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SEASONAL CITRUS OFFERS MYRIAD WELLNESS BENEFITS

BY TAMMY FENDER

It smells like heaven this time of year, as the buds open on grapefruit and lemon trees. The intoxicating scent transports me back to my childhood in Florida, surrounded by the sweet fragrance of orange and tangerine groves. Memories of picking fruit and sipping juice from roadside stands flood my mind, evoking a sense of nostalgia for the simplicity of those times. As the bees in my garden go wild enjoying every bit of nectar, I'm also reminded that spring—and the appearance of orange blossom honey at local farmers markets—is not far behind.

Citrus fruit captures all of South Florida's divine sunshine and turns it into healing for the body, mind, and spirit. Fresh citrus fruit



peel of citrus sinensis. Research has shown that inhaling this oil can help to soften one's emotions, reduce anxiety, decrease stress-hormone levels, and even lower pulse rate and blood pressure. An encounter with any citrus essential oil is likely to bring a smile to your face as they are inherently joyous. Over time, I've learned that each has a specific signature. While lemon is upbeat, it also offers clarity and mental freshness that encourage good decision-making. Neroli is very supportive for deep relaxation. Sweet orange puts you at ease and boasts a nurturing warmth reminiscent of maternal comfort.

While I encourage you to step outside to experience the beauty of citrus blooms directly and to

juices contain vitamin C, which can bolster the immune system and reduce markers of inflammation. At the same time, citrus fruits are full of protective antioxidants that can counterbalance environmental stress. But I've seen through decades of holistic practice that citrus fruit is strengthening in some less obvious ways.

I've long called upon the therapeutic benefits of citrus-based essential oils, especially sweet orange cold-pressed from the

drink plenty of freshly squeezed juice, it's also nice to amplify the effects with an essential oil. You can create a spritz at home by diluting several drops of essence of sweet orange in water; use it to enliven the environment when traveling or sitting at your desk. It's especially lovely to scent the air with this evocative aroma before journaling, or you can blend a drop into your favorite body lotion to luxuriate in the aromatic uplift. ◀◀

