

5 NATURAL COSMETICS

At the beginning of my research into natural skin care, I bought and used commercial cosmetics carefully chosen after thoroughly reading labels. Continued research inspired me to make some of my own cosmetics—after all, it’s a very simple thing to do and it allowed me to experiment with particular ingredients which caught my fancy.

Within three months of using my homemade cosmetics exclusively, I saw substantial improvement in the appearance of my skin—in marked contrast to what had been happening in the preceding years.

The information in this section can guide you in making your own cosmetics. It presents guidelines, techniques, and recipes. Enjoy!

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INDIVIDUAL PRESCRIPTION

The IP or individual prescription is a phrase coined by Marguerite Maury, a pioneer practitioner of medical aromatherapy. It refers to one combination of EOs that represents a person’s strengths and weaknesses and that can uniquely support the body’s inherent ability to heal itself. IPs tend to be unique to individual people.

There are two sides to the IP: First, what your skin and hair need is unique. Second, that essential oils adapt to your unique needs. This adaptability may also extend to other organic substances, such as herbs and vegetable oils.

You can adapt the IP concept to cosmetics. Keep in mind several things when formulating cosmetics:

1. Not every recipe will be best for everyone. Consider recipes more as guidelines than absolutes, the specific ingredients more suggestions to help you get started. Recipes should be modified to fit your own skin.
2. Individual ingredients may have different effects on you than on other people.
3. Synergy is possible when combining ingredients.
4. Notice your responses to individual ingredients, both emotional and physical. Trust your senses: if you don’t like it, it’s wrong for you.

As in other areas of endeavor, perseverance offers amazing rewards.

NOTES

This section offers specific advice on combining ingredients, describes pH and its importance in cosmetics, and discusses cosmetic preservation by techniques and ingredients.

In all cases where a recipe specifies vegetable oil, use only unrefined vegetable oil.

Skin and Hair Care *au Naturel*

I have found that essential oils are the easiest way to incorporate herbal benefits in skin and hair care products. The one exception is facial steam, for which I prefer dried herbs (the EOs seem too strongly aromatic in such close quarters). I also use herbal waters in recipes specifying a liquid for their ability to strengthen and repair skin and hair.

Combining Ingredients

Some preliminary notes about cosmetic products: Cosmetics can be liquid, gel, or cream (or ointment, balm, unguent, pomade). A lotion is a combination of vegetable oil and water with an emulsifier (needed when fat is less than 50% of a cosmetic). A gel is a viscous liquid, transparent or translucent, whose body is derived from a gelatinous ingredient. You can turn a liquid into a gel by adding carrageenan, agar-agar, pectin, or a gel produced from the seeds of flax or quince. You can turn an oil into a cream by adding a solid fat or wax. An homemade cosmetic may not have the consistency of a commercial one—but don't think less of it for that. Generally, a product's consistency has no bearing on its effectiveness, only on the way it feels on your fingers and on your skin.

When melting solid or semi-solid ingredients (such as beeswax and cocoa butter), do so in a hot water bath: a glass container (like a pyrex measuring cup) set in a pot of hot water over low heat. The melting can be speeded up by cutting or grating the solid into pieces as small as practical. When using ingredients that heat can damage, such as EOs, add them after the melting and any other cooking has been completed and the mixture has cooled to lukewarm.

When using beeswax to thicken an oil-based lotion, the mixture needs to be stirred frequently throughout its cooling period to keep the wax from separating. Shake a lotion vigorously before each use.

Cocoa butter in a blend of vegetable oils that also contains jojoba oil will, over time, solidify in small particles that become increasingly larger. Such a mixture should be used up within one month to preclude such precipitation.

The easiest way to incorporate herbs in cosmetic preparations is with tinctures. You can substitute a tincture for an herbal water: in place of an herbal water made with 2–4 T. herb and 1 cup water use 30 drops of tincture diluted in 1 cup of water.

Honey can be incorporated in a cosmetic in the proportion: as much as 2 tsp. honey for every 4 oz. of product. Honey is water-soluble but not oil-soluble; it is best dissolved in a watery ingredient before the latter is incorporated into the cosmetic. Honey can dissolve in cold water in a few hours, so you do not need to heat the water first. I find it unsatisfactory added to an oil and a cream because of the sticky consistency that results. Honey in a cream can crystallize in the container, although it does melt on the skin. It leaves my skin feeling tacky, but that may be a result of the moderately humid area in which I live. I do add it to cleansers (including masks), toners, and herbal moisturizers, and I deliberately use it to dissolve EOs. Before committing to a honey, test it for allergenic properties by spreading a little on your cheek and leaving it on for 10 minutes.

It seems a shame to use plain water in cosmetics because it has so little to offer. Instead, I prefer to substitute herbal waters (infusions and/or decoctions) and/or floral waters, either in part or in total. Actually, because of the short lifetime of herbal waters, I like to use floral waters with added tinctures.

When using glycerin, add it to the water-based ingredient(s). Heat only enough to dissolve the glycerin, then stir.

Should the alcohol in witch hazel distillate prove too drying, you can (1) remove it by boiling it off before incorporating the distillate in a cosmetic or (2) mitigate the dryness by adding a substance like honey or glycerin.

It is particularly convenient, when making cosmetics with EOs, to use quantities of vegetable oil stated in milliliters. It works out that, in a 2.5% dilution of EOs in vegetable oil, for 50 ml. of product, there are 25 drops of EO (that is 5 drops per 10 ml.). Similarly, in a 5% dilution, for 50 ml. of product there are 50 drops of EO (or 10 drops per 10 ml.). Using the dark glass bottles from the pharmacy that have ml. markings on one side and fl.

oz. markings on the other, it is very easy to first add the EOs and then fill to the desired line with a vegetable oil blend.

