

The essential oil of **Fragonia**

by **Peter Archer**

Fragonia is not an oil that you will have heard of until very recently, if at all. At our recent conference, it was mentioned quite often by Ron Guba in his presentation on essential oils for infectious diseases, and for many of the people present, this was the first they had heard of it.

My own experience of Fragonia only began in December last year, and until then I had never heard of it. At the seminar in Melbourne with Dr Daniel Péroël, Fragonia was one of the oils that he spoke about, and at this seminar I bought a small bottle to try out.

I subsequently contacted the distillery that produces Fragonia, Paperbark Oils in Western Australia, and obtained a larger quantity from them, and I will speak below about my own experiences with this oil.

So, let us first of all have a look at the background of Fragonia, the history of its development, and the people who developed it, etc.

History of Development

This information (and also much of the technical and other information) is drawn directly from two documents kindly supplied by John and Peta Day, of Paperbark Oils, the documents being a paper¹ they presented to the IFA conference in Queensland in March 2006, and also their informal speech notes² for the conference, and I would like to thank them for kindly making these documents available, with permission to quote the information. The photos of Fragonia were also kindly supplied by them.

Paperbark Oils is a small, family-operated farm (64 hectares) and distillery, located near Harvey, south of Perth. Peta and John Day bought the property in the mid 1990's, and began operations by planting 5 hectares of tea tree. They distilled their first tea tree essential oil in 1998, and were the first in the southern region of Western Australia to produce tea tree oil. John, an engineer, designed and built their distillation plant himself.

Since that initial production, the price of tea tree oil has dropped, and so they began a process of looking for other Australian plants and trees for producing oil, a process which eventually led them to the birth of Fragonia. They also now produce small quantities of rosalina, lemon tea tree, lavandula, Australian sandalwood, eucalyptus plenissima, and another new oil that they are pioneering, honey myrtle.

During their search for new plants from which to develop essential oils, in 2000 John and Peta happened to read an article³ in a journal by Chris Robinson, a botanist with the Dept. of Agriculture at Albany in SW Western Australia. The title of the article was "Agonis Oil and the Curse of Potential!", and Chris was writing about his experiences of having identified a new

species of a wild-growing aromatic shrub, an unidentified species of the Agonis family, known locally in the area where it was growing as “course tea tree” or “course agonis”.

The flowers of this species were being harvested for the fresh and dried flower market, mainly for export, but no-one was using the plant for anything else. Chris had been working on developing the plant as a potential new essential oil since 1996, and there was interest from groups of potential users, but there was not enough oil available to experiment with, and no-one was prepared to take the risk of planting enough of the plants to fully test its potential, as this would be a costly and risky operation. Hence the name of the article, the “curse of potential”, but the project was stalled and in danger of never coming to realisation.

That is, until Peta and John appeared on the scene, and decided to take the plunge. In 2001, they planted 5000 of the Agonis seedlings. This must have been a huge risk for them, being a small family-run business, with very limited resources. There was no guarantee that the resulting oil would be of much use, it may easily have turned out to be of very little use at all, and their investment of time and money would have been for naught.

The Naming of Fragonia

The species was at this point still not formally named, and Chris realised that to proceed with the essential oil development project, the species would have to have a formal botanical name, so in 2001 the name “Agonis fragrans” was formally recognised.

Also around this same time, John and Peta had done some trial distillations of small quantities of the Agonis plant material, gathered from various areas in the wild, and it soon became obvious that there was considerable variation between the samples from different areas, ie. that this plant had various chemotypes, which would complicate the project.

With very little interest in their project from anyone else, apart from Chris, they had to decide for themselves from which of the various plants that were available to take their material for propagation and planting. Their method of making the choices was to simply select what “smelt and felt right” to them.

As it turned out, their selection was absolutely brilliant, for, as we will go into below, they selected the chemotype that just happened to have its constituent biochemistry, according to Dr Penoel, “in perfect balance”, as well as having a lovely odour and very desirable healing properties. To quote directly from Peta and John's notes: “It may have been a fluke that a couple of 'amateurs' managed to select this particular chemotype, or it may have been that the 'balanced' oil was the obvious one and easy to select.” Either way, they got it right on their first attempt, which was just as well, as there may not have been a second attempt, if their first selections had turned out to be of limited value.

Regarding the name “Fragonia”, this was selected by John and Peta, and they decided to apply for trade-mark registration for the name, which was granted. They decided to do this for several reasons, one obvious reason being to give themselves some degree of protection for their huge investment, financially and in time and energy, in developing this new oil.

Another reason was to ensure uniformity, so that if anyone purchases a bottle of essential oil

labelled “Fragonia™”, they can be certain that this oil is indeed the exact same chemotype as that described in the literature, and tested and documented by Dr Pénoël. They made this decision after lengthy discussions with Dr Pénoël. In their notes, they mention the confusion for the purchaser when buying lavender oil, and also rosalina, and they also mention that, for example, tea tree oil varies in its makeup, and that even the ISO standard for tea tree oil does not guarantee any level of assurance regarding variations in its composition from various sources. This is obviously a complex subject, with some aromatherapists probably seeing this as not always being a “problem” at all, as after all, essential oils are natural products, and some variation is not only inevitable, but indeed desirable. However this is not the place to fully discuss the merits of this.

