

# Rosewood Oil: “Bois-de-Rose” Benefits

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Prized as a decorative tree and used to make furniture, chopsticks, and show pieces, rosewood is a versatile and durable tree that grows abundantly in Brazil.<sup>1</sup> But rosewood is more than just a raw material used in manufacturing. The popular fragrant oil of the same name is extracted from its wood. Keep on reading to learn more about rosewood oil.

## What Is Rosewood Oil?

Rosewood oil is extracted from *Aniba rosaeodora*, an evergreen tree that's indigenous to Peru and Brazil. Rosewood, also called “bois-de-rose,” is a member of the Laurel (Lauraceae) plant family along with camphor, cinnamon, bay, and cassia.<sup>2</sup> This aromatic tree can grow up to 40 meters high and is distinguishable by its reddish bark and yellow flowers. Many rosewood rainforests have been cut down to accommodate the high demand for this sturdy lumber, although legislation now requires planting a new rosewood in place of every tree that's been cut down.<sup>3</sup> Rosewood oil has a characteristic aroma that's warm, spicy, woody, fruity, floral, and enlivening.<sup>4</sup> This characteristic aroma makes it an established ingredient in high-class perfumery and soap-making, especially during the early 1900s, which caused deforestation of the tree.

Due to rosewood oil's high price, however, manufacturers turned to cheaper alternatives, such as Chinese Ho oils from *Cinnamomum camphora*, as well as synthetic linalool. This allowed rosewood forests to thrive once again.<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>

## Uses of Rosewood Oil

Rosewood oil's alluring fragrance has been widely lauded in the perfume industry, but its therapeutic properties are less well known. Aromatherapists use it to help treat depression, as it is said to impart feelings of happiness and strength.

Rosewood oil also calms the mind and prompts hormone secretion. It also works as an aphrodisiac as it stimulates your body and libido allowing you to relax and let go of stress and mental clutter.<sup>7</sup>

Another popular use of rosewood oil is for skin care. It has tissue-regenerating properties that help prevent wrinkles and premature aging, and also works well for preventing a variety of skin conditions. You can use it to reduce the onset of pimples, acne, and blackheads while controlling the amount of sebum secreted by your oil glands. Rosewood oil also has wound-healing actions, making it an ideal first-aid remedy for cuts and insect bites.<sup>8</sup>

To get rosewood oil's therapeutic effects, you can:<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup>

- **Diffuse it using a vaporizer.**
- **Dilute it in a carrier oil, and then place a drop or two on your skin or the affected areas that need healing.** Note: DO NOT use it on facial skin without diluting it in a mild carrier oil first. You can also use it as a massage oil.

- **Add it to your bathwater.** Use it while showering: after soaking for at least 3 minutes in steamy shower, turn the water off, put five to seven drops of the oil in the palm of your hand, and distribute it all over your wet body. The oil will penetrate very quickly and you can rinse it off if you prefer.
- **Mix it your favorite lotion or cream.** Add a drop or two to your favorite moisturizer to reap its anti-aging benefits.

Rosewood oil also works as an effective insect repellent that repels mosquitoes, bugs, and ants. It can also work as a room freshener.<sup>11</sup> Simply add 15 drops per 2 ounces of distilled water, and then spray as desired.

## Composition of Rosewood Oil

Rosewood oil's high linalool content (86 percent) makes it highly useful for industrial applications. Linalool is modified into many derivatives that are essential to the food flavoring and fragrance industries.

Meanwhile, other components of rosewood oil like a-pinene, a-terpineol, camphene, neral, myrcene, geranial, 1,8-cineole, benzaldehyde, linalool oxides, and limonene are responsible for its health-promoting effects. This oil works as a stimulant, antidepressant, analgesic, antibacterial, and antiseptic.<sup>12</sup>

## Benefits of Rosewood Oil

I believe that rosewood oil is a wonderful herbal oil to have at home, as its sweet and pleasant aroma can greatly delight your senses. However, there's a lot more to this oil than its enticing aroma. Here are some of the benefits of rosewood oil:<sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup>

- **Relieves pain.** Rosewood oil is a mild analgesic (not as strong as other herbal oils) that can help alleviate headaches, toothaches, and muscle and joint pain.
- **Heals wounds.** This oil's antiseptic properties help prevent wounds and cuts from getting infected, as well as stimulate faster healing.
- **Helps treat colds, coughs, and sinusitis.** It has the ability to regulate smooth muscle contractions, helping control bronchial disorders such as asthma.
- **Works as an aphrodisiac and stress reliever.** It can help treat impotence or frigidity, arousing sexual desire and improving sexual performance. Rosewood oil's fragrance also has a calming and relaxing effect on your mind and body.

## How to Make Rosewood Oil

Rosewood oil is extracted from the wood chippings or shavings of the rosewood trunk. This oil is produced via steam distillation, which works by vaporizing the oil and the active ingredients in it so they can be extracted and condensed. This extraction method helps assure that you are getting a pure and high-quality rosewood oil.<sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup>

I advise you to be very stringent when buying rosewood oil, as some brands may be adulterated or have been infused with other carrier oils, which will lower the potency. Choosing a rosewood oil that's produced by a reputable manufacturer is crucial

## How Does Rosewood Oil Work?

Rosewood oil's high alpha-pinene content is responsible for its impressive antibacterial properties, while the chemical components geraniol, nerol, 8-cineole, linalool, and limonene are useful for tissue regeneration. Studies have also shown that the topical use of rosewood oil can help destroy pre-cancerous and cancerous cells without adversely affecting healthy skin cells.<sup>17</sup>

To take full advantage of its therapeutic benefits, Rosewood oil can be applied topically, inhaled, or vaporized. It is rarely taken orally. As with other herbal oils, I do not recommend ingesting or applying this oil without the supervision of a qualified health practitioner.

## Is Rosewood Oil Safe?

Rosewood Oil is may be highly beneficial, as long as it's used in moderation and properly diluted. It blends well with citrus oils like orange, neroli, bergamot, lime, lemon, and grapefruit, as well as floral oils like lavender, jasmine, and rose.<sup>18</sup> Rosewood oil is non-toxic, non-irritant, and non-sensitizing. However, I still advise doing a skin patch test before using this herbal oil.

## Side Effects of Rosewood Oil

Rosewood oil has no known side effects. But despite its safe profile, children, pregnant women or nursing moms should not use this oil without the advice of their physician. Rosewood oil, especially at full strength, is not recommended for very young children as well.

People with sensitive skin should also be careful when using rosewood oil. If you see any signs of irritation after using this oil, stop using it immediately and contact your health care provider.