



# Functional Botanical Perfumery

*Past, Present, and Future*

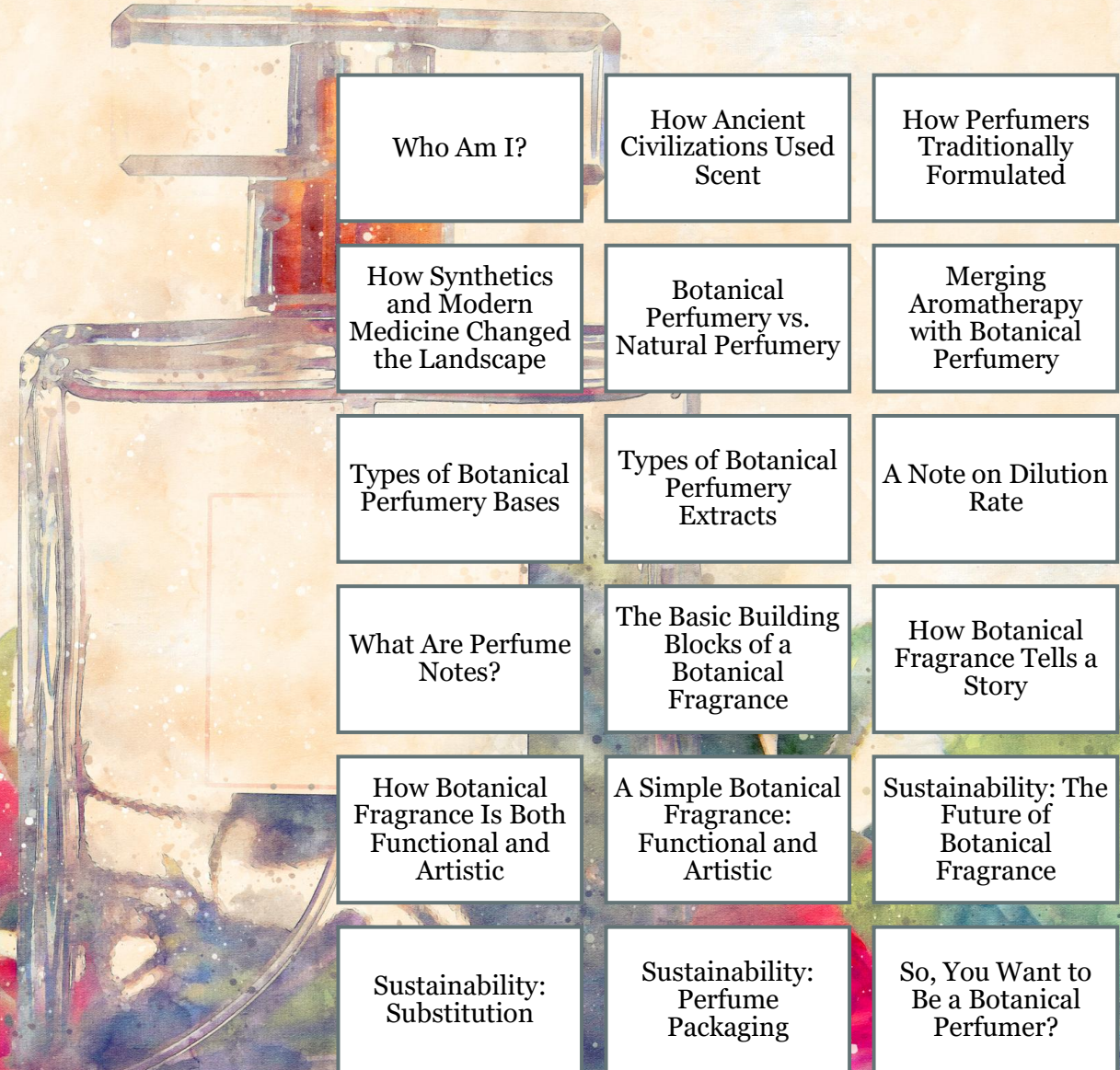
By Sharon Falsetto  
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NAHA Beyond Aromatics Conference  
Tampa, Florida  
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# What We'll Be Talking About



