

# Quality is everything when using essential oils

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS Michael Balich's family has been gathering wild lavender from the remote windswept coastlines of Croatia to produce one of the world's finest organic lavender oils on the market. Proud of his ancestral tradition and keen to spread the word about the benefits of organic oils over lesser quality essential oils, Balich started *Mediterrana Oils* in Perth four years ago and now produces twenty four varieties of oils—all perfectly pure and truly organic.

The herbs Balich uses for his oils are grown in their natural environment on an island in the Adriatic sea, hand-picked and transported by donkey to a central distillery where they are processed using the single steam distillation method with woodfires and rain water. Before packaging the product in Australia, each batch of oil is tested by Dr Lyall Williams at the Chemistry Department at Macquarie University in NSW. Dr Williams has personally endorsed *Mediterrana Oils* as 100% chemical and pesticide free.

So what's so important about using chemical-free oils? According to Dr Williams, plants for the commercial production of essential oils are commonly grown as monocultures and invariably attract pests and diseases which are controlled by pesticides or fungicides. "If these chemicals are carried over with the essential oil during the steam distillation step, eventually they may be transported during the aromatherapy massage into the fatty tissues of the body," he said.

Balich says many aromatherapists confront problems in their practice when they use adulterated oils (oils that are blended with additives or those made from non-organic plants). "Poisons can cause problems on the skin," he claims, "even in minute

doses such as pesticide residues in some commercial oils. I had a lady recently who had developed a rash on her skin from using a particular essential oil. She wanted to know if she was allergic to it or if she should be using another kind. I gave her the same essence of one of our organic oils to try out and her skin rash disappeared in a few days."

Balich regularly visits the Adriatic region where the herbs are grown for his oils to monitor stock quality and says he is able to tell which region a particular oil comes from by looking at its ingredients list. Through conducting research he can further assess slight variations in ingredients each year depending on weather conditions. Where most commercial companies will artificially adjust these levels of ingredients to maintain uniformity, Balich argues that the oils are then no longer pure and prefers to leave his unadulterated.

He says his unique place in a competitive market is his commitment to purity and that his oils are selling extremely well both here in Australia and overseas.



## AROMATHERAPY

GUARANTEE 100% PURE ORGANIC ESSENTIAL OILS



The importance of using quality essential oils in aromatherapy can not be overemphasised. The power of aromatherapy lies in its ability to aid healing physically, emotionally and mentally, and this will only be achieved when employing the essential goodness of nature, and not an imitation.