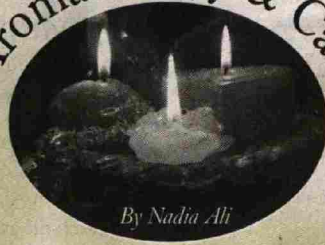


Aromatherapy & Cats



When you think of aromatherapy, it conjures up the smell of aromatic breezes wafting through the air, via the warm ambience of soft-lit candles.

The homey scent of cinnamon, lavender or even refreshing pine come to mind.

We are familiar with the practices of aromatherapy for humans, but is it beneficial to our feline friends?

Founded thousands of years ago by the Chinese, aromatherapy is the practice of using plant and essential oils that are inhaled to offer psychological and physical benefits.

Some practitioners are even suggesting it as a cure for ailments in cats.

Tick or flea control, anxiety or stress, loneliness, grief, mange are instances when aromatherapy offers a gentler alternative than trying to pry open a cat's mouth to give a tablet.

However, cat owners should discuss aromatherapy with their cat's veterinarian and the American Veterinary Medical Association is not convinced that a drop of essential oil rubbed directly on a cat's paw or stomach area works.

In fact, the association states it can be harmful and even life threatening to cats.

According to Dr. Gloria Dodd, DVM of Everglo-Natural Veterinary Services she says, "Cats have very few detoxing enzymes in the liver (less than man or dogs) therefore, many, many chemicals (including essential oils and aromatherapy) can be toxic to cats."

Furthermore, essential oils applied to a cats' skin, taken internally, or simply inhaled, can trigger irregular behavior in cats causing them to be clumsy, uncoordinated, vomit or dazed.

Potentially toxic essential oils to cats are: Birch, Cinnamon Bark, Clove, Fir, Lavender, Lemon, Lime, Melaleuca, Oregano, Pine, Tea Tree, Thyme and Wintergreen.

Therefore ONLY buy and use aromatherapy oil products from a reputable holistic veterinarian.

A safer, diluted product available for purchase is hydrosols or hydrolats or floral waters which are a by-product of the essential oil production.

Hydrosols can be tolerated by cats, some veterinarian's say, as they are delicately scented and are spritzed into the air not directly at or onto the cat. They are gentle and are considered a reasonably safe method of treating emotional imbalances or stress-related symptoms in felines.

They come in many varieties such as: Rose, Neroli,

Rosemary, Roman Chamomile, Linden, Myrtle, Lavender, Geranium and Bay Laurel.

According to Dr. Stefanie Schwartz, "It is always best to seek the advice of a veterinarian who is trained to advise pet owners about alternative treatments. The

Veterinary Botanical Medical Association and the Veterinary Holistic Association are good places

to start."

Today, you can buy aromatherapy products for cats straight from the pet shop shelf such as:

- Aromacat Products
- Feliway – stop unwanted spraying
- Rescue Remedy
- Pet Essences
- Ever-Glo Natural

Again, even if you buy an aromatherapy product off the shelf, make sure you know where it came from and how to use it.

Even though there is a growing trend to utilize more natural products including essential oils for aromatic benefit, there is a mixed reaction to aromatherapy and cats.

Be sure to check the comprehensive list of holistic veterinaries provided at the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association to ensure the safety of your cat's health.

Other sources of information:

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association
 2218 Old Emmorton Road
 Bel Air, MD 21015
 410-569-0795, www.ahvma.org
 E-mail: office@ahvma.org

Veterinary Botanical Medicine Association
 1785 Poplar Dr.
 Kennesaw, GA 30144
<http://vbmasw.web.aplus.net>
 E-mail: office@vbma.org

Books:

- "Psychoactive Herbs in Veterinary Behavior Medicine" by Dr. Stefanie Schwartz
- "Holistic Aromatherapy for Animals" by Kristen Leigh Bell
- "The New Natural Cat" by Anitra Frazier
- "Veterinary Aromatherapy" by Nelly Grosjean 🐾

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