Who Am I?	How Ancient Civilizations Used Scent	How Perfumers Traditionally Formulated
How Synthetics and Modern Medicine Changed the Landscape	Botanical Perfumery vs. Natural Perfumery	Merging Aromatherapy with Botanical Perfumery
Types of Botanical Perfumery Bases	Types of Botanical Perfumery Extracts	A Note on Dilution Rate
What Are Perfume Notes?	The Basic Building Blocks of a Botanical Fragrance	How Botanical Fragrance Tells a Story
How Botanical Fragrance Is Both Functional and Artistic	A Simple Botanical Fragrance: Functional and Artistic	Sustainability: The Future of Botanical Fragrance
Sustainability: Substitution	Sustainability: Perfume Packaging	So, You Want to Be a Botanical Perfumer?



# Who Am I?

Sharon Falsetto Chapman

A botanical perfumer with an extensive background in aromatherapy.  
I am also a gardener with a special interest in aromatic plants and herbs.  
And I am an herbalist.

Other key attributes which help me in my work as a botanical perfumer:

Writer  
Storyteller  
Editor



# How Ancient Civilizations Used Scent

## Practical

Egypt: Sacred offerings made to the Gods on a daily basis in the temples

Egypt: Ancient Tombs (Mummification)

Ancient Greeks: Scented oils were used as a testimony of good hospitality

Romans: Lavishly used aromatic plants such as roses for banquets and social status

## Cosmetic

Egypt: Macerated roses and oils in pomades

Ancient Greeks: Scented both hair and feet with aromatic oils

Ancient Pompeii/Romans: Cosmetic lotions with medicinal properties

France Marie Antoinette (1700s): Cosmetic perfumes which were medicinal too.

## Health

Egypt: Burning of aromatic herbs in the squares for sanitization

Greek Megallus created the perfume Megaleion for inflammation and wounds

Greek soldiers: Scented oils and creams for battle wounds, sun protection, hygiene issues

Medieval: Black Death: Aromatic herbs burned, worn, and for protection.

# How Perfumers Traditionally Formulated



From botanicals (no isolates/synthetics).



Perfume recipes were heavily guarded and often burned after formulation so no one could steal them.



Ancient royalty had access to the best materials/perfumers e.g. Egyptians Kings and Queens.



Gradually expanded into medical texts. But many texts lost in time.



Medieval times: Perfume Guilds, apothecaries, glover-perfumers made perfumes before books were published for the general public to learn at home.

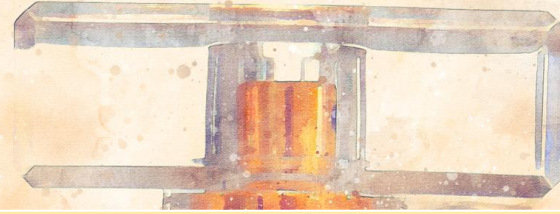


19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> centuries: As home use waned, perfumers became more guarded with trade secrets and formulas were written in shorthand/code only readable by staff. The issue of IP rights stood in conflict against demand for full transparency of ingredients used in perfumes.

Reference: *Perfumed Papers: The Evolution of the Perfume Formula* by Nuri McBride Class

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# How Synthetics and Modern Medicine Changed the Landscape



**19<sup>th</sup> Century Onwards:** The introduction of modern medicine separated from the traditional use of plants in medicine. This included vaccines, antibiotics, anesthesia and genetics.



**19<sup>th</sup> Century Onwards:** The introduction of synthetics replaced true botanical perfumery. The first synthetic scent was coumarin synthesized by William Henry Perkin in 1868. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chanel No. 5 was the first perfume to make major use of the synthetic compound of aldehyde. Although the 1880's saw use of coumarin and vanillin in two well known perfumes: Fougère Royal and Jicky respectively.

