

*Novel Essential Oils from Latin America*

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A FEW novel indigenous essential oils obtained from a wide range of samples examined by the author during his trips to Latin America are described. These oils are of particular interest to phytochemistry on account of their originality and unusual chemical composition. They are also of great interest to perfumery as shown by tests conducted in Firmenich's Perfumery Laboratories in Geneva. They are:

*Aniba canelilla* (H.B.K.) Mez. (Brazil). This essential oil, originally from Amazon, contains 70% of a rare natural isolate: 1-nitro-2-phenylethane and has a powerful spicy note of unusual character.

*Baccharis dracunculifolia* DC (Vassoura, Brazil). The oil is produced from a plant indigenous to central and south-east areas of Brazil. Contains as main ingredient 24% of nerolidol as well as a large range of oxygenated sesquiterpenes and their esters with a pronounced spicy-leathery odour, unusual in an essential oil obtained by steam distillation of leaves.

*Psila spartioides* (H & A) Cabr. (Pichana, Argentina). Obtained from a small shrub indigenous to the pre-Andes plateau in Argentina. Contains a ketone rather rare in essential oils: cryptone, as well as an unusually high percentage of terpenes more than 60%, for an oil produced by steam distillation of leaves. This oil has an extremely attractive ambery, woody and spicy character.

*Lavas* (Guatemala). A man-made oil showing the interesting genetic mutation taking place by irradiation of *Cymbopogon flexuosus*, the lemongrass plant. Lavas oil has now a lavandin character, useful in perfumery applications.