A container for holding a sample of essential oils is disclosed. The container can be substantially flat and flexible. The container can also be formed to include an internal pocket for holding essential oil. In some implementations, the container may be combined with and inserted into a sleeve. The sleeve may act as a business card or other marketing material, which can be handed out to individuals interested in learning more about essential oils.
CONTAINER FOR HOLDING ESSENTIAL OILS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/788,793 filed Mar. 15, 2013, entitled CONTAINER FOR HOLDING ESSENTIAL OILS, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Essential oils are natural aromatic liquids found in the roots, stem, bark, seeds, flowers, and other parts of plants. Technically, essential oils are fat soluble, non-water-based phytochemicals that include volatile organic compounds. The chemistry of any particular essential oil can be very complex and may consist of hundreds of different and unique chemical compounds. These oils give plants their distinctive smells, provide protection against disease, and assist in pollination. In their pure form, essential oils are translucent with colors ranging from clear to pink to blue. At different times throughout history, essential oils have also been used for medical purposes in which these oils have been inhaled, topically applied, or ingested.

[0003] The market for essential oils for personal use has grown rapidly over the last few decades with a large number of companies emerging to capitalize on their popularity. These oils are marketed via traditional retail channels as well as through network marketing organizations, in which independent distributors teach friends, co-workers, and others within their personal networks about essential oils. In such presentations, distributors may allow individuals interested in these oils to sample drops from the distributor’s bottles, which typically hold approximately 5, 10, or 15 mL of essential oil.

[0004] To facilitate the distribution of oil samples, some companies produce small sample vials that can hold between 1 to 3 mL of essential oil (between about 17 to 40 drops of essential oil may be contained in 1 mL, depending on the oil type), which can be provided to interested individuals free of charge or at a relatively low cost. Glass is the material of choice for such a container, since essential oils tend to react with and/or dissolve the materials commonly used to form such containers. Moreover, relatively opaque and colored glass is preferred since the integrity of the essential oils may be compromised from prolonged exposure to ambient light. Vials that hold less than 1 mL of oil can be less expensive, but are considered ineffective because it is difficult to insert and remove oils through the vial’s small opening. Small vials are also too small to hold the necessary labeling information required by government regulations, and as such must be filled by third parties or placed in a larger package that includes this information.

[0005] Given the cost of essential oils, each small sample vial of oil may cost several dollars, which can become very expensive to companies and individuals who give away many sample vials. Despite the cost of current sample vials of essential oils, each year tens of thousands of distributors give these small sample vials to their friends and associates at a substantial cost to themselves or the receiving parties. Similarly, each year numerous retail stores, online websites, and other commercial entities seek to entice new consumers into the market for essential oils using similar small bottles or vials. Despite the large number of parties (estimated at number at least one-quarter billion) who have sought to provide low cost samples of essential oils over the past few decades and despite the high cost of current sample vials, the technology used to provide and distribute sample amounts of essential oils for personal use has remained unchanged.

SUMMARY

[0006] The present invention provides a container that is capable of holding a sample amount of essential oils. Such a container can reduce the cost of providing samples of essential oils, while also increasing the ability to distribute such samples. In some implementations of the invention, the container is a flexible and substantially-flat sachet that can be easily handed out, mailed, or included in a product brochure or card.

[0007] In other implementations, the container is compressible, and can be formed in the shape of a bubble or the like, which can be squeezed to eject the sample quantity of essential oils that are contained within the pocket. The container can have a main body that is compressible and is biased in an uncompressed state. The main body can define an inner pocket and be compressible to a compressed state in which the inner pocket has a lesser volume than when in the uncompressed state.

[0008] Some aspects of the invention further include a sleeve into which the container can be inserted to form a combined sales tool. The sleeve can be a business card, brochure, invitation or the like.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] In order that the manner in which the above-recited and other features and advantages of the invention are obtained will be readily understood, a more particular description of the invention briefly described above will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. These drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are not therefore to be considered to limit the scope of the invention.