#### References:

- Payerchin, R., How Modern Medicine was Made: A Century of Breakthrough, Discovery, and Invention, Medical Economics Journal, Oct. 2023, Vol. 100, 10: <https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/how-modern-medicine-was-made-a-century-of-breakthrough-discovery-and-invention>
- Fragantica, Yudov, Mat, Coumarin: <https://www.fragantica.com/notes/Coumarin-259.html>
- University of Bristol (UK), Cotton, S., 2-methylundecanal: The Smell of Chanel No. 5: <https://www.chm.bris.ac.uk/motm/chanel5/c5h.htm>

# Botanical Perfumery vs. Natural Perfumery

**Botanical  
Perfumery**

**Natural  
Perfumery**

Use of the **whole**  
plant/extract

Use of the whole  
plant/extract

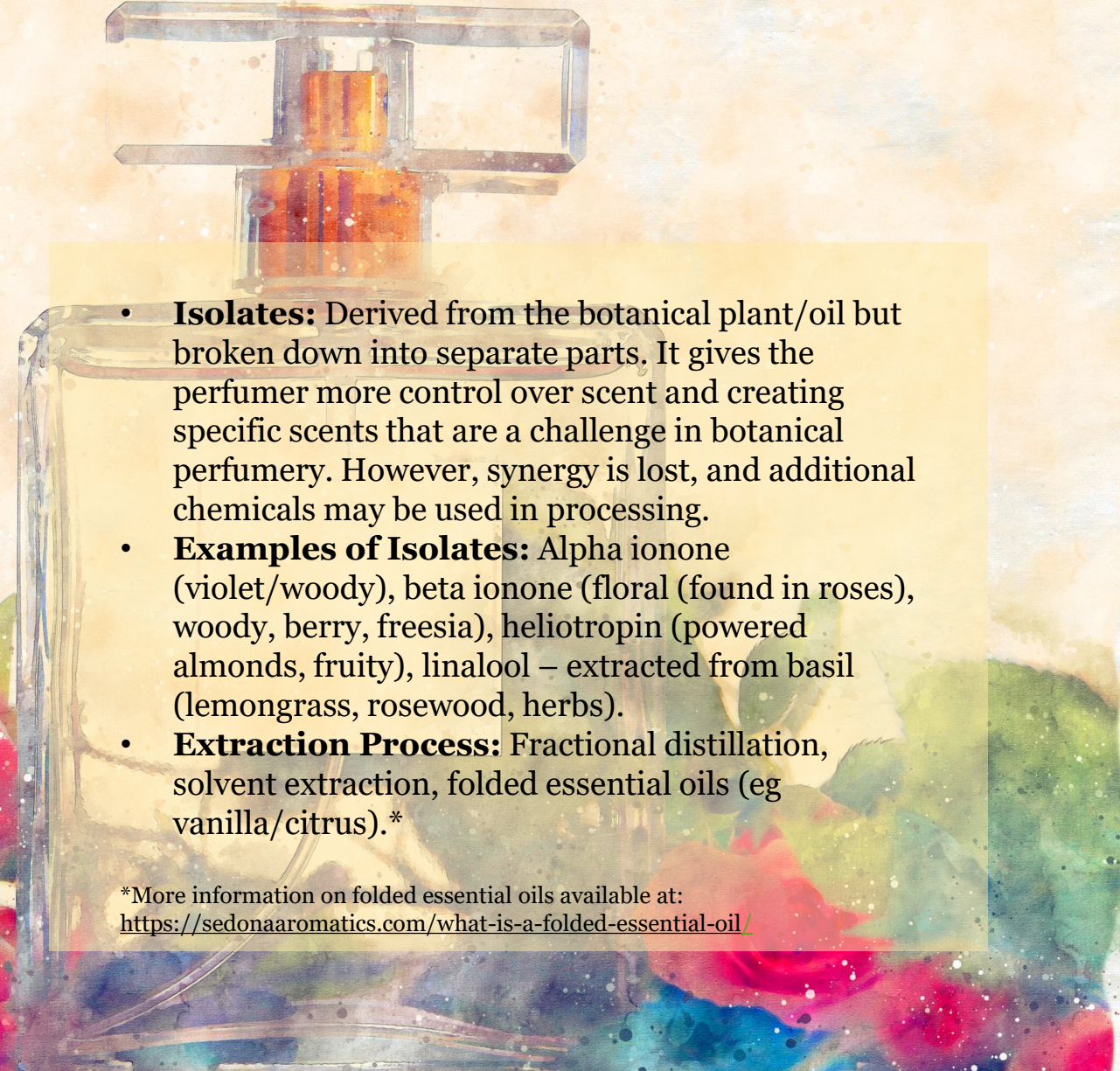
More difficult to  
work with than  
isolates/synthetics

