

To Everything There Is a Season: The Flower Essence Spectrum Chart

"When I walk with you I feel as if I had a flower in my buttonhole."
-William Makepeace Thackeray

[Excerpted with permission from Lila Devi, [The Essential Flower Essence Handbook](#), Chapter 7]

The rational part of the human mind loves charts, diagrams and systems of classification. They can give us clarity, context and a sense of order.

We have the sun/moon/ascendant in Western astrology; vata/pitta/ kapha in Ayurvedic treatment; and rabbit/monkey/snake in Chinese astrology, as but a few of the systems we use to try to understand ourselves! For this reason, I hope you will enjoy these next two chapters (and Chapter Thirty-one), whether you are an essence novice or a well-versed practitioner. They are intended to explain Spirit-in-Nature Essences in a workable system, though are in no way meant to limit the whole of humanity with finite definitions.

THE ESSENCE SPECTRUM CHART

A spectrum is, literally, *"a series of coloured bands diffracted and arranged in order of their respective wave lengths, by the passage of white light through a prism."* The word, prism, stems from the Greek, *"to saw,"* and refers to *"a solid figure whose ends are equal and parallel polygons and whose faces are parallelograms."* I have chosen this name for our chart because a spectrum describes a series of coloured bands, more commonly called a rainbow, which is a symbol of hope. And hope is the underlying message of every flower that ever graced the earth. Also, colour is vibrational, as are the essences. In a sense we too might be considered prisms, as beings of light that diffract qualities, somewhat like colours, into the different facets of our personalities.

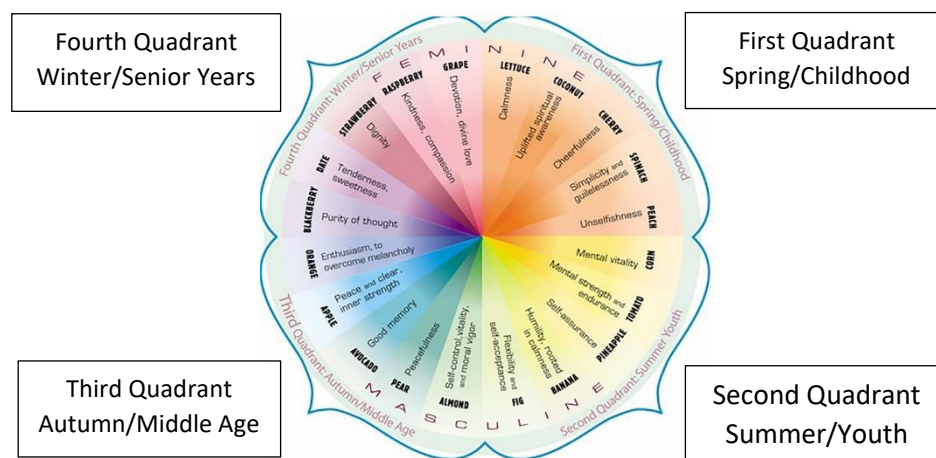
This Essence Spectrum Chart, then, provides a thematic overlay of Spirit-in-Nature Essences. It is neither necessary nor recommended to take them in this particular order. Nor is it true that only women can take the ten feminine essences or that only children can use the remedies in Quadrant I-although taking the former can help us to develop our feminine nature and the latter, our childlike side. The Spectrum maps a directional flow of energy, explaining how the essences can lead us on a journey of self-discovery.

We could say that this journey, one essence-step at a time, represents the maturing process of the personality. Opening like blossoms, we learn our life's lessons. Just as no two flowers are exactly alike, so also are no two human beings identical. Our journey, then, is a progression-not in terms of specific years, but of a flow of consciousness. In this chapter, we will examine the ways that each essence thematically evolves out of the one before it and into that which

follows. Accordingly, each essence symbolizes a gathering of wisdom, happiness and inner freedom on our path toward realizing our highest potential as human beings.

The essences may be likened to pieces of a stained-glass mosaic, each with a different shade and texture-opaque to clear, smooth to bevelled - which comprise the totality of our unique personalities. Your expression of Strawberry's dignity, for example, will differ from anyone else's. Your closest friend will express the kindness of Raspberry in ways very different from your own.

The Essence Spectrum Chart is divided into halves according to predominantly masculine and feminine essences and into Quadrants representing life stages and seasons of the year. This chart, then, illustrates the flow of nature's cycles with stages of life. It proclaims, as do all ancient healing arts, that we are a part of a greater universe, consciously created.



