

Rose Absolute Oil: An Elegant Fragrance in a Bottle

What Is Rose Absolute Oil?

Rose absolute oil is derived from rose blooms. The plant, a perennial shrub from the genus *Rosa* of the plant family Rosaceae, is native primarily to the temperate areas of the Northern Hemisphere. There are over 100 species of roses, the majority of which is native to Asia, although some come from North America, Europe, and northwest Africa.

The rose plant can be an erect, climbing, or trailing shrub with stems covered in thorns of various shapes and sizes. The leaves are alternate and pinnately compound, somewhat oval and sharply toothed. The fleshy, berry-like fruit is called a “hip,” and the flowers, which usually have five petals (cultivated varieties have double or multiple sets of petals), come in different colors, such as white, red, yellow, pink, and even orange.¹

There are two types of oil produced from roses: rose absolute oil and rose otto oil. They are actually used for the same purposes, but are different in terms of how they are produced. Rose otto, also called attar of roses, is extracted via gentle steam distillation. It usually comes from the Damask rose (*Rosa damascena*), and produces a sticky, pale yellow or olive green oil with a rich and spicy floral scent. Meanwhile, rose absolute oil is made via solvent extraction and is the cheaper of the two varieties. It is more viscous than rose otto, and solidifies at cooler temperature, which is why I suggest warming it in your hand before using it. Rose absolute oil is either reddish orange or olive green in color, with a lighter floral scent. Of the two, its scent is the one that you would typically expect from rose oil.²

Some aromatherapists prefer to use rose otto oil, as they feel that the chemical solvents used to extract the rose absolute oil may negatively affect the properties of the oil. However, others believe that the radiance and intensity of rose allows the oil to withstand the extensive processing, so that rose absolute oil still has positive benefits.

Uses of Rose Absolute Oil

Rose absolute oil can be used in aromatherapy, but I advise you to dilute it properly in jojoba oil or vegetable oil prior to using, as it is very concentrated.³ Fragrance formulators and perfume manufacturers prefer rose absolute oil because of its strong aroma and lower cost than rose otto oil.⁴

You can also use rose absolute oil to:⁵

- **Enhance your bath time.** Blend five to six drops of rose absolute oil in a teaspoon of carrier oil or full-fat milk, and then add to your bathwater.
- **Relieve tired and cramped muscles.** Make a soothing massage oil by diluting two to three drops in three tablespoons of carrier oil.

- **Get rid of unpleasant odors, or simply to relax and rejuvenate your mind or body.** Add two to four drops of essential oil to a burner, diffuser, aroma stone, or aroma steam, and inhale its invigorating scent.

Diluted rose absolute oil can also be applied topically, such as in skin formulas. It can be added to creams, soaps, and lotions not only for its fragrance, but also for its mild antiviral and bactericidal properties.

Composition of Rose Absolute Oil

The typical chemical composition of rose absolute essential oil includes citronellol, phenyl ethanol, nerol and geraniol, farnesol, stearpoten, and with traces of nonanal, nonanol, linalool, phenylacetaldehyde, carvone, citral, and citrene.⁶

Benefits of Rose Absolute Oil

Rose absolute oil is traditionally calming and uplifting, and has [anti-inflammatory](#), cooling and soothing properties. It works well for dry, hot, inflamed, or itchy skin. It can also work well for preventing scarring, treating broken capillaries, and even for relieving stress. Studies have also shown rose oil to have antimicrobial properties. Here are the other potential health benefits of rose oil (rose otto or rose absolute oil):

- **Stress and anxiety relief** – A 2009 study of 40 healthy volunteers found that applying rose oil to the skin led to a greater relaxation response than a placebo oil. Those who received rose oil also decreased their breathing rate and blood pressure more than those who received a placebo.⁷
- **Menstrual cramps** – A 2006 study involving 67 female college students found that applying rose oil mixed with other oils ([lavender](#), [clary sage](#), and almond oil) topically effectively reduced menstrual cramps.⁸
- **Menopausal symptoms** – In a 2008 study, 52 menopausal women were given weekly massages using essential oils like rose, lavender, jasmine, and rose geranium. The researchers found that the women who received massages had a significantly greater improvement in menopausal symptoms than those who weren't massaged.⁹

How to Make Rose Absolute Oil

Rose oil is very difficult to extract, which makes it a very expensive substance. There is roughly 0.02 percent essential oil in every rose blossom, meaning you need at least 60,000 roses to produce just an ounce of oil.

The solvent extraction used to make rose absolute oil is actually more efficient than the traditional steam distillation (used to make rose otto). From 10,000 pounds of roses, ten pounds of a substance called concrete can be extracted. This concrete is then refined to create rose absolute oil. At least 67 percent of the concrete is used to make rose absolute oil. ¹⁰

How Does Rose Absolute Oil Work?

Rose absolute oil works best when diffused, inhaled, or applied topically. I advise diluting this oil prior to use, as it can be very strong. It blends well with bergamot, chamomile, clary sage, neroli, patchouli, sandalwood, lemon, ylang ylang, and lavender.¹¹

Is Rose Absolute Oil Safe?

Rose absolute oil is safe, as long as it is used in its diluted form. I advise you to do a skin patch test to make sure that you do not have any allergies or sensitivities to this oil. Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children should also refrain from using this oil.

As with most essential oils, I recommend consulting a qualified healthcare practitioner before using rose absolute oil.

Side Effects of Rose Absolute Oil

There are no known side effects of rose absolute oil when used in its diluted form. However, if used topically at full strength, it may lead to skin irritation. Make sure you do not apply it to your eyes, mucous membranes, and other sensitive areas.