**AND/OR** Use of  
isolates - see  
following slides

Possess therapeutic  
properties

Must be “naturally  
derived” (see above)  
but no legal  
definition (see  
following slides)

# Natural Perfumery: Isolates

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- **Isolates:** Derived from the botanical plant/oil but broken down into separate parts. It gives the perfumer more control over scent and creating specific scents that are a challenge in botanical perfumery. However, synergy is lost, and additional chemicals may be used in processing.
  - **Examples of Isolates:** Alpha ionone (violet/woody), beta ionone (floral (found in roses), woody, berry, freesia), heliotropin (powered almonds, fruity), linalool – extracted from basil (lemongrass, rosewood, herbs).
  - **Extraction Process:** Fractional distillation, solvent extraction, folded essential oils (eg vanilla/citrus).\*

\*More information on folded essential oils available at:  
<https://sedonaaromatics.com/what-is-a-folded-essential-oil/>

# Perfumery: FDA Definition

“If a product is intended to be applied to a person’s body to make the person more attractive, it’s a cosmetic under the law. Here are some examples of fragrance products that are regulated as cosmetics:

- Perfume
- Cologne
- Aftershave.”

*Check for your country’s regulations if outside of the United States.*

**Taken From:**

- FDA Website. Fragrances as Cosmetics. Accessed from: <https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetic-ingredients/fragrances-cosmetics>

# Interpreting "Natural" Perfumery




- “There is no regulatory definition for “essential oils,” although people commonly use the term to refer to certain oils extracted from plants. The law treats Ingredients from plants the same as those from any other source.”
- “Fragrance ingredients in cosmetics must meet the same requirement for safety as other cosmetic ingredients. The law does not require FDA approval before they go on the market, but they must be safe for consumers when they are used according to labeled directions, or as people customarily use them. Companies and individuals who manufacture or market cosmetics have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their products are safe and properly labeled. ”
- If a cosmetic is marketed on a retail basis to consumers, such as in stores, on the Internet, or person-to-person, it must have a list of ingredients. In most cases, each ingredient must be listed individually. But under U.S. regulations, fragrance and flavor ingredients can be listed simply as “Fragrance” or “Flavor.”
- “Here’s why: FDA requires the list of ingredients under the [Fair Packaging and Labeling Act](#) [External Link Disclaimer](#) (FPLA). This law is not allowed to be used to force a company to tell “trade secrets.” Fragrance and flavor formulas are complex mixtures of many different natural and synthetic chemical ingredients, and they are the kinds of cosmetic components that are most likely to be “trade secrets.” To learn more, see the [regulation on cosmetic ingredient labeling](#) and the [Federal Register notice for this regulation](#), which addresses “trade secrets” and the FPLA.”

#### Taken From:

- FDA Website. Fragrances as Cosmetics. Accessed from: <https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetic-ingredients/fragrances-cosmetics>

# Merging Aromatherapy with Functional Botanical Fragrance

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- Both are capable of having therapeutic actions
  - By introducing use of absolutes and tinctures, more creative blends can be used in functional botanical fragrance
  - Using alcohol as a base medium allows for more creativity
  - By applying the scientific knowledge learned as an aromatherapist, botanical fragrances can be functional as well as creative
  - Historically, ancient civilizations intuitively (and through lived experience) used botanical scents for health, wealth, and beauty purposes
  - Bringing back historical use before synthetics separated health and fragrance use

