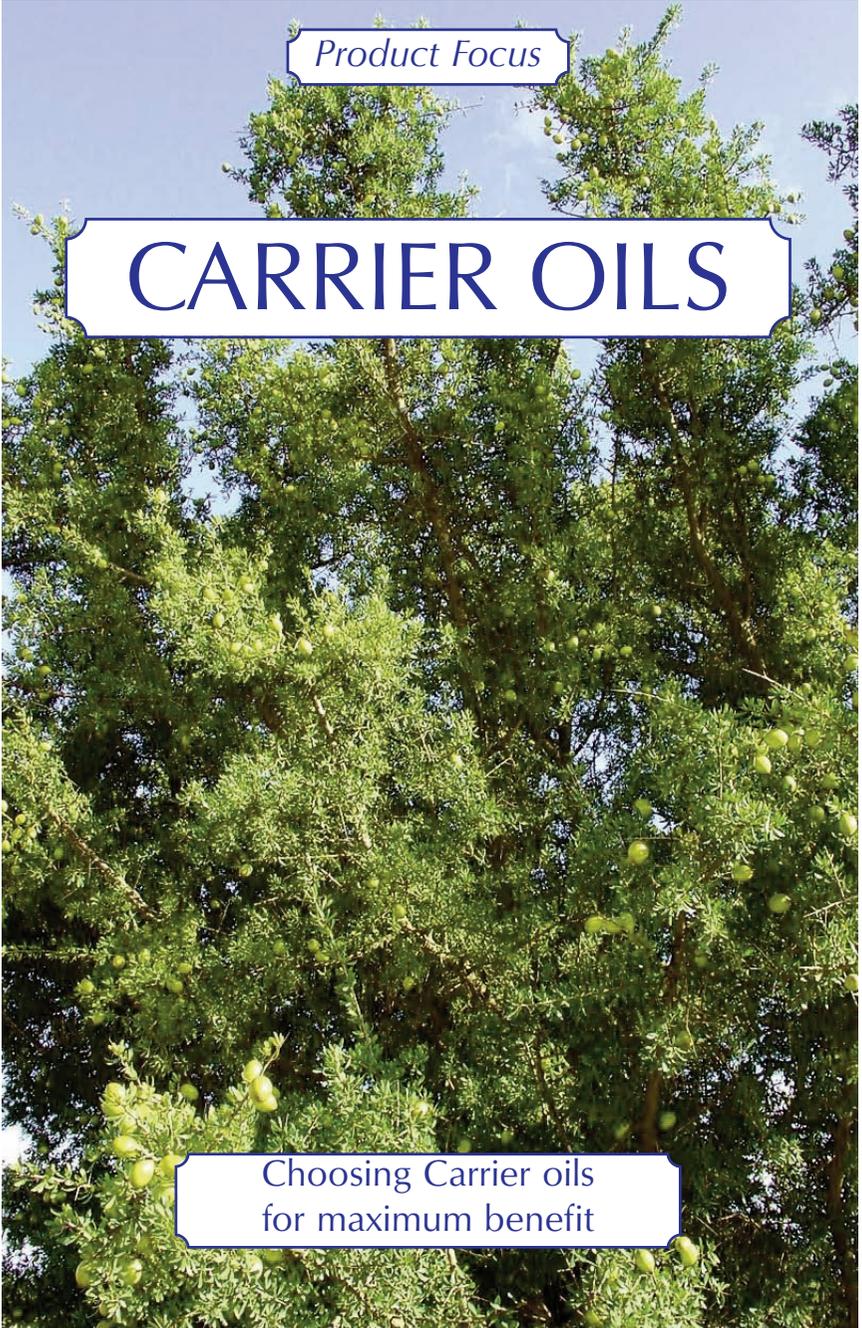


*Product Focus*

# CARRIER OILS

Choosing Carrier oils  
for maximum benefit



# Carrier Oils

Choosing the correct carrier oil (or blend of carrier oils) is a satisfying and important aspect of aromatherapy massage — and a sometimes under-rated one. Carrier oils can be seen almost as a minor adjunct to the ‘main benefit’ provided by the essential oils, but in fact their correct and thoughtful use can add a significant additional dimension to the benefit of the treatment.

Ayur Veda, the world’s oldest system of health care, recommends that everyone should perform a daily self massage with a warm vegetable oil. This is said to help balance the physiology, and prevent all manner of ailments. (To convince yourself of this, why not try self massage with warmed sesame oil first thing in the morning for a couple of days? Brilliant for anyone who suffers from cold hands and feet.)



Carrier oils (also known as base oils, fixed oils, etc) are of vegetable origin and are often derived from the nut or seed of the plant. This is the part that goes to structure the next generation, so it is brimming with concentrated energy and life force.

Vegetable oils contain vitamins and minerals and are largely composed of fatty acids, which play a key role in human physiological function. They are an important source of energy, and are also a component in the building and maintenance of healthy cells.

Many vegetable oils contain a particular group of fatty acids known as essential fatty acids (EFAs), so called because they cannot be produced by the body yet are a requirement for life and health. Deficiency of EFAs can lead to a number of ailments, including dry and flaky skin, and raised cholesterol.

Oils that are particularly high in essential fatty acids include pumpkin seed, rose hip seed, hemp, and borage. All are extremely healing and are used by the body to synthesize important compounds known as prostaglandins, which are components of many vital processes.



