



Naartjie (*Citrus reticulata*) Essential Oil – Benefits and Uses

Naartjie essential oil (also known as mandarin or tangerine oil) is cold-pressed from the peel of the naartjie fruit (*Citrus reticulata*), a popular citrus in South Africa. It has a sweet, fresh, tangy citrus aroma with subtle floral undertones—milder and gentler than many other citrus oils. It is considered one of the safest and gentlest citrus essential oils, making it especially suitable for families, children (with proper dilution), and sensitive users.

There are three main varieties based on ripeness at harvest:

- **Green mandarin:** Tangy, fruity, floral—often considered the gentlest.
- **Yellow mandarin:** Balanced, bright, semi-sweet.
- **Red mandarin:** Sweet, mellow, calming—most popular for aromatherapy.

Key Chemical Components

- **Limonene** (65–95%): Antioxidant, uplifting, cleansing, antimicrobial.
- **γ -Terpinene:** Antioxidant, antimicrobial.
- **Myrcene:** Calming, anti-inflammatory.
- **α -Pinene:** Supports respiratory health.
- **Linalool:** Relaxing, skin-soothing.
- **Citral** (small amounts) and other aldehydes, flavonoids, esters.

These compounds support the oil's antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and calming properties.

Therapeutic Benefits

Emotional & Mental Well-Being Naartjie oil is renowned for its calming yet uplifting effects. It helps reduce stress, anxiety, nervous tension, irritability, and mild depression. Its cheering aroma promotes emotional balance, optimism, and relaxation. It is particularly useful for restlessness, emotional distress, and calming tantrums in children.

Sleep Support Its mild sedative properties calm an overactive mind, promote restful sleep, and support bedtime routines for adults and children. It influences brain waves and may increase sleep duration and quality (based on studies with related citrus oils).

Mood Uplift The bright, sweet scent combats fatigue, refreshes mental outlook, and counters pessimism—ideal during stressful or emotionally exhausting periods.

Digestive Support Acts as a digestive tonic with mild antispasmodic effects. It helps relieve indigestion, bloating, gas, stomach upset, dyspepsia, gastritis, constipation, and IBS-like symptoms when massaged (diluted) onto the abdomen.

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Skin Health

- Antioxidant and free-radical fighting (supports collagen, healthy ageing, and protection from environmental damage).
- Brightens dull skin, improves tone, balances sebum, and benefits oily or acne-prone skin.
- Soothes sensitive skin, reduces appearance of scars, stretch marks, cellulite, and wrinkles.
- Antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties help with blemishes, redness, and minor wounds.
- Purifying for scalp and hair—adds shine and soothes irritation.

Other Benefits

- Mild pain relief and anti-inflammatory effects (e.g., muscle soreness, headaches, cramps).
- Supports circulation, skin regeneration, immune function, and respiratory comfort (eases congestion when inhaled).
- Natural air purifier and deodoriser with antimicrobial action against certain bacteria and fungi.
- May help with fluid retention and mild liver stimulation (traditional use).

Note: Many benefits stem from traditional aromatherapy use and studies on citrus oils/limonene. Essential oils are not a substitute for medical treatment—consult a healthcare professional for therapeutic claims.

Common Uses

- **Diffusion/Aromatherapy:** 3–6 drops in a diffuser for stress relief, mood uplift, sleep, air freshening, or creating a cheerful atmosphere. Great for bedrooms or living spaces.
- **Massage:** Dilute 2–3 drops per 10 mL carrier oil (e.g., jojoba, coconut, almond). Use on abdomen for digestion, or on body for relaxation, stretch marks, cellulite, or muscle relief.
- **Skincare:** Add to creams, lotions, serums, facial oils, or cleansers (properly diluted). Suitable for brightening, acne, or anti-ageing routines.
- **Bath:** 3–5 (up to 5–10) drops mixed with carrier oil, unscented soap, or bath salts. Never add undiluted.
- **Household:** Add to natural cleaners, surface sprays, linen sprays, or room fresheners for antibacterial and purifying action.
- **Other:** In homemade perfumes, hair care, or (food-grade only) a few drops in mocktails/smoothies.

Blends Well With

- **Citrus:** Lemon, lime, sweet orange, bergamot, grapefruit.
- **Floral:** Lavender, geranium, neroli, ylang ylang, jasmine.
- **Woody:** Cedarwood, sandalwood, frankincense, cypress.
- **Herbal:** Clary sage, rosemary, marjoram, basil.
- **Spice:** Ginger, cardamom, black pepper (cinnamon in small amounts).

Excellent bedtime blends: lavender, chamomile, cedarwood, or frankincense.

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Safety and Precautions

- **Dilution:** Always dilute—0.5–2% for adults (lower for children); 1% for face, 2–3% for body.
- **Patch Test:** Test on a small area (e.g., inner elbow) for 24 hours.
- **Photosensitivity:** Low risk compared to other citrus oils (very low furanocoumarins), but as a precaution, avoid direct sunlight/UV on applied skin for 12–24 hours.
- **General:** Not for internal use unless under professional guidance and food-grade. Avoid eyes, mucous membranes, and broken skin. Keep out of reach of children.
- **Special Populations:** Consult a doctor or qualified aromatherapist if pregnant (generally okay after 4 months, diluted), breastfeeding, using on children under 6, or with medical conditions.
- **Storage:** Cool, dark place to prevent oxidation.
- **Pets:** Check safety for your animals before diffusing.

Naartjie essential oil is a versatile, gentle addition to wellness routines—ideal for relaxation, sleep, gentle skincare, digestion, and natural cleaning.

When used with proper dilution and common sense, it brings a cheerful, calming citrus freshness to aromatherapy, self-care, and home environments. For personalized advice, consult a qualified professional.

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