
**Essential oils — Principles of
nomenclature**

Huiles essentielles — Principes de nomenclature

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 54, *Essential oils*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 3218:1976), which has been technically revised.

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Essential oils — Principles of nomenclature

1 Scope

This International Standard lays down the principles to be adopted for designating essential oils in English and French, e.g. for the labelling and/or the marking.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 4720, *Essential oils — Nomenclature*

3 Principles

3.1 Unless stated otherwise, the principles set out below are applicable in both English and French. In each example, the English term is given first and is followed by the corresponding French term in brackets.

The name of the essential oil shall be sufficiently clear and unequivocal so that there is no risk of confusion regarding:

- the botanical origin of the plant;
- the part of the plant used;
- its phenological stage;
- the processing operations, if any, prior to obtaining the essential oil (predrying, fermentation, etc.);
- the method of obtaining the essential oil.

These remarks only concern the name of the essential oil. The correct botanical name of the species and if necessary, of the plant variety, as well as the details relating to the origin and the method of production of the essential oil are given in the corresponding international standards, in the Scope and Terms and definitions clauses.

As far as the botanical name is concerned, refer to ISO 4720.

3.2 In order to distinguish essential oils from fatty oils, the expression “Essential oil of ... [Huile essentielle de ...]” shall be used to describe the former.

NOTE ISO/TC 54 decided to adopt the terminology “Essential oil of ...” instead of “Oil of ...” for all the international standards published by the committee. This change will be introduced progressively when reviewing the international standards and for all new drafts.

3.3 The words “Essential oil of... [Huile essentielle de ...]” will be followed by the commonly accepted common name of the plant and plant part if several plant parts may deliver essential oils (see also [3.7](#)).

EXAMPLE 1 Essential oil of lavender [Huile essentielle de lavande].

EXAMPLE 2 Essential oil of parsley fruits [Huile essentielle de fruits de persil].

3.4 The complete usual botanical name will be used (names of genus and species) when no common name exists.

3.5 Interspecific hybrids will be designated in the text by the common name and according to the botanical nomenclature rules in force.

EXAMPLE Essential oil of lavandin Grosso (*Lavandula angustifolia* Mill. x *Lavandula latifolia* Medik.) [Huile essentielle de lavandin Grosso (*Lavandula angustifolia* Mill. x *Lavandula latifolia* Medik.)].

3.6 When the essential oil originates exclusively from certain varieties or from certain clones of a given species, the name generally adopted for the variety or the clone will be specified.

EXAMPLE Essential oil of lavender "Maillette" [Huile essentielle de lavande "Maillette"].

3.7 When the botanical species comprises several chemical races (chemotypes in English and chimiotypes in French) differentiated by the essential oils obtained, the name of the principal chemical constituent shall be specified.

EXAMPLE Essential oil of basil, methyl chavicol type [Huile essentielle de basilic, type méthylchavicol].

3.8 If several parts of the plant can be used for the extraction of the essential oil, the name of the part employed shall follow the common name of the plant in English and shall precede it in French.

EXAMPLE 1 Essential oil of clove leaf [Huile essentielle de feuilles de giroflier].

EXAMPLE 2 Essential oil of clove stem [Huile essentielle de griffes de giroflier].

3.9 Since the same name can be given to plants of distinct species stemming from different parts of the world, it is often necessary to distinguish the species by indicating the geographical location from where the plant originates. In this case, the common name of the plant includes a name of a country or region.

EXAMPLE Essential oil of Spanish wild marjoram (*Thymus mastichina* L.) [Huile essentielle de marjolaine sauvage d'Espagne (*Thymus mastichina* L.)].

NOTE This naming allows to distinguish *Thymus mastichina* L. from *Origanum majorana* L. which is called "marjoram" in English and "marjolaine" in French; no ISO standard exists today for essential oils of *O. majorana* L.

3.10 Plants of the same botanical species can grow naturally or be cultivated in different geographical regions and their essential oils may present different physical and chemical properties due to the genetic material and the ecological and agricultural circumstances. They will be distinguished by adding after the name of the essential oil, the name of the region or country where the variety or the cultivar is originating from, followed by the term "type" in English and preceded by the term "type" in French.

EXAMPLE 1 Essential oil of black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.), India type [Huile essentielle de poivre noir (*Piper nigrum* L.), type Inde].

EXAMPLE 2 Essential oil of black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.), Madagascar type [Huile essentielle de poivre noir (*Piper nigrum* L.), type Madagascar].

EXAMPLE 3 Essential oil of rosemary, Spain type [Huile essentielle de romarin, type Espagne] (ISO 1342).

EXAMPLE 4 Essential oil of rosemary, Morocco and Tunisia type [Huile essentielle de romarin, type Maroc et Tunisie].

3.11 When the essential oil of a plant can be obtained by different processes, the method used shall be indicated at the end of the title, preceded by a comma.

EXAMPLE 1 Essential oil of lime, obtained by distillation [Huile essentielle de limette, obtenue par distillation].

EXAMPLE 2 Essential oil of lime, obtained by expression [Huile essentielle de limette, obtenue par expression].

Bibliography

- [1] ISO 1342, *Essential oil of rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis L.)*

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