

## Therapeutic-Grade Essential Oils...In My Ice Cream?

by: karina klug, nutritional supplements buyer

I love ginger, especially in stir-fry. Unfortunately, when I don't have time to peel and chop, sometimes I forego this delightful addition. Recently I stumbled on a replacement, which I suggest trying - ginger therapeutic-grade essential oil.

Essential oils are already a part of my life. I use them for skin care, burns and scars as well as for their uplifting, energizing and calming effect. Essential oils are often thought of solely for their smell. However, let me expand your creativity with essential oils into their variety of culinary uses.

Essential oils have a long history of being used in both the fragrance and food industries. In fact, many packaged foods on the market have essential oils in them, you just may not know it because they are labelled as "natural flavoring." One thing to keep in mind is not all essential oils are to be taken internally. For a complete list of essential oils that are Generally Regarded As Safe (GRAS) by the FDA, check out the following link, <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodIngredientsPackaging/FoodAdditives/FoodAdditiveListings/ucm091048.htm#abb>.

A good rule of thumb is to only take essential oils internally that are already used for culinary purposes, such as orange, lavender, cinnamon bark, lemon, lemongrass, basil, oregano,

rosemary, thyme, grapefruit, clove, rose, cardamom, ginger, and peppermint. Please note essential oils are powerful and concentrated. Do not take one unless you know it's considered generally safe. For instance, Pennyroyal is one essential oil that should NEVER be taken internally.

This article was a great excuse to talk to the dynamic, knowledgeable Melissa Farris who owns Veriditas Botanicals, a therapeutic grade essential oil line. Melissa has inspired me to cook with essential oils. I now understand that the fear generated around using essential oil in food in the United States has really been a misunderstanding. The queen of therapeutic grade oils mentioned all of the fabulous ice cream made with essential oil available in Provence, France. Imagine how refreshing and luxurious lavender, lemon verbena, rosemary or basil ice cream would be on one of these scorching hot days.

It is absolutely essential to use therapeutic grade essential oil. Problems with reactions to essential oil are most often due to synthetic fragrances in oil. When an essential oil is therapeutic grade be assured that it is the pure plant oil and has no synthetic additives. If you or someone you know has had a reaction to essential oil it could have been a synthetic fragrance in the oil. We

cannot stress enough to use a therapeutic grade essential oil in cooking! When Melissa uses essential oils in cooking, she recommends 1 drop per 4 servings. Remember these concentrated oils go a long way. Melissa warmed me with another edible visual. When she makes ratatouille, she adds oregano, thyme, basil or marjoram in essential oil form instead of dried herb. She also noted to always put the oil in at the end because oils are volatile and evaporate in the heat.



What stirred my desire to write this article was a bit of experimenting I've been doing with essential oil in yogurt. Lemon essence yogurt, is fresh, creamy and lovely. Fabulous on its own, or served in place of whipped cream with dessert.

I use the plain Fage Greek yogurt for its thick luscious texture. A hand-held microplane grater works great for this and you can pick one up at Ace Kitchen Place in downtown Decorah. Grate the lemon rind into 32 ounces of your choice of yogurt. Make sure to scrape only as deep as

the yellow rind because the white pith of citrus fruit is bitter. The texture of the rind with the yogurt is fabulous. The suggested amount of essential oil is one drop per four servings of food. However, this is a rough guideline as far as flavoring intensity. I use Verditas Lemon essential oil and I sweeten with lemon or plain stevia about 7-10 drops per serving, add more or less to your taste. In addition, I have chopped up mint leaf and basil and mixed that in, although one could certainly use a drop or less of basil and/or peppermint essential oils. Keep it simple enough to showcase the sunny lemon burst. Finally, whip all ingredients together and enjoy.