Remember that these vegetable oils are largely composed of mono- or poly-unsaturated fats. This means that they are more reactive and so more easily utilised by the body, but it also means that they react more quickly with oxygen, and will tend to have a shorter shelf life.

Many oils that you can buy in supermarkets have been through the process of refining, which involves a range of chemical and physical processes to increase shelf life and yield, but this destroys many of the nutrients. For therapeutic use always use cold-pressed oils.



Try using different oils according to skin types, conditions and parts of the body. Try creating your own carrier oil blends, such as wheatgerm, sunflower, sesame and hazel; or when treating particularly dry skin, add 10% of avocado to sweet almond. For facial blends you will only need a few drops, so try rose hip seed, borage, or evening primrose.

Oshadhi supplies 30 different types of carrier oils, many with organic and non-organic cultivation. Most are available at 30ml sizes, and all are cold-pressed and suitable for massage use. Some are listed on the next two pages. (Please [download our practitioners' catalogue](#) or website for the full collection.)

# Some favourite Carrier Oils

(The links below are clickable...)

## **Apricot Kernel** – *Prunus armeniaca*

A light, soft oil wonderful for facial blends, where it works well in conjunction with richer oils. It can be used on mature, dry or inflamed / sun-damaged skin. Blends beautifully with Jojoba and/or Rosa Rubiginosa to create a luxurious and therapeutic facial massage blend.



**Argan fruits**

## **Walnut** – *Juglans nigra*

An excellent emollient with good moisturising properties for dry or ageing skin. It is well absorbed, high in linoleic acid and helps to regenerate, tone and moisturize damaged or dry skin. Also a good 'balancing' oil.



**Aloe vera**

## **Sweet Almond** – *Prunus amygdalus*

A superb general purpose massage oil, probably the mainstay of aromatherapists around the world. Light, with good slip-page and moderate absorption, this is a soothing and versatile oil, good for dry skin.

## **Sesame** – *Sesamum indicum*

One of the most important oils in ayurveda, sesame is antibacterial and antiviral, a potent antioxidant and a natural anti-inflammatory agent. It makes a wonderful massage oil, but can be thick at room temperature, so warm it as much as is comfortable before applying. Used only cold pressed oil which has a nutty brown colour, not the supermarket variety.



**Borage flowers**

## **Sunflower** – *Helianthus annuus*

Rich in the essential fatty acid linoleic acid, as well as palmitic acid and stearic acid, all components of healthy skin, sunflower is a light, non-greasy oil. It resembles human sebum, and is a good base for diluting more expensive oils.



**Olive**

## **Grapeseed** – *Vitis vinifera*

The vast majority of the grapeseed oil on the market is refined and so provides slippage but little therapeutic value. Because of low yields, cold pressed grapeseed is hard to obtain, and more costly, but it can be used where there are nut allergies. It has excellent emollient properties, making the skin feel supple and smooth, and contains linoleic acid.

## **Avocado** – *Persea americana*

A wonderful skin soother, easily absorbed, and useful for problem skin (particularly dry skin and its associated symptoms). The oil is rather thick, and has a distinctive (though not unpleasant) aroma, so best blended with other oils. Also, it is green, and may mark sheets and clothing.



**Rosa Rubiginosa fruits**

(The links below are clickable...)



**Grape**

**Rose Hip Seed** – *Rosa rubiginosa*

The ‘fountain of youth’ as it is known in South America is now well-researched for its regenerative qualities. Rich in linolenic acid and alpha-linolenic, vital for skin regeneration. Reduces scar formation, wrinkles, stretch marks, and gives resilience and smoothness to the skin.

**Evening Primrose** – *Oenothera biennis*

Rich in the vital GLA (gamma linoleic acid), required for cell membranes. Helps re-establish skin elasticity, and known for its nourishing qualities for dry devitalised skin. Add a few drops to a facial blend, or apply topically.



**Coconut**

**Sea Buckthorn** – *Hippophae rhamnoides*

The golden fruits are brimming with important skin-nourishing compounds, including vitamins C and E, flavonoids similar to those found in Ginkgo, and essential fatty acids (omega-9, -7, -6, -3). Add a small amount to a facial blend, or use for topical application on damaged skin.



**Walnut**

**Borage** – *Borago officinalis*

Also known as starflower, Borage grows happily throughout Europe. The oil is wonderfully high in GLA, and can be valuable for denourished or prematurely ageing skin. A precious addition to any facial blend.

**Jojoba** – *Simmondsia chinensis*

An evergreen desert shrub, containing a precious wax that does not congeal at room temperature. Contains fatty acid esters, proteins, and minerals vital for the protection and nourishing of the collagen. Penetrates easily and therefore an excellent carrier for essential oils. Provides some protection against UV rays, and good for sebum control.



**Sunflower**

**Aloe Vera** – *Aloe vera*

Many ancient peoples enjoyed skin care with Aloe Vera. The juice contains enzymes, hormones, glucose, saponins, iron, calcium, zinc and manganese as well as many other highly useful substances. A great carrier.



**Poppy**

**Argan** – *Argania spinosa*

A pure natural skin food, rich in vitamin E and anti-oxidants that protect and repair damaged or mature skin, argan can be used for nourishing facial massage or as a night oil. It blends well with rose hip seed oil for stretch marks and scarring. It protects the skin in cold weather.