

A photograph of a vast field of yellow flowers, likely saffron, planted in neat rows. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing bright yellow heads and others as green buds. The soil between the rows is a rich, reddish-brown color. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees, and beyond that, a range of blue-grey mountains under a pale, overcast sky.

dōTERRA

Albania and Small Farmers

A Co-Impact Sourcing Story

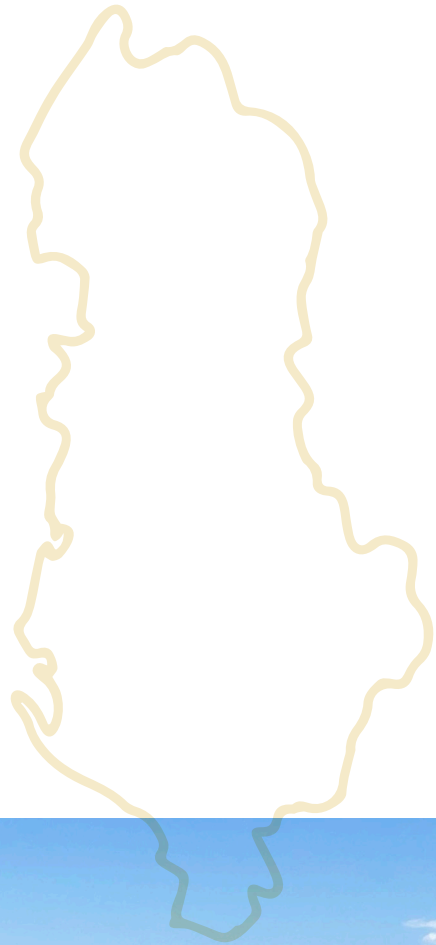


Helichrysum harvesting

dōTERRA's Sourcing in Albania

Albania has a long history of producing essential oil crops due to its ideal climate and fertile soils. dōTERRA began working closely with our partner in Albania starting in 2016 to develop a Co-Impact Sourcing model operation for producing premium quality Helichrysum, Laurel Leaf, Lavender, Juniper Berry, and other oils and ingredients. Essential oil crops, particularly Helichrysum, grow beautifully in Albania's long, dry summers, Mediterranean climate, and rich soil. Their production, with a higher profit margin than traditional crops, contributes to creating and sustaining jobs in rural areas and providing higher household incomes for small farmers.

To pursue what's pure, dōTERRA's partner proudly implements our Sourcing Guiding Principles, including the fair treatment of, and investment in, farmers and their surrounding communities. As part of that commitment, payments are provided to farmers within 48 hours of selling their raw material. Farmers are also offered long-term contracts, meaning that they have a guaranteed buyer for more than one season. With these long-term contracts, farmers can invest in their fields and plan for the future.



Laurel Leaf Fields



Distillation

Helichrysum

Helichrysum, a small perennial plant with golden yellow, ball-shaped blossoms, is harvested in the early to mid-summer when the flowers are mature. The plants are steam distilled for about two hours on the same day they are harvested.



Laurel Leaf

Laurel Leaf harvested for dōTERRA's essential oil comes primarily from farms in Southern Albania. These farms reduce the potential for over-harvesting the native wild-growing Laurel trees. The trees thrive on sloping, well-drained soils and are maintained at about 10 feet (3 meters) tall to facilitate easier harvesting. Once the trees have reached 3 to 4 years of maturity, the bushy dark green leaves and small branches are both mechanically and hand harvested for essential oil production. The process of loading the stills, distilling, and then unloading the stills, lasts about two hours.



Lavender

dōTERRA's partner, working closely with dōTERRA's Esseterre Bulgaria team, planted and began farming Lavender in Albania in 2018. The sunny, dry climate and rocky soil of Albania is similar to Bulgaria, and lavender thrives in both locations. Lavender, with its distinct purple flowers, is harvested once the summer sun has dried out the flowers—this is when they produce a higher volume and quality of oil. The steam distillation takes place on the same day as harvest and lasts about two hours.



Juniper Berry

Juniper Berries grow on shrub-like evergreen conifers that are native to the Northern Hemisphere and thrive in the Balkan area of Europe. The essential oil is extracted through steam distillation of the dark blue berries which are often hand harvested.



Koplik
Helicrysum
Lavender
Juniper Berry

Tirana
Helicrysum
Lavender
Juniper Berry
Laurel Leaf

Sarandë
Laurel Leaf

QUICK FACTS

Albania is located at the intersection between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas to the northwest of Greece.

Albania's coastline makes up about one quarter of its territory and contributes to a climate that is temperate with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers.

Albania is home to more than 3,250 species of plants, making up 30 percent of all flora in Europe.

dōTERRA sources Helichrysum, Laurel Leaf, Lavender, Juniper Berry, Vitex, and other oils from Albania.

In Albanian, the name of the country is Shqipëria, meaning Land of the Eagles.

The Albanian flag is a red background with a two-headed black eagle in the center representing the north and south reuniting during the time of the national hero Gjergj Kastrioti, also known as Skanderbeg.



dōTERRA Healing Hands Foundation and Albania

The dōTERRA Healing Hands Foundation has supported several projects in the communities of essential oil farmers in Albania. Projects are selected based on the needs and requests of sourcing communities, or communities in which farmers and their families live. Leaders in sourcing communities identify the projects, which are then reviewed, approved, and funded by dōTERRA Healing Hands.

Some project highlights include:

Temporary shelters: In November 2019, Albania experienced a devastating 6.4 magnitude earthquake 21 miles (34 km) northwest of the capital, Tirana. The dōTERRA Healing Hands donated funds to help construct temporary shelters, provide health support, and address urgent basic needs, supporting over 1,100 people affected by the earthquake.

School bathrooms: With donations from dōTERRA Healing Hands, bathrooms in two rural schools were reconstructed to support regular student attendance, particularly for girls. Before the bathrooms were improved, students would often walk an average of 30 minutes to use the bathroom facilities in their homes, and many, especially girls, would not return for the remainder of their classes. After the bathroom reconstruction, female student attendance improved from 65% to between 90 and 100% attendance.

Anti-human trafficking program: dōTERRA Healing Hands has partnered with the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation to support a program aimed at the prevention of human trafficking for youth living close to Albania's southern border with Greece, particularly in rural areas. The program, led by a social worker and psychologist, provides in-person and online trainings and activities for youth on leadership, healthy relationships, self-realization, community activism, and volunteering service learning. In addition, a 10-month training program for state social workers has been implemented to increase their capacity for rescue, trauma support, and prevention.



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References