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Mansfield, "the production of euphoric, relaxing, sedative, or stimulating neurochemicals is stimulated."

Judith Fitzsimmons and Paula Bousquet, authors of *Aromatherapy Through the Seasons*, say the use of essential oils creates a multifaceted effect: "The real beauty of aromatherapy is that it works on a cellular and physical level and also in the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic areas of your life."

It's really quite amazing when you think about it. Imagine an area the size of a small apricot pit, a 1-inch square area, filled with millions of sensory neurons that can capture, process, and store 10,000 odors. This is our olfactory system at work, and part of its job is to create a personal history for us based on scent, says clinical aromatherapist Ava-Marie Lind-Shiveley. "None of our other senses so well establishes a memory database." She says our response to scent is both physiological and psychosomatic. "Within an instant of smelling an aroma, we can be sent back to the first moment we were introduced to it."

By enabling us to recognize, revisit, and/or reclaim these various emotions and memories, aromatherapy allows another avenue of access for healing during a bodywork session. It creates a path through which the somatic experience can find its full strength.

When the powerful effects of aromatherapy are combined with massage, it can take us to another level, say aromatherapy educators Shirley and Len Price. "When, during a massage, the touch of the therapist is combined with the mental and physical effects of the essential oils, the client is helped to achieve a temporary separation from worldly worries, somewhat akin to a meditative state." Helping clients reach this level of relaxation is a primary goal of massage therapists and aromatherapists alike, so it makes sense that a partnership could beautifully exist.

A Scent Journey

"Scent is not simplistic," Lind-Shiveley says. "It is voluminous." She illustrates this point with a quote from Helen Keller: "Smell is a potent wizard that transports us across thousands of miles

and all the years we have lived. The odors of fruits waft me to my Southern home, to my childhood frolics in the peach orchard. Other odors, instantaneous and fleeting, cause my heart to dilate joyously or contract with remembered grief."

If you decide to do some personal exploration into the world of scent therapy, proceed with due caution in both the quality of the oils you buy and how you dose and administer them. There is a dichotic nature inherent in aromatherapy. It is gentle, yet powerful; subtle, yet intense. There are essential oils strong enough to cause miscarriage, but there also are many oils safe enough to use on infants. The key is knowing how to utilize nature's gifts to provide the best, most effective therapeutic collaboration possible. Talk with your massage therapist about incorporating the science of aromatherapy into your

sessions or ask about a referral to an aromatherapist in your area.

Karrie Osborn is contributing editor to Body Sense.

BALANCING

Bay Laurel, Cedarwood, Geranium

CLARIFYING

Juniper, Lemon, Peppermint

COMFORTING

Bergamot, Frankincense, Rose

ENERGIZING

Eucalyptus, Grapefruit, Rosemary

FOCUSING

Angelica, Sweet Basil, Lime

SEDATING

Chamomile, Clary Sage, Patchouli

UPLIFTING

Lavender, Orange/Mandarin, Pine, Tea Tree



Aromatherapy has roots in ancient cultures.