in your gums, skin, muscles, and even hair follicles to

contract, which strengthens them and holds them in place. This prevents them from becoming loose or falling out.[21](#)

- **Treat wounds** – Owing to its camphene content, the oil has antiseptic properties that helps treat internal and external wounds. Cypress oil is even used as an ingredient in antiseptic lotions and creams.[22](#)
- **Serve as a diuretic** – This promotes good digestion and stops gas from forming in your intestines. It also reduces swelling, cleans your kidney, and eliminates toxins and excess water from your body.[23](#)
- **Constrict your blood vessels** – By constricting your veins, it helps stop bleeding, and may also benefit those who suffer from hemorrhoids and varicose veins. It can also be used for bleeding, perspiration, and irregularly heavy menstrual flow.
- **Promote proper liver function** – It maintains adequate bile secretion and protects the liver against any kind of infection, which are both essential for optimal liver health.[24](#)
- **Relax your nervous system** – It has a calming and sedative effect on your mind and body. Cypress oil is also beneficial for people who have suffered a major trauma or shock.[25](#)

How to Make Cypress Oil

Cypress oil comes from the young twigs, stems, and needles of the tree, and is extracted via steam distillation. Sometimes, the fruits of the plant are used to make this essential oil.[26](#)

How Does Cypress Oil Work?

According to Oriental medicine, cypress oil works by enlivening and regulating the blood flow in your body. It has restorative and toning effects on your veins, which is due to its astringent quality. Cypress oil can also harmonize your blood, which makes it useful for menstrual difficulties in women.[27](#)

Is Cypress Oil Safe?

Cypress oil is generally safe, and is non-toxic and non-irritant. However, I do not recommend using it topically without doing a skin patch test. Simply apply a small amount on your skin and see if an allergic reaction occurs.

You can dilute the oil in a carrier oil if you suspect to have sensitivity to it. Some of the best carrier oils to mix with cypress oil are lime, lemon, orange, clary sage, bergamot, frankincense, lavender, marjoram, pine, juniper, rosemary, and [sandalwood oils](#).[28](#)

Always consult a qualified health care practitioner before taking cypress oil orally so you will know the best dosage for your condition. Because of its ability to regulate menstrual flow, I do not recommend this essential oil to pregnant women and nursing moms. Do not use it on very young children as well.

Side Effects of Cypress Oil

Aside from its potential effects on pregnant women, cypress oil has no known contraindications.²⁹ However, to ensure that you only get the wholesome benefits of this oil, make sure you purchase it from a reputable manufacturer, so you will know that it's unadulterated and made from only high-quality ingredients.