

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIQUID COPAL (Essential Oils)

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In our Native American tradition, natural plant medicines have been used throughout history. The Native American term “copal” means the living essence of healing plants. The sacred liquid copals deserve serious study, for they have great potential for healing. Unfortunately, the public today is still largely unfamiliar with how to use traditional plants. The traditional healing plants are safe, comparatively inexpensive, practical to use, quick acting, and effective. The use of these plants to combat infections is adequately documented in medical and scientific literature. There is now sufficient clinical experience to show how plants can be effective for a wide range of health problems. Unfortunately, much of the research and medical literature on this topic is available only in other countries.

In France, for instance, many medical doctors use the liquid copals to fight common infections. The most common uses are for infections of the respiratory and digestive systems, the urinary tract, the reproductive organs, and the skin. The French are world leaders in the use of liquid copals for therapeutic purposes, and because it is considered normal, the liquid copals are covered by health insurance plans. French pharmacies also carry formulas consisting of liquid copals and herbal tinctures that are specifically made under a doctor’s prescription. Aromatherapy is taught in French colleges, universities, and medical schools. In the United States, traditional natural plants are commonly available but the medical doctors rarely use them in treatments.

The American public in general is unfamiliar with liquid copals and the possibilities of using them for healing purposes. There is comparatively little public or private funding available for natural health care research. In order to make better decisions, people should be informed about alternative treatments and what they can do to live a longer and healthier life. A freely informed public is in everyone’s best interest.

In the process of plant metabolism a liquid copal is created. They are synthesized by the plant’s chemistry and circulate through the stems, leaves, flowers, and roots. They contain the elements that make each plant unique – the scent and the intelligence of the plant. As you walk through a forest of pine trees you can easily smell their fragrance. Liquid copals are found in the skin of an orange, in the leaves of a peppermint plant, and in the petals of a rose flower. It is the liquid copals that give the plant its aroma and fragrance.

Liquid copals are “essential” for a plant’s survival. They are key components of plants’ immune systems. Scientists have observed that plants use their liquid copals for various reasons such as repelling unwanted insects, healing plant injuries, preventing water loss from foliage when the climate is hot or dry, and attracting bees and other insects that aid in pollination.

Liquid copals are stored by plants in resin ducts, hollow spaces, and cells. They can be found in various parts of the plant such as the leaves, stems, bark, needles, resin, flowers, fruits, and roots. With few exceptions, liquid copals are extracted from plant materials through steam distillation or cold pressing. When a plant is distilled, each has unique requirements in terms of how the plant should be handled. These include when to harvest, the time between harvesting and distillation, distillation equipment, temperature, pressure, and when to stop distillation in order to avoid exposing the copals to excessive heat, thus destroying vital constituents. Cold pressing is used to remove citrus liquid copals from the peel of citrus fruits such as grapefruit, orange, lemon, lime, and tangerine.

Thousands of tons of liquid copals are used each year by the flavor and fragrance industry. These liquid copals are inferior in quality to those we use in our traditional healing and therefore should not be used for that purpose.

Because of the limited amount of plants grown in the world each year, many commercial growers will use various methods to make it more profitable for them. Growers will use chemicals during the growing process and extreme heat, pressure, or chemical solvents to squeeze more liquid copals from the plants during distillation. These processes not only cut production time and reduce costs, but they also greatly compromise the quality of the liquid copals being produced. The result of such practices often diminishes or eliminates the life force. Many times the very small trace constituents that are lost are the ones important for healing. Dead liquid copals are avoided in our traditional healing. Dead liquid copals may still have a flavor or fragrance to satisfy the perfume and food industry, but they are not the quality liquid copals necessary for healing. In fact, this lower standard is very acceptable for flavoring or fragrance. Since the demand for unadulterated liquid copals comprises less than 5% of the market, it is the suppliers that buy the food and perfume grade liquid copals and sell them as “therapeutic” grade who are committing fraud.

Because quality liquid copals are expensive to produce, fraud is rampant in the industry. Liquid copals that say “100%” can mean as little as 10% of the pure liquid copals with the rest being a colorless, odorless petrochemical. This mixture is

considered acceptable in the retail trade. While some companies are conscientious about correctly labeling their products, others are not.

It is important to understand the term “aromatherapy grade” originated in England and is known to be the practice of massage with liquid copals. To the English, “aromatherapy grade” liquid copals consist of only 2 - 5 % pure liquid copals and 95 - 98% carrier oil. A food or fragrance grade of 2 - 5% can still meet the English requirement of “aromatherapy grade.” In America, many take the term “aromatherapy grade” to mean pure unadulterated quality liquid copals which may not be the case. This is another area where one will need to determine which English is being spoken-- American English or British English. You will soon recognize when the liquid copals are labeled “aromatherapy grade,” it is probably by definition adulterated and/or diluted.

