

Juniper Berry Oil: Joy from Juniper

What Is Juniper Berry Oil?

Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) is a coniferous evergreen shrub that belongs to the pine family (Cupressaceae), and is commonly found on heaths and mountains in North America, Europe, and Southwest Asia.¹ In the United States, junipers grow abundantly in the mountainous regions of the Appalachians, as well as in western states such as Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Utah.²

The juniper tree can be identified by its stiff and needle-like blue-green leaves, short reddish-brown trunks, small yellow flowers, and blue or black fruits or berries (produced by the female trees). The tree can grow anywhere between six to 25 feet high.³ The leaves, which grow in whorls of three on the woody twigs, emit a lemon- or apple-like fragrance when crushed.⁴

Both the branches and the berries of the leaves have been used since ancient times for medicinal and spiritual purposes. The evergreen tree is also popular as a residential ornament plant, often used in wildlife plantings and shelterbelts. The aromatic wood is also used for making furniture, fence posts, and pencils.

Juniper essential oil is traditionally steam-distilled from the needles, twigs, wood, and berries. However, juniper berry oil, which is extracted solely from the berries, is superior in quality. It's a pale oil with a watery viscosity, and a fresh, clear, and slightly woody and fruity fragrance.⁵

Uses of Juniper Berry Oil

The fresh and calming aroma of juniper berry oil is widely renowned for relieving stress and anxiety. When diffused, it can also cleanse and purify the air. If you want to use juniper berry oil to get its healing and calming effects, try these methods:

- **Vapor therapy.** Use a burner or vaporizer to diffuse the oil, which helps relieve emotional issues, such as addiction, nervous tension, and hangovers.
- **Massage oil or added to bath water.** This works well for pain relief, such as for [arthritis](#), pain in passing urine, swollen joints, [gout](#), and muscle fatigue.
- **Add to lotions and creams.** Try this for skin-related problems, such as oily skin, acne, dermatitis, psoriasis, and weeping eczema.
- **Use in a compress.** Ideal for eczema, arthritis, and general infections.

Composition of Juniper Berry Oil

The main chemical components of juniper berry oil are a-pinene, b-pinene, camphene, sabinene, γ-terpinene, α-phellandrene, myrcene, α-terpinene, 1,4-cineole, β-phellandrene, terpinen-4-ol, p-cymene, cayophyllene, and bornyl acetate.

It also has trace amounts of camphor, limonene, nerol, linalool, borneol, and linalyl acetate.⁶

Benefits of Juniper Berry Oil

Juniper berry oil has anti-rheumatic, astringent, carminative, depurative, antiseptic, vulnerary, and other beneficial properties that contribute to its health-promoting effects. This relaxing oil can help relieve mental and emotional issues, such as [anxiety](#) and mental fatigue.

You can use juniper berry oil topically to help relieve a wide range of skin and hair problems, such as eczema, weeping eczema, acne, psoriasis, hair loss, and dandruff. It also helps with fluid retention and can help [prevent cellulite formation](#). Juniper berry oil is also an antiseptic that protects wounds from infection and tetanus.⁷

Improved blood circulation, which is essential in removing toxins like uric acid from the body, is another boon of this essential oil. It helps fight ailments that are related to improper circulation and toxin accumulation, such as gout, arthritis, and renal calculi.

Here are some other health benefits of juniper berry oil:⁸

- It works as a laxative and helps regulate menstrual cycle in women
- Protects against digestive problems like stomach upsets, intestinal fermentation, and colitis
- It relieves hemorrhoids. Simply add a diluted drop to your hot bath for 20 minutes (do not sit in the bath longer than this, as the effectiveness may be lessened).

How to Make Juniper Berry Oil

Juniper berry oil is made by steam distilling the berries. However, you can make your own infused berry oil at home. Here's a step-by-step procedure from Lisa Lise:⁹

1. Put juniper berries in a clean and sterilized jar. Fill at least three-quarters of the container.
2. Fill the jar with your oil of choice. Choose a safe oil, such as olive oil or coconut oil.
3. Close the lid tightly, and place the jar in a cool and dark place. Give it a good shake every day for four to six weeks.

Note: Check the jar regularly for any unpleasant smell, which may indicate bacterial growth. If it smells strange, throw it out and make a fresh batch.

How Does Juniper Berry Oil Work?

Terpineol, terpinene, and pinene are three of the major constituents of juniper berry essential oil, and are the reason why it can be helpful in treating skin infections and other health issues. Juniper berry oil also contains chemicals that flush out free radicals, which lurk in your bloodstream and enter the cells in your organs.¹⁰

Is Juniper Berry Oil Safe?

Juniper berry oil is non-toxic and non-sensitizing, although there are some people who have a reaction to it, so use it in moderation. Make sure you do a skin patch test before using juniper berry oil. Apply a diluted drop on your arm and see if any reaction occurs. This oil blends well with cypress, cedarwood, lavender, lime, grapefruit, geranium, [vetiver](#), lavandin, [bergamot](#), [lemongrass](#), and [clary sage](#). Because it can stimulate the uterine muscle, juniper berry oil should not be used during pregnancy.¹¹ I do not recommend this essential oil to nursing moms and very young children as well. Those who suffer from any type of kidney or liver disease should refrain from using juniper berry oil.¹²

Side Effects of Juniper Berry Oil

If taken orally, juniper berry oil may cause your urine to smell like violets. If you notice this effect, it means that you've been using the herb for too long, and should consider stopping. Overdosing on juniper berry oil may lead to kidney irritation and blood in the urine.¹³ Make sure you consult a qualified physician before taking this oil orally.