

Frankincense Resins

What are they and how they help with Anxiety Issues

By Robin B Kessler CCA

Anxiety. This is a very interesting word. Everyone feels anxious now and then. It's a normal emotion. Many people feel nervous when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an important decision. Some feel anxiety and find it hard



to relax or sleep. There are complex anxiety issues but those should be treated by a medical doctor. There are Essential Oils that may help with simple anxiety issues. I have found certain Frankincense Resins, may just help you cope with these issues also.

The use of resins can be incorporated into Aromatherapy as it acts basically the same as the essential oil without many of the concerns over ingesting, drug interactions and is not highly concentrated like the essential oil.

Frankincense is the oleo gum resins which comes from *Boswellia* and *Commiphora* shrubs/trees. These shrubs/trees have a network of resin-bearing ducts that distribute, often fragrant oleo gum resin. The resin is used by the plants for defense against insects, fungi and the repair of damaged tissue. Frankincense is made up of water-soluble gum, resin, and essential or volatile oils. These resins and volatile oils are lipophilic and dissolve in vegetable oils, alcohol and petroleum distillates.

There are 4 species of Frankincense that contain Boswellic acid ("BA"); they are *Boswellia carterii*, *Boswellia sacra*, *Boswellia papyrifera*, and *Boswellia serrata*.

Boswellic acids (BA) are resin acids that make up between 30% and 60% of the resin portion of Frankincense.

Recent studies have indicated that the Boswellic acids in Frankincense possess anti-inflammatory and anti-Cancer properties. There are short term studies supporting this

premise but to date, no long term studies have been completed to prove this theory.

Boswellic acids are only present in the resin portion not the essential oils as Boswellic acid molecule is much too heavy to be volatile.

Resins can be used in various ways to achieve the desired effect. They can be; burned as an incense to achieve inner strength and peace, used in teas for relaxation and to help with anxiety, drank it as a "lemonade spritzer" for inflammation and assist with digestion and help with anxiety by making you feel more at ease. Resins can be swallowed in a capsule or straight once ground down to a powder form. They can also be infused and made into a salve to relieve pain in joints and muscles.

There are 18 of species of Frankincense resins and I am going to explain the ones most people use and how they may help with anxiety. The trees start producing resin when they are about 8 to 10 years old. When the trees are around 30 years old the resin is harvested. The resin is extracted by making a small, shallow incision on the trunk or branches of the tree which is called Striping. The resin is drained as a milky substance that coagulates in contact with air and is collected by hand.

FRANKINCENSE BOSWELLIA PAPYRIFERA:

Boswellia papyrifera is a species of flowering plant that is native to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan.

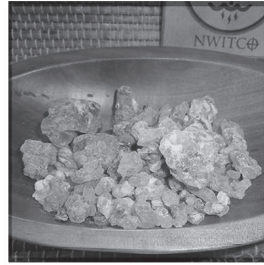


It is distinguished from other types of Frankincense by the presence of large amounts of Octyl Acetate and Octanol and two other unusual and unique chemical markers, Incensole and Incensole Acetate. Studies have shown that Incensole Acetate affects our central nervous system and possesses psychoactive properties. According to some studies, Incensole Acetate can generate heightened feelings of wellbeing and spirituality, reduce feelings of anxiety and depression and improve memory function. Other research has indicated that Incensole Acetate shows neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory properties and

indicates it may be of use in cases of stroke and head trauma. It is presumed that Incensole and Incensole Acetate are absorbed by the body through the smoke released during the burning of Frankincense as an incense. One can see how this might be an ideal incense for spiritual/religious purposes in churches and temples.

MAYDI-THE KING OF FRANKINCENSE-THE CHEWING GUM!

Boswellia frereana is native to the Somali Puntland the Somaliland highlands, and is their pride and joy. Maydi is considered the King of Frankincense.



With a sweet and warm amber fragrance highlighted by spice, and floral notes, Frankincense Frereana differs from most other types of Frankincense with its pure oleo-resin content and lack of water-soluble gum.

Harvested from fewer trees over a much shorter period during the year, Maydi, or *Boswellia frereana*, is not as abundantly available as the other more familiar types of Frankincense. It is bought up quickly by the, Saudi, Omani and Yemenite dealers, and much of it is used domestically.

Maydi is used in its unprocessed state as a natural chewing gum, locally and in Arabian nations, for this reason it is also known as “**Yemenite Chewing Gum**”. Due to its lack of water-soluble gum, it does not deteriorate in the mouth with warm saliva, but holds its form indefinitely, releasing healing oils and resins for extended periods of time. Some have known to chew it for relaxation and some chew it to help with inflammation in one’s mouth. *B. frereana* is also an excellent oleoresin for mature skin and signs of aging and has excellent anti inflammation properties.

I chew it when I am down and need some down time to relax after a long stressful day. I have also put it into my mouth when a tooth is bothering me sucking it for a few minutes. It gets like “gum” in your mouth, the taste is a bit bitter but the reward is worth it.

FRANKINCENSE RESIN-BOSWELLIA SERRATA

Boswellia serrata grown in India, is likely one of the most well-known and well-used types of Frankincense in the world. Also called Indian Olibanum and Salai, its traditional medicinal uses are well recorded.



Used extensively for hundreds of years in the Indian healing tradition of Ayurveda, *Boswellia serrata* is considered a NSAID (or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug), causing little to no side effects or irritation compared to steroidal drugs. It is used to treat arthritis, Osteoarthritis, inflammation of joints, bronchial asthma and recently has shown promise treating ulcerative colitis, and Crohn’s disease. Growing from India up through the Punjab and into Pakistan, it is used extensively as an incense and incense ingredient in local rituals and ceremonies.

