We tend to think of geraniums in terms of decorative summer flowers. Many of us have pots of them on our patios, or in window boxes, impressing us with their different hues of white, pink, and bright red. They are so much more, however! Geraniums can also be used medicinally. Read on to discover how geranium essential oil can be used to heal your body.

Contrary to popular belief, geranium essential oil is not distilled from the flowers. Rather, it is steam distilled from the fuzzy green leaves and stems of the plant. Having many similarities to rose oil (a far more expensive oil), geranium essential oil is often used in place of rose. It is a wonderfully healing essential oil in its own right, however.

Composition of Geranium Oil

Geranium (Pelargonium graveolens) essential oil contains some interesting and well-studied phytochemicals (plant based, natural chemicals). Sixty-five different phytochemicals had been identified as of 2011.

Depending on the species, citronellol tends to be the phytochemical in largest quantity, making up around 30% of a drop of geranium essential oil. Other phytochemicals of note include trans-geraniol, 10-epi-gamma-eudesmol, alpha-pinene, isomenthone, limonene, and linalool.
Geranium also contains an abundance of flavonoids – quercetin being one of the more well known. Quercetin has been much-studied for its anti-inflammatory benefits and ability to ease allergies, improve cardiovascular health, and reduce the proliferation (spread) of cancer cells.

All of these phytochemicals contribute to the surprisingly many ways geranium essential oil can heal. It has anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antiseptic, antiviral, astringent, anti-parasitic, and anti-hemorrhagic properties. It is also rich in antioxidants.

The 17 Best Uses for Geranium Essential Oil, A-Z

#1. Adrenal Health – Geranium has been used for centuries for its ability to support the adrenal glands. It acts as a tonic for the paired adrenal glands that sit atop the kidneys. In so doing, geranium may help those suffering from chronic exhaustion and fatigue. (See A, C, and D in “Tips for Use”)

#2. Allergies – A June 2016 Japanese study found that geranium essential oil had an inhibitory effect on cultured mast cells. These are immune cells involved with triggering allergic reactions, inflammatory conditions and autoimmune dysfunction. Geranium also inhibited tumor necrosis factor (TNF), a cell signaling protein known as a cytokine, involved in systemic inflammation. TNF is also involved in the regulation of immune cells. (See B, C, D, and F in “Tips for Use”)

#3. Anxiety, Depression, Nervous Tension – The aroma of geranium is very calming to the nervous system. It helps to relieve nervous tension, melt away anger and aggression, balances emotions, lifts the spirit, and promotes feelings of peace and well-being. See A, B, C and D in Tips for Use.

#4. Blood Sugar Problems – Geranium is held in high esteem in Tunisia and is much studied there for its ability to decrease blood glucose levels. Animal studies reported in 2012 revealed that serum glucose levels were significantly decreased in diabetic rats and much more effective than glibenclamide, an antidiabetic drug. Hopefully studies will continue and humans will be included! (See B, C, D, and F in “Tips for Use”)

#5. Brain Clarity & Concentration – Geranium helps to improve cognitive function and improves concentration. It is even being studied for its ability to prevent neurodegenerative disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer’s. (See B, C, and E in “Tips for Use”)

#6. Cancer – Geranium has long been used by natural healers for its anti-tumoral properties. One 2002 study found that geraniol had anti-proliferative effects (proliferation is the ability of cancer cells to spread) and, when combined with the chemotherapy drug 5-fluorouracil, had twice the cancer-killing action of 5-fluorouracil alone in cultured colon cancer cells. Several of the researchers in that study released a subsequent study in 2004 showing this combination also
worked in mice. Researchers observed a 53% reduction in tumor size using the combination of 5-fluorouracil and geraniol.

A Chinese study reported in 2012 stated that the combination of geranium and several traditional Chinese herbs greatly assisted breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiation. The geranium/herb combination was found to delay or slow the associated reduction of leukocytes (white blood cells involved in immune function) for women receiving chemotherapy and/or radiation.

Research released in May 2016 revealed that citronellol can be used in an interesting way. Researchers combined citronellol with the anti-cancer drug cabazitaxel, a taxane used to fight prostate cancer. The combination (called a conjugate self-assembled nanoparticle, or CSNP) improved the drug’s ability to accumulate at the site of a tumor. Researchers said this method was an effective antitumoral, in vitro (test tube).

(See B, C, D, E, F, and H in “Tips for Use”)

#7. Candida – Because of its strong anti-fungal properties, geranium has been investigated for candida sufferers. Research reported in 2008 found that of three essential oils studied, geranium was the most effective in combination with Amphotericin B, an antifungal drug, against 11 strains of candida. Geranium helps the antifungal drugs work better and they appear to have a synergistic effect. Another study reported in 2008 on mice found that geranium oil suppressed candida cell growth in the vagina. (See F and G in “Tips for Use”)

#8. Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex) – Due to its anti-viral qualities, geranium essential oil is excellent for helping to heal cold sores. It will reduce the pain and size of a cold sore quickly. (See F and H in “Tips for Use”)

#9. Golden Staph and Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) – A research study reported in 2012 demonstrated that geranium has excellent antimicrobial properties against Staphylococcus aureus (“golden staph”) and even methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus. Indeed, the author’s own mother-in-law was diagnosed with MRSA several years ago. Geranium essential oil was one of several essential oils used topically (on the skin), instead of the antibiotic drugs given to her by the doctor. It completely healed the MRSA in what her doctor called “record time.” (See B, C, D, F, and H in “Tips for Use”)

#10. Hair and Scalp Health – Geranium has been used traditionally for decades for hair regrowth. It is known to nourish and tone the scalp. Geranium works on the sebaceous (oil) glands of the scalp, regulating the secretion of sebum. This helps to balance both dry and oily scalps, resulting in smooth and silky hair. (See H in “Tips for Use”)

