



## Personal Care

# THE NOSE KNOWS

## *Scent-sational Opportunities*

### *in the Aromatherapy Aisle*

BY BRENDA PORTER

**T**he aromatherapy market features a variety of scents to stimulate the senses (and the skin) for a better frame of mind.

The \$2.7 billion home fragrance market encompasses essential oils to stimulate a number of healing aromatic attributes ranging from moisturizing, cleansing and hydrating skin to helping address more serious afflictions like depression, fatigue, low self-esteem, anxiety and stress.

According to research firm Packaged Facts, the market in general is being driven by "Innovative new scents and delivery systems, products that resemble decorative accessories, the lure of aro-

matherapy in an increasingly stressful world." SPINS', SPINSScan Natural database reports retail sales of \$31.3 million up more than 2.5 percent in the 52 weeks ending March 24, 2007.

**Tim Blakely, training brand manager for Frontier Natural Products' Aura Cacia brand, said consumers' purchases are also based on new information and research about the category and its benefits being distributed through the media and ultimately word of mouth.** "What we're going to

see is more accurate information from books, articles and research papers getting to retailers and then passing it along to consumers," said Blakely.

Dropwise Essentials' (San Francisco, CA) formulator and founder, Donya Fahmy added, "I think retailers would be wise to create a dedicated "aromatherapy" section or area — whether it's an end cap or display case or a separate stand-alone display. They can

arrange all their aromatherapy products, not just essential oils but products made with essential oils, and organize it in a way that customers can compare different aromatherapy products/brands."

Dropwise's catalog covers premium aromatherapy and



## THE ESSENCE OF IT ALL

**F**lower essences are a nice complement to any aromatherapy section as the two therapies can be used together. According to Jann Garity of the Flower Essence Society flower essences are "imprints of the original flowers."

Consumers' interest in this modality is peaked because "More and more people are understanding vibrational medicine," said Garity.

These imprints are derived from Dr. Edward Bach's original 38 plant and flower essences, said to correct emo-

tional difficulties — negative emotions are replaced with positive. The 38 essences are further divided into seven emotional groups.

Retailer training will also be of value. The Society, for instance, offers stores training by phone or in person—all free of charge from a staffer or a nearby practitioner.

For example, the *Flower Essence Repertory*, the definitive guide to flower essences is offered free to stores.

Manufacturers, like Nelson's, which manufactures the Bach line of Original Flower

Remedies, offers an, "Aggressive training program for retailers which includes online and in-store training, reference books, flip charts and more," explained Denise Eaton, retail relationship supervisor for Nelson's (Wilmington, MA) and Bach practitioner.

Similar to choosing the right aromatherapy oil, when customers' choose the right flower essence, the results are quite rewarding, Eaton said. "If they take the wrong flower nothing will happen; when they take the right one they will see the difference. They

need to put things into perspective first and make the right choices," Eaton explained.

To get customers' interested in the category, Nelson's offers sample packs for purchase of two of its most popular Bach remedies—Olive for Energy and Walnut for uplifting the mood. The four, single shot vials also come with a coupon to encourage a full purchase.

The company also recently launched Rescue Remedy, a combination of five of the original 38 essences (Impatiens, Star of Bethlehem, Cherry Plum, Rock Rose and Clematis) in a sugar and alcohol-free pastille — especially convenient for those who are sensitive to the alcohol base of the original spray, Eaton said. Also available is an eye dropper stock tincture and a cream.

natural, organic plant-based personal care products.

### What to Choose, When

"The decision can be overwhelming," cautioned Blakely. "First, consumers need to identify the benefit they are trying to achieve. Then choose a product." For example, Blakely said a customer may be looking for a scent to relax or an essential oil for joint pain. But how do they know if the room diffuser will suffice or the bath oil?

Aura Cacia senior brand manager, Mindy Sieffert offered, "One customer may be more inclined to take a relaxing bath while another may prefer a room diffuser. Don't be afraid to talk to the customer about their preference."

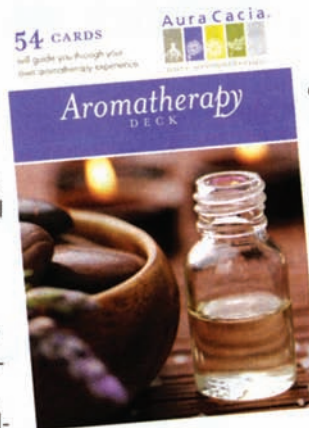
Added support can come from Aura Cacia's newly launched Aromatherapy Deck, which is similar to a card deck with three different types of cards. The collection of 54 artistically designed cards are designed to inform and educate consumers on essential oils and how to use aromatherapy to enhance their lives, the company says. The Aromatherapy Deck is divided into three

different types of cards—Essentials, Benefits and Formulations—that may be viewed in any order and provide a wide range of information on essential oils and their use in everyday aromatherapy applications.

"It's great for someone entering the world of aromatherapy," Sieffert said.

Fahmy suggested retailers create or add color to the section, making it as visually appealing as possible. "Photographic images of plants or lavender fields are also eye-catching. If done tastefully, this grabs the attention of shoppers. Many companies use colors as a way of branding different scents or aromatherapy blends within their lines so use the color schemes of the brands you carry as a starting point for ideas to build on," said Fahmy.

An educated retailer brings added sales to its department, experts said. Aura Cacia offers stores both online and in-store training to complement its wealth of brochures and training materials.



Fahmy advocated for consumer literature from multiple sources for customers to read while browsing, "Especially if staff is busy or not immediately available to answer questions, though engaging the customer will be far more effective than just giving them some literature to read."

Aromatherapy products tend to be more expensive, Fahmy said, but offer higher ROI.

"If at all possible, incentivize your staff to promote these products and make sure they receive whatever training is available or necessary for them to really understand how to sell the benefits and the value to the customer." **VR**

### **i** For More Information:

- Aura Cacia, (800) 669-3275
- Dropwise Essentials, (866) 418-1682
- Flower Essence Society, (800) 736-9222
- Nelson's/Bach Flower Remedies, (800) 319-9151