

## The Myrtaceae Plant Family



Some essential oils in the Myrtaceae family

Eucalyptus globulus, Eucalyptus smithii, Eucalyptus staigeriana, Tea Tree, Manuka, Clove Bud, Niaouli, Cajeput, Myrtle

Myrtaceae, the myrtle family of shrubs and trees containing about 150 genera and 3,300 species that are widely distributed in the tropics. They have leathery evergreen leaves with oil glands. The myrtle family is composed of 9 families, 380 genera, and about 13,000 species distributed throughout the tropics and warmer regions of the world. The majority of these species belong to just two families, Melastomataceae and Myrtaceae. Myrtales includes many trees (notably Eucalyptus), shrubs such as the classic myrtle, several food and spice genera, and many ornamental plants.

In aromatherapy this plant family is one of the most important as they help with respiratory blockages and aid breathing. The familiar aroma of eucalyptus will give us a clue to this. It is important to know the Latin names for the eucalyptus oils as some are extremely powerful.

The most commonly occurring oxides in many essential oils is eucalyptol (1,8 cineole in eucalyptus and melaleuca oils. It makes sense that oxides would be beneficial for respiratory conditions. They have a familiar menthol like aroma that gives that instant feeling of being able to breathe and open the airways. 1,8 cineole is called the oxygen atom as the oxygen atom itself attaches to the 1st and 8th carbon atom

### General therapeutic properties

Mucolytic	Antiseptic	Tonic Respiratory	Stimulating	Anti- inflammatory	Decongestant
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Essential oils rich in menthol and 1,8 cineole are fabulous for the respiratory system but they are either not safe to use with children, should be avoided or need to be used with care. As we saw in the Lamiaceae plant family the mints in particular are cautioned with children and pregnancy where there is a high content of menthol.

Now we are going to look at the Myrtaceae plant family which contain essential oils rich in the oxide, 1,8 cineole which are amazing for opening the airways and relieving congestion. This component is found in eucalyptus oils.

Both menthol and 1,8 cineole are cautioned for children as they can slow breathing and potentially cause neurological problems so we need to be careful.

Essential oil	Children under the age of 3	Children aged 3-6
Peppermint (Mentha Piperita) Cornmint (Mentha arvensis)	Avoid	Can be diffused Topical application up to 0.5%
Eucalyptus oils	Can be diffused Topical application up to 0.5%	Can be diffused Topical application up to 1%

We should always be cautious when using essential oils with children, the frail and elderly. Later on in this course we will look at Hydrosols and using aromatherapy safely with our young.

Hydrosols are a by-product of the steam distillation process and produces aromatic waters which are very safe for topical application and diluted ingestion. This is a good time to remind ourselves of the knowledge we have gained throughout this course and the importance of having a sound understanding of why we must respect aromatherapy.

The Myrtaceae plant family is wonderfully powerful and in your hands and with your knowledge, you will be able to prescribe and administer these wonderful gives of nature.

Robert Tisserand links

<https://tisserandinstitute.org/learn-more/types-of-eucalyptus-uses-and-safety/>

<https://tisserandinstitute.org/learn-more/kids-inhalation-safety/>