I will mention, however, that there is an issue of this type with some other Australian essential oils, (kunzea and blue cypress are two that I have personal knowledge of) where a pioneering person or group of people put in a lot of hard work in developing a new essential oil, which was of a particular species and a particular chemotype. But when that hard work started to pay off, with the new oil becoming popular, others came along and started distilling and selling what purports to be the same oil, but is actually a totally different chemotype (or, in some cases a different species altogether!) with many users of those oils becoming very confused, because the oil that they are buying does not seem to have the same properties as the oil that is described in the literature.

Regarding the specific example of kunzea oil, the “standard” kunzea that all the published reference material refers to is distilled in Tasmania by John Hood. This “original” kunzea has, as pointed out by Dr Pénoël⁴, a unique composition which includes a combination of five C15 molecules in the one oil, and this makes the genuine kunzea a very valuable oil. However, other people, on mainland Australia, are now also producing and marketing an oil that is claimed to be “kunzea”. I was recently shown a bottle of one of these alternative “kunzea” oils, and just by smelling it I could tell that this oil was **nothing like** the Tasmanian kunzea with which I am very familiar. I was also shown a GC analysis of the oil, and it was nothing like John Hood's kunzea, it was totally different, and definitely did **not** have all of those C15 compounds present.

Here in NZ, we of course have a similar situation with the various chemotypes of manuka, as most of you will be well aware, and how it is so important to always know which chemotype you are using.

My personal opinion on this is that, while I would not like to see “fair competition” stifled, however, for the sake of fairness to the “pioneers”, and also because of the vital importance that any essential oil that is marketed as being of a particular type really **must be true to its label** and have the same properties that have been published as being the properties of that oil, it is really important that answers to this difficult issue be found. The trademarking of the name Fragonia™ is one way of dealing with this issue, in that any bottle of essential oil that is labelled “Fragonia™” will almost certainly be the exact same oil as what is published in the literature.

The Botany and Growing of Agonis fragrans

Agonis fragrans is a lignotuberous shrub reaching approx. 2.5 metres in height. It has erect flowering branches, with thick, rigid leaves and small clusters of five white-petalled flowers with a pale pink centre. Flowering occurs typically between January and May.

The plants are very well suited to the soil type in which they are being grown at the Paperbark Oils property. The soil is a free-draining, acid sand, which is not suited to most forms of conventional chemical-fertiliser type farming, requiring the application of large quantities of fertiliser and lime. An adjective that is mentioned in Peta and John's notes on the soil is that it is "gutless".

However, this is exactly the type of soil that Agonis fragrans has evolved on over millions of years, so the Days have been able to, in their own words "work with the soil, not against it".

The plants are fertilised, with a solution of natural seaweed and fish-based fertiliser, by fertigation (ie. through the irrigation system) and by foliar spraying. They also plan to improve the soil condition by adding natural peat that occurs naturally on their property, and by composting the spent biomass from the distillation process. They also use small quantities of the biomass as a weed suppressant.

The plants need irrigation in summer, and this is done via a system of above-ground irrigation tapes, which minimises water loss from evaporation, with the water directed directly to the plant roots. This watering system also minimises summer weed growth, which would be rampant with conventional watering.

Insects are not proving to be a problem, as the Paperbark farm does not have a huge monoculture of all the same plants, and insect control is managed mainly by the annual cycle of harvesting, and also by preserving their remaining wetlands and natural bush, which encourages birdlife, with a resulting benefit of insect control.

Harvesting and Distillation

The plants are harvested in the late summer, and the oil is produced by steam distillation, in a stainless-steel state-of-the-art plant designed and built by John, who is an engineer. The still is very efficient, both in the time taken for distillation, and in fuel-efficiency. Recycled oil is used to fuel the boiler, and all excess hydrosol that is not sold, and also all of the condenser cooling water, is recycled onto the plantation.

The operation is therefore as totally eco-friendly and efficient as possible.

Properties and Uses

In any project to develop and test a new essential oil, there are two key areas of information that are always explored. One is the traditional uses of the plant as a herbal remedy (if any). However, as far as is known, Agonis fragrans does not have any traditional body of herbal

knowledge to draw on.

This leaves us then with the other major factor to explore, the biochemical composition of the oil, as revealed in a GC analysis, and in the table below we have the GC data.

α -pinene	21 – 27	1.8-cineole	29 – 32.5
β -pinene	1.5 - 1.7	Linalool	11.7 – 12.4
Myrcene	1.4 – 2.2	terpinen-4-ol	3.7 – 4.3
Limonene	2.4 - 2.5	α -terpineol	5.4 – 7.6
p-cymene	2.2 - 2.9	Myrtenol	3.1 – 4.5
γ -terpinene	1.3 – 3.3	Geraniol	0.5 – 1.2

In their paper¹ presented to the Australian conference, John and Peta Day, in commenting on the GC data, quote directly from the Mark Webb book⁵, “Bush Sense”, reproducing what Mark lists about the various constituent compounds that are present in this oil, as revealed by the GC analysis. I will not reproduce all the data here, it is drawn from Mark Webb's table, “Aroma Constituents”, which starts on page 115 (at the end of the book) of the first edition of “Bush Sense”.

