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## Aromatherapy: The Nose Knows

--by Linda F. Jarrett

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The nose is in the news. To create a mood, you create a scent. It started with aerosol sprays, moved to scented dried flowers and dyed wood chips, then to the more sophisticated freeze-dried flowers, fruits, nuts and berries. Now, decorators and consumers are discovering essential oils.

"Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils for all purposes, including household," says Cheryl Hoard, owner of Cheryl's Herbs in Brentwood, Mo. "By using these oils, you are not only creating a lovely atmosphere, but you are disinfecting the air and preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses. Many essential oils have antibacterial and antiviral properties."

Oils can be diffused into the air in many ways. According to Hoard, aromatherapy enthusiasts prefer the electric aromatherapy diffuser. "This method puts the fragrance in the air using no heat, which is the best for the oil. You get the best smell and retain more of the properties."

If you're not ready to invest in a diffuser, try a potpourri or simmer pot to start out in your experimentation with essential oils. To maximize dispersion of the aroma, put about 10 drops of oil in the water. You can also buy brass or porcelain candle rings that you fill with oil and put on a light bulb. The heating of the bulb releases the scent.

Following are some essential uses for essential oils.

- If you're having guests, use the spice or culinary oils, which stimulate appetite and aid digestion. Lavender, cardamom, caraway and spearmint are good choices.
- To prevent guests from getting too relaxed after dinner, rosemary and basil stimulate and provoke good conversation.

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