

Winter 2021 - FREE

Around the Table

THE FOOD CO-OP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER • PORT TOWNSEND, WA



IN THIS ISSUE: **NEW POSSIBILITIES**

Local Honey – What is Mead?, Midori Kraut, Sprouted Seed Bread, Aromatherapy, Berry Smoothies, and A Case for Sour Grapes



General Manager

Kenna Eaton

Managing Editor

Andrea Stafford

Layout

Mindy Dwyer

Copy Editors

Lisa Barclay

Contributors

Lisa Barclay, Liam Cannon,
Kenna Eaton, Sidonie Maroon,
Kate Nichols, Jenefer Rojas,
Owen Rowe

Board of Directors

Owen Rowe, Juri Jennings,
Claire Cunningham, Charlie Dick,
Dave Dunn, Kate Nichols

Around The Table

is published by The Food Co-op on a quarterly basis and comes out in the winter, spring, summer, and fall. If you are interested in contributing content for *Around The Table*, please contact marketing@foodcoop.coop to discuss your article idea. Articles should include stories about food, community, sustainability, or cooperation.

Around the Table is a celebration of the changing seasons, our local farmers and producers, what's happening in our local kitchens and community, and lots of opportunities to learn and share.

Welcome TO THE TABLE!

- 3 From the GM
- 4 Living in Interesting Times
- 5 Board Plans 2021
- 6 Meet Wilderbee Farm
- 8 Meet Midori Farm
- 9 Sour Grapes
- 11 Make Your Own Vinegar
- 12 Aromatherapy
- 14 Basically Delicious Budget Meals
- 16 Berry Smoothies
- 19 Kitchen Creativity: Recipes!
- 22 Learn To Cook Online - Free for Co-op Members!
- 23 Staff Anniversaries & Awards

An Essential Breath of Fresh Air—

HOW AROMATHERAPY CAN HELP YOU SWEETEN YOUR EMOTIONS DURING HIGH STRESS TIMES

by Jenefer Rojas, Wellness Department

As customers come in and out of the Co-op, through our small, humble aisles, I overhear the joy that comes with grocery shopping here. “Hi, Carol, it is so good to see you!” or “Tell your mom I say hello and that I’m thinking of her,” and most recently, “Your mask is so cute. Where’d you get it?” As dystopian as it can feel, wearing a mask has become something of a quirky fashion statement. However, as beautiful and helpful as these masks are at keeping our community and ourselves COVID-free and stylish, nothing beats the feeling of reaching over and unleashing yourself to reintroduce your senses to the delight of crisp, fresh, aroma-filled air.

Many essential workers reading this may know the feeling all too well. From farmers to doctors, wearing a mask eight hours a day can feel overly inhibiting to the senses. Our olfactory system (sense of smell) screams for stimulation—at least mine does—so any time I get a whiff of the aromas in our Wellness or Deli Departments, my body shifts and so does my mood. Which is unsurprising, considering the fact that our sense of smell travels directly to our limbic system and neocortex, which are the parts of the brain that store and sort out emotions, memories, and conscious thoughts.

In fact, research published by the National Institute of Health (NIH), titled “The Importance of the Olfactory Sense in Human Behavior and Evolution,” states that olfaction plays a huge role in adding emotional attributes to events and objects in our lives. I’m sure that most of us can recall a time when we smelled something delightful, like pumpkin spice, and automatically thought of the holidays or a specific family gathering. If those memories are enjoyable, that pumpkin spice may bring back some of the same positive emotions you experienced at the time. The same area of our brain

activates our fight or flight response, which is why we are probably more likely to speed while driving down Mill Road or speed walk after entering a foul bathroom. Our sense of smell can change how we feel in an environment and how we perceive that space in retrospect.