Looking at the GC data, there are three main constituent molecular groups, as follows:

- Monoterpenes – α -pinene, β -pinene, myrcene, limonene, p-cymene and γ -terpinene
- Oxides – 1.8 cineole
- Monoterpenols – linalool, terpinen-4-ol, α -terpineol and myrtenol

A Matter of Balance

These three main molecular groups are present in *Agonis fragrans* in an almost perfect proportional balance of one third each, and this has been especially commented on by Dr Daniel Péroël as being of special significance. I would like to quote directly from Dr Péroël's course notes⁴ from his Australian seminars (December 2005), on this:

“From the chemistry approach, the striking element is the extremely well-balanced composition of the oil. In fact, as I was working on the results of the GC analysis, one Sunday afternoon, all of a sudden, it occurred to me that, for the very first time, I was gazing at a unique composition. I am not speaking of the individual molecules that make out the oil here. I am referring to the respective proportions of the families of components between them and the proportions of the individual components between them, especially inside the monoterpenols.

“I was amazed by finding out that the sacred number known as the “golden proportion” was expressed almost perfectly through the chemistry of this E.O. Then, because the proportion was respected regarding several successive levels, I was able to relate this repetition to a very well-known physical and mathematical structure: the fractal.

“So, having in a single EO, the fractal structure based on the golden proportion struck me like an eye-opener! What I mean is the fact that we have to go beyond the analytical chemistry aspect in order to understand, in a holistic way, the unique power of harmonisation and rebalancing of this essential oil.

“This intuition was confirmed later on through numerous patients who have worked with it. It is not just that this EO is endowed with properties useful for the respiratory system or to treat various infections, which was proven by experimental tests on different strains of bacteria. If it were just that, it would be already good, but not sufficient to place it in a top position.

“Actually, what I have stated with this oil is its capacity of 'making peace' inside the person who uses it and also in his/her life in general. If you understand that, in most diseases, there is also an emotional part, it is obvious that bringing harmony in this subtle area of the patient is at least as important as treating the bug or reducing the inflammation.”

Dr Péroël then goes on, in his seminar notes, to outline a case of a patient who was able to “make peace” with herself, on many levels. I will go into this in more detail below, and also describe my own experiences with this oil in this regard.

The actual proportions of the constituent molecular groups which Dr Péroël is so excited about are as follows: monoterpenes (30 to 39%), oxides (29 to 32%), and monoterpenols (23 to 29%). Obviously, there will be variations in the exact percentages of each and every batch of the essential oil that is distilled (as there are variations in the exact make-up of each batch of every essential oil). However, the figures are very close to a “perfect” ratio of one third to one third to one third.

If you refer to any essential oil reference book, you will see that this is very rare, if not totally unique, in that, with almost all other oils, there is one group of compounds that dominate, an example being the eucalyptus family of oils, where the oxides are the dominant constituent, or, to mention an extreme case, Anise Seed, and also Sweet Fennel, which have at least around seventy percent of anethole.

Now, all of these “one family dominant” essential oils are extremely useful, each one in its own unique way, and it is the total range of all of these, maybe we could call them “uni-family dominant” oils, that is one of the factors that gives therapeutic aromatherapy its great power and versatility. For example, of all of the oils that could be classed as the “heavy artillery” of the aromatic medicine world (especially for infection control), they are all of this type, an obvious example being the general class of oils which have the phenol compounds as their dominant constituents. We would not wish to have it any other way.

However, it occurs to me, while writing this, that maybe what we are seeing here, with the birth of the essential oil of Fragonia™, is the beginning of a new era. Up until now, all of medical science has been locked into a totally “dualistic” world-view. This applies especially to conventional, allopathic medicine, but it also applies to many branches of “natural medicine” also. Whenever someone “falls ill” with an infectious disease, our first thought is to use the “heavy artillery”, like the phenol oils, to obliterate the “enemy”, the microbes.

In this rush to dualistic battle, we often tend to overlook the other factors that must be present, like the person's emotional and mental balance, their belief system about themselves and their relationships with other people and with the world in general. Or, if we do think of these more “subtle” factors, we often tend to put them in a separate box: for example mainstream medicine (after prescribing a course of antibiotics, or whatever) would refer the patient to a psychiatrist or psychologist. A natural medicine practitioner might refer the client to a counsellor, or give them a bottle of flower essences. In these examples, there is a “split” in the treatment, with the more down-to-earth physical factors being treated with a “sledge-hammer” type treatment, and the more subtle factors being split off and looked at separately, often by a different practitioner. In this, it might be said that we tend to forget that the patient is a whole, integrated person, and that the “split” is an artificial division, invented for the convenience of the practitioner.

