

# Benzoin Siam Resinoid Laos

*Styrax tonkinensis* Pierre



**Balsamic**  
Vanilla like



Botanical family : Styracaceae  
Method of culture : Traditional  
Part harvested : Gum

CAS TSCA : 9000-72-0  
INCI : Styrax tonkinensis resin extract

## Specifications

Method for obtaining : Ethanolic extraction  
:  
Appearance : Amber brown solid  
Constituents : Benzoic acid, vanillin

## Harvest period

J F M A M J J A S O N D



Originally from Laos, *Styrax tonkinensis* grows wild in the mountains of Laos, Thailand, and northern Vietnam. This large tree that looks like a birch is called benzoin Laos, benzoin Siam, or benzoin aliboufier. The tree's fragrant exudation, benzoin gum, is what is harvested. Production of this resin is artificially stimulated by making incisions in the trunk of a mature tree in the month of September. Several incisions are made on the same tree; a tree can produce for two to three years. The incision in the bark is in the shape of a "V" or a rectangle, so that the precious resin accumulates between the flap of bark and the trunk. Benzoin flows down the trunk in brittle, white tears a few weeks after the initial tapping. The year's one harvest takes place in January and February. The benzoin tears are then cleaned and sorted by size and color to be given different grades No. 2 gum, No.3 gum, or No. 5 gum each with its own olfactory qualities. The tears are then shipped in wooden crates to our production plant in Spain. The ethanol distillation of the No. 3 gum results in the solid No. 3 benzoin resinoid. Diluting this substance in the DPG solvent means the resinoid can be more readily incorporated into formulae. Its sweet, milky, vanilla-like smell is reminiscent of vanilla beans. The No. 5 resinoid, with even sweeter notes, is produced from the No. 5 gum.

Around the 14th century, benzoin gums were meticulously prepared for export. From the forests of Laos to Bangkok, whence they were subsequently shipped to Europe, benzoin tears suffered a long, hot journey that could alter their subtle scent. As the means of transportation were not the same as they are today, Laotians relied upon an ancient technique to preserve the fragrance of the tears: the resin was spread over large mats, along with ginger rhizomes filled with pork bone marrow. These mats were then tied up and wrapped. The gum's absorption of the fat helped it preserve, and even refine, the smell. This long process could take a year. After complete absorption of the fat, the gum was ready to be exported.

Advised uses : Aromatherapy, Perfumery, Cosmetic, Alimentary



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