

There are many other easily obtainable ingredients that you may already have to hand in your garden. A few of these are listed below.

#### Herbs

Rosemary  
Bay leaves  
Thyme

#### Spires

Clove  
Cinnamon  
Juniper Berries  
Coriander  
Star anise  
Cardamom

#### Dried flowers

Rose (buds and petals)  
Marigold  
Lavender  
Chamomile

A stock of dried lemon and orange zest is also useful

### Blending

When creating a blend there must always be a good proportion of gum resin, otherwise you end up with 'bonfire'! Resins burn more slowly and slow down the burning of the other ingredients. Choose your resins and add these first, then add woods, spices and herbs. A pestle and mortar is useful for mixing and to reduce the size of some of the ingredients. Finally a few drops of one or two essential oils can be added. The blend will need to be stored in an airtight jar for a few days to 'mature' before use. It is best to make only small quantities at a time.

#### A sample blend

2 teaspoons Myrrh  
1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
1 teaspoon juniper berries (crushed)  
1/4 teaspoon thyme  
2 drops lemon oil  
2 drops sandalwood oil (sandlewood chips can be substituted as the oil is expensive! )  
2 drops orange oil

#### A word about WHITE SAGE

Lakota white sage was and is used extensively by Native American Indians in the practice known as 'smudging' White sage has powerful cleansing properties and is used to clear negative energies from people, the environment and from possessions Sage is obtainable in smudge sticks, where it is sometimes combined with other herbs such as cedar or lavender, and in leaf form. To use, simply light as you might a joss stick and blow out the flame (smudge sticks may take some time to light as they tend to be very densely packed). Sage will often go out on its own, but it can be tamped out in a dish or in sand If you want to be really traditional, You can use a shell like an ashtray!

**Caution: Asthmatics and people with respiratory problems may need to avoid incense smoke!**

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# Using Granular Incense



A Guide from

*The Simmering Cauldron*

[www.thesimmeringcauldron.co.uk](http://www.thesimmeringcauldron.co.uk)

## What is Granular Incense?

Traditional granular incense has been around for thousands of years and is especially recorded as being used in Egypt. Indeed, in Ancient Egypt, the saying was that 'a day without fragrance was a day lost'. Traditionally, Frankincense was burned in the morning, myrrh at noon and in the evening a special blend called 'Kyphi' was used. The preparation of Kyphi is recorded in hieroglyphs and was clearly an important and probably secret ritual act. It was said to have the power to rock people to sleep, evoke pleasant dreams and banish the worries of the day.

The burning of incense has always been linked to spirituality. It was often offered to the gods alongside sacrifices and prayer as the pleasant aromas made the offerings more acceptable and the 'sacred smoked carried peoples' prayers to the gods. Frankincense and Myrrh are well known amongst the gifts given by the Magi to the infant Jesus.

Today, in Greece, the burning of incense is a daily ritual. On a recent visit to Rhodes to buy incense, the shop owner told me that each morning incense was burned to clear the house of negative energies and to bring good fortune and blessings on the family. In Greek cemeteries too, each tomb has its own 'censer' (incense burner) and when family members visit the graves, as well as laying flowers as we do in Britain, they also burn a pinch of incense. As you can imagine, incense is widely available in Greece, in fact it is sold in many supermarkets. Greek incense is gum based, to which scented oils and powders have been added to create very distinctive aromas. Incense brought back by us from Greece can be purchased on our stall.

Burning Traditional incense

You will need,

- A censer (this can be purpose made or simply a small pottery dish)
- A tablespoon or so of sand or earth
- A charcoal disc

Half-fill the censer or dish with sand or earth (This is to absorb the heat)

Holding a charcoal disc between thumb and forefinger, light it from a candle flame or a lighter (As it takes a few seconds for the charcoal to 'catch', a flame from a match may not last long enough)

When the charcoal ignites, you will see a line of sparks begin to travel across the disc, at this point lay the disc on the sand in the censer. The hollow in the disc should be uppermost as this forms a recess in which to put the incense grains.

Now you should leave the charcoal to smoulder for about 20 minutes until it has a coating of grey ash. At this point you can add a pinch of incense.

Granular incense gives off a lot of smoke so only add a little at a time. A charcoal disc will smoulder for around an hour, so you can continue to add grains of incense during this time.

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## Practical uses

As well as filling a room with a pleasant fragrance, you can use incense smoke for the following,

- House clearing/cleansing, (to get rid of negative vibrations)
- Cleansing your new crystals, (see our crystal leaflet)
- Cleansing auras (you may need a feather when doing this to direct the smoke)
- Blessing new magical tools
- An aid to meditation

The Simmering Cauldron stocks individual incense ingredients, which can be used separately or mixed together to make blends. We also stock some of our own blends.

## Incense ingredients

### Frankincense

This resin forms the base of many incense blends and it has numerous associations. It can be used to raise vibrations, to consecrate, purify, protect and exorcise. Frankincense is widely used in Catholic churches.

### Myrrh

Rather bitterer than frankincense, myrrh is used to consecrate, purify and bless. This resin is also used during healing.

### Copal

This resin was held to be sacred by the Maya. It is used for cleansing, initiation and clairvoyance.

### Sandalwood

This is the wood of a small tree native to India and Sri Lanka and it has a warm, woody fragrance. It can be used for protection, purification and healing. Try mixing a pinch of sandalwood with a pinch of frankincense.

### Dragon's Blood

This is not blood of any kind! It is the resin of the dracaena palm tree. Alone, it smells fairly penetrating, but it is cleansing and serves to boost the energies of other ingredients.

Before trying out any blending, it is a good idea to burn incense singly to get used to each individual fragrance and effect. This may take some time as the sense of smell is very easily exhausted. The best way to try out incense is to burn a little in a room and then walk into that room.

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