

Neroli Oil: The Fragrant Citrus Oil

Did you know that it takes at least 1,000 pounds of orange blossom flowers just to make one pound of neroli oil?¹ No wonder it's the most expensive among citrus essential oils. Neroli oil actually offers many impressive uses and benefits, so get to know more about this valuable essential oil.

What Is Neroli Oil?

Neroli oil is produced by steam-distilling the fragrant flowers of the bitter orange tree (*Citrus aurantium*), which is cultivated in the Western parts of India, Eastern Africa, and the Himalayas. During the mid-1500s, the Spaniards brought the tree back to St. Augustine, Florida, where it thrived and was exported by 1763. This is why Florida became known as one of the world's largest producer of oranges, with the orange blossom flower² and fruit³ even regarded as official state symbols. Today, orange blossom trees are also commercially grown in Morocco, France, Tunisia, and Egypt. Neroli oil was named after the 16th century Princess Anna Maria de La Tremoille of Nerola, Italy, who loved the fragrant orange blossom scent and introduced it to Italy.⁴ ⁵ Both Duchess Marie Antoinette and the French military leader Napoleon Bonaparte loved neroli oil, using it every day as a fragrance or aftershave.⁶ Most of the parts of the bitter orange are valued for their strong but alluring fragrance, and are vital in the fragrance industry. The essential oil comes from the orange peel, the leaves are used to make petitgrain oil, and the flowers are distilled to make neroli (or orange blossom) oil.⁷

Neroli oil has a sweet and intensely floral aroma, and can be pale yellow or coffee-brown in color. Oftentimes it is classified as a floral oil instead of a citrus oil.⁸ However, be very cautious when purchasing neroli oil, as many manufacturers adulterate their oil with chemical compounds in order to increase their sales. Even when diluted, neroli oil still retains its strong floral smell.⁹

Uses of Neroli Oil

During the ancient times, neroli oil was essential in helping combat the plague, relieve fever, and banish nervousness.¹⁰ The ancient Egyptian priests and priestesses also used this oil to heal their body, mind, and spirit.¹¹

Neroli oil is also widely used in the perfume and fragrance industry. In fact, Eau-de-Cologne, the famous perfume from Cologne, Germany, used this oil as its main ingredient.¹² Today, neroli oil is added to various fragrances and perfumes. Not only does it complement other citrusy notes, but it also acts as a natural fixative that helps maintain the original composition of the oils without losing its true fragrance.¹³

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Neroli can be applied topically or diffused or inhaled. It helps improve skin health by regenerating and keeping your skin elastic, preventing the appearance of stretch

marks, banishing acne, reducing the appearance of scars, and helping heal broken capillaries.[14](#) [15](#)

In aromatherapy, neroli oil is valued for its calming and relaxing scent, which acts as a tranquilizer that can help alleviate anxiety and heart palpitations, relieve insomnia, and even prevent or treat stress-related depression.[16](#) [17](#) Its fragrance can also help alleviate digestive issues, such as intestinal spasms, colitis, dyspepsia, and diarrhea.

Here are some ways to use neroli oil:[18](#)

- Wet a cotton ball, add a drop of neroli oil, and lightly dab it on your skin to help treat acne.
- Mix with your favorite skin cream to help regenerate your skin.
- Put a few drops in a diffuser to help fight lethargy, depression, anxiety, stress, and digestive problems.
- Mix a few drops with a carrier oil and massage all over your body to help improve circulation.
- Apply a few drops to a hot or cold compress to alleviate headaches and neuralgia.
- Ease premenstrual discomfort by mixing a few drops in your bath water.

Neroli oil's pleasant aroma can also work as a deodorant to drive away foul odors. When used on the body as a perfume, or sprayed as an air freshener or diffused via a vaporizer in a room, the oil not only eliminates the odor, but also helps kill germs and toxins.[19](#)

Composition of Neroli Oil

Neroli oil's therapeutic properties come from its many beneficial components, such as alpha pinene, beta pinene, alpha terpinene, farnesol, camphene, geraniol, indole nerol, linalyl acetate, linalool, methyl anthranilate, neryl acetate, and nerolidol.[20](#)

Benefits of Neroli Oil

Neroli oil has many beneficial and health-promoting properties. It acts as an antiseptic, disinfectant, antispasmodic, bactericidal, antidepressant, and sedative.

These useful benefits make it efficient for:[21](#)

- **Treating cuts and wounds.** It can be a substitute for anti-tetanus in emergency cases. Simply dab a diluted solution on the wound – this will keep your wound safe from infections until you can go to a doctor for a proper anti-tetanus injection. [22](#)
- **Killing bacteria that can cause diseases like typhoid, cholera, and food poisoning.** It can also relieve skin conditions that are caused by bacteria.
- **Maintaining normal blood pressure levels.** A small 2012 study published in *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* found that neroli oil may aid in blood pressure control. The researchers found that participants who inhaled an aromatherapy blend of neroli, lavender, ylang-ylang, and

marjoram had a significant decrease in their blood pressure and stress hormone cortisol levels within 24 hours.²³

Neroli oil is also a tonic that can help promote proper circulation, healthy metabolism, and immune system support.

How to Make Neroli Oil

Neroli oil is made from the freshly picked flowers of the bitter orange tree, which then go through a lengthy absolute extraction process, traditionally via hydrodistillation or steam distillation.²⁴ It's very expensive to produce neroli oil, which is why some manufacturers infuse it with other natural essential oils. This does not reduce neroli oil's benefits, though.

How Does Neroli Oil Work?

Neroli oil can be inhaled, diffused, or massaged or applied directly to your skin to acquire its benefits. It can also be taken orally, but I strongly advise doing this under the supervision of a qualified health practitioner.

When used topically or inhaled, neroli oil works as an antidepressant that has a soothing and calming effect on your mind and body. It eases tension and anxiety and uplifts your mood.²⁵ It can also relax your nervous system and digestive tract.²⁶ Neroli oil can help stimulate the growth of new cells, supporting your skin's renewal process. It's said to work for all skin types and conditions, but I still advise doing a skin patch test before applying this oil liberally all over your skin.²⁷

Is Neroli Oil Safe?

Yes it is, as long as it's used in moderation. Neroli oil is not known to be toxic, but as with other essential oils, I advise caution when using it. You can use it undiluted, but if you prefer a milder formulation, you can also infuse it with other carrier oils like, geranium, lavender, jasmine, lemon, rose, and [sandalwood oil](#).²⁸

As a precaution, do a spot test before using neroli oil by applying an undiluted form on the inside of your arm. If any allergic reaction occurs, don't use it. When ingesting neroli oil, make sure to consult a healthcare provider who can recommend a safe dosage.

I advise against using neroli oil if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Do not use this oil for very young children, too.

Side Effects of Neroli Oil

Neroli oil may cause certain side effects like uneasiness and headache on some individuals.²⁹ It can also be addictive or nauseating if used too often.³⁰

I also advise against using neroli oil if you need to concentrate and stay alert, such as when you're driving. The oil's sedative effects can affect your concentration and cause drowsiness.[31](#)