



TINDERBOX

SPIRITUAL BEINGS BEING HUMAN

EOSTARA - 23 SEPTEMBER 2019

ISSUE No. 117

Flowers always make people better, happier and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine to the soul.

Swami Rama



Evolution of scent

Acuity of the smelling sense

THE ACUITY of the olfactory system in early humans was more developed than ours; modern chemical life has done much to anaesthetise our smell sense and rendered it more or less redundant.

The human brain however can actually remember more than 50,000 different scents, and every one of these individually shaped smell molecules has to fit like a jigsaw into its own exact space on the olfactory bulb.

Before the man-made chemical world held sway, plants provided most of the smell signatures, which were read discerningly by early peoples to determine certain outcomes.

Even if we are unaware of it, plant and human pheromones can profoundly

SPECIAL FEATURE
OUR SENSE OF SMELL

affect us subliminally, driving our feelings, actions and habits.

The sense of smell, like a faithful counsellor, foretells its character.

Jean Brillat Savarin

Smell is an invisible chemical world that carries with it vital information for animal and plant survival. Smell allows plants to communicate.

Plants have receptors that respond to volatile chemicals, whereas humans have sensors in the nose that recognise and bind with molecules in the air.

We humans are not immune to the biological survival signals that affect

us both viscerally, emotionally and triggering memories from our primordial history.

How a plant smelt had direct bearing, to our ancestors, about how to use the plant in a beneficial way for overall health.

The very smell of a plant conjures up different feelings and physical reactions in people, all of which have psychological and physiological significance.

The ancients believed that strong-smelling plants such as cinnamon, clove, frankincense and myrrh would drive away evil spirits and so employed these aromatics as fumigants.

Whoever gets really angry should take roses and less sage and smell this in the moment of anger. Sage comforts and rose brings joy and happiness.

Hildegard von Bingen

The main task of an essential oil in a plant is to organise the flow of information within the organism itself and to enable communication between the organism and other systems.

The essential oils then activate the metabolism of the system involved; they enable communications with neighbouring plants, repelling enemies and attracting pollinating insects.

These characteristics closely resemble the ways that we humans put smells and perfumes to use, whether our own or in the form of perfume.

CONTINUED PAGE 2

CONTEMPLATION ONE: MEET WITH PLANT

GO DIRECTLY to the plants themselves to learn from them.

Start with a few plants; ones that have 'called' you - the plants that you feel most drawn to, are those with which your heart already has a kinship. Remember that it will take time and effort to decipher this plant, with all its multi-faceted meanings.

Meet the plant with this softer, more open and expansive sense of self, expose your most vulnerable aspects and become aware of the feelings that arise as you sit with it. Become adept at listening to what is unspoken, and bring new meaning to 'playing it by ear'.

Use your senses to *control* your senses and your mind to *control* your mind. Remember that they are simply instruments of perception. Immerse yourself in the plant's smell and savour it, drawing its essence deep into the nose with long conscious inhales, to differentiate the myriad different olfactory notes that define its character.

Smell and imbibe wholeheartedly the unique signature that this plant bears, as each aromatic note unfolds with friction, heat, and movement, releasing its volatile elements into the air to be breathed.

Look with soft, receptive and loving eyes (*helpful hint: imagine you are looking at a baby animal*). Ignoring your mind's compulsion to describe, label and categorise; allow the plant's own beauty and sentient form to be accepted and embraced without reserve for what it is, not what you *think* it is.

Behold the beauty of the plant unfolding for you as it does for no one else, sacredly, secretly, and silently; remember that you are a soul with a body, rather than a body with a soul.

Touch its foliage, its flowers, and its roots; feel its texture against your skin, is it velvety, prickly, or spongy. Note your preferences and aversions without engaging in them and impartially witness any dormant or residual sensations that may arise; the feelings are the medicine.



Notice the chakra zone along your spine where you most experience feelings.

Put a leaf or plant part under your tongue to detect a sweet, bitter or pungent taste. Chew it a little to feel how readily it dissolves or collapses in the mouth's masticating processes to discover other occluded aspects of its aromatic nature.

Tune the ears to the vibrations of the inhalation and exhalation; breathe the plant.

