

THE RETURN OF  
THE FOREST

A DEEP CONNECTION. SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND SENSUALITY:

## THE RETURN OF THE FOREST

Forest bathing, forest events, magazines devoted to forests and a forest academy. You've probably guessed it: forests are hot property right now! But it's not all about a trendy lifestyle: at the root of the new interest in woods lies deep-seated human needs – plus hard science that underscores the importance of the sense of smell.

Our longing for an authentic re-engagement with nature has gained a new focus: forests are the new beaches. For a long time, the sea, the coast and beaches were the epitome of relaxation, recreation, fresh air and a healthy microclimate. Now, people are flocking to the forests to re-experience a side of nature that is obviously lacking in our everyday lives.

This renaissance comes as no great surprise. First, as our awareness of environmental issues rises, we are paying more attention to forests and woods as original ecosystems, and more aware of the stabilising effects that forests and trees have on air and water circulation, on temperature, climate, soil conservation and biological diversity. Forests convert carbon dioxide into oxygen and biomass, they purify water, protect against natural hazards such as flooding, and supply timber, one of our most important renewable resources.

*And into the forest I go, to lose my  
mind and find my soul.*

John Muir, naturalist, 1838-1914

### Nature is the best recipe for many things, including recreation

But that's not all that forests have to offer. "Forests with their smells and dappled lighting are a pleasure for all the senses. The silence interspersed with natural sounds has a relaxing effect, the green is soothing for the eyes. And, most importantly, forests have a discernibly positive effect on our health", says Christian Lüke, Head of Marketing at the Hamburg-based fragrance house Düllberg Konzentra.

Forests have long occupied a special place in Japanese culture. Shinrin Yoku, "bathing in the atmosphere of the forest", is practically considered a form of individual preventive health care. In the 1980s, Japanese scientists started studying the beneficial medical effect of forest bathing, and Japanese universities now offer forest medicine as a specialisation for physicians.

### The feel-good factor

Forests can offer considerable health benefits: studies have shown

FORESTS OFFER  
MEASURABLE  
HEALTH BENEFITS



A CHEMICAL  
COCKTAIL OF  
BOTANICAL  
FRAGRANCES

that a stroll through a forest can lower the heart rate and blood pressure, and significantly reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol... and what's best: all it takes to reap these benefits is twenty to thirty minutes daily. The immune system also benefits: after only one day in the woods, the number of defence cells in our blood rises by nearly 40%, and this result lasts for a week. Amongst other things, experts now recommend forest "bathing" to counteract high blood pressure, high stress levels and depression.

The Austrian biologist Clemens Arvay has coined the term "biophilia effect" to describe the benefits, stating that the "biochemical cocktail" of a forest has a healing effect on humans. This cocktail consists largely of terpenes, which are volatile organic substances. These botanical fragrances are found in herbs such as thyme or rosemary, as well as in conifers. Perfumer Scott Moroschan: "You can isolate these fragrances by steam distillation of needles, cones, twigs or shavings. The essential oils obtained in this way differ depending on the tree. Each of these trees has its own olfactory fingerprint. Cedar, Swiss stone pine, pine or silver fir – each variety conveys the idea of forest with an individual scent."

*In the woods too, a man casts off his  
years, as the snake his slough...*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher and writer, 1803-18

### Essential oils bring the forest into our homes

Of course, these essential oils can have a beneficial effect even if you're not surrounded by trees. Christian Lüke: "Forests have arrived in Personal Care, Fine Fragrances and Home Care. On the market we are increasingly seeing fine fragrances with spruce notes, shower gels with a conifer fragrance or candles that bring the forest into the home."

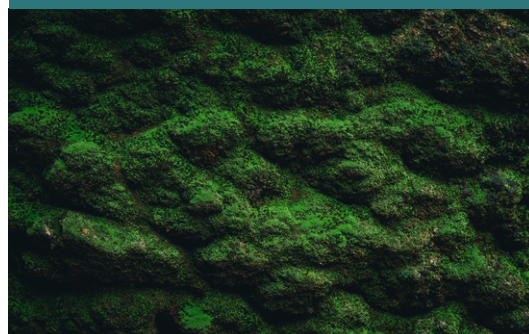
As a specialist for essential oils, Düllberg Konzentra has developed a range of products that creatively harness this topic. "We call this series Deep Forest. The aim is to allow consumers to dive deep into the soothing fragrance universe of the forest," explains Mr. Lüke. In the Forest Bathing bath additive, essential oils of pine needles have been combined with juniper; Cool Pine Forest focuses on mountain pine. Ingredients such as woodruff and spruce balm, laurel, tree moss and tree bark have been included in shower gels for men. Düllberg Konzentra's perfumers have also developed ideas for scented candles, which Mr. Lüke describes as "incredibly soothing and relaxing. It's like swimming in the forest in the comfort of your own home, and as they are based on natural essential oils, they are completely authentic."

So, if you want to forest bath, there's no need to book a flight to Japan. A scented bath oil, a shower gel or a candle can give you all the benefits, creating moments of relaxation and restoration at home. But if you do want to leave your own four walls and head for the forest, we recommend a holiday on the German island of Usedom, where Europe's very first medical and spa forest has opened – the perfect place to take a stroll and some deep, deep breaths.



## The forest in numbers

In theory, Germany has 1,300 square metres of forest per inhabitant. Forests are not just great places for recreation, they are also environmental heroes, extracting CO2 from the air and releasing oxygen again. Trees store around 2.5 billion tons of carbon per year. Forests are also important providers of raw materials. Approximately 76 million cubic meters of timber are felled annually, and about 121 million cubic meters grow again.



Düllberg Konzentra provides selected essential oils and perfume oils for the fragrance and beauty industry. Contact us for more information:

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