In the recipes that follow liquid ingredients are specified in ounces, by which is meant fluid ounces (there are 8 fluid ounces to one cup).

pH

pH is a measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a substance. The pH scale runs from 0 to 14, where 7 is neutral, numbers less than 7 are acid, and numbers greater than 7 are alkaline. The endpoints are the most highly acidic (0) and alkaline (14).

pH gets its name from its definition as the power of the Hydrogen ion. The number is the negative *logarithm* of the effective H⁺ (hydrogen ion) *concentration* in gram equivalents (called moles) per liter. Expressed mathematically, $\text{pH} = -\log(\text{H}^+)$. The definition of a logarithm is $\log N = x$ where $10^x = N$. Thus a pH of 1 means that the substance has 10^{-1} (or 0.1) moles of H⁺ per liter of solution. Likewise, a substance with a pH of 2 has 10^{-2} or 0.01 moles H⁺ per liter of solution.

This definition is instructive in two ways. First, the fact that the scale is logarithmic means that adjacent numbers differ by a factor of 10. For example, 3 is ten times more concentrated-acidic than 4, while 9 is ten times more concentrated-alkaline than 8. Second, the pH is specific to the concentration, so diluting a solution with pure water (whose pH = 7) will change its pH. As an example, vinegar typically has a pH of 3. To reduce its acidity and raise its pH to 4, you must dilute it by adding 9 times its volume in pure water, which has the effect of making the concentration of the resulting solution 10% vinegar.*

The pH of the skin is slightly acid (about 5, but it can vary from 4.0 to 6.75) because the lipid film which naturally covers the skin contains fatty *acids*. Its superb buffering capability allows it to adjust alkaline cosmetics with pHs between 8.0 and 10.5 so that they do not harm the skin. Furthermore, the natural pH level of the skin and hair is quickly restored after the use of alkaline products, typically soap and detergents. It is not the alkalinity of pure soap that irritates skin, but the alkyl sulfates (like sodium lauryl sulfate) in detergents. On the other hand, extreme pHs can damage hair, in particular those acid solutions whose $\text{pH} < \text{or} = 2$ and alkaline solutions whose $\text{pH} > \text{or} = 10$.

The pH of a natural cosmetic has no influence on the results gained from its use.

Cosmetic Preservation

The FDA's *Cosmetic Handbook* "contains valuable information on FDA's requirements and policies for safe production ... of cosmetics." Their regulations focus on sanitary manufacturing practices. They define an adulterated cosmetic as one which meets at least one of the following criteria: (1) it or its container is composed of a potentially harmful substance, (2) it contains filth, (3) it contains a non-permitted or non-certified color additive, (4) it is manufactured or held under unsanitary conditions which may cause it to become injurious or contaminated. While the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act prohibits the introduction into or the receipt in interstate commerce of any cosmetic that is adulterated, there is no statutory requirement that cosmetic products or ingredients be proved safe in advance.

In general, manufacturing guidelines are as follows: Buildings and facilities should be sanitary. Equipment should be cleanable and clean. Personnel should be trained, wear appropriate outer garments to prevent adulteration, and should maintain personal cleanliness. Raw materials should be stored and handled in a manner that precludes their contamination or deterioration.

* Lemon juice, which is often substituted for vinegar, has a pH between 2.1 and 2.3. It should probably be diluted to 1% in any cosmetic; that will raise its pH to just above 4.

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The FDA states: “Cosmetics need not be sterile, however, they must not be contaminated with microorganisms which may be pathogenic, and the density of non-pathogenic microorganisms should be low. In addition, cosmetics, should remain in this condition when used by consumers.”

To achieve these standards, commercial cosmetics are typically preserved by the inclusion of “appropriate biocidal and biostatic agents.” These agents contribute to the sanitation of the cosmetic at the time of its manufacture and after repeated use by the consumer. However, the FDA acknowledges that there are as yet no meaningful performance standards for preservatives.

You can easily achieve effective sanitation and preservation in your homemade cosmetics. First, follow the FDA’s guidelines for manufacturing. Second, keep your raw materials—the natural ingredients—safe from the deteriorating presence of light, heat, and oxygen. Third, include natural preservatives such as benzoin, wheat germ oil, and honey in your cosmetics. Fourth, place your cosmetics in “clean” containers—they offer the best protection against product spoilage when they are sterilized. Not only should the bottle or jar itself be clean, but so should the cap or lid and lining. Be aware that micro-organisms are inevitably present in bottle caps and lids, especially when there are cap linings. A container can be sterilized by submerging it in boiling water for 15 minutes (a good reason to use glass containers). Soaking it in a chlorine bleach solution (1 T. bleach in 16 oz. water) can also be effective, but then you must rinse off **all** the bleach before filling.

The fifth step is to adhere to effective preservation techniques during use. It is a good practice to prepare cosmetics in small quantities and to keep in the refrigerator, if not the whole product, then all but 2–3 days’ worth. This is especially important for water-based cosmetics, which can be quick to grow fungi and mold. Refrigeration can prolong product life. I sometimes freeze an herbal water for future use in one or more cosmetics. Avoid touching a cosmetic in its container; if you cannot pour it out, use an object like a clean spoon to remove the desired amount.

