

Does your oregano measure up?

Sourcing for quality

Chris Greene, DC

photo by Scott Yavitt

Every time we go into a health food store, we are confronted with endless choices. We try to make decisions based on quality rather than stylish marketing. The first step in recognizing the real value of a product is determining exactly where the raw material comes from.

Consider the source

If you're considering taking oil of oregano, first consider its source. I always tell my patients that the oregano oil they take should be researched and tested to ensure its efficacy. Has it been proven safe for internal consumption? It is imperative that you know where the oregano comes from.

True wild oregano

There are 52 different species of *Origanum* in six families. The most important factor in producing oil of oregano is location, location, location. The main suppliers of true wild oregano are from Greece and Turkey. These fertile lands, which were never glaciated, are home to the most mineral-rich mountains in the world. The efficacy of wild oregano is enhanced by the fact that it grows out of the calcium-, magnesium-, and phosphorous-rich rock that is found there. The negative ionic charge from the Mediterranean Sea, coupled with high-altitude growing areas, may make

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these the most energetically vibrant plants on the planet.

It takes 3,000 pounds of this type of wild-crafted oregano to produce two pounds of oil. Pure, unadulterated oregano oil is expensive to produce compared to commercial grade oils; the difference can be likened to the difference between true perfume and eau de toilette.

Health benefits

Oil of oregano contains compounds that work as antibacterial, antiviral, antiparasitic, and antifungal agents. It has been used to treat athlete's foot, candidiasis, gum disease, and cold sores. The oil has also been used internally to aid digestion. Antioxidants found in oregano oil make it a powerful free-radical fighter. For pain relief, high-quality oil of oregano is safe and effective for toothaches and headaches

because of its natural anti-inflammatory properties. It has also been used successfully to treat rheumatoid arthritis pain. Wild oregano is a rich source for a number of minerals, including calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron, and phosphorous.

Read up on it

When one of my patients has questions about which oregano oil they should take, I recommend they read Dr. Cass Ingram's *The Cure is in the Cupboard: How to Use Oregano for Better Health* (Knowledge House Publishers, 1997). This is the definitive book about oregano oil. It is a valuable resource with a strong scientific base, which not only offers dozens of treatment protocols, but also helps direct the reader to quality products. **a**

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