

China's Largest Comprehensive Perfumery

By Chen Xunyu, Beijing, China

The 30-year-old "factory of good smells," known as the Guangzhou Baihua Perfumery, is capable of turning out six-hundred different varieties of aromatics, spices and essences, one sixth derived from natural substances.

Sophisticated in the production of natural fragrances for years, the factory is located on the southern bank of the Pearl River in an area surrounded by flowery beds and gardens. In fact, Guangzhou is famous as "the flower city," known for its moonlit flower fields. In the blossom season from May to October, peasants in nearby districts deliver to the perfumery each day an average of 10,000 kilograms of flowers, 90 percent of its needs. The remainder is bought from other provinces.

Located in the tropical zone, Guangzhou and environs abound in aromatic plants such as lilac, magnolia, eucalyptus, lemon, litchi, banana, pineapple, mango and citronella grass. Shanghai, China's cosmetics and essence manufacturing center, ships in much of the raw materials it needs from Guangzhou and other parts of South China.

For most of the year, a variety of colors surrounds the perfumery, the largest producer of such a wide range of aromatics and essences in China. Aromatic plants even cover the ridges between flower fields. Each day, after delivery of flower buds to the perfumery, workers spread them out in shady houses for five to six hours, then deliver them into drum-like rolling machines. Through extracting, concretes are produced. They, in turn, can be compounded with other chemicals to make perfumes.

In the factory itself, mixed smells from four workshops fill the air. Here are produced natural fra-

grances, aromatic chemicals, emulsified essences and meat essences. In the lab, highly experienced master technicians blend aromatic materials to produce a desired fragrance.

Historically, natural fragrances represented the principal product, and they remain so today. During the first ten months of 1986, the perfumery produced some 300 tons of aromatics and 1,500 tons of essences with an output value of some 50 million yuan (U.S. \$13.5 million), one-tenth of the national output value of the aromatic industry, according to Wang Cuiwen, deputy director of the Guangzhou Baihua Perfumer.

Two-thirds of the perfumery's output consists of food flavorings and other essences used in cosmetics, cigarettes, wine and soap making. Exports of essences were U.S. \$43,000 while exports of aromatics and aromatic chemicals reached U.S. \$642,000.

Early in the 1950s, only jasmine, Chinese jas-

Guangzhou Baihua, Perfumery Aromatics, Essential Oils and Aromatic Chemicals—1985

<u>Main Products</u>	<u>Total Output</u>
jasmine concrete	
Chinese jasmine concrete	3 tons
michelia alba concrete	
patchouli oil	20 tons
michelia alba oil	
citronello1	
geraniol	
hydroxycitronellal	360 tons
geranyl acetate	
coconut aldehyde	
geranyl formate	
geranyl butyrate	

mine, rose, *Michelia alba*, sour orange, sweet orange, and pomelo could be extracted for natural fragrances. At present, more than one-hundred kinds of aromatics and essential oils can be extracted, distilled and absorbed from leaves, stems and fruits of aromatic plants. Main products include jasmine concrete, cassia oil, citronella oil, sassafras oil, basil oil and other highly-priced varieties such as *Michelia alba* leaf oil, vetiver oil and cananga oil.

Before 1983, lab technicians used their own noses to analyze different compositions in essential oils and essences. Now computers provide the information more quickly and accurately.

Just two years ago, the perfumery began producing essences of meat, chicken and seafood, with an output of ten tons annually.

Recently it has turned its attention to flavoring essences to provide long-lasting, fresh fruit taste in certain bottled and packaged drinks. Essence of cola is used by Guang-Mei Food Company, a Sino-U.S. joint venture. Essences made of citronella oil are exported to more than ten countries and regions each year. Emulsified orange essence is considered to be "reaching the international first-class level" by experts of the China Food Association. The perfumery exports some essences to Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Europe and Southeast Asia.

Although half of the equipment in the perfumery is more than twenty years old, since the government has turned its attention to the development of the aromatic industry, the perfumery has been listed by the Ministry of Light Industry as one of the key enterprises to be renovated. An ambitious plan to double output by 1988 is on the drawing board, to coincide with completion of a U.S. \$2 million equipment installation that will increase annual output value to more than 100 million yuan.

Equipment was imported from the International Flavors & Fragrances of the United States at the end of 1985 to improve the perfumery's citronella oil processing system. It will be put into production in the first half of 1987. Equipment and software will be imported from France and Britain to improve production of jasmine concrete and essences.

Because natural fragrances are a traditional export item, China is planning to grow more aromatic plants and improve techniques to boost production.

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