



What is the value of the "4 Thieve oil & vinegar" remedy of essential oils? This is the question asked now with a hopeful answer of how it may assist us through this dark moment spread across the planet, through society and the animal kingdom. The plant medicines used, essential oils which are the epitome of a living plants ability to heal or harm are key to understanding why this remedy has been so useful in combating Plague during the season of the European "Black Death" march beginning after the first decade of the 1300's. The essential oils commonly used are cassia, cinnamon, rosemary, lemon and clove bud together creating a formula of vitality that contains properties antimicrobial, anti-fungal, antiseptic, and antiviral. In all likelihood, camphor was used instead of eucalyptus oil since the birthdate of "4 Thieves" predated the import of eucalyptus to France.

Who were these '4 Thieves'? Almost everyone in the port town of Marcelles France was out of work and scraping to survive when they even dared to venture into public in 1314. Bubonic plague swept through, then out of Asia into Europe, notably into French ports of trade during 1413. It halted trade, releasing disease and death in such a suddenness that in the end it has been remembered as the Black Death. In the port town of Marcelles, four thieves blended the only known natural remedy capable of retarding and bringing relief; they were perfumers. In the decline and absence of work, they turned to robbing the homes of the dead who were left to rot in an absolute fear of touching the deceased that had completely captured the population. Blending the essential oils of cinnamon, rosemary, eucalyptus and lemon they applied it to all the open skin areas of their bodies, while creating beak masks to fill with these

herbs and their essential oils soaked in cloth. For months they prevailed and collected loot. I'm betting the sharp, fresh smell of the oils tipped the coppers off. As they stood before the judge, the pressure to explain how they accomplished their thievery so successfully overwhelmed the whole event. These four thieves levied their brilliance in medicinal perfumery to persuade the court to excuse them from the punishment of being burned alive for their hideous crimes against the dead. The judge readily agreed. The boys gave up the formula, taught the local "doctors" how to mimic their process and then the judge true to his word did not burn them alive. He hung them. In the village square. Such is patriarchy.

Before its sweeping devastation was complete, the Black Death decimated millions, raging on and off into the early 1700's. It evolved the social structure of Europe, creating the paid worker. To this day, whether mixed with vinegar or based in oil, this simple remedy has been a benefit to humanity in cleansing, retarding and bringing relief to epidemic malady. It is not a "cure". It is preventative, kills bacteria and virus topically and gives you a good idea of why those gothic beak masks kept four thieves alive to pocket the wealth left by the dead. Hail the journeyers!

Three hundred years before these perfumers employed their experience to blending this remedy, Hildegard of Bingen, polymath and mystic, a Benedictine abbess in Germany amassed an herbal – medicinal that worked on the symptoms born in the era of plague. Together with the grimoire of one Brother Aloysius, a Dutch monk who devoted his life to herbal remedies wrote his epic healer's herbal "Comfort to the Sick" a formula comprehensive as THIEVES OIL can be strengthened and polished with equal parts of these essential oils:

Clove bud

Red thyme

Rosemary

Cinnamon leaf

Cassia or cinnamon

Sweet marjoram

Lavender

Eucalyptus

And a tad of lemongrass.

The formula should then be blended equally with a cold pressed base oil, best offered here as sweet almond oil. Always remember to skin test oils for safe applications! A few drops replenished onto clean Kleenex kept in your pocket to use as a filter for breath. Diffuse into your space via aromatherapy lamp or vaporizer. Mix a few drops into a glass bottle (to preserve the vitality of the essential oils) with atomizer to spray your hands and surfaces to cleanse. An effective natural remedy to help combat the dark moment we face together as a community.

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