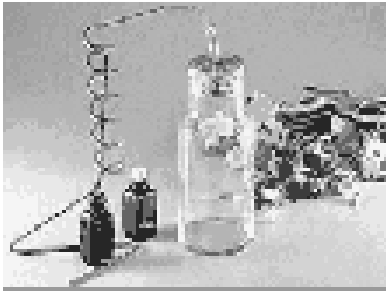


Using the Entfleurance Condenser

The term “entfleurance” refers to the process of saturating fat with the oils of plants and then distilling the concoction to separate the aromatic oils or perfumes. In alchemy, this oil is considered the Sulfur or “soul” of the plant. Just about any part of the plant can be used to extract the oil. Dry flower petals can be used whole, but



leaves, fruits, nuts, berries, stems, bark, or roots must be dried and ground to a powder. Common household tools used for this process are cheese graters, pepper mills, and coffee grinders. The most effective fat used to extract the oils is common lard. Melted lard will absorb the oil contained in an amount of flowers that is up to three times its own weight. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of lard will absorb the oil from $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of flower petals.

In a simple entfleurance apparatus as shown in the drawing at right above, the glass jar is the reservoir in which the process takes place. Place about $\frac{1}{4}$ -pound ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of lard in the reservoir and warm until it melts. Lard melts at a very low temperature (98° F), so it is not necessary to place the reservoir over a flame. Simply setting it in a pan of warm water will suffice. When the lard melts, it will occupy about $\frac{1}{8}$ of the volume of the reservoir.

Fill the rest of the reservoir with flower petals. If you are using ground powder, add no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of the material. Insert red plug in the cork stopper and seal the reservoir. Shake vigorously to make sure the melted lard has come into contact with all parts of the plant material. Let stand at a warm temperature for about an hour, shaking occasionally to facilitate the transfer of the oils into the lard.

Next, pour the contents through a coarse strainer to separate the flower petals or any gross material from the melted lard. With petals, the same melted lard can be returned to the reservoir for up to two more batches. With powdered plant material, the melted lard should be used only once. This completes the entfleurance portion of the process.

The next step is distillation, in which the aromatic oils are separated from the lard. To do this, the concoction must be “spiritized” by adding undenatured (ethyl) alcohol. Use a minimum of 100-proof alcohol. Vodka or Everclear is ideal for this process as they carry very little odor. Add 1 ounce of alcohol to the melted lard in the reservoir and shake for about five minutes to thoroughly mix the ingredients. During this agitation, the sulfurous soul (oil) of the plant will combine with the mercurial spirit of the alcohol.

Place the reservoir in a pan holding about an inch of water and set the pan on an alcohol burner stand or stovetop burner set at the lowest temperature. Coil an 18-inch length of $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch diameter copper tubing around a pipe or cardboard tube. Insert one end of the coiled copper tubing into the lid of the heatproof mason jar and run the other end into a receiving jar or vial. You may have to support the spiraled copper condenser with a stand. Adjust the height of the stand and condenser, so the reservoir and condenser line up.

After setting up the entfleurance, heat the water in the pan to a simmer. This will cause the distillation to begin, and you will notice drops of liquid collecting in the receiver. Be careful not to overheat the water in the pan. If any steam comes from the discharge end of the condenser, reduce the heat immediately. If you notice any strong aroma coming from the unit, the essence is being lost and the heat should be turned down.

When the dripping from the condenser stops, the distillation process is complete. The spirit of the alcohol has resurrected the soul of the plant from the gross lard and then dissipated back into the air. The aromatic oil in the receiver is the purified soul or essence of the plant that has been “rescued” by the alcohol.

After distillation, pour the aromatic oil in the receiver into a vial and seal to keep it fresh. The “dregs” or melted lard should be poured out of the reservoir and discarded. Wipe the reservoir inside and out with paper towels to absorb any excess oil and then wash. Run warm water through the condenser to flush out any remaining distillate.

You can use the aromatic oil to make cologne, lotion, or soap by blending it with other ingredients. The oil itself makes a wonderful perfume or essential oil. To make cologne, add about 3 parts of ethyl alcohol to 1 part perfume. After-shave lotion can be made by dissolving 1 part vegetable oil in 3 parts of cologne. Hand lotion can be made by adding 3 parts vegetable shortening (such as Crisco) to 1 part of cologne. Scented soap can be made by melting a bar of unscented soap (such as unscented Ivory) and adding $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce of cologne per bar. Pour the soap in a mold and allow to reharden in a cool place.