It was therefore very timely that our recent conference had as its main theme the more “subtle” aspects of aromatherapy, and also we must remember that the word “Holistic” features prominently in the name of our organisation.

Anyway, to wrap up the point that I am attempting to make, before getting back to the topic of the actual essential oil, I would like to mention briefly that, with the dawning of the new millennium, humanity is in the process of shifting away from the old “exclusively dualistic” world-view, into a more balanced, holistic paradigm. I am noticing this in my work, especially in my work in my other specialist modality of flower essences, and I am noticing it in other ways too, including in my personal life, and in my own general life's path, including the spiritual aspects of my life journey.

So, it comes as no surprise to me, that Peta and John Day, in the process (described above) of intuitively selecting which plants from the wild to use to establish their plantings of this new essential oil species, were led to select those ones that would result in such a “balanced” oil. To repeat again their own words “It may have been a fluke that a couple of 'amateurs' managed to select this particular chemotype, or it may have been that the 'balanced' oil was the obvious and easy one to select.”

I would contend that yes, you could say that, in a sense, it was indeed a “fluke”, but that all so-called “flukes” are never chance, random happenings away, as there is always a higher intelligence at work, and that this intelligence, call it “intuition” or whatever, automatically led them along the path that was the “obvious and easy one to select”.

Getting now back to our study of the constituent molecules, and how this will impact on the usefulness of the oil, the Days, in their notes, refer to the known properties of the three groups of constituents by quoting from Joy Bowles book⁶, “The Basic Chemistry of Aromatherapeutic Essential Oils”. Some of you will no doubt know this book, and the following is a summary of the data:

Monoterpenes (ref. page 53 of Bowles, 3rd edition)⁶

General tonic and stimulant. Through inhalation, stimulates mucous glands to either dry up, or to produce a more fluid mucous. Net effect is decongestion.

Cancer prevention and treatment.

Hormone-like properties.
Relief of muscular aches

Oxides (ref. page 101 of Bowles, 3rd edition)⁶

Expectorant
Anti-inflammatory effect in asthma

Monoterpenols (ref. page 68 of Bowles, 3rd edition)⁶

Anti-infectious, strongly anti-bacterial and anti-fungal
Analgesic, vasco-constrictive, making the site of application feel cold, while inducing a slight local anaesthesia.

Tonifying and stimulant
Sedative
Anti-spasmodic (linalool)

Bowles gives a lot more detail than the above bare-bones list, including some references to studies and trials as supporting evidence. I suggest you refer to her book if you wish to see this level of detail.

Properties of *Agonis fragrans*

Let us now look at each of the properties of this oil, with our main focus on the experiential evidence from lab testing and from clinical use.

Antimicrobial and Anti-infectious

Turning again to the Day's paper¹, they relate how preliminary testing for anti-microbial activity was done by a team at the microbiology Dept at the University of Western Australia. This same department had previously done much of the scientific test work on tea tree oil. The tests were carried out on four different types of bacteria and on the fungus *Candida albicans*. A brief quote from the test results states that “the anti-microbial activity of *Agonis* sp was similar to that of *Melaleuca alternifolia* (tea tree) with the added benefit of possessing a more pleasant fragrance”.

Further, more comprehensive, tests were done in 2004, and while the results of these tests are yet to be published, “it is known that they confirmed that *Fragonia*TM has significant anti-microbial activity, similar to other anti-microbial essential oils, including tea tree oil.”

There are now ongoing clinical trails by aromatherapists, and of course by Dr Péroël, and these trials are “very promising”, and are confirming the oil's antibacterial and antifungal properties. I will detail my own experiences in this regard below, however, I will mention here about my personal opinion regarding this oil's effectiveness when used as treatment for the three classes of microbes, bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

From the lab. Tests, it is obvious that *Fragonia*TM has strong anti-bacterial and anti-fungal

properties. But what about viruses? After all, the most “common” human acute microbic-induced infection is the “common cold”, and this is viral. While conceding that what I am saying here is totally “anecdotal” evidence, and that it is based on a very small sample over a limited period of time, I am firmly of the opinion that this oil is also quite strongly “anti-viral”.

Exactly how strong, when compared to other anti-viral essential oils, I am not sure. However, over the course of this past winter, on a number of occasions, when faced with the early symptoms of a cold, I deliberately used only Fragonia™, and no other oils, both for myself, and for two or three other people, and very time, as long as the beginning symptoms of a cold were caught early enough, the Fragonia™ alone stopped the developing cold in its tracks.

I developed a little “trick” that I would like to share with you. Whenever I felt the beginnings of a sore throat, I immediately reached for my bottle of Fragonia™, which I carried with me at all times. I would place a drop of the neat oil on my fingertip. I would reach deep into my mouth, back towards the throat, and I would carefully smear the neat oil all over the back of my tongue, the front of my tonsils area, the rear part of my palate, and around the gums of my rear molars. I had to get used to poking around in this delicate area, and to suppress the “gag reflex”, but after a while it became almost automatic to do this little routine. I would replenish the drop of oil several times, each treatment using about 4 drops of the oil.

