

Frankincense

FRANKINCENSE ESSENTIAL OIL IS VIRTUALLY SYNONYMOUS WITH INCENSE IN BOTH ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS, AND IS USED PRIMARILY TO PURIFY AND SANCTIFY SPACES. FRANKINCENSE IS AN IMPORTANT ARCHETYPAL SOUL SCENT OF THE WESTERN SUN-GODS OF THE SUMERIANS, BABYLONIANS, PERSIANS, EGYPTIANS, HEBREWS, AND GREEKS, AND RIGHT UP TO MODERN JUDAIC AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES.

FRANKINCENSE OPERATES BY INDUCING FOCUSED CONTEMPLATION, WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR ASPIRATION TO THE DIVINE, TO THE SPIRIT. THE SCENT OF THIS RESIN ENCOURAGES SPIRITUAL TRAVELERS TO DROP OUT OF THEIR MINDS AND EGOISTIC LIMITATIONS, AND MOVE INTO PRESENCE WITH THEIR SPIRIT OR CENTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

USING THIS HOLY, ANCIENT OIL PROMOTES FEELINGS OF SATISFACTION, PEACE, AND INTERNAL RELAXATION. AS A COSMETIC, FRANKINCENSE OIL WILL CALM TOPICAL IRRITATION, TIGHTEN AND FIRM SAGGING SKIN, ALL WHILE MINIMIZING THE APPEARANCE OF SCARS, DARK MARKS, AND AGE SPOTS. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ABOUT 20 DIFFERENT SPECIES OF FRANKINCENSE, ONLY ABOUT SEVEN TYPES ARE AVAILABLE COMMERCIALY.

Boswellia Carterii

BOSWELLIA CARTERII, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS B. CARTERII, IS THE MOST WIDELY SOUGHT-AFTER FRANKINCENSE. HARVESTED IN THE MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS OF SOMALIA, THIS SPECIES EMITS A DEEP, SMOOTH, GROUNDING AROMA WITH TERPENIC TOP NOTES. DUE TO ITS HIGH LEVEL OF ALPHA-PINENE, B. CARTERII CAN BE USED FOR IMMUNITY SUPPORT AND RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS REDUCING THE APPEARANCE OF FINE LINES AND SCARS. BUT TRADITIONALLY THIS SPECIES HAS BEEN UTILIZED FOR MAKING INCENSE FOR SACRED CEREMONIES.

Boswellia Sacra

B. CARTERII AND SACRA ARE OFTEN REFERENCED AS ONE IN THE SAME. ALTHOUGH THEY'RE BOTH FROM THE BURSERACEAE PLANT FAMILY, THEY'RE TWO DIFFERENT SPECIES. B. CARTERII TREES GROW IN SANDY SOIL AND PRODUCE WHITE OR PINK FLOWERS, WHILE SACRA TREES PREFER CHALKY, LIMESTONE SOIL AND PRODUCE YELLOW-WHITE FLOWERS.

SACRA HAS A PUNGENT, EARTHY FRAGRANCE WITH WOOD UNDERTONES AND HINTS OF CITRUS. THIS SPECIES HAS THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF ALPA-PINENE, BUT DUE TO ITS RARITY, IT'S OFTEN SAVED FOR MAKING SACRED PERFUME BLENDS.

Boswellia Frereana

AROUND THE WORLD, FREREANA IS NICKNAMED “THE KING OF ALL FRANKINCENSE,” BUT IN ITS NATIVE LAND OF SOMALIA, IT’S SIMPLY CALLED “MAYDI” OR “DHIDIN.” THIS VARIETY IS ALSO FOUND IN THE MOUNTAINS, BUT IT TYPICALLY GROWS AT A HIGHER ALTITUDE THAN B. CARTERII. THIS SLIGHT ENVIRONMENT SHIFT CREATES A CITRUS FRAGRANCE, AND GREATER LEVELS OF CYMENE, THUJENE, AND PINENE, WHICH GIVES THE OIL ITS ANTIBACTERIAL, ANTI-INFLAMMATORY, AND ANTISPASMODIC PROPERTIES. ITS HEALING BENEFITS ARE SIMILAR TO B. CARTERII, BUT IT’S PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AT RELIEVING INFLAMMATION FROM ARTHRITIS. IT’S ALSO A WONDERFUL NATURAL FIXATIVE FOR PERFUMES.

Boswellia Serrata

SERRATA IS ONE OF THE OLDEST DOCUMENTED FRANKINCENSE IN THE WORLD (ALONG WITH BOSWELLIA PAPYRIFERA) AND IS BELIEVED TO BE THE VARIETY THAT’S REFERENCED IN THE BIBLE. IT’S NATIVE TO NORTH AFRICA AND INDIA, WHERE IT’S HIGHLY PRIZED IN AYURVEDIC MEDICINE. THIS VARIETY IS A POWERFUL DECONGESTANT, ANTI-INFLAMMATORY, AND ANTISEPTIC, SO IF YOU WANT TO PURIFY THE AIR IN YOUR SACRED SPACE, THIS WOULD BE THE OIL TO PUT IN YOUR DIFFUSER. THE AROMA IS SWEET WITH DELICATE FLORAL AND CITRUS NOTES.

Boswellia Neglecta

NEGLECTA IS A RARE SPECIES OF FRANKINCENSE. THE B. NEGLECTA TREE IS MOST ABUNDANT IN NORTHERN KENYA, WHERE THE LOCALS REFER TO IT AS “DAKKARA.” IT HAS A STRONG SCENT THAT’S REMINISCENT OF WARM, MUSTY LEATHER WITH NOTES OF SPICY CUMIN AND PINE. THE MEDICINAL PROPERTIES ARE SIMILAR TO OTHER FRANKINCENSE VARIETIES, BUT DUE TO ITS RARITY, PRACTITIONERS OFTEN SAVE IT FOR SACRED PERFUMES, ESPECIALLY WHEN TRYING TO CAPTURE A VINTAGE OR LEATHERY SCENT.

Boswellia Papyrifera

PAPYRIFERA HAS A RECOGNIZABLY FRUITY AROMA WITH STRONG ORANGE OVERTONES. THIS VARIETY, HARVESTED IN ETHIOPIA, HAS A LARGER PRESENCE OF INCENSOLE ACETATE, WHICH HAS BEEN SHOWN TO POSSESS PSYCHOACTIVE PROPERTIES. IT’S BEST USED FOR MEDITATION OR RITUAL WORK.

Boswellia Rivae

RIVAE IS HARVESTED FROM TREES GROWN IN ETHIOPIA, AND IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS “SWEET FRANKINCENSE.” WITH OVER 200 MOLECULAR COMPOUNDS, IT’S CONSIDERED TO BE A PREMIERE FRANKINCENSE THAT’S MOST OFTEN USED IN PERFUMERY. IT GENERALLY HAS A SOFTER AND SWEETER FRAGRANCE WITH A LIGHTLY WOODY UNDERTONE.

