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**Subject:** Tea Tree and Cajeput Oil

## Steven Horne's Newsletter

Natural News and Herbal Views



In the late 1980s, I had a neighbor who was a medical doctor. Our kids played together so we had some opportunities to get to know each other. One day he remarked to me that people were better off not putting antiseptics on wounds because the antiseptics killed not only microbes but the body's own tissues, causing the wound to heal more slowly. He was speaking of substances like iodine and mercurochrome, which was a popular topical antiseptic for minor injuries back then that has since been banned by the FDA.

I replied that there were antiseptics you could apply to wounds that would not only prevent infection but would speed healing. I was speaking of tea tree oil, which I had already been using for many years, although there are plenty of other oils that have these effects. He was surprised and wasn't even sure that was possible. I don't know if he ever investigated my claim more deeply, but there's plenty of evidence that essential oils like tea tree oil can do just that.

# About Tea Tree and Cajeput

Tea trees belong to the *Melaleuca* genus and there are a number of different species that are used to produce essential oils, which are sold as melaleuca, tea tree, or cajeput oil. The leaves of these trees, which are native to Australia, were traditionally used by aboriginal people to heal cuts, wounds, and skin infections. They also crushed the leaves to inhale the vapors for respiratory congestion and headaches.



Most tea tree oil comes from *Melaleuca alternifolia*, although other species have been used, and cajeput comes from *M. cajeputi*. Since they're closely related both botanically and therapeutically, I'm going to talk about both in this article.

## Topical Application



Kids can get a lot of minor injuries growing up and I routinely applied tea tree oil to burns, cuts, abrasions, and other minor injuries. It's not analgesic, but it also doesn't sting like alcohol or some other topical antiseptics do. It's non-irritating and nontoxic for topical

application. Oils from *Melaleuca* trees are also cicatrizant, which means they help heal wounds without scarring. Many other essential oils have this property and seem to increase the speed at which the injury heals, as well as helping it to heal without forming a scar. I don't think that's a quality that is duplicated by any chemical drug.

Besides minor injuries, the oil can be applied topically to help treat acne, warts, ringworm, insect bites, and fungal infections like athlete's foot and toenail fungus. So besides being antibacterial, I also find the oil to be a very good antifungal agent. It also appears to help stimulate the immune system.

Although you can apply it neat (undiluted) to injuries, for larger skin surfaces (like acne) you should probably dilute it with a carrier oil at a rate of about 1:5 because the skin can become sensitive to it when it is applied multiple times and some people report skin irritation with it (although I haven't experienced this).

## Other Uses for Melaleuca Oils

Both cajeput and tea tree can be inhaled to ease respiratory congestion. They have a vaporous, penetrating quality also found in eucalyptus and pine, which helps open up congested airways. Of course, they also help the body fight any infection present in the lungs and sinuses. The oils also help "clear the head" when your thinking is cloudy or foggy and you need to wake up your mind to feel more focused and alert.



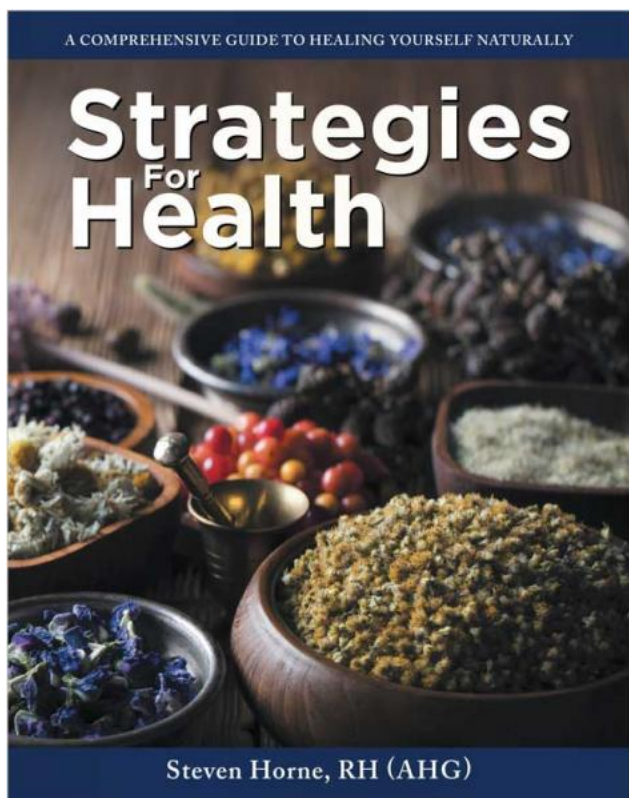
I've also used both tea tree and cajeput internally. However, for internal use I prefer cajeput. It's a little more camphoric and less heating for internal use. Internally, the oils are helpful for fungal infections, such as thrush and candida, and for intestinal parasites or amoebic dysentery.

It's very important to dilute the oil properly when using it internally and to only use it for short periods of time, no more than two or three weeks. You can add 1-2 drops of oil to a spoonful of olive oil or honey and take this once or twice a day.

For fungal infections, I typically use a formula I got from Carl Robinson when one of my children had thrush. I've used it many times since then and found it very effective. It consists of 4 drops of cajeput oil, 3 drops of lavender oil, 2 drops of thyme oil, and one drop of lemon oil. You dilute this in olive oil at a rate of 1:20 for adults and 1:40 for children (that is 1 drop of the essential oil blend mixed with either 20 drops or 40 drops of olive oil). The dose of the diluted mixture is 1 drop for children or 2 drops for adults twice daily for one week. It can also be applied topically.

I always keep some tea tree oil in my first aid kit along with a topical analgesic blend like Tei Fu, Tiger Balm, or White Flower, the former to fight infection and the latter to ease pain. However, be aware that tea tree oil degrades when

exposed to light and heat so it needs to be kept in an amber bottle and away from sunlight in a dark, cool place.



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