# Types of Botanical Perfume Bases



Solid



Oil



Alcohol



Advantages and disadvantages of each



How each base affects the overall fragrance



Why aromatherapy roll-ons are not the best botanical perfume base

# Types of Botanical Perfumery Extracts

- Tinctures
- Absolutes
- Essential Oils
- CO2 Extracts
- Enfleurage

# A Note on Dilution Rate

**Aromatherapy:**  
0.5% to 3%

**Aromatherapy**  
is specific to a particular  
ailment; e.g. back  
massage, facial cream  
and is oil or cream based

**Botanical Perfumery:**  
Eau de Cologne 2% to  
5%; Eau de toilette: 4% to  
8%

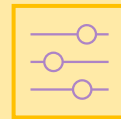
**Botanical perfumery**  
is “one spot” application  
on pulse points; usually  
alcohol based (essences  
react differently to oil  
based)

# What are Perfume Notes?

Note: Absolutes and some CO2s tend to be heavier than essential oils



**Top Notes:** Lightest, smell first, last for minutes to an hour



**Middle Notes:** smell second, last for several hours



**Base Notes:** Heaviest, smell last, can last for days

# What are Perfume Notes?



**Top Notes:** Bergamot,  
peppermint, lemon



**Middle Notes:** Lavender,  
rose, jasmine



**Base Notes:** Sandalwood,  
patchouli, oakwood

# The Basic Building Blocks of a Botanical Fragrance



Top/Middle/Base Notes



Bridge Notes



Anchor Notes



Extending Notes

# How Botanical Fragrance Tells a Story



**Audrey on Air:** Inspired by Audrey Hepburn's character Holly Golightly in the movie *Breakfast at Tiffanys* (1961)

**Key Attributes:** Fun, flirty, fab(ulous)

**Represented by Scents:** **Fun:** Mandarin-infused tincture, orange; **Flirty:** Rose, mimosa, ambrette seed, pink pepper; **Fab:** Jasmine, honey.

# How Botanical Fragrance Is Both Functional and Artistic



**Brown-eyed Brooks:** Inspired by 1920's  
Hollywood actress Louise Brooks

**Functional Attributes:** Promotes  
confidence and lessens social anxiety

**Artistic Attributes:** Initial warm, fruity note which  
becomes a dominant earthy, spicy, musky rose bloom.  
Tenacious and edgy with a surprise smoky note,  
reminiscent of 1920's dance halls and bars.

# A Simple Botanical Fragrance: Functional and Artistic




**Scent Prompt:** Promote confidence at a job interview

**Function:** Prevent anxiety, excessive perspiration, gastrointestinal upset

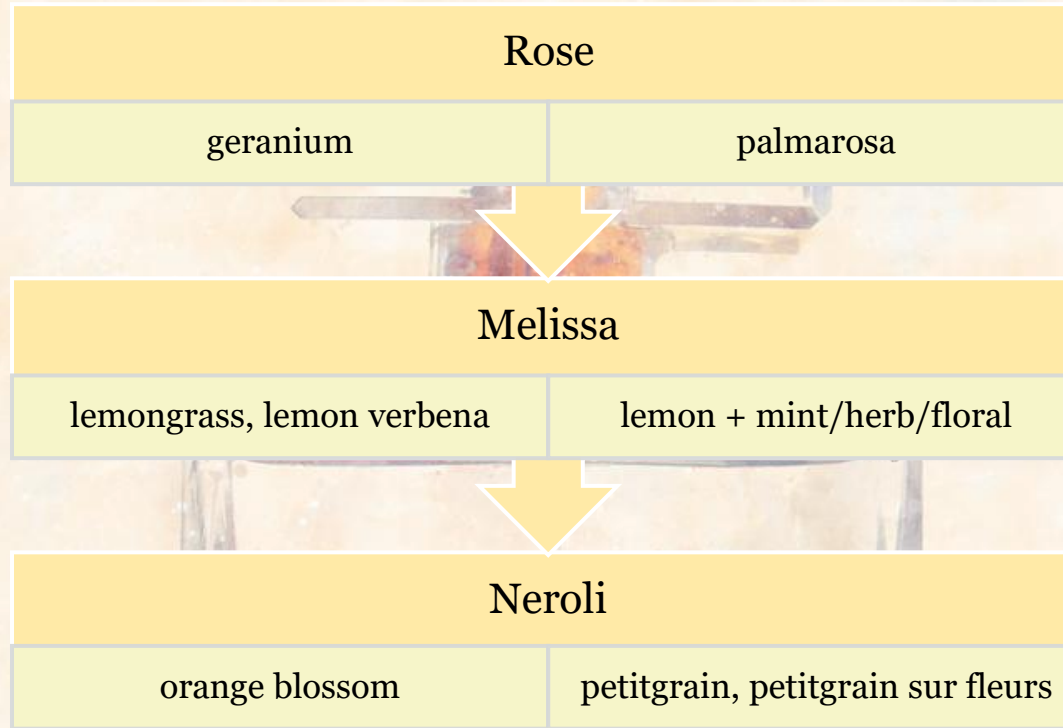
**Artistic:** A layering of scent that is light but lasting and makes you feel confident

