



Essential scents

The right fragrance can lift the spirit and add zing to any winter day. And those made with essential oils, volatile oils derived from plants, give you much more to "ahhh" over. According to Laura Hittleman, corporate beauty services director for Canyon Ranch spas in Tucson, Arizona, and Lenox, Massachusetts,

"Scents made with essential oils can offer aromatherapy health benefits and are soothing alternatives for people who may be sensitive or allergic to synthetic ingredients." What's more, she says, essential oil-based perfumes, colognes, and spritzes can be more ecofriendly—particularly those made with certified organic ingredients.

For instant relaxation anywhere :: Aura Cacia Soothing Lavender Stick



According to Minneapolis-based aromatherapist Mindy Green, lavender is one of the best essential oils for beginners because it promotes relaxation and soothes minor skin irritations. This handy roll-on applicator contains lavender in a base of jojoba and coconut oils and can be used at home or on-the-go to promote instant calm.

For an extralong day :: EO Products Amma's Rose Perfumed Oil



Named for the humanitarian from India known as Amma who received the 2002 Gandhi-King Award for Nonviolence, this perfume is made with spicy sandalwood oil and soothingly sweet rose oil to promote balance and relaxation. A lasting and exotic combination, it will keep you smelling like a rose throughout your busy day.

For outdoor fun :: Weleda Citrus Body Oil



Whether playing or working outdoors, this refreshing blend of natural lemon and other essential oils adds zip to any activity. Blended with moisturizing almond oil, it can be applied directly to skin for a light and breezy scent.

For a romantic date :: Ecco Bella Bourbon Vanilla Eau de Parfum



The fruit of an orchid, the vanilla bean has been highly valued for centuries, both for its strong flavor and its reputation as an aphrodisiac. Ecco Bella's sweet parfum spray contains the complexity of real vanilla (instead of commonly used, less expensive derivatives) and can heighten a romantic mood by creating a sense-pleasing cloud just for two.

For a hectic day at the office :: Aura Cacia Ginger Mint Aromatherapy Mist



For busy times when energy and focus need to be maintained all day, this scent is a winner! It contains energizing peppermint and spearmint, warming spicy ginger, and uplifting lemon.

For men :: MyChelle Dermaceuticals Splash! Cologne



For men who want a fresh, pleasing scent with aromatherapy benefits, this cologne contains soothing chamomile, enticing vanilla, warm sandalwood, spicy patchouli, and just a hint of jasmine for a light, distinctly masculine scent.

—Adna Licht

Ginseng may protect brain cells

Huntington's, the genetic disease that erodes brain cells, affects 1 out of every 10,000 Americans.

But a recent laboratory study suggests that **concentrated forms of ginseng** may protect the brain from deterioration caused by Huntington's and other degenerative diseases (*Annals of Neurology*, 2005, vol. 57, no. 5). Rats induced with a chemical designed to mimic Huntington's were given a partial extract of whole ginseng, resulting in **significantly less loss of motor control**. Unlike whole ginseng, which contains both helpful and harmful elements, the partial extract contains only helpful ginsenosides, which act as antioxidants and **neutralize substances that can damage cells** and potentially lead to diseases like Huntington's and Parkinson's. Unfortunately, the only form of ginseng available to consumers now is whole root, says Janet Stringer, MD, an author of the study. Will partial ginseng extract have the same neuroprotective effects for humans? Stay tuned.

—Jill Altenhofen