How to Tell When An Ingredient is Over-the-Hill

There are a few obvious symptoms that an ingredient is spoiled:

- the presence of mold, which is common in herbal waters
- the presence of a bitter or hot odor and taste, which indicates rancidity in vegetable oils
- the presence of a vinegar odor, which occurs in floral waters.

Essential Oils and Dermatitis

Essential oils can be a lovely addition to a cosmetic, both for their fragrance and their beneficial effects. As I have learned the hard way, for daily use they are best used in low dilutions or not at all.

- For facial products, use no more than one drop of an EO blend per ounce of product. If this proves irritating, lower it to one drop per 2 ounces.
- For body skin products you may tolerate a 1% dilution.

Higher dilutions are likely to be non-irritating when used for only short periods of time.

I have suffered dermatitis several times that were found to be caused by external application of EOs over a long period of time. The first times resulted in red, swollen, and painful eyelids. The latest time affected my lower lip.

DILUTIONS

Many recipes can be generalized by specifying amounts of individual ingredients as percentages of the finished product. The following equivalents are provided for your use when following such a recipe.

0.2%	1 drop per 1 oz. product	
1%	20–23 drops per 4 oz. product	2 drops per 10 ml. product

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2.5%	50–60 drops per 4 oz. product	5 drops per 10 ml. product	
5%	50–60 drops per 2 oz. product	10 drops per 10 ml. product	
10%	50–60 drops per 1 oz. product		
1%	0.5 tsp. per 8 oz.	1/4 tsp. per 4 oz.	1 drop per tsp.
5%	2.5 tsp. per 8 oz.	1 1/4 tsp. per 4 oz.	5 drops per tsp.
10%	5.0 tsp. per 8 oz.	2 1/2 tsp. per 4 oz.	10 drops per tsp.

SKIN CARE COSMETICS

The cosmetics in this section are grouped by type.

The following abbreviations are used:

C.	cup
T.	tablespoon
tsp.	teaspoon
oz.	fluid ounce
x	part (any quantity)

See Chapter 8 for equivalent units of measure which can help you convert one unit of measure to another.

Cleansers

There are many ways to cleanse your face. Some suggestions follow, but do not feel limited to them. I recently made a cleanser from equal amounts of honey, yogurt, kaolin clay, powdered oat flakes, and almond oil. I like it. Try different mixtures—have fun!

A cleansing oil is easy to use, simple to make, and highly effective. Rely on it for everyday use. In addition to cleansing the skin, it can also be used to remove makeup from the face and eye area. It is excellent for all skin types; it will not clog your pores or aggravate acne. Pour about one teaspoon of cleansing oil into the palm of one hand, press the two palms together to spread the oil, then massage gently into your skin for about one minute. Wipe off/blot your face and hands with a facial tissue or (reusable) absorbent cloth (unbleached cotton flannel sounds nice). Rinse skin with lukewarm water and an abrasive washcloth.

Cleansing oil is nothing new—it was used in antiquity. The baths of ancient Greeks and Romans started with an all-over oiling which was later scraped off with a crescent-shaped strigil. Will Durant in *The Life of Greece* claims that most people cleansed themselves with oil because they were “unable to spare water for a bath.”

Cleansing oil: 2 oz. vegetable oil, 2–4 drops EO (optional). Choose a pure unrefined vegetable oil high in oleic acid*, like almond oil or camellia oil. EOs that are gentle, non-irritating, and good for all skin types: juniper, geranium, lemon, peppermint. A blend of carrot, fennel, and juniper in equal quantities has a light and intriguing fragrance and is nice on the skin.

Floral water cleanser: 4 oz. floral water, strong herbal water, or witch hazel, 2 tsp. honey, 5 drops EO. I like this for traveling and camping.

Honey and water cleanser: Honey, if used regularly as a cleanser, will make the skin soft and velvety. A simple recipe is 1 T. honey in 2 C. water.

* Vegetable oils high in oleic acid are similar to sebum and therefore can best dissolve sebum on the skin.

Herbal cleanser: Make a strong infusion or cold water extract of cleansing herbs in a base of witch hazel instead of water. Add 1 tsp. honey and 2 drops EO for every 2 oz. cleanser. Apply with a cotton pad.

Creams and lotions can be used as cleansers or nourishers, depending on the properties of the ingredients. Lotions and creams share the same basic ingredients but differ in their proportions: a solidifier (lanolin*, beeswax or other wax, or cocoa butter†), a vegetable oil (single, blend, or herbal), herbal or flower water or pure water, and a blend of essential oils‡. Select the appropriate vegetable oils, EOs, and watery liquids—herbal water, floral water, witch hazel, or pure water. Creams made with herbal water and/or aloe gel may need refrigeration to preserve freshness; creams made without water will keep in the refrigerator for up to one year. Be sure to study the advice on combining ingredients earlier in this chapter before making a cream or lotion.

The basic approach to making a cream or lotion is to melt the solid oils and waxes, add liquid oils, stir and let cool to lukewarm. Let waters warm to lukewarm; if you heat them, be careful to not let them get hot. Combine vigorously. This approach emphasizes limiting the temperature of any ingredient and especially those that can be damaged by heat. Some people advise using a blender to combine the oils and waters, but all I can see is the work to clean it afterwards. Decide for yourself.

When used as a cleanser, both creams and lotions should be removed in the same way as a cleansing oil. I find that a lotion is more difficult to remove than a cream or oil, and for that reason consider it better suited as a nourisher.

The original “cold cream” recipe was written down by Galen, a Greek physician in the ancient Roman Empire. This recipe became the basis for skin creams for the last 2000 years. That recipe and several variations follows. You will find great variation in the proportions between solidifiers and vegetable oils and waters. Undoubtedly, if none of these suit, you can create your own recipe.