During times of high stress (such as this pandemic), it is important to hold onto the things we can control. For me the best way to do that, especially during a long day with my respiratory system slightly sheltered, is to treat my sense of smell to rich floral and cozy aromas. Aromatherapy is a holistic healing treatment that uses natural plant extracts, essential oils, to promote health and well-being. Historians and researchers have been able to trace the use of essential oils to make perfumes, cosmetics, and medicine back thousands of years in Egypt, India, China, and Greece. Essential oils are also outstanding in their effectiveness treating things like stress, acne, and inflammation. Although aromatherapy has ancient and widespread origins, the practice has picked up speed in the last few years, proving to help treat many conditions, including depression, insomnia, asthma, menopause, arthritis, alopecia, cancer, and more. Quite the impressive resumé!

Aromatherapy has picked up so much speed that there are even certified practitioners working in hospitals to prescribe essential oils for specific chronic illnesses.

However, aromatherapy can also be quite basic, and there are ways to incorporate it into your everyday life without seeking a professional facilitator. So what are the basics of aromatherapy, and how can you get started? Here are some of my favorite ways that are easy, relaxing, and affordable.

*“olfaction
plays a huge role in
adding emotional
attributes to events
and objects in
our lives.”*

AROMATHERAPY BASICS



DIFFUSERS—You may have seen these round or rectangular boxes in our Wellness Department and wondered what they are. Well, they are diffusers, and they gently break down and unleash essential oils into the air so you can safely inhale pure plant extracts. Simply fill up your diffuser with water and add two-to-three drops of your favorite essential oil. If you are a pet owner, make sure you do this in a room where your furry family member will not interact with the oil. Some essential oils are harmful to animals. Better to be safe than sorry.

My favorite essential oil to diffuse in the morning is NOW Lemon Essential Oil (benefits: refreshing, cheerful, uplifting). My evening pick is NOW White Thyme Oil (benefits: may support the immune, respiratory, digestive, nervous, and other body systems, and it is also known to help insomnia).

AROMATIC SPRITZERS—Aromatic spritzers—topical or air freshening—can be used any moment of the day when you feel you need a pick-me-up.

My favorite aromatic spritzer at the moment is Calm Soothing Facial Mist from Pranarom (good for sensitive skin). Simply aim and spray one to two feet away towards the face and enjoy the calming, moisturizing oils. Perfect for aromatherapy purposes but also may help fight against dry winter skin.

BATHING SALTS—The perfect way to inhale some of the beautiful aromas of essential oils is to add them to your bath. Simply add some epsom salt and four to five drops of your favorite essential oils to warm water and enjoy a more stimulating and relaxing soak in the tub.

My favorite at the moment is NOW Peppermint Oil. This oil is most commonly used to treat headaches and migraine attacks. It contains menthol, which may also help relax muscles and ease pain—perfect for athletes or heavy-duty workers!

TOPICALS—There are a plethora of products that incorporate an essential oil as a primary ingredient. They are the perfect way to enjoy the aroma of each plant, while also taking advantage of some of the medicinal benefits that direct application to the skin may bring.

My personal favorites at the moment are Island Thyme's Eucalyptus Fir Respiratory Stick, Lavender Peppermint Stick, and Grapefruit Mandarin Body Lotion. Both sticks are roll-on essential oil soothers that may help ease a headache or your breathing after a bad cold or stuffed-up nose. The lotion is pretty self explanatory, but if you enjoy citrus flavors, this is definitely one to have on your radar as it is fresh and uplifting to the senses.

As we enter the second flood of COVID-19 cases, it can be a bit daunting finding ways to stay healthy, safe, and mentally at peace. We are not sure how many more shutdowns we will have to endure, but we can at least use this time to establish an intentional daily self-care routine, not just when times scream “Urgent!” Essential oils and aromatherapy are one way to adjust to the new fashion of protecting nostrils through the use of boldly printed masks.

I dedicate this article to all the essential workers who work hard from dawn to dusk to keep our food systems thriving, our communities healthy, and our families safe. The next time you take your mask off after a day at work or a trip to the store, I invite you to listen to some calming music or tell yourself some words of affirmation, and then take a deep breath, noticing the layers of smells around you—perhaps accompanied by some essential oils. I hope this serves you as a guide to ring in the new year and the next stages in your life with a sense of newness and clarity—you may just be happier because of it.

Come visit us in the Wellness Department for more information on essential oils and let us know which are your favorites. We'd love to hear from you.