

Making Your Own Essential Oils

Story of Scent Cell Phone Tour at The Frelinghuysen Arboretum

You too can capture the fragrance of flowers by extracting their essential oils!

When using roses for culinary purposes, it is important to use roses that have never been sprayed with a pesticide. The smell and taste of each type of rose can vary, so it is suggested that you taste each cultivar.

THINGS YOU'LL NEED

4 cups fresh flower petals, firmly packed
Plastic bags
Rolling pin
Glass quart jar with tight-fitting lid
Grape seed or olive oil
Coffee filters
Funnel
Small glass jars
Masking tape

STEP 1

On a sunny morning pick fresh flowers. If there's not a plentiful supply of fully open blooms at the moment, select half-opened flowers and plan to gather more as they mature over the next 2-3 days.

STEP 2

Place the flowers in a glass of water and refrigerate them immediately. Misting them with cold water a couple of times each day will prolong their freshness.

STEP 3

Cut or pull the petals from fully opened flower heads. Work as quickly as you can to prevent the loss of fragrance. Press the petals into a measuring cup, then empty them into a plastic bag.

STEP 4

Squeeze the air out of the bag and lay it flat on your working surface. Run a rolling pin over the bag a few times. Press firmly to bruise the petals well. They should look battered, but not torn and messy.

STEP 5

Pour the flower petals into a glass quart jar. Add 1 cup of grape seed or olive oil and cap the jar tightly. Set it in a warm, sunny windowsill for about 48 hours. Shake it vigorously two or three times each day.

STEP 6

Strain the liquid through several coffee filters. Pour the fragrance oil back into the jar and discard the coffee filter and solid materials.

STEP 7

Repeat the process three more times, using up the rest of the flower petals.

STEP 8

Cover some small glass jars with masking tape. Write the date and description of the contents on the jars, and funnel the floral essential fragrance oil into them. Put the lids on tightly and store in a dark, cool spot for up to a year.