My friend Britney of *Eat and Be Merry* put the following together for a sweet, low sugar treat. Whether you prefer peppermint-cocoa, lavender-cocoa, or just plain cocoa, I think you'll be pleased with this pudding-like sweet treat. Again, the Greek yogurt works perfectly as a base but any yogurt can be used. The Co-op

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**GROWN**  
*Locally*  
a community  
farming cooperative

**LOCAL**  
100 miles

GROWN Locally began on a summer afternoon in June 1999. A group had just finished touring Sunflower Fields Farm, and started visiting about the fact that so much of the food that was being eaten in the area was being shipped long distances. They had just seen firsthand how much food could be grown on a local level. The challenge was to have a system that could grow and distribute this food direct to neighbors, schools and the institutions in the area. After many monthly meetings and discussions, the group of 10 producers took up the challenge and GROWN Locally was incorporated.

GROWN stands for "Goods Raised Only With Nature." GROWN Locally has both certified organic and non-certified growers. Unless otherwise noted, vegetables are raised without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Animals are raised without antibiotics and hormones, and with attention to humane treatment. Eggs are from free-range flocks and the egg producers have an egg handling license from the state of Iowa.

Our customers are restaurants, grocery stores, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, colleges and distributors. Our product list includes eggs, meats, herbs, fruits, berries,

chickens and produce.

For the past year, GROWN Locally has been focusing on food safety. We audit each producer to ensure that they are growing to our standards, have a good water test and that they are keeping the appropriate logs and documentation. Our members and coordinator have attended various food safety courses in the past year. We have upgraded our distribution facility and just recently passed Sodexo's third party audit to become a qualified vendor in order to sell to Luther College and other Sodexo accounts in our region.

GROWN Locally currently has 16 members and just introduced a brokerage level this year. As a broker, your farm is audited as if you were a member, but your products are only requested if members do not have them available. This year our current members chose to expand their operations to cover our increased demand, but even with the best planning, we are usually short on a few items and have been using some of the local brokerage farms we have in place.

We work closely with Betsy, Matias and their staff to ensure that the very best products are available at Oneota Co-op and Water Street Café.

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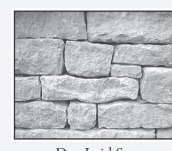
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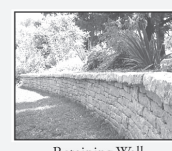
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## Grass Run Farm

by: kristine jepsen

Yup, it's true: Grass Run Farm is growing. What started in 2005 as one family's efforts to market a few beef at the farmers' market has grown to a producer-owned meat company specializing in buying local all-natural livestock from more than 15 families and marketing them to an expanding customer base in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

We now deliver fresh and frozen 100% grass-fed beef, all-natural beef fed local grains, and all-natural Iowa pork to co-op groceries, institutions, restaurants, and other wholesalers along our weekly delivery routes.

Each year, we've encountered lack of infrastructure in the local foods movement. It's one thing to sell a cooler full of ground beef at farmers' market. It's another thing to process, freeze, and ship 1,000 lbs of local beef patties to Iowa colleges. Each week. All year. We've rented pallet space in metro areas. We've purchased our own delivery truck to make sure orders get places on time in good shape. We've orchestrated livestock trucking and product cross-docking and last-minute route changes because of icy roads and steep driveways. While

demand continues to grow for local, healthy foods, it's certainly been a struggle to create a supply chain like the conventional one that's fed us for decades.

So, we solve problems as we face them, and we encourage customers to follow our work in progress. Here are some projects Grass Run Farm will be tackling this year:

- Consolidating our fresh and frozen inventory to our own local warehouse, helping us serve more people with less run-around

- Hiring additional local employees to manage our inventory and help us meet new opportunities with efficiency and ease.

- Moving our beef and pork processing to family-owned specialty packing houses in Omaha, Nebraska, and Estherville, Iowa, respectively.

"What?!" you may be thinking. Well, it's our best option, having outgrown our most local branded meat processor in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. Furthermore, this move actually makes Grass Run Farm greener. Consider the distinction between "food miles" and the fuel burned per pound of meat as it travels from producer to processor to cold storage warehouse, then to the customer. According to the USDA report "Local Food Systems: Emerging Research and Policy Issues," intermediate-size, regional supply chains like Grass Run Farm (buying from regional farmers, processing efficiently in the region, and selling meat regionally), provide the lowest ratio of fuel per pound of meat, significantly better than conventional meat distributors, as well as individual farmers hauling a handful of animals at a time and selling at farmers' markets.