TWO HALVES

Quadrants I and IV comprise the feminine half of the Spectrum. The ten essences grouped here possess qualities that are more feminine in nature-yielding, inward, inspirational, receiving, nurturing and basically feeling-oriented. Quadrants II and III constitute the masculine half. These ten remedies contain qualities that are more masculine-outwardly expressive, driving, building, creating, achieving and reason-oriented. Flower essences as living energies possess both male and female attributes, much as we do. In ways similar to us, they are predominantly either masculine or feminine. For example, Pineapple contains the feminine qualities of inwardly knowing oneself, and inspiring others through that knowledge. It also outwardly expresses the more masculine qualities of confidence and competence. The latter qualities-necessary tools for success, especially in the business world-being dominant, Pineapple is located in the masculine half of the Spectrum.

FOUR QUADRANTS

The Spectrum is also divided into four Quadrants of five essences each, representing the seasons of the year-spring, summer, autumn and winter. It also symbolizes the four basic stages of life-childhood, youth, middle age and senior years. Each Quadrant also depicts a complete cycle within itself. If we decide to strengthen the youthful side of our personality, we would look to the Quadrant I essences in the Spectrum; for more ripened, mature and inward qualities, we would study the fourth Quadrant.

THE FIRST QUADRANT

In Quadrant I, we find essences that capture the qualities of springtime and childhood-Lettuce, Coconut, Cherry, Spinach and Peach. Spring heralds the completion of winter when living things begin to grow again. Having hibernated under the snow, plants and animals now bask in the sun's warming, life-affirming rays. Shadows, along and the new born of many species take their first breath.

The first Quadrant also symbolizes that period of life that includes birth, infancy and childhood. As new arrivals on this earth, we make acquaintance with our parents and siblings. We grapple with attempted mastery of our bodies-walking, talking, eating, tying shoes and eventually taking the training wheels off our bicycle. Exploration, excitement and wonder abound in the Quadrant I essences. These five essences also reside in the feminine half of the Spectrum. Not yet weaned from the mother figure, they exemplify the qualities of adaptability, softness, gentleness and receptivity.

Lettuce, the first essence in this Quadrant, represents the personality at birth as a clean slate, or a calm mind. From this vantage point, we are now ready to be filled with direction, creative endeavours and the making of choices. Coconut is the white chalk with which to write on this slate. The hallmark of Coconut is expansiveness; it conveys the ability to see the whole picture and live more in a superconscious, solution-oriented state of mind.

Through this uplifted state, we find ourselves in tune with a positive energy flow-the cheerfulness epitomized by Cherry. Cherry is the child skipping, hopscotching and seeing the bright side of every circumstance. Cherry's good cheer evolves into Spinach. Playful, full of wonder, undaunted and trusting, Spinach represents the fully nurtured little one. The functional Spinach child then matures into Peach, the caregiver. Peach, Quadrant I's final essence, is also the transitional remedy into the next Quadrant. Peach represents an embracing of others and a concern for their needs, signalling a shift of focus from the self to others in preparation for moving into Quadrant II.

THE SECOND QUADRANT

The second Quadrant contains essences that express the fire of summertime and youth. The summer season recalls images of a more intense sun, greens parched to paler shades, longer days and clear night skies. To the young, this means a time to party; to stay out late, test their strength and rebel with a newly formed will power, growing into a sense of “I-ness.” *“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,”* lyricized romantic poet, Robert Herrick, *“old time is still a flyin’. For this same flower that smiles today, tomorrow will be dyin’.”* If, in truth, youth is wasted on the young, it’s a fact to which they remain blissfully oblivious!

Comprising this Quadrant are Corn, Tomato, Pineapple, Banana and Fig. In the masculine half of the Spectrum, these essences all express a predominantly male energy-moving forward in life, owning one’s power and energizing the ability to accomplish tasks.

Corn, the rambunctious offspring of Peach, sends energy moving with a wave of raw vitality. *“I can!”* it affirms, *“I can do anything, when so I think!”* What better way to charge through life than bursting through our fears with untimorous Tomato. Also called “the warrior essence,” Tomato’s strength leads us to the self-assurance of Pineapple. Fearless and invigorated, we develop self-knowledge and trust of that inner wisdom.

