

Essential Oil Second Edition: A Guide for Health Care Professionals

A Valuable Resource for Perfumers, Aromatherapists and Medical Personnel

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Medical personnel routinely reach for the Physicians Desk Reference (PDR) book every time they need to research or confirm a prescription drug. What is the dose? How many times a day to administer? What are the side effects? What possible drug interactions may occur, etc.? The PDR is regarded as indispensable to ethical, careful treatment.

I regard Robert Tisserand and Rodney Young's Second edition of Essential Oil Safety as the aromatherapists and perfumers equivalent of the PDR. In many ways it surpasses the PDR, in scope and citations. Perhaps it will soon be known as simply the EOS, a nod to the accessible, well-researched and professional information found in it, the way PDR is shorthand for that book. Medical personnel who now work with, or are considering working with essential oils, will also find this book invaluable.

Almost 4000 citations are provided to back up the findings and recommendations in EOS. The first section of the book lists essential oils alphabetically, and for each oil provides botanical name, family, source, key constituents, safety summary, "our" safety advice (the authors' recommendations), regulatory guidelines, organ-specific effects, systemic effects, and comments.

The second part of the book addresses constituent profiles; those are the individual chemicals that make up each oil. This is a geeks dream section! Everything you ever wanted to know about individual chemotypes all in one place, with up-to-date references. There are detailed profiles on, as the authors state, from "A to Z" - from Acetophenone (found in cistus and orris) to Xanthorrhizol (found in turmeric).

The next section is on the subject matter in the title of the book - safety. The general safety guidelines cover first aid (signs and symptoms of toxicity, reporting adverse events), safety in healthcare (adverse skin reactions, child safety, patient safety, practitioner safety), general safety measures (packaging, storage and quality control, waste disposal). Although the terms "first aid" and "patient safety" may not seem at first glance to be relevant to perfume users and perfumes, they are very important. I have a section on safety in the workspace, the people using the workspace, and the customer in my textbook on natural perfumery.

Anyone who handles either the undiluted raw materials or the end product should have at least a rudimentary knowledge of safety because essential oils are potent, concentrated chemicals. Yes, they're natural, and some think if something is natural, it is safe. You can become sensitized to clove oil, found in many mouthwashes and dental preparations, or have an unsightly rash if you use a phototoxic oil on your skin and go in the sun.

Succinct comments on the International Fragrance Association's (IFRA) limits on usage of oils, or in some cases, outright prohibition of oils, are made. Whether you are interested in IFRA's guidelines for safe usage of essential oils, or want to have some hard science behind the findings, information is presented here that can answer your questions.

I have worked on a publication with Robert Tisserand previously, and from that experience, and observing his teachings, books and approach to the subject, know that he is a stickler for detail and precise language. He knows the oils, the medical research behind them, and the legislative constraints.

This book is his follow up to the First Edition, and his writing partnership with Rodney Young has produced a classic for the aromatics community. There is no other book like it, nor is there apt to be in the near future.