**Scents:** Lemon, cypress, jasmine, cedarwood, sandalwood.

# Sustainability: The Future of Botanical Fragrance

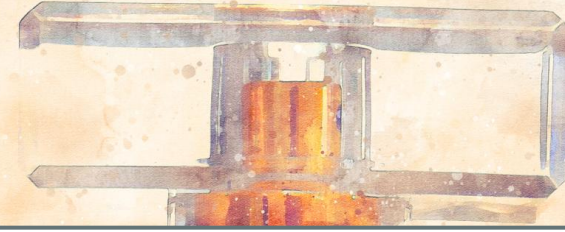
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- **Exhaustion of Plant Supplies:** High demand may lead to scarcity.
  - **Climate Change:** More water needed to grow plants in a hotter world e.g. roses.
  - **Carbon Dioxide Production:** Transporting precious plants and oils around the world for perfume making.
  - **Unpredictable Weather Patterns:** Hotter weather, less rainfall leads to changes in growing needs, harvesting needs, yield production, and subsequently oil production.
  - **Fake Challengers:** Are you buying the real deal?
  - **Local vs. International:** Can you grow and/or purchase some oils locally or substitute expensive imported oils with local alternatives?

# Sustainability: Substitution



## Other Considerations:

- Is it an absolute, CO<sub>2</sub>, or essential oil?
- Sourcing/supplier?
- How much are you using?




**Supplies:** Look for recycled paper and glass, reusable, or compostable

**Giving Back:** For example, does the supplier plant a tree?

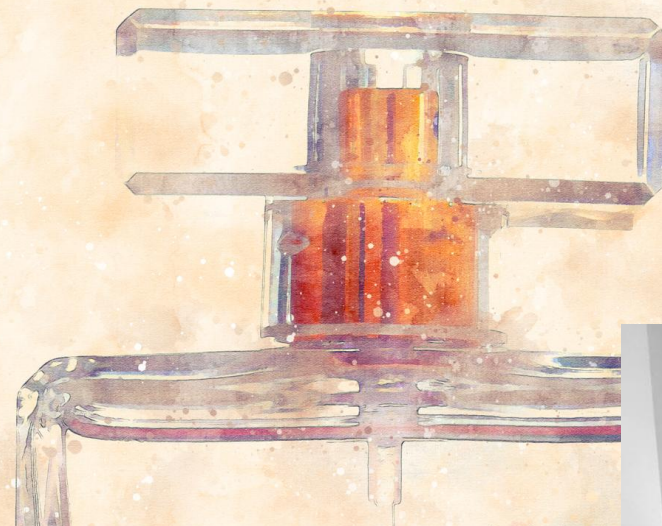
**Supplier's Business Sustainable Practices:** Carbon offsetting, renewable energy practices, waste reduction

# Sustainability: Perfume Packaging

# So, You Want to be a Botanical Perfumer?

- 
- **An Aromatherapist's Perspective:** Insight into my journey
  - Need to learn **how to choose extracts**
  - **Weave a Scent Story**
  - **Build a Fragrance Through Scent Prompts:** Beyond perfume accord building
  - **How I Can Help...**

Thank you for  
Listening!



- Sharon Falsetto Chapman
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- Shop Botanical Fragrances:  
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