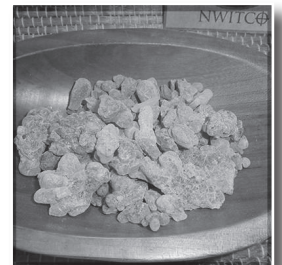
As most types of Frankincense, when burned as incense helps cleanse a space and create a sense of sacredness. Frankincense is ruled by the Sun, from an astrological point of view, is calming to the mind and heart, helps raise one’s spirits, and is said to generate heightened feelings of spirituality and well-being. This could very well work for those who feel they need an uplifting.

BOSWELLIA CARTERII

Boswellia carterii grows abundantly in Somalia, in Africa,

In Somalia, a traditional use of *Boswellia carterii* is to burn it as an incense for fragrance, especially after cooking

something non pleasant smelling such as fish. It is also burnt to ward away mosquitoes, and insects such as sand flies. It is also believed that burning *Boswellia carterii* frankincense after an illness will cleanse the space of sickness and drive away evil spirits. The belief that it will drive away the evil spirits may also help with the anxiety issues surrounding the illness.



Boswellia carterii is added to water in the evening by Somalis, and the frankincense is allowed to soak overnight. The water is ingested for digestion issues, stomach problems, gas, and cramps. The water is also used as a face cleansing cosmetic by Somalian women, and is believed to be useful as an anti-wrinkle cosmetic. The ancient Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut was known to grind up charred frankincense and have it placed in her Kohl eyeliner. This practice is also considered the first recorded use of the resin.

It is said that up to 90% of *Boswellia carterii* resins are sold to the perfume industry with France being one of the major purchasers. France has an incredible history of distillation and perfumery with *Boswellia carterii*, especially in Grasse region of France. When we smell a beautiful perfume, we tend to relax our minds. This relaxation may calm the soul and remove the stress which may lead to anxiety.

BOSWELLIA SACRA

It is native to the Arabian Peninsula (Oman, Yemen). It is the same species as *carterii* only it grows in a different country. The trees look nothing like each other but the resin looks identical to each other. It can be used in drinking water to add aromatic fragrance to the water. It is also said to clean the air and kill bacteria that multiplies in the throat and stomach. In Oman, this type of superior frankincense is burned in churches, temples and mosques to add aromatic fragrance and holy a feel. Also, wealthy people burn this frankincense in their homes to provide a feeling of luxury, especially when receiving guests.



BOSWELLIA NEGLECTA

Aromatically, *Boswellia neglecta* has the warm, sweet amber notes of Frankincense, and the uplifting bronchia dilating freshness of sweet Balsam Fir trees.



It helps calm the mind and is conducive to meditation, clarity of thought and spiritual pursuits.

It dramatically reduces the feelings of anxiety and panic, the emotional distress, mental anguish and confusion and the physical knife-sharp pangs in the heart area one can experience with anxiety.

It eases the breath physically and emotionally, lifting feelings of heaviness and tightness from the chest.

Some, who suffer from Asthma, have found it alleviates the tightness, shortness of breath and the sense of panic that accompanies an asthma attack.

It can bring a feeling of deep calm, to mind, body and heart, and supports a deep and restful sleep.

B. Neglecta from Ethiopia is historically used as an

It dramatically reduces the feelings of anxiety and panic, the emotional distress, mental anguish and confusion...

incense, medicine and a source of fragrant essential oil for perfume and aromatherapy.

In common with the rest of the Frankincense family, is ruled astrologically by the Sun and has a strong affinity with the heart and chest, physically, emotionally and on an energetic level. Like the Sun, all types of frankincense are warming, anti-inflammatory, expand and brighten the perspective, and promote heightened feelings of spirituality and wellbeing. As my friend and mentor Dan Riegler would say, "It may be one of the best resins to use for anxiety and stress".

REFERENCES.:

Pictures and information taken with permission from Dan Riegler blog at <https://apothecarysgarden.com/>

Some info taken from <http://tisserandinstitute.org/frankincense-oil-and-cancer-in-perspective/>

Some info taken from <https://frankincense.info/2016/04/18/boswellia-carterii/>

Some info taken from <https://uk.lush.com/article/future-frankincense>

Some info taken from Ryan Bambricks blog at <https://frankincense.info/>

If you would like more educational information please visit the Facebook group I created called "Frankincense Resin//And All Tree Resins" - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/frankincenseresins/>

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Robin B. Kessler is a Certified Clinical Aromatherapist. She received her certification from Aromahead Institute and The School for Aromatic Studies, and continues to take courses in a wide variety of related subjects and is currently studying for her Advanced Graduate Certification. Robin consults professionally with (and prepares aromatherapy blends for) practitioners including medical doctors, acupuncturists and chiropractors. She gives seminars on aromatherapy safety topics, and is the lead Aromatherapist for the Stein Hospice Group, Compassus (Willington and Somerset, New Jersey locations) and Right At Home, where she works with seniors to help support them with a better quality of life. Robin is also available for private aromatherapy consulting (in person and by phone). She has written several articles which have been published in Aromaculture magazine and continues to give seminars and workshops on Aromatherapy and also on the usage of resins, especially Frankincense. She created two Facebook groups. One called Safe Essential Oil Recipes Only! and Frankincense Resins and Other Tree Resins. Both educational groups on the usage of essential oil and resins.