Sacred Scents©

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Essential oil of the Month: Ravensara

By

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Botanical Name: Ravensara aromatica

Common name: Ravensara, havozo, hazomanitra

Why I love ravensara: I love the gentle soothing scent. As I inhale the scent, it reminds me of a cross between a hint of rosemary and tea tree. I take a number of deep breaths and as it fills my lungs I feel calm, relaxed, and mentally invigorated. It seems to expand my consciousness. It feels as if it fills my brain with a nurturing calmness.

Aroma, scent and color: The aroma reminds me of a very delicate version of rosemary with a camphorous overtone. It is woody and spicy. The oil is colorless.

Native to and history: The essential oil is from a 40 foot tall evergreen havozo tree native to Madagascar. The word ravensara originates from two Malagasy words; ravina meaning leaf and tsara meaning the tree with good leaves. All parts of the tree are aromatic. The tree bark was first distilled in the 18th century, by a French scientist Baume. This species of ravensara belongs to the Laurel family. The Malaygasies use ravensara bark, leaves and fruit as flavorings in medicines. They also crush the leaves and create ointments. The macerated leaves are used in cough preparations. It is also used for all types of viral infections. It is known to the people of Madagascar as the essential oil that heals.

Ravensara is cultivated in Sri Lanka and Madagascar. It is sometimes called the clove nutmeg because of a hint of clove. In Madagascar, the seed kernels are a popular spice. The ravensara bark is used in Malagasy rum.

Chemistry: Ravensara is a complex essential oil containing at least 58 known chemical compounds. The primary ingredient (19%) is the well known limonene monoterpene. Ravensara has four known types (21-36%) of monoterpenes. Monoterpenes are volatile and absorb quickly into the bloodstream and have the quickest physiological effect on the body. They
are immune stimulating, antiseptic, and a tonic. They are beneficial due to their mildness and safety. They may irritate the skin. **Ravensara** contains thirty three known types (20-35%) of sesquiterpenes. Sesquiterpenes are anti-inflammatory, sedative, antispasmodic, immune supportive, analgesic and calming to the body. **Ravensara** contains eight known types of alcohols (8-15%). Alcohols are anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, antimicrobial, support the immune system and are a sedative. They are calming to the body. **Ravensara** contains six known types (5-10%) of oxides. Oxides are skin penetrating, stimulating and antispasmodic. Its primarily characteristic is an expectorant with phlegm-loosing properties. **Ravensara** contains five known esters (2-6%). Esters are sedative, antispasmodic, adaptogenic and anti-inflammatory. They are cooling and soothing which make them ideal for massage blends. The chemistry overlaps because some compounds are in multiple groups like monoterpenic alcohols.

**Part of the plant:** The tree has a reddish bark with dark green foliage. The tree’s fruit resembles the scent of cloves. The young leafy leaves and twigs are slowly steam distilled. This tree produces flowers and seeds that are used as a spice.

**Ravensara may help the body recover from the following:** anxiety, asthma, bladder, blood poisoning, bone pain, bunions, burns, cancer, chicken pox, cholera, colds, cold sores, cuts, depression, diarrhea, ear aches, fatigue, fever, flu, liver, lungs, measles, support the nerves, immune system and adrenal glands, infectious mononucleosis, insomnia, irritability, muscular tension, pneumonia, respiratory tract infections, scrapes, shingles, sinusitis, viral infections, whooping cough, wounds

**Ravensara blends with:** bay (Laurel nobilis), bergamot, black pepper, cardamom, cedarwood, clary sage, cypress, eucalyptus (all), geranium, frankincense, ginger, grapefruit, lavender, lemon, mandarin, marjoram, Melaleuca quinquenervia, myrtle, palmarosa, pine, sandalwood, thyme

**Contraindications and Precautions:** Avoid with pregnancy and small children. No dilution is generally required.

**Body, Mind and Spirit:** It assists the body in the removal of toxins after viral infections. According to Kurt Schnaubelt, Ph.D. in his book *Advanced aromatherapy*, **ravensara** is an excellent nerve tonic. It works well with acute cases of flu, increasing one’s energy. **Ravensara** combined with Calophyllum inophyllum is effective for shingles. The effects I feel with **ravensara** make this a sacred oil.
**Essential Oil Recipes:**

**Flu recipe**  
1 drop of **ravensara** on each sole of the feet  
Apply directly on the soles of fee to boost the immune system. **Ravensara** is an excellent anti-viral agent.

**Shingle recipe**  
1 drop **ravensara**  
1 drop Calophyllum inophyllum (Tamanu)  
Blend together and dab on location with a sterile pad.

**De-stressing blend**  
2 drops **ravensara**  
1 drop lavender  
Apply along the spinal column to induce relaxation.

**Sore muscles**  
6 drops **ravensara**  
1 ounce of your favorite carrier oil or lotion  
Blend the above ingredients and apply to sore muscles.

**Did you know:** There are six different species of **ravensara** growing on the island of Madagascar. One of the species is called **Ravensare anisata** and it is spicy with a licorice scent.

**Testimonial:** I was born in Itondy, Madagascar. **Ravensara** was a part of my life growing up and I use the oil because it is very effective for infections and breathing disorders. M.R.

**Quote of the month:** *All healing comes from the heart.* anonymous

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**Resources:**
Reference guide for Essential Oils                    Connie and Allan Higley  
Aromatherapy for massage practitioner                Ingrid Martin  
An A-Z aromatherapy                                    Patricia Davis  
The Encyclopedia of aromatherapy                      Chrissie Wildwood  
The aromatherapy book                                 Jeanne Rose
375 Essential oils and hydrosols
Essential Aromatherapy
The healing power of essential oils
The little giant encyclopedia of aromatherapy
Advanced aromatherapy
Portraits in oils
The healing trail: essential oils of Madagascar

Medical aromatherapy
The aromatherapy practitioner
Reference manual Vol. II

Jeanne Rose
Susan Worwood
Shangri-La

David Shiller & Carol Shiller
Kurt Schnaubelt, P.h.D
Philippe Mailhebiau

Georges M Halpern, M.D., Ph.D with Peter Weverka
Kurt Schnaubelt

Sylla Sylla Sheppard-Hanger