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AROMATHERAPY



Honeysuckle

One reason gardens have always drawn my attention is for their fragrance. I recall as a child smelling fragrant roses and flowers, then teaching my children about different scents as we browsed local nurseries, and now in my newest garden space being mindful of adding fragrance along with beauty. As a holistic nurse I have been drawn to the practice of aromatherapy for many years, teaching my students about this holistic health approach that can be an integral part of their practice of self-care, and encouraging them to get out into nature to explore fragrances.

Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils from plants (flowers, herbs, or trees) as a complementary health approach. According to the National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health, essential oils are most often used by inhaling them or by applying

a diluted form to the skin. It is important to note that all of these preparations are powerful, and education on preparing these oils is needed before exploring these applications. On a simpler level, one can capture the essence of aromatherapy simply by nurturing fragrant flowers, herbs and trees in your own garden space. I lived near Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA for over 20 years, and will always remember the fragrances of the different indoor and outdoor gardens as I would meander my way through each season, taking in the beauty of all that was there.

Many essential oils are used in aromatherapy, including those from Roman chamomile, geranium, lavender, tea tree, lemon, ginger, and cedar-wood. Interestingly, the part of the brain that processes odors is very close to the part that houses emotions and memories. When you sniff something you like, you tend to breathe more deeply, your blood pressure lowers and your heart rate slows—all of which relax you. I encourage aromatherapy as a means to improve your physical, mental, and spiritual health, and a wonderful way to share our love of gardens!



End of Season—Rose