Original cream formula: Melt 1x white wax in 4x olive oil in which rose petals have been macerated, then add a little cold water while pouring the melted liquid from one vessel to another. Sometimes a little vinegar was added.

Cream #1: 1 oz. cocoa butter and beeswax, 3 oz. vegetable oil, 4–6 drops EO. Melt the cocoa butter and beeswax in a hot water bath, add the vegetable oils and keep the mixture over heat until it is completely melted and combined. Off heat, stir in any watery liquids (not in this variation, but in others) and stir until it cools and solidifies (I speed this up by sitting the container in ice water). Add the EOs when the cream is lukewarm. Refrigerate to complete cooling. You may want to continue to keep the cream in the refrigerator to retain that consistency (it will be softer at room temperature).

Cream #2: 1 oz. beeswax, 2 oz. vegetable oil, 1.5 oz. water/herbal water or floral water, 4–6 drops EO. For a cleansing cream, use lavender floral water and essential oils of tea tree and juniper.

Cream #3: 1 oz. beeswax, 2 oz. vegetable oils, 2/3 to 4/5 oz. herbal or floral water, 4–6 drops EO. This is very waxy in feel (too waxy for cleansing in my opinion), and would be good for lips.

Cream #4: 1/2 oz. beeswax, 1/2 oz. cocoa butter, 2 oz. vegetable oil, 2 1/2 oz. aloe gel, 1/2 oz. honey or glycerin (optional), 6–8 drops EO. When the wax and oil have been heated and melted together, heat the aloe gel and add to the oil mixture. If using honey, dissolve in 2 T. water and reduce the aloe by the same amount.

* I do not include lanolin in any of the recipes because of its animal origin and because I do not use it.

† The use of cocoa butter results in a softer consistency. Experiment to find the recipe that yields the consistency you prefer. The yummy chocolate fragrance of cocoa butter is very appealing and led me to use it a lot in the beginning. I substituted it for half the wax in the cream recipes. But the inevitable granularity of the finished cream eventually discouraged me from using it.

‡ Essential oils are always optional and especially so when the vegetable oil is an herbal oil.

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Cream #5: 1 oz. beeswax, 4 oz. vegetable oil, 2 oz. herbal or floral water, 7–8 drops EO. Use as much as 1/4 oz. of EO for a nourishing cream.

Cream #6: 1 oz. cocoa butter, 1/2 oz. beeswax, 3 oz. vegetable oil, 4–5 drops EO.

Cream #7: 1.5 oz. spermaceti (please substitute cocoa butter or shea butter or jojoba oil), 1.5 oz. beeswax, 9 oz. almond oil (you may substitute other vegetable oils), 7 oz. rosewater, 8 minims (9–10 drops) rose EO. This recipe is quoted by Mrs. Grieve from the *British Pharmacopia*, where it is recommended as soothing for abraded skin.¹ The substitutions are mine.

Citrus cleansing cream: 1/4 oz. cocoa butter, 1/4 oz. beeswax, 2 oz. walnut oil, 1 tsp. orange flower water, 1 drop lemon EO, 1 drop geranium EO, 1 drop tea tree EO. This cream is medium soft at room temperature, liquefies readily. Nice texture without waxiness.

I sampled a soft cream in Pt. Reyes Station, California that was neither greasy nor sticky, but left my skin feeling moist for at least one hour. It contained: olive oil, aloe gel, tinctures, beeswax, and glycerin.

Lotion #1: 1/2 oz. cocoa butter, 3–4 oz. vegetable oil blend, 2 oz. herbal water, 6 drops EO. For a cleanser you might use almond, apricot, jojoba, and/or avocado oils; an herbal water made from chamomile, lavender, burdock, yarrow, echinacea; and essential oils of carrot seed, juniper, tea tree, geranium, lemon, patchouli.

Lotion #2: 1 tsp. beeswax or cocoa butter, 2 oz. vegetable oil, 1/4 tsp. honey dissolved in 2 oz. herbal or floral water, 4–6 drops EO.

Soap bark cleanser: small handful powdered soap bark, 2 cups water. Make a decoction by putting a handful of soap bark in a pan and adding water to cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for an hour, adding more water if needed. Let cool, then strain. Pour some on your hands, work into a lather, and wash your face. Rinse. Preparation time: 5 minutes. Shelf life: 1 week refrigerated. Storage: Glass jar with screw top. Makes 2 cups.

There are two types of exfoliators—chemical and abrasive. Papain (from unripe papaya) and bromelian (from ripe pineapple) are chemical exfoliators. Many substances can act as abrasive exfoliators: whole meal cereals (like rice flour), bran, whole meal legumes (like garbanzo flour), seed meal (like sweet almond meal), clays, salt, fine cane sugar, diatomaceous earth, jojoba meal. Abrasive substances can be blended with honey, malt syrup, brown rice syrup, oil, and/or fruit and vegetable flesh.

Exfoliating cleansing scrub: Start with a base of powdered oat flakes (what we commonly call oatmeal) and kaolin clay. Add one or more abrasives such as rice flour (which has a very finely gritty feel), almond meal (medium feel), cornmeal (coarse feel). Add honey for its softening and moisturizing effect. Bind all ingredients with a liquid like yogurt (best choice), herbal water, floral water, or plain water. Optional ingredients include aloe gel, vegetable oil, dried powdered kelp. Amounts can vary. I use roughly equal amounts of powdered oat flakes, kaolin clay, brown rice flour, and honey and add yogurt until I achieve a paste that is easily applied to my skin—too wet and it will run off, too dry and it doesn't spread readily. Stored in the refrigerator, the cleanser can keep one week.