The Fragonia™ oil is so mild, even on the mucous membranes, that I did not get any adverse reaction, however, after repeated use of this little trick, many times per day, for several days, I did notice what I suspect was the beginning signs of “skin sensitization”, in the form of slight soreness, which got worse if I applied more of the oil to the area, so I eased off for a few days, and it was fine.

When applied in the above way to the inner throat, as well as proving very effective in stopping the progress of infection, the Fragonia™ oil also worked as an analgesic for the sore throat, the soreness almost disappeared after the treatment. (See below for use of Fragonia™ as an analgesic for dental pain.) I would suggest that, for a sore throat, an alternative to the above method would be using the oil in a gargle, however, I have not tried this, as the “neat via the finger” method worked so well for me.

Anti-Inflammatory

In-vitro studies of Fragonia™ were done by the School of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Western Australia, and to quote “that Fragonia™ inhibits secretion of the IFN γ , involved in the inflammatory response to tissue injury or infection.”

If we refer to the functional groups of the constituent molecules, the presence of substantial amounts of α -pinene and 1,8 cineole would indicate that the oil should have anti-inflammatory properties.

There is also positive clinical feedback, to quote from a patient of Sue Lavall, an aromatherapist and microbiologist in Perth, “Several weeks ago I sprained my left knee and at one stage it felt very hot and sore. I applied Agonis fragrans oil neat to the knee and within a few minutes it had cooled the knee to almost normal temperature”.

Expectorant

Fragonia™ is approx. 30 percent 1,8 cineole, and as this compound has a long and well-documented history of having a powerful expectorant property (as in eucalyptus), it is pretty much a “no brainer” to figure out that this oil will have at least some degree of expectorant property. In addition, both limonene and α -terpineol also have expectorant properties.

Dr Péroël (according to the Day's paper¹) reports great success in treating the respiratory system with this oil. This includes ENT, through to the lungs. An opinion is stated to the affect that “the monoterpenols supply the anti-infectious action upon most common bacteria and the cineole aids the breakup of mucous secretions”. Dr Péroël also reports success “in calming the 'nervous cough' associated with inflammation of the bronchial airways”, report the Days.

The Day's paper goes on to say that “although eucalyptus and other high cineole oils will remain as first option when an aggressive oil is required to break up large amounts of mucous, Fragonia™ oil has immense advantages over these oils, in that it.....

- Breaks up mucous effectively (just as the other oils do).
- Provides a pool of complex monoterpenols which act upon most commonly found bacteria and hence attack the infection associated with mucous formation.
- Soothes the irritation and nervous reactions linked to the inflammation.
- Strengthens and balances the immune system when used in a preventative manner.
- Is extremely gentle on the skin.
- Has a pleasant fragrance.
- Readily absorbs through the skin, as the 1,8 cineole improves dermal absorption.”

Immune Stimulant

The Days also quote Dr Péroël² in the area of “immune enhancement through skin application”, and they quote him as saying:

“The action of aromatic molecules, in the field of infectious pathology, is generally known to be partially in connection with increasing the self defence system of the organism. In the case of Fragonia™, this mechanism of action appears to be as important as its intrinsic anti-infectious properties”. Because of Fragonia's gentleness on the skin, Dr Péroël advocates the daily application of a couple of drops on the groin area, under the armpits, and on the side of the neck, these being areas where the lymphatic nodes are located. One cannot imagine applying a couple of drops neat of any of the high-phenol oils (which are also oils that have a highly immunostimulant action) to these areas of the body! (My comment)

I personally suspect that the anti-viral action that I observed was to a large part due to the oil's immune system stimulant properties.

Analgesic

The Days report that clinical data is showing promise in using Fragonia™ to relieve minor pain, and in particular pain associated with arthritis, and that the oil seems to provide relief to muscle and joint pain within quite a short time after topical application. They suggest that this is probably linked to the para-cymene content.

However (they go on to say), Dr Péroël believes that “para-cymene is only one part of the explanation of the analgesic effect of Fragonia™ as there are other essential oils with higher content in para-cymene that do not work (as analgesics) as well as Fragonia™”. He is referring to the “combined actions of the constituents within an oil which increase its efficacy”. My own comment on this would be “of course, this is true of all essential oils, it is the **synergy** that we are speaking of here”, or to put it in more holistic terms, it is the “totality of the character of the living oil”.

My own personal experience of Fragonia™ for its analgesic properties have not been for muscular or joints, but rather for a sore throat, as detailed above, under “Anti-microbial”, for which it worked well for me. Also, I had an occasion, for about a week, where I had ongoing mild to medium-intensity dental pain and discomfort, and rubbing some neat Fragonia™ on the teeth, gums, and affected area of the mouth proved to be very helpful, reducing the pain to a good degree. I would suggest this as a much milder alternative to resorting to the much more aggressive oil of clove bud, especially if the pain is relatively mild, and if it is ongoing for a long period of time.

Emotional Aspects

As well as being an extremely useful essential oil for its properties of healing on the “physical level”, there are reports of clinical success with using Fragonia™ oil for balancing of the emotions and the mind.

