

eco beauty: more than skin deep



Although standards of beauty vary across the world, what remains consistent wherever you are is the collective pursuit and appreciation of real, natural beauty in all its diversity.

Achieving and maintaining a glowing complexion naturally while holding back the hands of time is possible, as long as skin is adequately nourished from the inside out. In addition to a fresh, seasonal diet brimming over with skin's super-nutrient essentials, a natural regime working in harmony with the skin to enhance healing and cellular regeneration is the prescription for healthy radiant skin at every age.

Now that it is medically accepted that the body absorbs significant amounts of what is used on the skin, consumers are fast becoming far more aware of what they are using on their skin and hair, and the natural and organic sector is blossoming. This greener, cleaner and more sustainable mindset is here to stay, with a myriad of deliciously scented, all natural, botanical ingredients packed with the best of nature's very own healing treats. What's more, with the continuing refinement in the extraction of active properties from natural ingredients, the results and benefits of natural may soon match the performance of the technologically advanced synthetic alternatives.

While all products need preservatives to maintain their shelf life, safety and efficacy, this is even more important with natural and organic products that are more prone to oxidation and damage from harmful bacteria and fungi. Vitamin E

and certain plant oils are widely used to preserve and safeguard natural products. Additionally, by ensuring an absolute barrier is generated through effective airtight packaging, the safety and shelf life of natural products can be extended and improved.

As we strive to clean up our world, as important as actual ingredients within a product is the packaging. Whether it is plastic, glass or paper, it too must be entirely sustainable and leave no footprint.

natural + organic certification

The organic label tells you how an ingredient has been grown. It does not tell you how beneficial the ingredient or product is for the body.

The main benefit of organic systems is that they work in harmony with nature by creating a healthy environment with greater emphasis placed on building and maintaining healthy soil, nutritious crops and animal welfare.

When it comes to defining cosmetics there are no hard and fast rules. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), for example, only permits its seal on products that are 95 per cent or more organic and the remaining 5 per cent of ingredients must come from approved natural sources. The British Soil Association allows a product to be certified if it contains up to 5 per cent non-organic ingredients, but only if there is no organic alternative available. A number of certifiers exist in Australia, each with their own specific certification criteria, while in

some other countries a product need only have a minute organic content to receive the organic seal of approval.

Organic skincare does not necessarily mean chemical free. Every ingredient is a chemical regardless of its origin. Water for example, is technically a chemical and is uncertifiable. As many skincare products contain water none of these can be labelled as 100 per cent organic.

When purchasing skin and body products, always check the labels. If a product claims to be natural, read what it contains and most importantly what is left out (such as synthetic preservatives, fragrances, petrochemical and other suspect chemical derivatives).

Look at where the ingredients are produced, their carbon footprint and most importantly ask yourself if the packaging is biodegradable or recyclable. Always look for certification (natural or organic) from a credible certifying body.

The product ranges featured here have been meticulously chosen based on their utmost truth, transparency and respect for the earth. They contain only the purest of indigenous ingredients cultivated by skilled artisans from remote, rural communities from the Himalayas to the Amazon rainforest and markets of Morocco.

Some are wholly organic (and certified), others contain the very best of ethical, sustainable and natural ingredients, but all are free from harsh and suspect chemicals and share an ethical commitment to



THIS PAGE (FROM TOP): Mukti carries a range of fine eco-beauty products; a collection of fresh flowers and plants, as well as essential oils, form the basis of several treatments that emphasise affinity with the earth. OPPOSITE: It is common accepted that the body absorbs large amounts of what is applied on the skin.

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THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): The healing power of herbs and plants are harnessed in pursuit of beauty; the minimalist beauty of Nude's packaging design only serves to highlight the product within; Damascus roses are highly sought after for their divine fragrance.

OPPOSITE: The baobab has many properties that make it an ideal ingredient for beauty products.



protect the planet and nourish the skin in the most delicious way possible.

The Damascus rose otto in the **Ila** (www.ila-spa.com) range comes from Pawan, a spiritual cooperative farmer in the Himalayas. Pawan is a true adherent to his cause, respecting the planet and supporting other Indian farmers in maintaining ancient farming methods. His rose oil is amongst the purest and sweetest on the planet. His fields are fully irrigated using solar power. Instead of changing the landscape with artificial structures, jasmine and marigolds are planted to give shade and protect the delicate roses. The roses themselves are harvested at dawn when they are at their most fragrant and are distilled on site in a process powered by biofuel.

