

It's in the AIR

Drop by drop,
Fayetteville
woman has
distilled plant
essences into
a business.

A drop of liquid — plant essence and water — goes into a bottle for storage.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/
MICHAEL WOODS



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A refrigerator stores bottles of hydrosols — distilled plant essences with water — that Dabney Rose uses in food and water and to make skin-care items.

BY MICHELLE PARKS
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

FAYETTEVILLE — Bubbles of boiling water churn the lemon slices inside the clear glass flask. Steam rises and travels through an angled condensing tube, and the liquid drips into a bottle producing a pungent aroma.

It's not the lush, floral scent that often fills the kitchen. But Dabney Rose is trying something new, experimenting with this batch of hydrosol. She has used steam to distill plant fragrances for 20 years, including lemon tree blossoms. But she has never distilled the actual lemon.

Her setup is simple. A flask perches on a small springform pan atop the stove's gas burner. A clamp attached to a metal stand holds the condensing tube at a slight angle. Cold water from a hose circulates through the outer layer of the glass tube, cooling the steam that condenses in the inner tube.

It's the same equipment her father, a chemist, gave her 20 years ago when she started her relationship with hydrosols.

Rose grabs a spoon and tastes the lemon hydrosol a few times during the process. "That's a very nice lemon," she

says. When the flavor starts to weaken, after about 40 minutes, she turns off the burner.

She thinks she'll try lemon again — maybe next time using only the rinds, for an even stronger scent.

With a last name like Rose — her maiden name — it's fitting that her world is dictated by fragrance. Her interest started with aromatherapy and then evolved into distilling.

In distilling, she takes flowers and leaves from plants and trees — most of them from her garden — to create oil and water mixtures called hydrosols, which she adds to her cooking and drinks and applies topically for skin care.

"I use these things for everything," she says.

Rose prefers floral scents — of course — and says the fragrant mixture have a mental, physical, emotional and psychological impact. She often puts lemon blossom and frankincense hydrosols in her drinking water.

This steam distillation process is used to capture essential oils. When creating essential oils, the oil is

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