[0010] FIG. 1A is a perspective view of a representative container suitable for containing a sample amount of essential oils, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

[0011] FIG. 1B is side view of the container shown in FIG. 1A, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

[0012] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of another representative container suitable for containing a sample amount of essential oils, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

[0013] FIG. 3A is a perspective view of a sachet containing essential oils that is only partially inserted into a sleeve that can hold the sachet therein, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

[0014] FIG. 3B is a perspective view of a sachet fully inserted into the sleeve of FIG. 3B, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 shows the sleeve of FIGS. 3A-3B when it is unfolded, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

[0016] FIG. 5 shows the sachet of FIGS. 3A-3B prior to being formed and filled, in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] This specification describes exemplary embodiments and applications of the invention. The invention, however, is not limited to these exemplary embodiments and
applications or to the manner in which the exemplary embodiments and applications operate or are described herein. Where reference is made to a list of elements (e.g., elements a, b, c), such reference is intended to include any one of the listed elements by itself, any combination of less than all of the listed elements, and/or a combination of all of the listed elements.

[0018] Numerical data may be expressed or presented herein in a range format. It is to be understood that such a range format is used merely for convenience and brevity and thus should be interpreted flexibly to include not only the numerical values explicitly recited as the limits of the range, but also as including all the individual numerical values or sub-ranges encompassed within that range as if each numerical value and sub-range is explicitly recited. As an illustration, a numerical range of “about 1 to 5” should be interpreted to include not only the explicitly recited values of about 1 to 5, but also include individual values and sub-ranges within the indicated range. Thus, included in this numerical range are individual values such as 2, 3, and 4 and sub-ranges such as 1-3, 2-4, and 3-5, etc. This same principle applies to ranges reciting only one numerical value and should apply regardless of the breadth of the range or the characteristics being described.

[0019] The term “substantially” means that the recited characteristic, parameter, or value need not be achieved exactly, but that deviations or variations, including for example, tolerances, measurement error, measurement accuracy limitations and other factors known to those of skill in the art, may occur in amounts that do not preclude the effect the characteristic was intended to provide.

[0020] The present invention relates generally to a container used to contain a sample amount of essential oils within an internal pocket. FIGS. 1A-1B illustrate a representative container in the form of a sachet 10, according to some embodiments of the present invention. The sachet 10 can be flexible and substantially flat so that it is capable of holding a few drops of essential oil, such as between one to fifteen drops. Such sachets 10 can reduce the cost of providing samples of essential oils, while also increasing the ability to distribute such samples since these sachets 10 can be easily handed out, mailed, or included with sales tools and marketing materials. Moreover, the sachet 10 provides surfaces that are sufficiently large enough to contain all of the labeling information required to be included with this product, such as nutritional information, safety, quantity, and other such information.

[0021] As shown in FIGS. 1A-1B the sachet 10 can include two or more sheets of material (“sheets”) 30, 32 that are coupled together to form an internal pocket 16. The sheets 30, 32 can be substantially flexible, such that they can be manipulated, compressed, and/or folded with the hands. As such, when the sachet 10 is opened, essential oil within the pocket 16 can be squeezed out by pressing inwardly on the pocket 16. The sachet 10 can include a tearing feature 22, such as a tear line, score, scored line(s), notch (including a V-shaped notch), cut, or other such structure(s) or void(s) that can facilitate tearing away a portion of the body of the sachet 10.

[0022] The sheets 30, 32 can include one or more layers that are capable of containing an essential oil without reacting with these oils and that can preserve the integrity of the oils. Such layers can include an opaque material that prevents light from entering the container. Such layers can additionally or alternatively include a material that can contact essential oils, even very corrosive oils (e.g., lemon oil), for prolonged periods (e.g., up to one or two years) and through harsh temperatures without substantially reacting with the oils or affecting the properties of the oils. Non-limiting examples of suitable materials include polymer materials or a metal or metal alloy (e.g., aluminum, aluminum foil, tin foil, mylar, silver, and/or other suitable metals). In some instances, a suitable material may be one layer of the sheets 30, 32, such as an internal layer while another outer layer may be coupled to the internal layer, to provide other properties to the sheet 30, 32. In some instances, the sheets 30, 32 are substantially flexible.

[0023] As mentioned, the two or more sheets 30, 32 can be coupled together to form an internal pocket 16. These sheets 30, 32 can be coupled together via various means including ultrasonic sealing, ultrasonic welding, heat sealing, RF sealing, pressure sealing, and other suitable coupling techniques. The coupling can result in a seal 18 that encompasses the pocket 16 to prevent its contents from leaking out. As such, in some embodiments, the two or more sheets 30, 32 are sealed together to define the internal pocket 16.

