



# The ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS PAGE

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Music: "Peg of My Heart" furnished by [Heart and Soul Music](#) "Providing Quality Music for Nursing Homes"



## Aroma Therapy

There are many types of products and essential oils that Activity Directors are including in their Aroma Therapy Programs. However, you need to be aware of side affects with some essential oils, which is the liquid kind that comes in small bottles. First important rule is to only purchase Essential Oils from vendors or catalogues that specialize in Aroma Therapy. The second rule is to understand the side affects with essential oils. There are many web sites with great information about the benefits and side effects as well as allergies associated when using the oils. Be sure to request an MSDS for the essential oils and to know exactly what products are in the bottles. Always make sure the label is clearly shown on the bottle.

Generally the following essential oils are ok to use with most people. However, when ever trying essential oils for the first time, you should observe residents for allergic reactions or changes in behavior. Also be aware of anyone with a history of severe allergies, COPD or Asthma.

Eucalyptus, Jasmine, Lemon Balm, Lavender, Geranium Oil, Grapefruit, Peppermint, Rosemary, Chamomile, Lemon Balm, or Rose

The following precautions should be observed when working with essential oils.

Essential oils should never be used undiluted and directly on the skin because of severe sensitivity in some individuals. Essential oils should not be used topically unless the label states it can be used for massages. Many oils are too strong for the skin. As a general rule, don't use at all on the skin.

Be aware of allergies. Some oils can cause allergic reactions so residents need to be observed at all times. Watch for reactions both physical and mental such as agitation, wandering, crying. Breathing problems, tearing of the eyes, etc. Again, anyone with a history of Asthma, severe allergies, COPD and Epilepsy should be closely monitored and the aroma therapy scent should be checked for precautions. For residents with seizure disorder, avoid, basil, fennel, hyssop, rosemary and sage. For residents with Hypoglycemia avoid geranium.

Watch the amount of essential oil you are using as only one drop is recommended. The scent should never be over powering or noxious. Remember, what smells great to one person may smell awful to another. For some dementia residents, smells may be confused with something else or cause agitation.

Essential oils should never be given orally. Never leave an open bottle and place the bottle immediately back in a locked cabinet as soon as you have used it. If any one should swallow the oil, contact poison control immediately and refer to your MSDS.

It should also be noted that essential oils are flammable and should be kept away from all flames.

Unless you are trained and certified in Aroma Therapy, Never use Birch, Sage, Thuja, and Wintergreen, Bitter Almond, Calamus, Camphor, Horseradish, Mugwort, Mustard, Rue, Sassafras, Southernwood, Tansy and Wormwood, Ajowan, Almond, Arnica, Sweet Birch, Boldo Leaf, Broom Spanish, Melilotus, Onion, Pennyroyal essential oils.

All of the essential oils mentioned in the previous paragraph, if not used correctly can cause severe reactions and even in some cases death.

We recommend printing this article out and placing in your policy manual under Aroma Therapy. Activity Directors should in-service your staff as well.

## Toxic Plants and Poisonous Plants:

Many Activity Directors believe that Poinsettia Plants are poisonous, but they are NON TOXIC and have been removed from the toxic list. So this year, purchase Poinsettia's for your facility. As always, anyone who needs supervision, you might have to monitor to ensure that the resident does not eat the plants.

It is easy to be deceived by plants. In my garden, I have many Elephant Ear Plants. Because I don't have small children, I include them in my landscaping, but they are on the poisonous list. One part of a plant, may be edible while another is poisonous. The following lists are some of the more common poisonous plants and should not be included in the gardening / horticulture programs. If you do decide to use these plants, it is very important that precautions are taken and supervision provided. Recommend printing this article and placing in your policy and procedure manual. Your staff should be in-services on this toxic plant list.

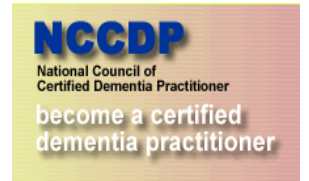
- Plant Toxic Part
- Hyacinth Bulb
- Narcissus Bulb
- Daffodil Bulb
- Dieffenbachia All Parts
- Elephant Ear All Parts
- Rosary Pea Seeds
- Castor Seeds
- Castor Bean Seeds

## ABOUT SANDRA

Sandra Stimson has experience as a corporate consultant, Corporate Trainer and National Speaker. Her experience is in long term care, as Activity Director, Director of Alzheimer's Units and Assistant Administrator of a 550 bed long term care county home. She is Co-founder of Pet Express Pet Therapy Club, is a Life Replay Specialist. Sandra implements dementia units nationwide. Sandra has written several books, Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care and Pet Express Pet Therapy Program. Sandra has been a facilitator for Alzheimer's support groups and is the Awards Chair for the NJ Association of Activity Professionals. Sandra is the Executive Director of **National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners**  
<http://www.nccdp.org>.

[Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#) offers resources for health care professionals in many areas of dementia care, care plans, Snoezelen products, dementia activity calendars, adult day care calendars, sensory calendars, reminisce videos for dementia, activity books, and dates to remember, party supplies, resources and links.

- Larkspur Seeds
- Monkshood Fleshy roots
- Autumn Crocus Bulbs
- Star of Bethlehem Bulbs
- Lilly of the Valley Leaves / Flowers
- Iris Underground stems
- Foxglove Leaves
- Bleeding Heart Foliage, Roots
- Rhubarb Leaf Blade
- Daphne Berries
- Wisteria Seeds / Pods
- Golden Chain Bean like
- Laurels All parts
- Rhododendrons All parts
- Jasmine Berries
- Red Sage Green Berries
- Yew Berries Foliage
- Jack in the Pulpit All parts
- Moonseed Berries
- Mayapple Apple, foliage, roots
- Mistletoe Berries
- Buttercups All parts
- Nightshade All parts, especially berry
- Poison Hemlock All parts
- Thorn Apple All parts
- Wild Cherry Trees Twigs / Foliage
- Cultivated Cherry Trees Twigs / Foliage
- Oaks Trees Acorns / Foliage
- Elderberry Trees All parts/ Roots
- Black Locust Trees Bark, Sprouts/ Foliage



**THE ACTIVITY DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

*Providing Internet Resources  
for Activity Professionals  
in Long Term Care Settings*  
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