

Eucalyptus Oil: Essential Oil Extraordinaire

Eucalyptus oil is a pure essential oil that has practical and industrial uses, as well as healing properties. It comes from a fast-growing evergreen tree native to Australia, with global eucalyptus oil production mainly from *Eucalyptus globulus* or "Blue Gum." Learn more about this essential oil – and how it can benefit your health and well-being.

What Is Eucalyptus Oil?

Eucalyptus oil is the distilled oil that comes from the dried leaves of eucalyptus – a colorless liquid with a strong woody and sweet smell. There are more than 700 different species of eucalyptus in the world, of which at least 500 produce a type of essential oil.

EucalyptusOil.com lists some of the common types of eucalyptus oil:¹

1. *Eucalyptus polybractea* – This is commonly known as "Blue Mallee," a small mallee type tree. The crude or single-distilled oil is high in cineole (a colorless, liquid terpene ether with a camphor-like odor and is found in essential oils) and usually assays between 80 and 88 percent.
2. *Eucalyptus globulus* – This is the species that has received the most attention from botanists and chemists, and its oil is best known and most used of all eucalyptus oils. Its cineole is between 60 and 70 percent. Since the properties of the crude oil usually do not meet the requirements of most pharmacopoeias, the oil has to be treated to increase the cineole content.
3. *Eucalyptus radiata* – Commonly known as "narrow-leaved peppermint," this is a medium-sized tree with fibrous bark. The crude oil has a cineole content of 65 to 70 percent and has a very refreshing aroma.
4. *Eucalyptus citriodora* – Referred to as the "lemon-scented gum," this large tree has gone through a name change and is now called *Corymbia*. The principal constituent of the oil is citronellal, and the oil is used for industrial and perfume purposes.

Australian aboriginals² use oil-containing eucalyptus leaf infusions as a traditional medication for body pains, fever, sinus congestions, and colds. As early as the 1880s, surgeons were already using eucalyptus oil as an antiseptic during operations.³ Toward the end of the century, the oil was used in most hospitals in England to clean urinary catheters.⁴

In 1948, the United States also officially registered eucalyptus oil as an insecticide and miticide (one that kills mites and ticks).

Uses of Eucalyptus Oil

According to Medline Plus,⁵ the diluted form of eucalyptus oil is taken orally for pain and inflammation of respiratory tract mucous membranes, coughs, asthma,

bronchitis, sinus pain and inflammation, and respiratory infections. It is also used as an antiseptic, insect repellent, and treatment option for wounds, burns, and ulcer. For healing mucus membranes (such as to safely and effectively treat [allergies and asthma](#)), you can apply a drop of eucalyptus oil on an organic cotton ball and sniff it several times a day. I also recommend adding a few drops to water or a nebulizer as steam therapy, or you can use a few drops in your bath water.

Eucalyptus oil is also popularly used as a fragrance in perfumes and cosmetics, and is found in mouthwashes, liniments and ointments, toothpastes, cough drops, and lozenges. It is commonly mixed with other oils to make it more easily absorbed by your skin. This supports the moisturizing process, which explains the oil's presence in skin products like a natural sunscreen.

There are different ways to use eucalyptus oil,⁶ including aromatically, topically, or internally. For instance, it can be applied to skin within a carrier oil, such as coconut oil. I advice starting with a drop added to 1 to 3 teaspoons of carrier, and increase the essential oil as necessary.

Composition of Eucalyptus Oil

Eucalyptus oils are made up of more than 100 different compounds.⁷ Its main chemical components are a-pinene, b-pinene, a-phellandrene, 1,8-cineole, limonene, terpinen-4-ol, aromadendrene, epiglobulol, piperitone and globulol.⁸ Crude eucalyptus oil sometimes contains more compounds in different quantities than after double distillation.

For example, eucalyptus globulus oil has 60 percent cineole and 40 percent other compounds, which becomes 80 percent cineole and only 20 percent other compounds after being double-distilled. As a result, crude oil may have a broader range of activities than the refined oil.

