ORIGINS
Tagetes originate from South America and was brought into South Africa during the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) with the fodder for the British Army’s horses and it is known in South Africa as ‘Khaki bush’. The leaves and flowers are a good insect repellent and are often seen hanging from native huts to deter swarms of flies and mosquitoes.

EXTRACTION
The main chemical components are tagetone, limonene, valeric acid and ocimene.

IRIS PALLIDA
Orris Butter; Flower concrete;

**LATIN NAME:** Iris Pallida  
**OTHER NAMES:** Steam distilled from the dried matured rhizomes.  
**SOURCE:** Hexane concrete from flowers  
**COLOUR** Pale yellow  
**AROMA** Violet-like, sweet, soft, warm and highly comforting fragrance  
**VISCOSITY** Solid  
**CULTIVATION:** Organically grown

**OVERVIEW**
*Origin, distribution area and production:* Iris is perennial plant from the Iris family (Iridaceae) and is native to North America, Asia, and Europe. The genus is widely distributed throughout the North Temperate Zone. Their habitats are varied, ranging from cold regions to the grassy slopes, meadowlands and rivers of Europe, the Middle East and northern Africa, Asia and across North America.

In spite the fact that there are hundreds of species most popular are Iris Pallida, Iris Germanica - with purple flowers and Iris Florentina (with white flowers) are used in traditional medicine and aromatherapy. However, it is the root - not the flowers - of the Iris that produces the its oil. Iris was first used in perfumery in the XVIIth century, its rhizome, an excellent fixative and aromatic reservoir, is ground to obtain a violet-fragranced powder with cleansing properties for the skin and hair. Orris is harvested in Italy and has been a traditional fixative for scent since ancient Greece. It is great for smoothing out the combined scents when you are making infused oils. Many consider that its essential oil, which is locked in these roots and which develops its scent over time, smells like violets (and orris is usually the real source of "violet" perfume).

**CHEMICAL COMPOSITION**
For orris root production, iris rhizomes are harvested, dried, and aged for up to 5 years. In this time, the fats and oils inside the roots undergo degradation and oxidation, which produces many fragrant compounds that are valuable in perfumery. The scent is said to be similar to violets. The aged rhizomes are steam-distilled which produces a thick oily compound, known in the perfume industry as "iris butter". The main most important constituent is irone. Iris rhizomes also contain notable amounts of terpenes, and organic acids such as ascorbic acid, myristic acid, tridecylenic acid and undecylenic acid. Iris root oil's relaxing and calming effect on the body is due to the action of its primary components: naphthalene, and iridin.
**IRIS CULTIVATION AT HEO**

**Propagation** - Iris is cultivated organically at Highland Essential Oils

- 2 Months old Irisses
- Winter leaves – kept as a mulch
- Starting to grow after winter

- One year old plants
- September - Flowering

Hoeing with sheep throughout the season

**Drying & Maturing of Rhizomes**

- Fresh cleaned rhizomes
- Peeled & dried Rhizomes
- Unpeeled sliced &dried
- Milled dried matured
Orris Butter oil is a volatile oil produced by a process of water–steam distillation of the dried matured and milled rhizomes of *Iris Pallida*. It is a pale white cream coloured and waxy substance at room temperature and therefore called a butter instead of an oil. After an initial drying period, which can take three to five years or more depending on the use, the root is ground. For potpourri, this powder is used without further processing. For other uses, it is dissolved in water and then distilled. One ton of iris root produces two kilos of essential oil, also referred to as orris root butter, making it a highly prized substance, and its fragrance has been described as tenaciously flowery, heavy and woody.

The harvesting season starts as soon as the flowers begin to open and continues until all the iris flowers have been gathered. The blossoms are collected by hand and are nipped just below the calyx (the green, outer protective cover). Collection begins at sunrise when the oil yield is at its highest, and should be completed by 10.00 am whilst the dew is still on the flowers.

It is taken to the Extraction factory where it is extracted with Hexane to produce a solid waxy light cream brown concrete with a soft powdery scent.

**IRIS RHIZOME OIL - Distillation**

Orris Butter oil is a volatile oil produced by a process of water–steam distillation of the dried matured and milled rhizomes of *Iris Pallida*. It is a pale white cream coloured and waxy substance at room temperature and therefore called a butter instead of an oil. After an initial drying period, which can take three to five years or more depending on the use, the root is ground. For potpourri, this powder is used without further processing. For other uses, it is dissolved in water and then distilled. One ton of iris root produces two kilos of essential oil, also referred to as orris root butter, making it a highly prized substance, and its fragrance has been described as tenaciously flowery, heavy and woody.

**IRIS FLOWER CONCRETE – Hexane extraction**

Iris flower concrete is obtained by cold extraction of fresh flowers with hexane. It is light cream brown waxy solid material with a fresh powdery fragrance.
The oil not only possesses an appealing scent, but also has health and beauty benefits.

**Cosmetically**, the oil helps to maintain healthy skin and nourishes sensitive skin. Iris root oil can also gently deep-clean oily, blemished skin and may even help regulate overactive sebaceous glands. In skin care iris is used to help the skin regulate its moisture level. Iris extracts on the skin surface, the outermost epidermal layer, holds moisture there, giving an immediate feeling of moisturising. Iris also contains antioxidants and soothing substances. The orris root extract helps the skin to remain hydrated and regulate a good balance of oil production and hydration so that skin feels soft, supple and fresh, with a healthy glow. It can help clear up blemished skin.

**Flavouring:** It is used as flavouring in liquors (especially gin), as well as in commercial cleaning, cosmetic, and body products. Orris root is often used in homemade recipes for natural soaps, body powders, toothpaste, sachets, incenses, potpourris, and pomanders (citrus fruit covered with cloves) and inedible food crafts such as spice-cookie ornaments and rose-petal beads.

**Health benefits:** It can loosen mucus and quiet dry coughs, making it good for treating bronchitis and whooping cough. It is used for treating bronchitis and sinus infections. Iris root oil also has a regulating effect on nervous disorders and is helpful for emotional shock, fatigue, stress and depression. Iris root oil's relaxing and calming effect on the body is due to the action of its primary components: naphthalene, and iridin. Processes laxative and diuretic effects that can help cleanse the blood.

**Perfume:** Orris root is most commonly known as a fixative that enhances and prolongs other scents and preserves botanical ingredients and as a base note in perfumery. The scent is reminiscent of the smell of violets. Typical iris perfumes:-, Infusion d'iris (Prada); Tumulte (Christian Lacroix); Aqua di Parma and Iris nobile (Aqua di Parma); Irisia (Creed); Y (Yves Saint Laurent) and Vol de nuit (Guerlain).

Orris root is also highly allergenic and can cause severe reactions such as hay fever, asthma, and cold symptoms. Because of the high number of people who are allergic to it, cosmetics labeled hypoallergenic cannot contain orris root.

**Avoid during pregnancy.**