

If you have ever enjoyed the scent of a rose, you've experienced the aromatic qualities of essential oils. These naturally occurring, volatile aromatic compounds are found in the seeds, bark, stems, roots, flowers, and other parts of plants. They can be both beautifully and powerfully fragrant. Essential oils give plants their distinctive smells, essential oils protect plants and play a role in plant pollination. In addition to their intrinsic benefits to plants and their beautiful fragrance, essential oils have long been used for food preparation, beauty treatment, and health-care practices.

But what exactly is a volatile aromatic compound? In short, these compounds are small organic molecules that tend to change quickly from their solid or liquid state to a gas at room temperature. They are called volatile because they change state quickly. When you first open a bottle of essential oil, you instantly notice that the aroma is potent and you can smell it typically even from some distance. The physical and chemical properties of the volatile aromatic compounds that compose essential oils allow them to quickly move through the air and directly interact with the olfactory sensors in the nose. Such unique properties make essential oils ideal for applications inclusion in aromatherapy – using these compounds from plants to help maintain a healthy mind and body – as well as other applications. The type of volatile aromatic compounds present in an essential oil determines both the oil's aroma and the benefits it offers.

Over 3,000 varieties of volatile aromatic compounds have been identified to date. The nature of an essential oil varies from plant to plant, within botanical families, and from species to species. The delicate ratio of aromatic constituents found in any given essential oil are what make it unique and give it specific benefits.

Even with pure essential oils the composition of the oil can vary depending on the time of day, season, geographic location, method and duration of distillation, year grown, and the weather, making every step of the production process a critical determinant of the overall quality of the essential oil product.

Essential oils can be used for a wide range of emotional and physical wellness applications. They can be used as single essential oils or in complex essential oil blends depending on user experience and desired benefit. Want to learn how to use essential oils? Visit our [essential oils usage](#) page to learn how to safely use doTERRA essential oils.