Sue Lavall has reported (according to the Day's paper¹) that one of her patients said the following “it appears to have a dual affect of relieving psychological tension and having a relaxing and calming affect on the entire mind”.

And, Dr Péroël has had quite a lot to say about this aspect of Fragonia™. Let us first of all refer back to what he said about the unique balance of the constituent compounds of the oil, in his notes for the December seminars, and specifically let's zoom in on this one sentence from that quote: “.... it's capacity of 'making peace', inside the person who uses it and also in his/her life in general”.

In his seminar notes, after speaking about the molecular balance of the oil, he goes on to say....

“One (case) that was quite interesting was about a female patient who was following a psychotherapy. She told me that, right on the day after having started the EO of Fragonia, she had been able to express and release blocked emotions that were never 'authorised' to be

'out' before, during a long period of therapy. For those of you who work with energy medicine, the fact that a reaction occurs so quickly will not be a surprise. Later on, she explained she was able to 'make peace' during her dreams, even with people who had passed away, and it was quite a healing experience.”

The Days also quote Dr Péroël as saying that “it is this (molecular) balance which gives Fragonia™ the unique power of harmonisation and rebalancing, and which helps to release many old blockages from an emotional perspective, and 'make peace'.”

Dr Péroël also suggests, as an experiment with this oil, applying one or two drops, neat, on specific chakras of your choice before going to bed, and seeing what dreams or experiences occur for you during the night.

And, his final word about Fragonia™ in his seminar notes⁴ is a suggestion that you “apply a few drops to your skin, after your shower in the morning, you will notice that most people are attracted to you like 'magic' and they think you wear a new kind of perfume.”

The Two “Aussie Cousins”

At the Melbourne seminar (December 2005), Dr Péroël spoke about the special synergy between the two new Australian essential oils, Fragonia™ and Kunzea. He has been working intensively with both of these oils since he was first introduced to them by Mark Webb in 2004. He was so enthused by these two new oils, that he visited Australia specifically to see for himself the farms and distilleries where they were grown and produced, and to meet with the developers of the two oils (the Days in Western Australia, and John Hood in Tasmania).

I will cover Kunzea in-depth in a future article, including what Dr Péroël said about this oil. However, regarding the synergy between them, it is interesting to note that they are both actually very “well balanced” oils. We have already discussed the specifics of how well balanced Fragonia™ is, and I will just briefly mention that, the fact that Kunzea has no less than five C15 molecules in its makeup, along with a good balance between the pinene and the cineole components. Because of this, in my opinion, one would be very justified in also calling Kunzea a “very well-balanced essential oil”. It is also interesting to note that they come from extreme opposites of the Australian continent, and also that in their constituent molecular makeup they complement each other very well, with the Kunzea providing the components (the C15 molecules) that are absent in the Fragonia™.

Dr Péroël spoke about how Fragonia™ can be successfully “used through all interfaces (of the body), ie. cutaneous, respiratory and digestive”. He focussed quite a lot on the digestive (oral use), because this was what we were very interested in learning from him, and he spoke at some length about what he calls the “JFK process” (joint fragonia kunzea process). This can be used as a general-purpose tonic, to give a person a “tune-up”. He suggested that a good way is to start out initially with one or the other oil on its own, and that “kunzea is more yang”, whereas “fragonia is more yin”. You can then introduce the other oil when you feel you are ready for it. For the internal (oral) version of this “JFK process”, a suggested dosage level is 3 drops of each, in capsules (diluted in an edible carrier oil, olive oil works well for this), two or three times daily, with meals.

Anyway, this really grabbed my attention, and a little voice inside of me was saying “Peter, you really need to do this for yourself.” So, starting on that very same evening that the seminar finished, I plunged right in, having never taken essential oils orally before, I jumped right in and immediately began taking three drops of each, three times daily. I did not have any capsules to load the oils into, so I just mixed them into a little food, avocado is great for this purpose, or honey is also very good. The taste is rather “medicinal”, but not all that bad, and both these oils are not “aggressive” to the mucous membranes, so are safe to swallow in this way.

My Personal Clinical Experiences

I started taking this “JFK process” combination with no particular expectations, other than as a general tonic, which I could certainly do with at that time, as I was feeling exhausted, after a very full-on weekend seminar in the Melbourne December heat, right on top of a very rushed trip over from Christchurch. I did have hopes that the oils would help me with my energy levels, as Dr Péroël had mentioned about how taking two drops of kunzea frequently (orally) during a long flight had prevented jet-lag for him, and I was due to fly home in two days time.

However, to my great surprise, exactly four days after beginning the “JFK process” (three drops each of Fragonia™ and Kunzea, orally, three times daily, with meals), suddenly, all symptoms of my very long-standing I.B.S. (irritable bowel syndrome) totally disappeared! I had had this condition for longer than I could remember, had been treated repeatedly by various modalities, including herbal, diet modification, flower essences, homeopathic, and lots and lots of essential oils, but the oils only ever by “external” application, on the skin.

