

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to make essential oils from the garden:

Essential oils are all the craze right now, and many people are using them for their relaxing benefits. Many people buy their essential oils from the store or online, but another way to obtain essential oils is to make them from your own garden. In essence, essential oils are volatile oils you can extract from a plant.

How to extract oil:

The most common way to extract the oils from the plants you want to turn into essential oils is by steam distillation. To steam distill an herb to make an essential oil, you must simmer the plant to create a steam, and then the steam travels through a tube, which is then run under cold water. Liquid will form from the condensation and create two parts, a water compound and an oil compound. The water compound can be used as floral waters, like rose water and lavender water. The oil that rises to the top is what can be used as an essential oil. The steam distillation process is typically done with a still. Usually, stills cost several hundred dollars.

How to make essential oils without a still:

For those who truly like DIY projects, you can make essential oils without a still if you have a crock pot, a lid, distilled water and at least 3 to 4 cups of chopped plant material, depending on what scent you want your essential oil to be. Place the plant in the crock pot and cover it with water. Put the lid on upside down. Turn the crock pot on high, and then turn it to low once the water is hot. Simmer the lid upside down. Turn the crock pot on high, and then turn it low once the water is hot. Simmer on low for about 4



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hours. Then, turn off the crock pot and let it cool. When it cools, place the inside of the crock pot in the refrigerator. The next day, a thin film will have formed on the top of the mixture. This is the essential oil. Lift the oil off the top and put in a bottle with a cap. Make sure to label it well. Do not store in an area with light or heat. The only downfall to making your own essential oil is it may not be as strong as the ones you purchase from the store, so you may need to use more to get a similar effect.

Tips to keep in mind:

Whenever you make your own essential oils at home, always use fresh plant material so you get the best results, since fresh plants produce more oils than those that are dried. Three to four cups of plant material, one batch, only makes a few teaspoons of essential oils. Chop the plants prior to placing them in the crock pot so it allows more oil to escape from the leaves. Always use distilled water instead of tap water to prevent bacteria from getting into your oils.



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