



The Core Aspects of Resins & Gums

WORKBOOK

FROM THE NORTHWEST SCHOOL
OF AROMATIC MEDICINE'S

BOTANICAL RESINS
WORKSHOP SERIES



Botanical Resins

Botanical resins have been some of the most treasured natural substances for thousands of years cross-culturally.

They lie at the heart of all aromatic arts, are some of the oldest plant substances used in ancient medicine practices, and are found in the rituals and rites of nearly every spiritual and religious practice.

Why is that...?

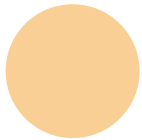


In today's world, many people who are interested in herbs or aromatics tend to overlook resins and gums entirely.

But there's a reason all older cultures prized resins like Pine, Frankincense, Copal, Myrrh, or Dragon's Blood above a lot of other types of herbs for their *vast* uses.

Resins are potent medicines, *chock-full* of medicinal and aromatic constituents that can be utilized in countless ways.

Ways to Use Resins



As incense for respiratory health and balancing emotional and psychological issues



As topical medicine for any first-aid uses: cuts, bruises, scrapes, sprains, breaks, sports injuries, arthritis, pain, rashes



Infused into beauty products for their well-known anti-aging benefits, skin rejuvenating, and added aroma



In essential oil blends or as single oils for emotional, psychological, and physiological healing



As aromatic medicine for strengthening immunity and combating colds, flus, and other viruses



For fragrant enjoyment in the form of incense, perfumery, essential oils, or added into any DIY creations



As incense or anointing oils for spiritual use to accompany ritual, prayer, meditation, and ceremony of any kind



As internal medicines in the form of tinctures, spagyrics, cordials, and mouthwashes



Resins can be made into any topical preparation like salves, creams, lotions, body butters, balms, chapstick, serums, chest rubs, ointments, and liniments.



The art of working with resins lies in knowing your resins...

Not All Resins Are Equal

The truth is, there are thousands of plant species around the world that produce resins; each with differing aromas and medicinal constituents. And each with a different chemical makeup that determines how to best work with them in crafting.

What all herbal and aromatic crafters must learn if they want to incorporate resins into their practice is the *unique qualities* of each resin they use. Without this basic understanding in place, time and resources are often wasted.

The #1 issue crafters face

when they start using resins is that they can be very difficult to add into herbal recipes *without knowing the different groups of resins and gums* as well as which methods should be used to process them down and extract them with.

Without knowing which type of resin you're crafting with, you can risk ending up with either a very sticky mess or failed extractions, along with composted ingredients and feelings of defeat.

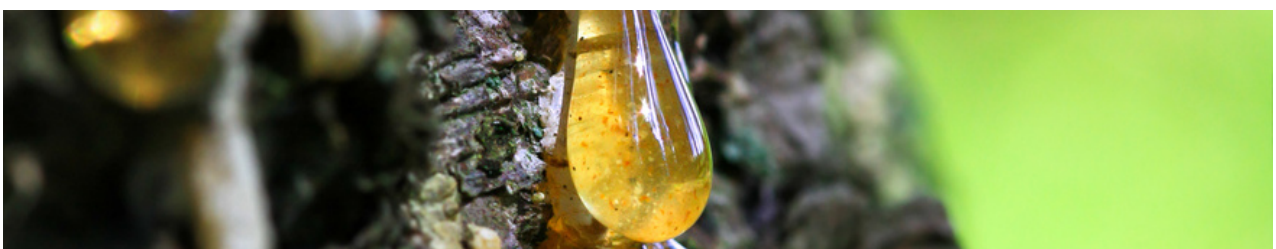
For those who make herbal beauty products, knowing this information can also save you from ending up with a resin-based cream or body butter that feels sticky or tacky and uncomfortable on your skin.





Resin & Gum Groups

Before you even think of making a resin into a botanical preparation, you need to know which group it fits into to know how to process it down or extract it properly. Let's take a look at the **3 main groups** of resins and gums...





Resins

Resins are a plant's essential defense mechanism. They are exuded as a honey-like liquid from a plant's interior when its bark or wood is damaged. Resin contains anti-microbial, anti-fungal, and insecticidal properties that keep intruders from entering and harming the plant.

Resins also speed up a plant's healing process, among other functions. They also contain *a wide range of chemical and aromatic constituents* that aid many other biological processes.



Long ago the ancients witnessed this miracle substance healing and protecting the trees and discovered that ***it has the same benefits when used topically with humans.***

From there, it became one of the most powerful and effective topical herbal remedies for various issues.

They also found that resins *contained aromatic medicine* that aided the psyche, emotions, and offered many benefits that enhanced spiritual ritual and ceremony.

With exposure to oxygen, over time resins harden to a very solid form. They can be extracted with the right solvents and even melted down in some cases, and made into countless medicinal and aromatic preparations.

What Exactly Is Resin?

Resin is a different substance than gum. The most common type of resin used in the herbal and aromatic arts is known as: **Oleo-Resin**

“Oleo“ refers to the *essential oil content* naturally found mixed in with the resin. These essential oils are full of medicine and aromatic constituents that are beneficial for many healing uses.

The resin portion also has its own aroma and medicinal constituents, to a lesser degree. *But combined, they create a well-balanced, unparalleled, and potent product.*





Gums

Gums also act as a plant's defense and healing mechanism. They are exuded in similar ways as resins when a plant or tree is injured or penetrated by insects, and act like a band-aid. Gums can also contain constituents with anti-microbial, anti-fungal, and insecticidal properties.

Gums are not considered aromatic and do not contain comparable amounts of medicine to resins. Therefore, they are most commonly used for utilitarian purposes as thickeners, binders, and waterproofing agents.

Oleo-Gum-Resins

Oleo-Gum-Resins contain all 3 components: essential oil, gum, and resin. There are a smaller group of species that produce these types, though they are some of the most sought-after, such as the many Frankincense and Myrrh species.

Oleo-gum-resins are much stickier and softer than resins, which tend to be quite hard after they dry.

Each of these 3 substances: resins, gums, and oleo-gum-resins, **require special care and methods for processing and extracting them down.** Let's take a look at their solubility...



Extracting Resins & Gums



Resins: soluble in alcohol and oils (like olive and coconut). Ideal for tincturing and infusing into oils to make salves and many other oil-based products.

Gums: soluble in water only. Not soluble in alcohol or oils. Ideal for use as binders and thickeners in incense, beauty products, food & beverage.



Oleo-Gum-Resins: soluble in lower percentage alcohols, and partially soluble in oils. Calculations needed for tincturing. Can make great oil-based topical products.



What's Next?

Now that you know the basics of resins and gums and what sets them apart, the next step is to learn about **how to actually process them down** to prepare them for all types of herbal crafting. This is a big topic so I've created an entire video to give you everything you need.

Also, to help prepare you for sourcing resins, or even finding your own in nature around you, in lesson 2 of the Botanical Resins Workshop Series, I'll also be equipping you with the right tools to know exactly *who to trust* in today's often deceiving and confusing resins market.



Thanks for joining me. We still have a lot in store for you in the series. Stay tuned and look out for my next emails for lessons 2 & 3, where we'll dive deep into how to actually process, extract, and turn your resins into effective resin-based topical salves for first-aid, cold and flu relief, aches and pains, and much more...

This is just the beginning!



Evan Sylliaasen