

Making a perfume

BY MARIE ZANCANARO

There is nothing on earth more heady and romantic than the smell of fresh roses and flowers. This fragrance can be saved for the cold winter months by making your own perfume oil, or absolute. The process is simple and most of what is needed can be found around the house.

For making perfume oil you will need a clean quart canning jar, a large unused (new) cellulose sponge and oil for the base. The oil can be a light vegetable oil such as sweet almond oil; you may also use safflower oil or any oil that does not have too strong a smell. Soak the sponge in the oil, bend it in half and put it in the bottom of the jar, with enough tension so it will stay put if you turn the jar upside down.

Now you are ready to add your flowers. The fragrant part of flowers are the essential oils. Because these volatile oils evaporate in the heat, you will want to pick your flowers early in the morning before the sun hits the plant. Then remove leaves and stems, any bugs and then place the flowers in the jar.

Put a lid on the jar and turn it bottom up. Place the jar in a warm place for a few days. Replace the flowers with fresh flowers every few days. Repeat this process until the sponge smells like perfume. The process may take a few dozen repeats but the result is a wonderful rose or flower oil at a fraction of the commercial price.

When you are done wring out the sponge and save your oil in a perfume bottle or jar. The oil produced this way is called an effleurage.

Another way to produce perfume oil is to use lard. Soften the lard and put a thick coating on the inside of a canning jar. As with the perfume oil place your fresh flowers in the jar every few days. When the lard smells like flowers remove any plant material and add a small amount of high-proof vodka (about 1/8 cup).

Next put a lid on the jar and heat the jar in a hot water bath on low heat very slowly as you just want the lard to melt. Once the mixture is melted, shake the jar to mix the vodka and lard. Pour the mixture into a small bowl and put it in the fridge or freezer. When the lard hardens remove it. The remaining liquid becomes your perfume.

Now that you have your perfume you will want to "fix" the scent so it will stay strong for a long time to come. This can be done by adding a Balm of Gilead bud, which is a bud from a poplar tree. If you use a bud from your own back yard be sure it is quite dry so it will not mold in your perfume.

For an added bonus don't throw away the lard. You can use it to make rose-scented butter cookies or biscotti!

Another way to extract scents like woody flavors or spices for cooking or baking is to chop the plant, wood or spice and mix it into the melted lard. Let cool and set for a few days, then reheat the lard and strain out the plant material. Continue with the process until you get the strong flavor desired.

If you are vegan, don't despair, you can also use vegetable shortening. The result won't be quite as strong but it will work.

Congratulations!! You have made your own perfume.

Marie Zancanaro • 541-476-5588



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Applegate's own Greeley Wells, author of "The Starry Side" column in the *Applegater*, will share his enthusiasm and knowledge about constellations, stars, planets and a beautiful sunset. Special guest Chris Beekman will bring two Dobsonian telescopes he's made and we'll have a close look at some wonderful things in the sky.

The special attraction this night, along with a beautiful sunset, will be a very brilliant Venus and above her the crescent moon and above her Mars, all early in the western dusk and setting fast. A little later Jupiter will rise over the hills in the east at it's absolute brightest. Jupiter is at a rare 12-year closeness to us. The last time it was this close to the earth was 1963 and the next time will be 2022! She'll be up all night for us.

Please leave chairs and flashlights at home, but bring blankets, a small pillow and jackets, for a cool but comfortable reclining view of the heavens. How about some snacks too, especially for the kids?

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