Most users of liquid copals in Britain are horrified at the thought of applying pure, “neat” liquid copals to the body for fear of a toxic reaction. This may be because most British liquid copals are by-products of the food and fragrance industry and such liquid copals probably are toxic if used neat. Since in England only 2 – 5% liquid copals are used in their blends, no serious reactions are usually noted.

The term “Pure USP Grade Oil” refers to a set of standards for liquid copals set by the fragrance and food industries. These standards were set so that all batches of liquid copals will be as identical as possible for use in receipts and formulations. When a new crop of liquid copals come in, they add or subtract chemical constituents to make the new batch comply with the “USP Grade Oil” standards. These standards are intended for the fragrance and food industry and never for our traditional healing.

Some would argue that there are only minor differences between liquid copals and reconstituted liquid copals, but man can never reproduce the quality liquid copals that nature produces. There is more to liquid copals than just their aroma. For instance, throughout the world a pure synthetic methylsalcylate is labeled and sold as natural wintergreen or birch. The synthetic will never be able to duplicate the healing properties of the pure liquid copals of wintergreen or birch.

These counterfeit liquid copals are so skillfully compounded they are virtually impossible to detect even by the most sophisticated equipment. In the book What to do When Antibiotics Don’s Work! by Dirk Van Gils, it states that Dr. Herve Casabianca, director of the largest liquid copals testing laboratory in France, has come to the conclusion it is important to “know your grower, know your distiller, and know your supplier.” Dr. Casabianca says, “The chemists have become so clever that they can sometimes fool even the best of laboratories.”

God makes the sacred liquid copals. All we can do is extract them as lovingly as possible and find a producer who is willing to leave them untouched. God's gift of liquid copals can never be copyrighted, trademarked, or patented for profit. Every person has the right to experience true traditional liquid copals.

Traditional healing liquid copals are not usually sold in retail stores. It is believed over 90% of the "liquid copals" sold in the U.S. are fragrance or food grade and unsuitable for healing. Many books written on liquid copals are written by those with little or no experience with the traditional healing liquid copals. Their experiences and information may come from adulterated or synthetic liquid copals. The traditional healing liquid copals are very powerful and must be used with respect, in small amounts, and are best diluted in carrier oil when you first begin.

Liquid copals should always be purchased in protective dark glass bottles (blue bottles being the better choice) with airtight seals. The airtight seal prevents oxidation and keeps the volatile components of the liquid copals in the bottle, thereby retaining their traditional healing properties. The physical nature of liquid copals allows them to penetrate human tissue quickly. This is what gives the traditional healing its effectiveness.

The traditional healing liquid copals are wonderful to use, but we need to learn to respect them and their abilities. My favorite way to use the traditional liquid copals is on the bottom of my feet, my wrists, and my ears. This way I can benefit my whole body in a few quick applications.

Diffusing the liquid copals is another way to enjoy the benefits of their traditional healing aromatic influences. Diffusing not only removes dust particles from the air but also works as a great air filtration system. Until you purchased your diffuser, use a two ounce spray bottle, filled it with water, added ten drops of your favorite liquid copal, then shake and spray around the room. This is also good when traveling for use in hotel rooms and other lodgings, for keeping drivers alert, or for calming children. As you use the sacred traditional healing liquid copals, you may wonder how you ever tolerated the chemical substitutes.

As you use the liquid copals in their ceremonial traditional healing way, you will have your own experiences. Write about your experiences, explain how the liquid copals were used, and the benefits you experienced. This will prepare you to be able to share the Shahaptian Healing Way with others. You will find your knowledge will increase as you share. On the other hand, if you keep the knowledge and benefits to yourself you will lose this knowledge. The Shahaptian Healing Way

was given to us to share; therefore, we must be willing to assist others in their health quest.

As you use the liquid copals, you will find new applications to add to the list of benefits. You may find you did not notice the specific benefit mentioned for the liquid copals. This is okay because the sacred liquid copals seem to have a mind of their own and will adapt to the specific needs of the individual.

It is important to have respect for the ceremonial liquid copals. They are powerful and just a very small amount is all that is usually needed. If you use too many or too much, you may experience “flu like symptoms” as the liquid copals go to work in the traditional healing way to assist you to detoxify. If this is the case, drink plenty of water and stop using the liquid copals for a few days. Two tablespoons of the traditional powdered ginger in a bath may also assist in detoxifying.