I kept taking the JFK blend for another week or so, and then stopped. That was in early December 2005, and the old IBS symptoms have never really returned. I have had a few minor, temporary, recurrences, triggered by “dietary foolishness”, but nothing like the old intensity or unremitting regularity. If that was the only benefit that I was to ever have from these two oils, even just that would be priceless to me.

A little aside here, if you are into making up abbreviations, as an alternative to “JFK process”, how about “KFC process”? No prizes for guessing that this stands for “Kunzea Fragonia Combination Process”! (With no apologies to “the colonel”!)

Further Clinical Examples

I have looked through all of my clinical notes from December 2005, and, all through the notes, Fragonia™ is everywhere. Since when I obtained a bulk supply, direct from Paperbark Oils, I have used somewhere between 150ml and 200ml in my practice, which is a lot more than any other oil over this time period.

I have, many times, validated for myself Dr Péroël's statement about the powerful synergy between the two “Aussie cousins” oils, Fragonia™ and Kunzea. I have combined them together for oral use many times, only for myself and my partner, of course, I do **not** do oral dosing for anybody else, as I do not consider myself qualified to do this. And, I frequently use them together in footbaths, in steam inhalations, and neat on the skin for various purposes.

Here are some highlights from my case notes:

My partner and I both had all the symptoms of a really fierce cold coming on. This was in late May, just before we were due to set off on a 5-week North Island trip, and we were working very long hours, under a lot of pressure, to get ready for the trip. The **last thing** we needed was a raging cold! I prescribed intensive, multi-interface treatments, comprising frequent footbaths, steam inhalations, oils neat on the skin, neat in the mouth and throat, drinks of hydrosols, and oral ingestion of oils.

I used quite complex blends of oils, and included some “heavy artillery” oils like clove bud, oregano, and cinnamon leaf. In every blend, there was Fragonia™ and Kunzea. I made different blends for day and evening use, avoiding “stimulating” oils at night, so as not to keep us awake, but as both these two oils are not stimulating, they were used in the day blends and also in the evening blends (they are both very versatile oils).

By the end of the first day, the symptoms had abated considerably. But, late in the evening, my partner had a sudden relapse, her symptoms suddenly flared up, and it was crisis time! I did not want to resort to using heavy-duty “stimulating” oils, as she definitely needed a good night's sleep. When I tested intuitively, asking which oils to use, all that tested positive was Fragonia™ and nothing else. So, I gave her intensive doses of fragonia, neat on the skin, orally in capsules, and neat in the mouth and throat. She had a good night's sleep and woke up feeling much better, symptoms virtually gone.

We continued on with a regular regime of treatments for the next few days, but at a reduced dosage and frequency, and the cold symptoms held off, though we could tell that the symptoms were still there, in the background, not totally resolved. And then, four days later, there was a sudden dramatic flare-up. This time, I held nothing back, and “hit really hard”, with combinations of really aggressive oils (including cinnamon bark, oregano, thyme ct thymol and basil ct eugenol), but in there with these really “heavy” oils, there was also our two “Aussie cousins”, especially for neat on-skin application, which cannot be done with any of those really aggressive oils.

This time, the cold was conquered, and we left on our big trip, still exhausted from all the over-work, but symptom-free! For the whole of the five weeks we were on the road, we used Fragonia™ pretty well every day (with combinations of other oils also), and we got through the trip, and the very cold winter, without any of the usual winter ills. From my notes, I see that I also used Fragonia™ on at least two other people over this time, probably more, for also keeping winter ailments at bay.

Recipes

Recipe time! Here is a sampling of some of my favourite blends, featuring this oil. Unless otherwise stated, all steam inhalations are one drop of each named oil.

Steam Inhalation for General Tonic

Black Pepper

Fragonia™
Grapefruit
Niaouli
Spruce

Evening Footbath for Sleep and Tonic

Marjoram 4
Cypress 4
Fragonia™ 4
Rosalina 3
Thyme ct geraniol 3

Footbath for Tonic and Immune Booster

Cedarwood 3
Euc. dives 2
Fragonia™ 4
Grapefruit 4
Rosalina 2
Tea Tree 3

Vapourizer, for Tonic, etc.

Fragonia™
Grapefruit

Day Steam Inhalation for Stress, etc.

Fragonia™
Bay Laurel
Niaouli
Patchouli
Thyme ct geraniol

Evening Steam Inhalation for Stress, etc.

Fragonia™
Mandarin
Myrrh
Niaouli
Patchouli

Steam Inhalation for Headache & Bad Energy in Head

Fragonia™
Cypress
Juniper
Patchouli

Footbath for Cold coming on

Cypress 4

Fragonia™ 6
Bay Laurel 4
Ravensara 4
Spanish Sage 5
Oregano ct linalool 4

Steam Inhalation for Cold Coming On

Coriander
Fragonia™ (2 drops)
Kunzea
Lemongrass
Rosalina

Oral Dosing Recipes

All of these taken in capsules, in a carrier oil, with meals, usually 3 times daily. The quantities are in drops, the usual NZ type drops from the bottle dripulator, not the smaller drops from a plastic pipette, as per the French method. For up to 3 or 4 drops total dose, you can put all the drops of each individual oil into one capsule, for larger quantities, like 6 or 8 drops, split the total into two capsules. It is not usual to make up blends, each oil is put into capsules individually. For really “aggressive” oils, like thyme, split the dosage so that only a maximum of 2 drops is in each capsule.