Lest it become self-inflated and proud, Pineapple is now tempered by Banana’s humility, with its ensuing calmness reaped through non-involvement and detachment from life’s countless ups and downs. Balancing Banana’s attitude of non-attachment, we move on to Fig, for flexibility and self-acceptance. Fig addresses rigidity of the body and mind. It ensures that our ideas about ourselves and the world around us do not limit, calcify or constrict us.

THE THIRD QUADRANT

Flexible, malleable and strengthened by the lessons of Quadrant II, we now pass into the third cluster of essences for autumn and middle age, completing the masculine half of the Spectrum. Here, we reap the wisdom thus far acquired on our journey. Perhaps we find ourselves in midlife crisis, questioning the choices we have made. Maybe our career has reached its peak of fulfilment. Maybe our work in the outer world is nearing completion and we find it’s time to redirect our energy toward more interiorized pursuits. The children, if we had them, have now grown and gone, giving us the space for a more contemplative life.

In autumn, we harvest our garden of character strengths so carefully planted a short while ago. The earth’s life force, chased by the dropping centigrade, withdraws into its core. Leaves, now paper-like and multi-coloured, waft to the ground, escorted by colder breezes. Tree limbs wax brittle. Animals in the wild prepare for the coming winter, just as we prepare for this ripened stage of life.

Quadrant III includes Almond, Pear, Avocado, Apple and Orange, consecutively. Opened through Fig, we are now ready to be tempered by self-control, moral vigour and the moderate use of our senses dictated by wisdom rather than whim-Almond. A harmonizing calmness ensues through Almond's message of living the courage of our convictions.

Emerging from the negative state of that calmness-unruffled, unmoving-is the messenger of the perfect peace of Pear. Peace of mind, that most valuable commodity, is the stepping stone to remembering our purpose in life-Avocado, for good memory. *"Ah, now I remember!"* says Avocado.

In recalling that *raison d'être*, we may realize that we have always been well and whole. Peaceful clarity is our birthright, and the missive of Apple essence. Apple's expression of healthy attitudes manifests as the enthusiasm of Orange. No matter how deeply rooted our sorrows may seem, Orange washes them away, leaving us with the sweetly pungent taste of inner bliss.

THE FOURTH QUADRANT

We now embark on the fourth and final Quadrant of winter and senior years. This Quadrant echoes sweetness, resolution and completion. The muted, dried browns of a withdrawn autumn are now blanketed in the feather comforter of winter white. Snow and ice, like advancing years, slow us down, entreating us to bundle up and tread carefully over a snoring earth. Rhythms slacken while the days, like half-burnt candles, wane. And we, again like children in this season of maturing years, become more dependent on others. Thus, we return to the feminine half of the Spectrum with a well-ripened maturity and a storehouse of inner riches.

Quadrant IV contains Blackberry, Date, Strawberry, Raspberry and Grape. From a spirit made radiant through Orange, we turn to Blackberry. Like a cleansing snowfall, Blackberry's message purifies us with clean thoughts, honesty and honest self-assessment. Blackberry allows us to see the goodness in ourselves and in those around us. These qualities make us sweet and without judgment-the lesson of Date. Harboring this tender sweetness, we draw the same to ourselves, magnetizing the company of family and friends to our side, thus enriching the winter of our lives.

All too often, winter is likened to decline or decay when it is merely the cycle preceding spring. In Strawberry lies the first hint of approaching rebirth through the ennobling quality of dignity. Mature, refined and stately with the accumulated wisdom of the years, it bespeaks a certain softness, much like a perfectly ripened strawberry.

Only when we value ourselves can we truly value others. Here the seeds of Raspberry for kindness sprout into wondrous heart qualities of empathy, sympathy and true sensitivity to

others. In forgiving those who have deeply hurt us, we reap great benefits, including the ability to forgive ourselves. Healed of our own emotional wounds, we are then able to help others do likewise.

The Spectrum, like the astrological Aquarian, pours its life-giving waters into the final essence-Grape-for unconditional love. Grape's is the love that liberates instead of binds; the love that seeks to give rather than to receive; the love that is its own fulfilment. Selfless love wells up not from any outer source, but from the centre of our being that longs to love. Love is the truest healer. Love is the comforter. Love is the essence of life.

GOOD HEAVENS

To everything there is a season, we are lovingly told, and a time for every purpose under heaven. The Essence Spectrum Chart provides a time and place, philosophically speaking, in which to develop our inner strength and beauty.