Open your pores and breathe as if the skin breathes. Sense the subtleties of breath, sense how it cleanses the energy channels or *Nadis* to allow *Prana* to flow through them more efficiently.

Does it tense you up, rajasic-like, quickening the pulse, or does it weigh you down – tamasic-like, to feel heavy and solid? Perhaps it brings a harmonious sattvic state of lightness, with a calm lucidity?

CONTEMPLATION TWO: FIND A FRAGRANT FLOWER

GO OUT and connect with the flower of your heart's choice, being aware of what it is that is attracting you - its shape, colour or scent.

After feasting your eyes on the flower's delicate, intricate beauty, close them to focus on imbibing the essence through your nose. Cast aside pre-conceived ideas based on your opinions; let the flower speak to you from its own essential being.

If a flowering plant is not available to you then gravitate towards the flower essential oil that most beckons you such as rose, jasmine, tuberose or orange blossom.

You are now experiencing the sex of the plant.

Flowers, born through light, are the reproductive part of most plants that contain pollen and tiny eggs called ovules.

The blossom is really like the plant's genitals and is subliminally affecting your own sexuality; feel the primitive impulses nudge the sacral chakra, feel the heart ripen, waiting.

The blossom essential oils emit an euphoric, high vibrational energy that deeply relaxes the body by calming the nervous system; so more energy is readily available for sexual arousal.

In this way they act as aphrodisiacs, so how is this affecting your holistic sensing, feeling body? Learn with your whole body how the flower teaches you to enjoy life on deeper levels and very worthwhile it is to spread that joy outwards.

Blessings drop their blossoms all around you.

Rumi

Silent scent signals from plants to humans

FROM PAGE 1

With the help of essential oils we can activate the metabolism, kill off bacteria and with some species repel insects too.

We can also signal certain messages, repel other organisms such as bacteria and viruses and stimulate our own sexuality and that of others.

*Give me odorous at sunrise
a garden of beautiful flowers
where I can walk undisturbed.*

Walt Whitman

Subliminal scent signals

*The fragrance of that
knowledge! It penetrates our
thick bodies, it goes through
walls.*

Kabir

What if we were to become aware of these subliminal signals and olfac-

tory conversations that are going on around us, how different would it be?

The nose, the hub of breath and smell, is the portal to higher consciousness.

We can thus use breath and smell as steps for attaining the higher state of meditation.

Certain aromas speak to our subconscious more eloquently in olfactory archetypes that resonate with us more convincingly than any speech.

Only the scents of nature possess the evocative power to transform human consciousness and over millennia settle so deeply into our psyche.

Every individual plant scent will have an individual effect on the human psyche and nervous system, activating the endocrine system in constant and predictable ways so we can determine positive outcomes.

Odourous plant molecules continue to stimulate our hormonal response, even when strongly diluted in homeopathic potencies over long distances.

*Love is a springtime plant that
perfumes everything with its
hope, even the ruins to which it
clings.*

Gustave Flaubert

Life force, or prana, is imbibed primarily via our breath through the nose, carrying with it the very essence of a plant.

Its scent will reveal its spirit and the wholeness from whence it came.

To really smell a plant in the yogic conditions of meditation or reverence (the best French word is *recueillement*) we must gather all our senses and our psychic capacities to make one with the very essence of the plant to receive an inspired message from it.

*A nose that can see is worth two
that sniff.*

Eugene Ionesco

The artful Dodder

We don't attribute the smelling

sense to plants, but they all have a sense of smell and one such remarkable example is the Dodder plant, which is exceptionally sensitive to odours.

This parasitic vine is the sniffer dog of the vegetable world.

It contains almost no chlorophyll; the pigment that most plants use to make food; so to eat it must suck the sugary sap from other plants.

Dodder uses olfaction to hunt down its quarry. It can distinguish potential victims from their smell, homing in on its favourites and also using scents emitted by unhealthy specimens to avoid them.

*I have found that, in the
composition of the human body
as compared with the bodies
of animals, the organs of sense
are duller and coarser. Thus, it
is composed of less ingenious
instruments, and of spaces less
capacious for receiving the
faculties of sense.*

Leonardo da Vinci