[0024] In some embodiments, the sachet 10 includes a tab portion 14 or an otherwise grippable portion that can be gripped and completely or partially torn away from the body of the sachet 10 to create an opening into the pocket 16. This tab portion 14 can be gripped by a user when tearing the pocket 16 open with or without the aid of a tearing feature 22. The tab portion 14 can include two or more sheets 30, 32 that are coupled together. Additionally, the tab portion 14 can include a portion 20 of the pocket 16 that is torn opened when the tab portion 14 is pulled and a tear is created. The tear can rip the tab portion 14 away from the main body of the sachet 10, creating an opening in the portion 20 of the pocket 16 that extends into the tab portion 14. Essential oils within the pocket 16 can then be dispensed through the opening.

[0025] FIG. 1B shows a side view of the sachet 10. As shown, in some embodiments, the sachet 10 is substantially flat. The relatively small thickness of the sachet 10 may permit it to be unobtrusively included in a standard mailing envelope, attached to a packet of papers, inserted into a sleeve (as shown in FIGS. 3A-4), or included with introductory or instructional materials about essential oils and their use. The thickness 34 of the seal 18 can be approximately the thickness of the two or more sheets 30, 32. Each such sheet can have a thickness of between approximately 0.001-0.02 inches. When essential oil is included within the pocket 16, the thickness 36 of the pocket 16 can increase as the pocket 16 is filled with essential oil. In some instances, the thickness 36 of the pocket 16 may increase to between approximately 1.1 to 15 times (such as between 1.5 to 10 times or between 1.5 to 7 times) the thicknesses 34 of the seal 18. If air is inserted into the pocket, the thickness 36 may be even greater.

[0026] In some embodiments, the volume of oils capable of being inserted into the pocket 16 or inserted within the pocket 16 can be less than approximately 1 mL, for example, less than or equal to approximately 0.75 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.7 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.65 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.6 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.55 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.5 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.45 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.4 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.35 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.3 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.25 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.2 mL, less than or equal to approximately 0.15 mL, less than or equal to
approximately 0.1 mL, or less than or equal to approximately 0.05 mL of essential oils. The volume of essential oils disposed within the pocket 16 can also be measured in terms of number of drops of that particular oil. This volume can be less than or equal to approximately 25 drops, less than or equal to approximately 20 drops, less than or equal to approximately 15 drops, less than or equal to approximately 12 drops, less than or equal to approximately 10 drops, less than or equal to approximately 7 drops, less than or equal to approximately 5 drops, less than or equal to approximately 4 drops, less than or equal to approximately 3 drops, less than or equal to approximately 2 drops, or approximately 1 drop. In other embodiments, the volume of oils capable of being inserted into the pocket 16 or inserted into the pocket 16 can be equal to or more than approximately 1 mL, such as 1.5 mL, 2 mL, 3 mL, 5 mL, 10 mL, and 15 mL.

[0027] As mentioned, in some embodiments, the container (e.g., the sachet 10) can contain a composition containing one or more essential oils, including a blend of two or more essential oils. In some embodiments, the composition consists essentially of essential oils. In other embodiments, the composition consists solely of essential oils. The essential oils can be substantially pure and uncut essential oils. Essential oils are naturally occurring aromatic liquids found in the roots, stems, bark, seeds, flowers, and other parts of plants. These oils are fat-soluble, non-water-based phytochemicals that include volatile organic compounds. The chemistry of any particular essential oil can be very complex and may consist of hundreds of different and unique chemical compounds. In nature, these oils give plants their distinctive smells, provide protection against disease, and assist in pollination. When separated from their parent plant, essential oils in their pure form are translucent with colors ranging from clear to pink or blue.