Benefits of Eucalyptus Oil

Medical News Today expands on the various medicinal uses and benefits of eucalyptus:⁹

- **Antibacterial properties** – A study published in *Clinical Microbiology and Infection* found that eucalyptus oil may have antibacterial action on pathogenic bacteria in the upper respiratory tract.
- **Pain relief** – Research indicates the analgesic properties of this essential oil. A study in the *American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* applied Eucalyptamint on the anterior forearm skin of 10 subjects, and found that Eucalyptamint "produced significant physiologic responses that may be beneficial for pain relief and/or useful to athletes as a passive form of warm-up."
- **Dental health** – This oil exhibits antibacterial activity against cariogenic (tooth decay-causing) and periodontopathic bacteria.
- **Stimulating immune system response** – According to a study published in *BMC Immunology*, eucalyptus oil extract is said to implement the innate cell-mediated immune response.

One very important reason why many individuals use eucalyptus oil is its ability to address mental exhaustion through creating a cooling and refreshing effect. As a stimulant, it helps eradicate exhaustion and mental sluggishness, and rejuvenates "the spirits of the sick."¹⁰

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How to Make Eucalyptus Oil

Eucalyptus oil is extracted from fresh or partially dried leaves and young twigs, and undergoes steam distillation. You can make oil from eucalyptus leaves on your own, saving you money and allowing you a fresh supply of the oil. Here are steps how:¹¹
Things You'll Need:

- Kitchen weight scale
- Eucalyptus leaves
- Olive oil or another carrier oil
- Crock pot
- Small-gauge mesh strainer
- Airtight jar made of dark glass

Procedure:

1. Gently crush 2 ounces of fresh eucalyptus leaves with your fist to release the oil. You may use more or less depending on the size of your crock pot.
2. Place the eucalyptus leaves in the crock pot.
3. Add 1 cup of olive oil for every ¼ ounce of leaves in the crock pot.
4. Place the lid on the crock pot and turn it on at low heat. Let the mixture steep for 6 hours.
5. Strain the eucalyptus oil through a small-gauge mesh strainer and into an airtight jar made of dark glass.
6. Seal the jar and date it.

7. Store the eucalyptus oil in a cool, dry spot, where it will remain viable for 6 months. If needed longer, store the oil in the vegetable crisper drawer in your refrigerator, where it will last for about a year.

If you have eucalyptus essential oil ready,¹² you can make another homemade preparation. Mix the essential oil with an equal amount of apple cider vinegar. Apply it on problem areas, or use it as an antiseptic on wounds, boils, and insect bites.

How Does Eucalyptus Oil Work?

This essential oil works different ways.¹³ In vapor therapy (in the form of burners and vaporizers), eucalyptus oil may be used for respiratory problems, for helping improve concentration, or as an insect repellent.

It can also be used in blended massage oil or diluted in your bath – methods that can provide benefits against arthritis, asthma, mucous congestion, colds, headaches, sinusitis, fatigue, and muscle aches and pains.

You may also use eucalyptus oil in a cream or lotion for pain relief and for speeding up the healing of wounds and ulcers. Use it on your skin for insect bites or wounds, but be very careful when doing so. Finally, I recommend adding very diluted eucalyptus oil to a gargle as a soothing remedy for sore throat.

Essential oils generally blend well together. Eucalyptus oil, however, blends particularly well with benzoin, thyme, lavender, lemongrass, lemon, and pine.

Is Eucalyptus Oil Safe?

Essential oils like eucalyptus oil are generally safe to use, but with specific precautions.¹⁴ Adults should not take it orally (by mouth) except under a doctor's supervision. I do not advise giving it to a child, including cough drops with eucalyptus if the child is under age 6.

Eucalyptus oil is generally safe when applied to adult skin, but don't put the oil, salve, or chest rub on the face or nose of a child under age 2. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should also avoid using the oil.