Japan may be the most futuristic of high-tech countries in many ways, but when it comes to beauty, tradition reigns, and many of nature's tried and tested ingredients remain at the cutting-edge of today's skincare prescriptions. Camellia oil has long been used by the Japanese to maintain healthy radiant skin and hair and **Chidoriya's** wild crafted camellia seed oil continues to be manufactured by the traditional hand cold press technique in a family operated factory in Kyusyu, Japan.

The entirely natural range of ethically-conscious **Bamford** (www.bamford.co.uk) body products is the epitome of exquisite, contemporary luxury. Full of ingredients of unparalleled purity, refinement and integrity that will protect and preserve even the most

delicate baby's skin.

The rarest of distinctly African herbs and fynbos plants like rooibos (redbush) extract and cyclopia (honeybush) both overflowing with nature's protective antioxidants, Cape camomile and essential oil-rich mongongo nut oil can be found in the simply organic and sustainable **Maruwa Range** from South Africa.

Deforestation is not on the agenda at **Nude** (nudeskincare.com). The wild, oil-rich nuts at the heart of nude skincare ingredients are collected by hand from the forest floor or from the banks of the Amazon. Nude is carbon neutral, their packaging is entirely recyclable and some of their numerous dedicated projects include wind power operations in China and renewable energy and forest protection in Brazil.

'Safe enough to eat' is the tag line of the Australian-based certified organic range of **Mukti** (www.muktibotanicals.com.au) botanicals. The products are made in small batches to preserve quality and freshness and the pure plant-based ingredients are grown to the highest degree of purity to ensure each product is gentle on the skin and kind to the environment.

By choosing the **David Babaii for Wildaid** (www.db4wildaid.com) range of natural hair care products endangered wildlife preservation is being fostered. The celebrity-endorsed range created by Los Angeles hair stylist David Babaii in conjunction with actress Kate Hudson is at the forefront of Wildaid, the non-profit organisation's strategic campaigns to reverse the

devastation of the planet's wildlife.

The award-winning seeded packaging in the American-based **Pangea Organics** (www.pangeaorganics.com) range is compostable, biodegradable and plantable. Manufactured with zero waste and created from post-consumer newsprint, the company's boxes are embedded with seeds like sweet basil and flowering amaranth. After soaking a box, simply plant it and the medicinal herbs will start to sprout.

In Somalia, where aromatherapy-inspired **Aromatherapy Associates** (www.aromatherapyassociates.com) sources its Frankincense for its heavenly Rose and Frankincense Facial Oil, organic certification is non-existent. Organic is the standard process of agriculture and the frankincense is hand gathered from native trees.

Skincare products should be kept in a cool, dark place away from direct heat and light. Once purchased, a product will normally have a shelf life of up to one year (slightly less for active botanical and natural/organic products) after which it loses some therapeutic benefit. Always check the label for usage directions and expiry.

exotic ingredient selector

Argan (*Argania spinosa*): Extracted from the leaves of Morocco's indigenous Argan tree, argan oil is rich in essential fatty acids and antioxidants and helps protect and preserve the skin against environmental damage and premature ageing.

Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*): Oil

is extracted from the seed contained in the fruits of the African Baobab tree. It is moisturising, nourishing and anti-ageing with emollient and soothing properties.

Buriti (*Mauritia flexuosa*) is native to Brazil and Amazonia, the oil from the Buriti palm tree contains the largest natural reserve of provitamin A and is a powerful free-radical scavenger.

Cape Chamomile (*Eriocephalus punctulatus*): Endemic to remote mountain areas in South Africa this rare and fragrant aromatic shrub is packed with azulenic compounds that can help treat depression, inflammation and stress-related complaints.

Cupuacu (*Theobroma grandiflorum*): A creamy butter from the cupuacu tree native to Brazil and Amazonia providing long-lasting moisturisation.

Cyclopia (Honeybush): an indigenous shrub of coastal districts of the Cape South Africa, cyclopia extract is rich in anti-oxidants the herb offers protection against sun and environmental-induced skin damage.

Juazeiro (*Zizyphus joazeiro*): A native of South America the Juazeiro tree is known for its natural foaming saponins, which gentle skin cleansers.

Marula oil (*Sclerocarya birrea*): Extracted from the nuts of the Marula tree, it is rich in antioxidants and moisturizes, restores and re-hydrates the skin.

Manketti (*Ricinodendron rautanenii*): Oil from the kernel of the Manketti tree native to Africa and the Kalahari Desert. Rich in vitamin E, it acts as a powerful antioxidant nourishing and protecting the skin from environmental stresses and sun damage.

Moringa (*Moringa oleifera*): One of the oldest oils known to man, prior