At its simplest, I keep a jar of powdered oat flakes, kaolin clay, and brown rice flour in my bathroom and mix a little in the palm of my hand with water just before using.

I love to use this scrub made with cornmeal (instead of rice flour) on my entire body, and then apply body oil right afterwards. The oil is quickly absorbed and my skin feels marvelous.

Almond meal exfoliating cleanser: Moisten equal quantities of almond meal and clay with a vegetable oil to make a stiff paste. Apply to damp skin with fingertips, adding enough water to facilitate gentle massage.

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Almond milk cleanser and toner: This is made from almond meal and pure water in a proportion of 1:4 (or 2 T. almond meal in 1/2 cup water), whipped 2 minutes in a blender, then strained; keep in refrigerator, good for 2 days.

Steam with EOs: 5 drops EOs in just-boiled water; let water cool one minute before adding EOs, or vapor will be too strong to inhale comfortably. You can add a few more drops every 5 minutes. Steam 10–15 minutes.

Steam with herbs: 2 T. dried herbs* in 1–2 pints just-boiled water. Lavender and chamomile are great herbs for steam. A good herb mixture: lavender, chamomile, burdock, anise, licorice, yarrow, peppermint. If you have the time, simmer this mixture in a covered non-reactive pot for 3–5 minutes before steaming your face.

Spa body scrub: Kosher salt (or coarse sea salt) and vegetable oil. Choose an oil with a good body, like olive oil. Massage deeply and briskly into the skin. Wipe scrub off with a towel, then rinse with water.

Bath gel: agar-agar gel, Montmorillonite clay, powdered oat flakes, aloe gel.

Masks

A mask is made with a base of clay, gel, and/or meal. Proportions are usually flexible. Liquid is added to achieve a consistency that can be spread thickly on the face; the liquid used to steam your face is an excellent choice (and it makes the mask warm). Honey, herbs, and EOs (2–5† drops per application) can be added as can moisturizing ingredients such as egg or avocado (if the skin is dry). Fruit and/or vegetable pulp can be also added; some are especially suited to certain skin conditions. When you make your own mask, make just enough for one application; any leftover mixture can be thinned with vegetable oil, honey, yogurt, floral water, or whatever and used as a cleanser.

A clay mask is active as long as it is moist. There are several ways you can prolong the activity:

- apply the mask thickly
- spritz often with floral water
- incorporate into the mask ingredients that are humectant like aloe gel, honey, or castor oil.

A mask is where I often combine ingredients that are cleansing with those that are nourishing. Some ingredients can be both, especially French green montmorillonite clay, oatmeal, and honey. Depending on the state of my skin, I choose EOs that are cleansing or nourishing.

Apply a mask with the back of a teaspoon. This is a little like icing a cake. It is easy to do and easy to clean up afterwards.

Clay and oatmeal mask: 1 T. French green montmorillonite clay‡, ½ T. powdered oatmeal, ½ T. honey (optional), enough herbal water from facial steam to achieve a spreadable consistency, 3 drops EOs. Juniper and orange EOs make a lightly fragrant mask that is cooling. For dry or mature skin, use more honey than water. Note: oatmeal does not combine well with all clays, omit when necessary.

* Once you've settled on a mixture of herbs, make up 1 to 2 cups worth and store it in a clean container.

† The number of drops depends on which EOs you choose. Some are too intense to be used at the higher concentration.

‡ After several years of using natural skin care products, I discovered to my sorrow that not all green clays are created equal, in fact, no two deposits of clay are alike. (Refer to the description of clays in Chapter 4.) So, if you try a recipe and get an entirely different result than what you expected, perhaps one or more of the ingredients is not the same as I used. You may have to experiment to find a combination of ingredients that does work satisfactorily.

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Herbal gel mask: 3 oz. glycerin, 1/2 oz. pectin powder, 1 oz. jojoba oil (for dry skin), 1 oz. honey (optional), 3 oz. herbal water. In a bowl gradually add pectin powder to glycerine, blending until there are no lumps. Add jojoba oil and/or honey. Stir in herbal water. Let sit 8–12 hours to allow it to thicken into a gel.

Yogurt and herb mask: Mix 1 T. yogurt with 1/4 tsp. powdered herbs.

Nourishing honey mask: Spread honey on your skin and massage in by tapping skin with fingertips. Leave on 15–30 minutes, then rinse off with warm water. If your skin itches or stings, remove the honey immediately*.

Nourishing honey and oil mask: In a pot, warm 1/3 cup vegetable oil and 2 T. honey. Stir to blend. Apply a generous amount to the face (and chest if you wish) and massage in. Leave on 15–30 minutes, then remove with warm, wet wash cloth. You may not need to apply a moisturizer afterwards. Good vegetable oils are olive and flax.

Nourishing honey and yogurt mask: Combine equal parts honey and yogurt, warm enough to blend. Apply to face. Leave on 15–30 minutes, then rinse off with warm water. You could add an essential oil, like carrot seed, up to 2.5%.

Stimulating brewers yeast mask: 2 T. brewers yeast powder, 1 heaping T. aloe gel, 1 egg white, a few drops eucalyptus EO (or other EO for fragrance or effect). Combine ingredients, stirring into a thick paste. If skin is dry, first apply a thin layer of a nourishing oil (this could be a plain vegetable oil like sesame). Apply a thick coat of mask onto the skin of face and neck, excluding the under-eye area. Massage in with upward, outward motions. Leave on until it dries (30–45 minutes). Rinse off with tepid water. This mask is most effective when preceded by an exfoliating cleanser and steam.