[0028] Suitable essential oils that can be contained within the container, in accordance with some embodiments, include, but not limited to, essential oils from one or more of the following plants (and related plant species): ajowan, almond, allspice, aloe, ammi visnaga (khella), amyris, angelica, anise, apricot, arnica, avocado, balsam, basil, bay laurel, benzoin, bergamot, bergapten, birch, borage, boronia, buchu, cajeput, caldulmus, calendula, camellia, cannabis, caraway, cardamom, carnation, carrot, cassia, castor, catnip, cedar, cedarwood, celery, chamomile (including blue chamomile, German chamomile, Moroccan chamomile, Moroccan wild chamomile, and Roman chamomile), chamom, celandine, cinnamon, citrus, citrus, cistus, clary sage, clementine, clove, cocoa, coconut, combava, petitgrain, coriander, coriander, costus, cumin, Cypress, davana, dill, dill weed, elemi, erinder (Ieubane), eucalyptus, fennel, sweet fennel, fenugreek, fir, frankincense, galbanum, garlic, genet, geranium, ginger, ginseng, grapefruit, pink grapefruit, white grapefruit, grapeseed, hazelnut, helichrysum, hemp, honey, huckleberry, hyssop, immortelle, fragrant aster inula, Jamaican gold, jasmine, grandiflorum jasmine, jojoba, jobquille, juniper, lanolin, lantana camara, laurel nobilis, lavender, lemon, lemongrass, lime, lilies, lida, cubbe, lotus, macadamia, mace, mandarin, manuka, marigold, marjoram, massoia, melissa, mimosa, monarda, mugwort, musk, myrhh, myrtle, narcissus, neroli, niaouli, nutmeg, oakmoss, otocera, olibanum, opopanax, orange, blood orange, sweet orange, oregano, orris, osmanthus, palm, palmarosa, paprika, parsley, patchouli, peanut, pecan, pennyroyal, pepper, black pepper, peppermint, petitgrain, white pine, pine, primrose, ravensara.
In some embodiments, the container 40, shown in FIG. 2, can include a tearing feature on or near the neck 48. The tearing feature can be similar to that described above with reference to FIGS. 1A and 1B and which can facilitate the tearing open of the neck 48.

Reference will now be made to FIGS. 3A-3B, which illustrates a sales tool that may be used by vendors of essential oils to distribute samples of essential oils. As shown, the sales tool includes a container that includes a sample amount of essential oils, including a volume of oil previously described above. The container can be a sachet 10 as described with reference to FIGS. 1A-1B. The sachet 10 can be selectively inserted into a sleeve 60 and the two can act as a single sales tool that can be distributed to interested individuals.

In some embodiments, the sleeve 60 is made of paper, paper stock, card board, card stock, or other similar material. In other embodiments, the sleeve 60 is made of another material commonly used and/or suitable for use as a business card, print invitation, brochure, or the like. The sleeve 60 can be folded and/or coupled (e.g., glued, welding, etc.) together to form a sleeve, as shown. The sleeve 60 can thus have a first side 66 and a second side 68 that form a substantially flat sleeve 60 or envelope. The sleeve 10 can have an opening 62 in one or two of its ends. The opening 62 can allow selective insertion of the sachet 10 into an internal cavity defined between at least a portion of the first and second sides 66, 68 of the sleeve 60.

As shown, one or both of the first and second sides 66, 68 of the sleeve 60 can include a cutout 64 that facilitates gripping and removal of the sachet 10 from the sleeve 60. This cutout 64 can have various shapes that are shaped and sized for permitting access to the sachet 10.

As shown, in some embodiments, the sleeve 60 can include business-card-type information thereon that can inform the recipient of this sales tool to contact the vendor in order to purchase standard-sized containers of essential oils. Business-card-type information includes information typically included on a business card such as vendor name, vendor contact information, logos, QR codes, bar codes, and other such information. Moreover, additionally or alternatively, the sleeve 60 can include information about an upcoming event, a product (e.g., the attached essential oil), the vendor, a company, or the like.

In some embodiments, instead of a sleeve 60, as shown in FIGS. 3A-3B, the sachet or other type of sample container can be coupled to or inserted within a business card, brochure, invitation, mailing envelope, or other sales/marketing material.

FIG. 4 shows an embodiment of the sleeve 60 of FIGS. 3A-3B in an unfolded state. As shown, the sleeve’s 60 first side 66 and second side 68 can initially be formed of a single sheet that is then folded along fold line 70. Once folded, portions of the first side 66 and the second side 68 can be coupled together to form the internal cavity.

FIG. 5 shows an embodiment of the sachet 10 of FIGS. 3A-3B in an unfolded state. As shown, the sachet’s 60 first sheet 30 and second sheet 32 can initially be formed of a single sheet that is then folded along fold line 72. Once folded, portions of the first sheet 30 and the second sheet 32 can be coupled together to form the internal pocket. As mentioned, in some embodiments, the edges of the sheet can be sealed to form the internal pocket 16 in a manner that prevents the contents thereof from leaking out. In other embodiments, the sachet’s 60 first sheet 30 and second sheet 32 are separate sheets that are sealed together.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, a method is provided for distributing samples of essential oils. As mentioned, prior methods of distributing essential oils included the expensive distribution of 1 mL or larger vials of essential oils that can hold up to forty drops of oil. Accordingly, a method for providing samples of essential oils includes one or more of the following steps. First, the method includes providing a container containing a small sample of essential oil, wherein the container can be any of the containers discussed with reference to FIGS. 1A-5. In particularly, the container can be a sample sachet or an inflated, compressible container that includes an internal pocket shaped and sized to contain only between 1-15 drops of oil, between 1-8 drops of oil, or between 1-6 drops of oil. Such containers can reduce the cost of providing samples of essential oils, while also increasing the ability to distribute such samples since these flexible and substantially flat sachets can be easily handed out, mailed, or included in a product brochure.

