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## COMPOSITION AND APPLICATION OF ESSENTIAL OILS FROM THE *CENTAUREA* L. PLANT GENUS

### Summary

*Centaurea* L. is one of a more numerous genus of the Asteraceae family, ranked among the group of Angiosperm plants (flowering plants), morphology and chemical composition of which are still not well known. Most often it includes long-term plant species, but also annual and two-year species of Gramineous plants and shrubs. Plants from the *Centaurea* L. genus are found mainly in an area of the Mediterranean Sea and Western Asia. This genus is one of the richest in terms of occurrence of endemic species. Particularly large amounts of *Centaurea* L. species live in Turkey, mainly in south-west, central and of eastern part of the country. Ethnopharmacological examinations of the genus showed that a substantial amount of these plants in many countries is being used in the folk medicine for curing various ailments. In this paper essential oils acquired from 50 chosen species of the *Centaurea* L. plants are described, with particular reference to their chemical composition and properties important from the point of view of their possible application in health care, cosmetics and food industries.

Key words: *Centaurea* L. genus, chemical composition, essential oils, pharmacological properties