#11. Hemorrhoids – The astringent properties of geranium can help to shrink and heal swollen tissue, and ease the pain of hemorrhoids. (See F and I in “Tips for Use”
#12. **Inflammatory Conditions** – Geranium, and geraniol in particular, has been widely studied for its anti-inflammatory properties. 2014 research indicated geraniol increased interleukin-10 production, which is an anti-inflammatory cytokine. Because inflammation is involved in many disease processes, from arthritis to hemorrhoids to cancer, geranium essential oil is very useful indeed. (See B, C, D, F, and H in “Tips for Use”)

#13. **Insect Repellent** – Bugs don’t like geranium! It is an excellent insect deterrent. Going hiking? Take your geranium essential oil along. 2013 research found that the phytochemical 10-epi-gamma-eudesmol in geranium was just as effective as DEET against ticks.

Even dust mites don’t like geranium. 2008 research found that geraniol and beta-citronellol out-performed DEET and benzyl benzoate (two common chemically-derived mite and lice deterrents, both with side effects) for controlling dust mites. The beta-citronellol component makes geranium very effective for repelling mosquitoes as well. Several research papers investigating effective botanical insecticides have explored this and other essential oils for their ability to kill mosquito larvae. (See H in “Tips for Use”)

#14. **Shingles** – Research released in 2003 found that application of geranium oil was helpful for relieving nerve pain caused by shingles (herpes zoster). Being a good anti-viral, geranium also helps to speed the healing of shingles. (See A, D, F, and H in “Tips for Use”)

#15. **Skin Health, Scars, and Regeneration** – Due to its potent anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and antioxidant properties, geranium has been used for centuries in skin tonics, lotions, moisturizers, and balms for such conditions as dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, oily skin, and acne. It is balancing to the skin’s production of oil and superb for fading scars. (See H and J in “Tips for Use”)

#16. **Urinary Tract Infections** – 2011 research examined the effect of geranium oil combined with ciprofloxacin, a commonly used drug for treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs). Researchers found that the oil/drug combo worked synergistically to effectively kill the bacteria causing UTIs. (See D, F, and G in “Tips for Use”)

#17. **Wound Healing** – Geranium is a natural styptic – it helps to stop the flow of blood. Geranium also speeds wound healing by triggering blood clotting. This process, together with its natural antiseptic action, keeps harmful bacteria from reaching the bloodstream via open wounds and cuts. (See H in “Tips for Use”)

Tips For Using Geranium Essential Oil

A) Massage geranium into the skin and muscles of the back, especially mid-back and just over the bottom of the rib cage (over area of the kidneys). Use an organic carrier oil like jojoba, almond, coconut, hemp, or argan to dilute if desired or if you have sensitive skin.

B) Drip 1-2 drops of oil into your hands and make a tent over your nose and mouth (avoid the eyes), breathe in deeply for a couple of minutes.

C) Using an ultrasonic cool mist diffuser, diffuse several drops of geranium into a room where you intend to sit for an hour or so.
D) Massage oil into the soles of the feet. They have the largest pores in the body and the oil will be in the bloodstream and working in just a few minutes. This method works especially well if digestion is impaired.

E) Gently massage oil into the sides of the neck, overlying the carotid arteries, diluting as described in A above if needed. Also massage into the back of the neck just under the base of the skull.

F) Geranium essential oil is generally regarded as safe for human consumption by the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA). To take orally, put 1 drop of oil in 3-4 ounces (about 100 ml) of liquid such as almond or rice milk. It can also be combined with 1 teaspoon of honey. Avoid for children under 5 years of age.

G) Massage geranium oil into the abdomen and lower back.

H) Rub a drop of geranium on the affected area, being careful to dilute if you have sensitive skin. If using as an insect repellent, rub geranium into exposed skin.

I) Add a drop or two of geranium oil to one teaspoon of jojoba oil and pat it on topically. Use a small amount of gauze if you wish to hold it in place.

J) Add a drop or two of geranium to your favorite organic personal care products like cleanser, body wash, moisturizer, toner, shampoo, or conditioner.

Important Precautions When Using Essential Oils

- If you intend to use geranium essential oil medicinally, please do your homework and work with a qualified healthcare practitioner who is well versed in essential oil usage.

- Be aware that quality of essential oils varies widely. Find out whether or not your essential oil supplier uses organic growing methods, and knows how to properly distill the oils. Always buy your oils from a trusted source because if they are not organically grown or properly distilled they may be adulterated with toxic chemicals that will not help to heal you... and may indeed cause harm.

- Do not apply essential oils anywhere near eyes, ears, or sensitive regions of the body.

- If you have sensitive skin, be sure to dilute essential oils first. If you are unsure, do a patch test on a small area of skin just inside the elbow. You may want to dilute essential oils with an organic carrier oil such as jojoba, almond, coconut, hemp, or argan.

• It is not recommended to use any essential oil by itself as a sole treatment for cancer, or for any other health issues mentioned above. When used in combination with other treatments, both conventional and alternative, essential oils can be very effective in assisting the healing process.

Article Summary

• Geraniums are not only bright, summery flowers, they also have medicinal value. Geranium essential oil can be used to heal your body.

• Contrary to popular belief, geranium essential oil is not distilled from the flowers. It is steam distilled from the fuzzy green leaves and stems of the plant.

• Geranium essential oil shares similar properties with, and is often used in place of more expensive rose oil. However it also has its own healing abilities.

• The oil has anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antiseptic, antiviral, astringent, anti-parasitic, and anti-hemorrhagic properties. It is also rich in antioxidants.

• See the article for 17 ways it can heal & specific tips on how to use geranium essential oil.

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