Second, the method includes distributing the sample containers of essential oils to individuals that may be interested in these oils. This method may also include the step of providing (e.g., distributing, shipping, selling, etc.) the sample containers to individuals (sales people, independent distributors, etc.) who distribute the samples. This method can enable retailers, multi-level marketing companies, and other business entities engaged in the sale of essential oils to provide a low-volume and relatively low-cost samples of essential oils to prospective customers.

In some embodiments, the method further includes providing a sleeve into which the sample container may be inserted. This method may also include the step of inserting the container into the sleeve. The sleeve can be similar to that described with reference to FIGS. 3A-4. As mentioned, the sleeve can include business-card-type information that can inform the recipient of this combined sales tool to contact the vendor in order to purchase standard-sized containers of essential oils.

Although specific embodiments and applications of the invention have been described in this specification, these embodiments and applications are exemplary only, and many variations are possible. For example, essential oils may be inserted into another known type of container or packet for providing a product of a liquid, semi-liquid, or gel sample.

Moreover, the various embodiments of the container may be used for both personal as well and professional use. For example, single-use containers may be useful to medical practitioners who require or prefer single-use packaged products for sanitation purposes. Accordingly, in some embodiments, the invention includes a method for providing a container, such as any of the containers described herein, for medical purposes, for use in a medical facility, or for providing a single use serving of essential oils in a sanitary environment.

We claim:

1. A container for holding essential oils comprising:
   a container body, the container body being substantially flat and substantially flexible, the container body defining an internal pocket therein; and
   a composition consisting essentially of essential oil being disposed within the pocket.
2. The container of claim 1, wherein the container is a sachet, and wherein the composition has a total volume equal to or less than 0.75 mL.

3. The container of claim 1, wherein the composition has a total volume equal to or less than 0.3 mL.

4. The container of claim 1, wherein the container body includes two layers of material coupled together to form the pocket therein, the pocket being sealed between the two layers of material.

5. The container of claim 4, wherein the two layers of material are layers of sheet material sealed together about their edges to form the pocket there between.

6. The container of claim 4, wherein the container body includes a tearing feature configured to aid in tearing a portion of the container body.

7. The container of claim 6, wherein the tearing feature is a V-shaped notch.

8. The container of claim 1, further comprising label information printed on the container body, the label information being about essential oils required by government regulations.

9. The container of claim 1, wherein the composition consists essentially of 100% pure essential oil.

10. A container for containing essential oils, the container comprising:

   a main body that is compressible and is biased in an uncompressed state, the main body defining an inner pocket when in the uncompressed state, the main body being compressible to a compressed state in which the inner pocket has a lesser volume than when in the uncompressed state; and

   a composition consisting essentially of essential oils disposed within the pocket.

11. The container of claim 10, further comprising an extension portion coupled to the main body, and wherein the inner pocket extends at least partially into the extension portion.

12. The container of claim 11, wherein the extension portion is shaped and sized to be grippable by human fingers.

13. The container of claim 12, wherein the extension portion includes a tearing feature configured to aid in tearing a portion of the extension portion.

14. The container of claim 10, wherein the composition has a total volume equal to or less than 0.75 mL.

15. The container of claim 10, wherein the composition has a total volume equal to or less than 0.3 mL.

16. A sales tool for distributing samples of essential oils, the tool comprising:

   a sleeve that is substantially flat; and

   a sachet containing a composition within a sealed portion of the sachet, the sachet being selectively disposed within an interior of the sleeve, the sachet being substantially flat and substantially flexible, the composition consisting essentially of essential oils.

17. The sales tool of claim 16, wherein the sleeve is made of paper that is folded and coupled together to form a sleeve.

18. The sales tool of claim 17, wherein the sleeve is imprinted with business-card-type information.

19. The sales tool of claim 18, wherein the composition has a total volume equal to or less than 0.3 mL and the composition consists essentially of 100% pure essential oils.

20. The sales tool of claim 19, wherein the sachet includes two layers of material coupled together to form the pocket therein, the pocket being sealed between the two layers of material.

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