

In the shift to using “green” and “sustainable” products, do you know the difference between a natural product and an organic one, between fragrance and aromatherapy?

MAKING SENSE OF Scents

“Organic” describes items that are free of anything artificial – grown from the earth or sea and in no way scientifically altered or adulterated.

“Natural” can define an ingredient that is derived from organic sources but is tweaked some way, whether through pesticides, scientific alteration or interference by human hands.

One example of a natural product made from natural ingredients is soap, which is made from fats and alkali. Although fat and alkali coming together to form soap can and does occur in nature, the process is uncommon. The first soaps were made from wood ashes (a natural alkali) and oils, and they had a tendency toward harshness. Today soaps made under controlled circumstances can result in products that are extremely mild yet effective.

In contrast, an example of an artificial product made from natural ingredients is chocolate cake. The flour, sugar, cocoa, butter, eggs and other ingredients are certainly natural, but cake would not exist on its own without human intervention. The only way a cake can be produced is when humans mix the appropriate

ingredients and apply heat. Thus, in the most basic definition, cake is an artificial product.

FRAGRANCES CAN BE BOTH

Fragrance can be either synthetic or natural, depending on its source. In the US, the FDA requires that the word “fragrance” appear on the label, even if what you smell is from plants.

Spray a true perfume in the air, notice the sharp scent and the amount of time it lingers. Spray a natural organic spray and notice the smell has more of a warm dull fragrance, a result of the plants or flowers used in the blending, and not adulterated.

Aromatherapy in its truest form comes from essential oils, distilled herbs, plants, roots, flowers, barks, etc. By definition, aromatherapy has medicinal effects physically on the body and physiologically on the senses.

If you expect to use a certain product for its medicinal purposes, one without

the plant essence will not work at all as a therapeutic natural essential oil.

THE LAVENDER INVASION

Lavender is a great example of aromatherapy. You see it everywhere: in baby products, lotions, shampoos, air fresheners, dish detergents. Several products claim to have Lavender in them, but notice the label. Does it simply state “fragrance”? If Lavender is really in the product, the label should include the Latin name for the plant (*Lavendula angustifolia*) or one of the many lavenders grown around the world, each providing a slightly different smell.

Lavender seems to work well with most horses to heal the skin and calm and balance the psyche. It is one of the few essential oils that can be used “neat”

(not mixed with anything else). An organic lavender flower is good for a “hot” horse to balance out. Let him smell it through a gauze bag so he does not inhale too deeply. If your horse smells with both nostrils, he’s interested.

Take out a pinch and place in the palm of your hand so he can taste it. This worked great with an excited Andalusian stallion before a dressage competition; out of six contestants he came in first. A synthetic man-made lavender would have had NO effect on him at all.

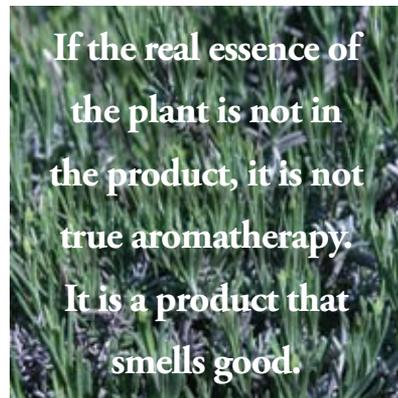
Read your labels and do some research to decide what works best for you, natural or organic, fragrance or aromatherapy.

Resource:

Andrea DesJardins, www.herc.org

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International and Equestrian Services, LLC to create “Equi Spa Lifestyle Solutions” and providing assistance with a new documentary titled “What About the Horse” produced by Voluntary Instinct. www.donneandcavalli.com



Essential oils should not be used “neat” on your skin or on your horses; blend in aloe or oil. True essential oils must be protected from the sun’s rays to maintain their potency. Most oils come in small colored glass bottles (usually amber, blue or green) with a dropper or plastic insert at the top for one drop at a time application.

-- Donna Mastrianni