Toners

Toners can be made with a base of herbal water, witch hazel, floral water, vinegar, or some combination of these.

My favorite toner (floral water and honey): 4 oz. floral water (I use orange or rose geranium), 2 tsp. honey, 2 drops EO (I use bergamot). There are many good mixtures: orange flower water with bergamot, geranium, lavender, neroli, clary sage, petitgrain; lavender water with lemon, orange, clary sage, rosemary; rosewater with bergamot, geranium, jasmine, patchouli, rosewood, sandalwood. This is soothing, astringent, anti-inflammatory, nutritive, smoothing, slightly antiseptic. There are two ways to dissolve the honey in the floral water: use heat (with a hot water bath) or let the mixture sit over night. Then add EO and shake well. Shake a little before each use.

Floral water and herb toner: Add an herbal extract (like marshmallow or coltsfoot) to floral water. I have been adding an eyedropperful of tincture to 2 oz. floral water and liking the results.

Aloe and floral water toner: 2 oz. aloe gel, 2 oz. floral water, 1/4 tsp. glycerin, 5 drops EO, 80 IUs vitamin E oil (optional). Combine ingredients. Shake well before each use. Optional: add coltsfoot and nettle tinctures.

Herbal vodka toner for oily skin: 6 oz. strong herbal water (comfrey and chamomile are nice), 2 oz. vodka. Shake to mix. Store in refrigerator. If you use 100 proof vodka, this toner is 12.5% alcohol.

Herbal lemon toner for dry skin: 7 oz. strong herbal water (rose hips and chamomile are nice), 1 oz. lemon juice or vinegar. Shake to mix. Store in refrigerator.

Witch hazel and herb toner: 2 C. water, 2 C. distilled witch hazel, 1 C. dried herbs, 2 oz. aloe gel, 2 T. glycerin (optional, for dry skin)*, lemon EO in a 0.5% dilution or peel from two lemons. In a non-reactive pot, heat water

* I once had this experience but left the honey on until a rash with small red bumps appeared. I suspected the honey of being contaminated or containing allergenic substances, because other honeys have had no such effect.

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and witch hazel. Add herbs, including lemon peel. When mixture boils, remove from heat, let cool to lukewarm. Strain the mixture (cheesecloth is fine), discard herbs. Add aloe gel, glycerin, and lemon EO. Keep refrigerated. Yield: about 12–24 oz. Recommended herbs: nettle, horsetail, coltsfoot, marshmallow, calendula, comfrey, lavender, chamomile, peppermint or raspberry, lemongrass, thyme. (The larger quantity of toner is really too much to use up before it spoils, even when kept in the refrigerator. Solutions: make less or freeze half.)

Double witch hazel toner: Prepare an alcohol extract of witch hazel by steeping the herb in 100 proof vodka for 14 days, then straining. Prepare a vinegar extract of witch hazel by steeping the herb in raw apple cider vinegar for 14 days, then straining. (See chapter 4 for details on preparing herbal extracts.) Combine equal quantities of the alcohol and vinegar extracts. You may want to dilute with a bit of pure water, but I did not. I used this successfully on my acne.

Vinegar toner: 2 oz. distilled witch hazel, 2 oz. floral water, 2 oz. lemon juice or vinegar, 2 tsp. honey dissolved in the floral water, 3 drops EO. This is especially nice when used after a soap.

EO compress: 5 drops EO in a bowl of warm water. Soak cotton pad or cloth, apply to face for 5 minutes, repeat up to 3 times.

Aftershave lotion: 4 oz. distilled witch hazel, 2–4 tsp. 100 proof vodka (not for dry skin), 1–2 drops EO, jojoba oil (optional). Suggested EO blends: 3x cedarwood and 1x bergamot; 3x sandalwood and 1x frankincense; 1x sandalwood, 2x cedarwood, and 1x ylang-ylang. Add 1 drop clove and/or 1 drop cinnamon for antiseptic qualities.

Nourishers

An absorption base allows the active ingredients, such as vitamins, collagen, or EOs, to penetrate the skin surface and be absorbed. It can also be an humectant, emulsifier, emollient, barrier agent, and/or healing agent.

Vegetable oils can provide both an absorption base and “active” ingredients (pure oils can contain EFAs, vitamins, and minerals). They definitely have a moisturizing effect and facilitate the absorption of EOs. They are useful even on oily skin because they allow the sebum to drain gently. Oiled body skin feels wonderful. Apply the oil a little at a time so as to not apply too much and overwhelm the skin; too much feels greasy. If after 15 minutes your skin has an undesirable oil film or shine, simply remove it by blotting. Once you try using a facial oil, you may come to prefer the natural, dewy look of your skin to the matte, dead look achieved by some makeups.

Skin oil: Combine enough EO with vegetable oil to achieve a 0.2% to 1% dilution; massage the oil lightly into the skin for a moment, then, after 5–15 minutes, blot with a tissue until no excess oil shows. Choose one vegetable oil or make a blend of several. Ditto for the essential oil. You might want to use the same formula for your face and body, or different formulas.

A good way to explore the effects of vegetable oils on your skin is to try one at a time. Apply a little oil to two different places, one exposed to the sun, the other protected. Notice how the skin feels immediately after applying the oil, 15 minutes later, and 60 minutes later. I recommend trying jojoba oil, walnut oil, pumpkin oil, shea butter, and coconut oil.

