

# The Foundations of Natural Perfumery



A WORKBOOK FROM THE  
NATURAL PERFUMERY  
WORKSHOP SERIES

THE NORTHWEST SCHOOL OF  
AROMATIC MEDICINE



# What is Natural Perfume?

Natural perfumery is the art and practice of creating fragrances using only natural aromatic materials that come *directly from nature*.

## **"From nature to nose..."**

You'll be working with plants you know and love, plus discover countless new aromatic materials that aren't commonly used in aromatherapy...

Whether you are a seasoned aromatherapist or an incense connoisseur, are just getting started on your aromatic arts adventure, or have made your own perfumes before, natural perfumery is a beautiful way to work with aromatics from the natural world.





# Modern Perfume vs. Traditional Perfume

**Traditional natural perfumery is healthier for you and the planet.** Most modern perfume uses lab-created synthetic compounds and chemicals, while natural perfumery relies solely on natural materials mainly derived from botanicals such as flowers, fruits, woods, resins, and spices.

Natural perfumery emphasizes sustainability, eco-friendliness, and a deep connection to nature. Perfumers skilled in this craft can blend natural essences to create complex and nuanced scents that evolve differently on each individual's skin due to the unique interaction between natural oils and body chemistry.

This artisanal approach to perfumery has gained popularity among those seeking authentic, plant-based alternatives to mainstream synthetic fragrances...

**And a deep desire to return to the natural roots of perfumery.**





**Most importantly, anyone can make their own natural perfume, as long as you have the right map to follow...**

***You've just received that roadmap.***

## **The 3 Uses of Natural Perfume**

Before you make your first batch of natural perfume, it's important to learn about the vast possibilities so you know which direction you want to take your natural perfumery journey.

**All ancient traditional perfume was made using 100% natural aromatic materials.**

For this reason, perfumery was historically used as aromatherapy in ancient times, in addition to fragrant pleasure. The 3 main uses of perfume are ***spiritual uses, aesthetics, and functional fragrances.***



## Spiritual Use

The history of perfume dates back to before the written word. In some ancient cultures, the words perfume and incense were interchangeable.

**The word perfume comes from the Latin root “per fumum,” meaning “through smoke.”**

Many cultures believe burning incense is like a rising prayer, as the fragrant smoke drifts up to the heavens, serving as a bridge that links the material and spiritual worlds. *This same reverence translated to the world of perfumery.*

In Ancient Egypt, perfume was traditionally used as an offering to the gods, religious rites, or reserved only for royalty. Many cultures see natural perfume as a tool for purifying & spiritually cleansing the body.

As time progressed, perfume found diverse applications, serving purposes ranging from aesthetic enhancement to practical functionality and more.



# Aesthetics

Using natural perfume for aesthetics means incorporating fragrances into your daily routine for pleasure.

Natural perfume can be crafted with the intention to elevate your sensory experience, enhance your mood, serve as a sophisticated adornment of fragrance for special occasions, and even for attraction.

Natural perfumes add a touch of luxury and refinement to our daily rituals, elevating the overall aesthetic experience through the power of aroma.





# Functional Fragrance

Aside from the common pleasurable uses of perfume, it's also used as a simple body freshener or a tool to cover up bad smells...

***...But it's so much more than that.***

Natural perfume harnesses the therapeutic properties of botanical essences to serve a specific purpose beyond aesthetic enjoyment.

Essential oils are potent, concentrated therapeutic extracts of herbs, offering a wide range of health benefits. Functional fragrances are formulated with natural materials known for their beneficial effects on mood, cognitive function, well-being, self-confidence and more.

For example, certain essential oils like Lavender may be used for relaxation and stress relief, while Citrus oils like Lemon or Bergamot can promote alertness and focus.

Functional fragrances blend the art of perfumery with the science of aromatherapy, offering both *sensory pleasure and tangible wellness benefits*.

# What's Inside A Natural Perfume?

The majority of materials in natural perfume are from botanical origins. There are some animalic materials commonly used in perfumery – you don't have to use them, but you can. In some instances, there are ways to blend or substitute botanicals to mimic animal aromas.

## Common natural perfumery materials:

**Essential oils** are concentrated aromatic compounds extracted from various parts of plants, including flowers, leaves, stems, bark, roots, and seeds.