To control bleeding in a pile

(Four times daily)

Cypress 6
Fragonia™ 8
Kunzea 8

Cold Coming On

Fragonia™ 6
Ravensara 4

IBS Minor Flare-up

Cinnamon Bark 4
Fragonia™ 4
Nutmeg 3

Sore Throat coming On

Fragonia™ 10 drops, 8 times daily
(This is a rather high dose, but was tolerated with no problems)

Post-Dental Treatment

Fragonia™ 4

Cypress 4

Runny Nose Symptoms

Fragonia™ 4

Grapefruit 4

Thyme ct borneol 4

Other Potential Interfaces

There are some other “methods of use”, that I have not tried, that are obvious candidates for this oil. One is suppositories and pessaries. Because Fragonia™ is so gentle and mild on mucous membranes, it will be a “natural” for use in this way, and at relatively high dosage levels too. A related method would be in a douche, for vaginal infections, and for this I would suggest a straight substitution in place of tea tree in an existing recipe.

The other method that I have not actually tried, is in high-percentage blends, for dermal application. I am actually a big fan of this form of use, by “high-dose” I mean anything from 25% to 70% of essential oils, in a carrier oil. My favourite concentration is around 40%. With Fragonia™ being so mild, it is an obvious oil to use in these type of blends. It also would go very well in creams and ointments, but I have not as yet tried it in these.

It will also almost certainly go well in compresses, both hot and cold, and I have not yet tried it in that way either. An obvious method to try out would be in a cold compress for joint injury or pain from swollen joints of the “hot” variety.

Personal Experiences

I have already outlined above my rather dramatic introduction to Fragonia™ and the recipes above will give you some suggestions for its potential uses, as a starting point for your own experimentation. I would just like to briefly add a couple more points from my personal use of this oil.

Over the past few months, during the winter of 2006, has been a very challenging time for me, for a number of reasons. This time-frame just happened to coincide with my intensive use of this new essential oil, and I must say that I have “really put it through its paces”! Fragonia™ has been my constant companion over this time, and I must say that I now feel more “balanced and at peace” than I have ever felt. It is difficult to find the words to exactly describe how I feel, but briefly, it is like nothing matters too much anymore, no matter if it is freezing cold and raining and our back yard is a lake, and I have so much work to get through that I will **never** get it all done, yet, I still feel at peace with everything.

I am convinced that my intensive use of this oil over this most challenging time has a lot to do with how well I have come through, mentally and emotionally, and I should also add that, despite the terrible weather, and the constant stress of over-work and pressure, I have not succumbed to a cold or sore throat, not once all winter. Every time some slight symptoms

appeared, I headed them off with the appropriate EO treatments. So, something is working at the physical level also. “Thank-you Fragonia!”

General Properties

The Paperbark Oils paper¹ lists these as being their summary of the general properties of Fragonia™

- Safe
- Effective
- Gentle on the skin
- Can be used at any time
- Safe for babies through to the elderly
- Pleasant fragrance, universally accepted
- Can be used on all interfaces and is readily absorbed through these interfaces – the skin, nose and respiratory, mouth and digestive

Paperbark oils list this as their summary of the potential properties and uses:

- Anti-infectious
- Anti-inflammatory
- Expectorant
- Immune reinforcing and balancing action
- Analgesic relief from muscle and joint pain
- Emotional balance – overall affect of creating peace and harmony in the mind and body, especially for sensitive people and for those going through difficult times

The final word will be from Dr Péroëll¹ :

“I am convinced that the global action of the set of molecules, in their unique balance, must have a role to play in the overall effect of the oil. This is the superiority and the secret of Nature in its complexity and intelligence. The single molecular approach is not to be rejected, but it needs to be integrated in a more global and 'living' way of thinking. All aromatherapists will understand this.”

References

- 1 Day, Peta and Day, John, (Paperbark Oils, Harvey Western Australia). Paper: "Two New Essential Oils from Western Australia, Fragonia™ and Honey Myrtle". Presented at the I.F.A. Conference, Broadbeach, Queensland, March 2006.
- 2 Speech Notes for the above presentation.
- 3 Robinson, Chris. "Agonis Oil and the Curse of Potential". Newsletter "Land for Wildlife Scheme", April 2000 issue.
- 4 Péroël, Daniel, MD. Seminar Handout titled "The Intensive, Extensive and Internal Use of Essential Oils", presented at Melbourne, Australia, 2-4 December 2005. © Osmobiose, 2005.
- 5 Mark A. Webb. "Bush Sense". Griffin Press, Adelaide, Australia, 2000
- 6 Bowles, E. Joy. "The Chemistry of Aromatherapeutic Oils", 3rd Edition. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, Australia, 2003.