Anxiety Cure: Take Time to Smell the Flowers

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Scientists in Germany have found that the scent of a Gardenia packs as much of an anti-anxiety punch as valium. They found that people who took a big whiff of the plant Gardenia jasminoides had the same biochemical reaction in their brains as people who took an anti-anxiety medication. The researchers have patented their findings.

Specifically, they found that two key fragrances emitted by Gardenias, Vertacetal-coeur (VC) and the chemical variation (PI24513, had an effect on the brain signaling molecule called GABA. If they can document in a clinical trial the benefits of the scents on anxiety and sleep, it could usher in a new era of treatment that doesn't have the side effects and addictive properties of barbiturates.

If you're one of those who have turned up your nose at the notion of aroma-therapy, it's time to take a second look. Researchers have previously shown that the sense of smell is one of the most potent triggers for memory and emotion. Thus, not everything dreamed up by crunchy granola-loving new-agey types is quackery. This study is the proof.

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