The bottom line is that our local food system is growing and adopting an infrastructure that makes it affordable and accessible to all. Along the way, we must expand our idea of local to include bigger food. Each additional farm family we represent, for example, increases the number of neighbors who can make a living farming on the increasing amount of land and commerce engaged in a legacy of sustainability.

Thank you to all our customers, who have supported us from the start and seen us grow through the years. And thank you, Co-op members, for seeing us in the bigger picture and encouraging us to fill a needed niche in the local foods system.

Curious to learn more? Check out [grassrunfarm.com](http://grassrunfarm.com) for updates or, better yet, come on out for a tour. Seriously. Our gates are always open.

Grass Run Farm will continue to use the famous Lorentz cure for their bacon and ham.

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Bulk department stocks plain cocoa powder, of which I use about a tablespoon per serving, more or less to your liking. Add the plain liquid stevia. Some possible essential oil inclusions for the cocoa recipe are orange, cinnamon bark, peppermint or lavender. Be sure to follow the same suggested amount of essential oil per serving - one drop per four servings. In particular, peppermint oil is known to be used to aid in digestion and many people find it quiets gas and upset tummy. One thing to note is if an oil is coming out too strong in your food, next time dip a toothpick in the bottle and stir that into the food rather than pouring one whole drop into the food.

A note about Stevia. This is my favorite alternative to sugar. It takes getting used to because if one uses too much, the bitter after-taste is a turn-off.

Melissa has an easy way to incorporate essential oils into your daily

life. She suggests putting one drop of either cardamom or peppermint (peppermint cooling, cardamom warming) on your hand and licking it off to aid digestion after a meal. I sometimes add one or two drops of essential oil to hot water to make a flavorful tea. Some of my favorite suggestions for this would be peppermint, lemon, spearmint or lavender.

Another great way of using therapeutic essential oils in culinary practices is by infusing honey with 1-2 drops of essential oil. The creative possibilities are endless. For example, I think lavender-infused honey over homemade bread would make for a wonderful breakfast and start to the day.

Lastly, perhaps a drink to cool and refresh using a simple blend of essential oils and tonic water. A non-alcoholic *Gin and Tonic* using therapeutic essential oils: 1 drop Juniper Berry, 1 drop Rosemary, 6 oz Tonic water. Always remember, with essential oils - less is more.

Check out Veriditas' Hydrosol Facial Toners for a sweet surprise. Besides being fantastic face and body toners, three of the four can be made into relaxing cocktails to drink. Orange Blossom, Rose Hydrosol, and Lavender can be added 1 Tbsp to 8oz of mineral water. A refreshing and relaxing cocktail.

Please note that in this article we are specifically discussing information and uses of the Veriditas line of essential oils. Other brands of essential oils may not result in the same experience.

As always this information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat or replace advice from a licensed medical practitioner. I find the benefits of essential oils to be many. Start to explore the possibilities of using therapeutic essential oils in your culinary practices. Ginger oil in ice cream, cinnamon bark and orange oils added to bread doughs and pastries, oregano oil added to pizza sauce, peppermint oil in frostings and brownies. Allow the exploration of essential oils to be fun.

For more inspiration, Melissa recommends the book *The Essential Oil Cookbook-Outrageous Recipes for Weight Control and Long Life* by Menkit Price. If we don't have a copy in-store, Gretchen would be happy to special order it for you to be picked up at the Co-op.



It's back!

## SHIRLEY'S CHEESECAKE

Back by popular demand, Shirley's Cheesecakes can again be found in the Café cold case. They will be available beginning Thursday, August 19, with Raspberry Swirl Cheesecake and Chocolate Chocolate Chip Cheesecake as your first scrumptious choices.

Other flavors to look for in the coming weeks include; Triple Berry, Almond, New York, Mint Chip, Peanut Butter Fudge, Double Fudge, Dutch Apple Brandy, Chocolate Orange, and Toffee Chip.

Satisfy your sweet tooth and pick up a slice of Shirley's Cheesecake in the Café cold case. To order a whole cake, please call or e-mail Shirley at -

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