Most modern essential oils are made using **steam distillation**, **hydro distillation**, or **CO2 extraction**. Most Citrus essential oils are made using **cold pressing**, also known as expression.

**Enfleurage** is an ancient, labor-intensive technique used in perfumery to extract fragrant compounds from delicate flowers into odorless fat or oil, like lard or vegetable oil.

**Absolutes** are similar to essential oils but are extracted through **solvent extraction**, which involves using a solvent like hexane or ethanol to dissolve the aromatic compounds from plant material.





# The 3 Main Types of Natural Perfume



## **Solid Perfume Oil & Wax Base**

Solid perfume comes in a solid, waxy form rather than a liquid or spray. It typically contains a blend of aromatic materials mixed with a base of waxes, butters, and/or oils.

They are essentially oil-based perfumes, with the addition of a wax-like substance such as beeswax, carnauba wax, or candelilla wax to create a semi-solid consistency.

Solid perfumes can be applied directly to the skin by rubbing or dabbing, releasing the fragrance gradually as the body heat melts the waxy base.

Solid perfumes were traditionally used in many cultures, however, they're not as popular now in modern times.

# The 3 Main Types of Natural Perfume

## **Spray Perfume Alcohol Base**



Spray perfumes, also known as atomizer perfumes, are a popular form of fragrance application that utilizes a pressurized container to dispense a fine mist of liquid fragrance. They typically consist of a blend of aromatic materials, such as essential oils mixed with alcohol.

Spray perfumes are very common and are largely becoming the most popular style of perfume, both in the West and across the world.

They're often considered a Western-style of perfume, specifically French and British style perfumery, as these countries were the first to start using alcohol in perfumes.

Spray perfumes are often a dilution of a concentrate, anywhere from generally 1-3% like in an Eau de Toilette, to 40% concentration seen in a Parfum Extrait.



# The 3 Main Types of Natural Perfume



## Attar Perfume Oil Base

Attars are typically not diluted and contain 100% aromatic materials. They are a traditional perfume from India and the Middle East that contains 100% pure distilled essential oils free from alcohol and synthetic chemicals.

**The word “attar” is an Arabic word meaning “scent.”**

Attar perfume is very concentrated, highly aromatic, and a potent natural perfume. It's typically made by blending aromatic materials into a base oil, often Sandalwood essential oil. This type of dab-on perfume is sometimes diluted into a carrier oil such as Jojoba.

Attar perfume is often seen as a *more intimate way to experience aroma and natural perfume.*

Almost one-third of the world uses this type of perfume, and it's becoming more popular across the West in modern times.

All three types of perfume – solid, spray, and attars – have their specific qualities and particular preferred uses depending on the intentions behind them.

Each type of perfume can be utilized for spiritual use, aesthetics, and/or as a functional fragrance...

It's all up to your personal preference and what you want to create.

***Making any of these types of natural perfumes can easily be done at home with the proper guidance, understanding, and tools.***

But to do so, there are some **key components** that you need to know to ensure you create a perfume that not only smells great, but also lasts throughout the entire day....







# The Joys of Being a Perfumer

Being a natural perfumer offers a unique blend of benefits and joys, serving as both a creative outlet and a pathway to artistic expression.

**It's an opportunity to craft olfactory masterpieces, blending scents like a painter mixes colors on a canvas.**

Working with materials sourced from diverse corners of the globe, from the lush fields of Provence to the exotic spice markets of the East, provides an endless palette of natural materials to explore.

With hundreds to thousands of materials at your fingertips, perfumers embark on a sensory journey, drawing inspiration from rich cultural traditions and the wonderful people you'll meet along the way.

It's a passion steeped in history and heritage, where the alchemy of fragrance creation melds science and art to become a *deeply spiritual and artistic endeavor*.

# What's Next?

Now that you know the foundations of natural perfume, its vast uses, and the 3 main types...

The next step on your perfumery path is to learn **what actually goes into a successful formula** to create a fragrance that not only captivates the senses, but *remains well-balanced and lasts all day long*.

Be sure to tune into the next video to learn exactly how to do this and continue on your aromatic arts journey!





Thanks for joining me. I still have a lot in store for you in the series. Stay tuned and look out for my next emails for Lessons 2 and 3, where we'll dive deep into the building blocks of perfumery and how to actually make your own natural spray perfume from start to finished product.

***This is just the beginning!***

**-JK DeLapp**