Single vegetable oils are simple to use. Jojoba oil is nice for young skin that is not especially dry. But I found it inadequate after menopause. Coconut oil is especially nice after menopause; I now use it, by itself, most of the time on face and body.

I have tried many combinations of vegetable oils and liked most. Try one or more of these and experiment on your own. 1) Combine flax oil with wheat germ oil (10%), avocado oil (10%), and black currant oil (5%); I like it

* Honey might be better than glycerine, especially when using lemon EO as the honey will help its dissolution. You could use as much as 2 tsp. honey per 4 oz. astringent. The liquid may need to be heated slightly to help the honey dissolve. With a little patience, honey will dissolve in a watery liquid even in the refrigerator.

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better when made with flax oil as the major component than almond oil because the latter feels greasy. 2) Equal quantities of castor oil (great for treating acne, but may not be good for wrinkles), coconut oil, flax oil, pumpkin oil, and apricot oil. 3) Half walnut oil, 1/4 pumpkin oil, 1/8 coconut oil, and 1/8 shea butter. This was a long-time favorite. 4) Plain jojoba oil works well unless your skin is particularly dry. 5) Ditto for camellia oil. 6) In a 4 oz. oil blend, include 1 T. coconut oil and 1/2 T. beeswax for a thick oil. Reducing the coconut oil and beeswax by half yields a light-bodied lotion.

Likewise I have tried many combinations of essential oils. 1) A floral blend of geranium, bergamot, orange, patchouli, ylang ylang, and petitgrain in a base of frankincense and vanilla is moisturizing and rejuvenating, and is equally effective on dry legs and facial acne. 2) A blend of patchouli, frankincense, neroli, and lavender is good for mature skin.

A facial oil to treat dermatitis: 2 oz. jojoba oil and avocado oil combined, 1 drop bergamot EO, 1 drop chamomile EO. I experienced dermatitis around my eyes in the early days of experimenting with natural cosmetics and switching over from commercial ones. This oil relieved it. If you suspect EOs as causing the dermatitis, omit them from this recipe.

Aloe and herbal moisturizer: Combine equal parts of aloe gel and herbal water (while still hot), mix well; honey or glycerine is optional—use 1 tsp. per 4 T. liquid (remember it needs dissolving). Pour into a bottle. Keep refrigerated. Pat or spray onto skin before and/or after applying a facial or body oil. A simpler version of this is to mix in the palm of your hand a drop or two of an herbal tincture with a teaspoon of aloe gel, then massage into the skin.

Almond milk moisturizer: Combine almond milk with vegetable oil in a proportion of 3:2. For instance: 3 tsp. almond milk, 1.5 tsp. apricot or almond oil, 1/2 tsp. pumpkin or flax oil.

Honey lotion: 1 egg, 4 T. vegetable oil, 3 T. water, 1 T. yogurt, 1 T. honey, 10 drops lavender EO. Mix together in a blender. Pour into a 6–8 oz. bottle and store in the refrigerator. Shake well before using. Use about 1 tsp. at a time; press into face and neck, then work into the skin with gentle circular motions of the fingertips for at least 1 minute. Absorption takes ten minutes or so, and skin may feel sticky at first.

Oil spray: Combine equal quantities of a floral water and a light vegetable oil (like apricot). Put into a spray bottle. Shake well before using. Apply in a light layer and rub in.

Lotions and creams can be moisturizers. See the recipes in the Cleanser section. Limit essential oils as described above.

A simple way to nourish your facial skin with both vegetable oil and herbal or floral water is to apply one immediately after the other: First spray or pat on a little herbal water (with or without aloe gel, honey, glycerine, and EOs), then pat on and massage in a facial oil. You could apply the facial oil first, then the herbal/floral water. You can also use three layers: herbal/floral water, face oil, floral water spray.

For hydration, spray with pure water, herbal water, or floral water. EOs can be added, especially for their fragrance—herbal water may not smell as nice as you would prefer; sandalwood is a good choice. I made up a nourishing herbal water which I use for hydration as well as creams, hair rinses, herbal moisturizers, and hair spray to revitalize the natural waves and curl in my hair.

Sun Protection

Please read “Skin and Sunlight” in Chapter 2 for a discussion of the benefits and dangers of sunlight.

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Sun protection is focused on preventing damage from both UV-A and UV-B light. Staying out of the sun is one method, but it is unnatural—humans need sunlight! So be careful about how much exposure, how frequently, and the time of day. Should you have a medical problem that precludes sunning, honor it.

It can be beneficial to expose your skin to the sun at high noon on clear days, but only for a short time, maybe 15 minutes, on a regular basis. Apply coconut oil before and leave it on for at least an hour afterwards. This protocol gives your body a chance to create vitamin D.

At other times you should protect your skin from sun damage. The three methods of protection are concealing clothes, topical application of protective cosmetics, and a diet rich in essential fatty acids.

See the discussion of the sunlight absorption properties of essential fatty acids in Chapter 4. If your diet includes sufficient EFAs and you incorporate them in skin oils, you may find you are adequately protected for moderate exposure.

SPF, or sun protection factor, is a rough measure of how long your skin can remain exposed to UV-B radiation from the sun without getting burned; it does not apply to UV-A light. The “safe” period is based on your personal sensitivity to the sun: if your unprotected skin would burn after 10 minutes of sun exposure, when protected by a cosmetic having an SPF of 15, your skin will not burn until $10 \times 15 = 150$ minutes (or 2.5 hours).

Certain natural ingredients offer sun protection: A mild infusion of elder flowers is most effective when applied to skin just prior to exposure. Shea butter has a SPF of 6 and can be used both before and after sunning. Sesame oil has a SPF of 4. PABA, a B vitamin, screens UV-B. To encourage tanning, add carrot EO to creams or oils. Applying coconut oil topically allows “the body to adjust naturally to sun exposure, naturally increasing the body’s tolerance level over time.”³⁸

On the other hand, the citrus essential oils (like bergamot and lemon) are photosensitizing, causing the skin to tan more readily when the oils are present. Under moderate sunlight, this may be alright, but under intense sunlight, the citrus essential oils may cause dark spots and even severe sunburn. Consequently they should be used cautiously before sun exposure, and then only in moderate sunlight. They should never be used neat on the skin in the presence of sunlight or UV light from electric sources (like tanning booths).

When making a sunscreen with PABA, you may need to adjust the amount of PABA in order to achieve protection for the desired length of time. Start with 5–7%. It works best when combined with other sun protectors such as sesame oil, shea butter, or elderflower infusion.

Don’t leave cosmetics with EOs in the sun, or the EOs become ineffective.

For sunburn apply lavender EO neat.

Some of the following recipes specify hazelnut oil, wheat germ oil, and vitamin E oil. I have yet to find a claim of sun protection for hazelnut oil, so I conclude you may substitute—sesame oil would be good. I also guess that wheat germ and vitamin E oils are used as preservatives; an unrefined wheat germ oil will also provide some sun protection.

Elder flower moisturizer: 2 parts mild elderflower infusion, 4 parts buttermilk, 1 part apricot oil, 2 parts almond oil. Shake well.

Light witch hazel tanning lotion: 2 oz. water, 2 oz. witch hazel, 10 drops bergamot EO, 10 drops lavender EO. Store in refrigerator.

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Comfrey-aloe sunscreen: 2 oz. comfrey emulsion (2 oz. comfrey in 4 oz. water), 1/2 oz. aloe gel, 1 oz. glycerine, 1/2 oz. PABA powder, 2 oz. sesame oil, 1/2 oz. vitamin E oil, 1/2 oz. jojoba oil. Heat separately to 135°F. in a hot water bath the oils and the other ingredients. Pour hot oil into water mixture, stir briskly until mixture is cool and consistent. Put in a clean container and refrigerate.

Sun tanning oil: 3 2/3 oz. sesame oil, 1/3 oz. wheat germ oil, 1 T. vitamin E oil, 30 drops lavender EO, 10 drops carrot EO.

Light sun tanning oil: (for light-medium intensity sunlight only) 3 2/3 oz. hazelnut oil, 1/3 oz. wheat germ oil, 30 drops bergamot EO, 10 drops lemon EO.

Light sunscreen oil: A mixture of hazelnut oil, sesame oil, wheat germ oil, and vitamin E oil blended with carrot EO and lavender EO offers some protection. Apply 30 minutes before exposure.

Sunscreen oil (SPF 15): 2.5 oz. almond or sesame oil, 0.5 oz. vitamin E oil, 1 oz. jojoba oil, 2 oz. aloe gel, 1.25 oz. glycerin, 0.5 oz. PABA powder, 0.25 oz. panthenol powder. Heat oils separately from other ingredients, add aloe mixture slowly to the oils while stirring. Let cool to lukewarm. Pour into applicator bottle. Shake well before using.

Sunscreen lotion (SPF 15): 4.6 oz. almond or sesame oil, 1 T. jojoba oil, 1.25 tsp. beeswax, 0.1 T. vitamin E oil, 2 T. aloe gel, 1 T. glycerine, 2 T. PABA powder, 3.5 oz. herbal or floral water. Heat oils separately from other ingredients, add water mixture slowly to the oils while stirring. Let cool to lukewarm. Pour into applicator bottle.

Sunscreen cream (SPF 15): 2.5 oz. shea butter, 1 oz. almond or sesame oil, 0.5 oz. PABA powder. Heat almond oil, add PABA stirring until PABA is completely in solution. Melt shea butter in separate container. Add almond oil to shea butter. Put into jar while hot, and let harden in refrigerator.

After-sun oil #1: skin oil containing lavender, peppermint, or lemon EO.

After-sun oil #2: 2 oz. almond oil, 2 T. sesame oil, 10 drops lavender EO, 5 drops chamomile EO, 1 drop bergamot EO, 2 drops geranium EO.

After-sun oil #3: 2 oz. vegetable oil blend, 20 drops lavender EO, 5 drops rose EO.

After-sun Rosa Mosqueta and aloe cream: 2 parts *Rosa Mosqueta* rose hip seed oil, 5 parts aloe gel. Not for oily skin.

After-sun bath: 1 T. jojoba oil, 4 drops chamomile EO, 3 drops geranium EO, 1 drop peppermint EO.

After-sun hair treatment: Treat with almond oil, rosemary EO, sage EO, and cedarwood EO about 15 minutes before shampoo.

Other

Skin treatment bath: 1–2 T. apple cider vinegar (to soften the water, does not smell, added when filling the tub), 1–2 T. of a mixture of vegetable oil, EOs, and honey. I combine 1 T. vegetable oil, 1 T. honey, and 6 drops EO while the tub is filling, and mix it in at the end (if you add EOs before the tub is full, they will evaporate before you can get into the tub and reap their benefits).

Almond milk bath oil: Combine 2 C. fresh whole milk, 2 T. almond oil, and 2 tsp. almond extract. Makes enough for one bath. Pour into bath water. Enjoy a fragrant and soothing soak.

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Massage oil: 12–14 oz. vegetable oil, 1/4 oz. EO. Or, for 50 ml. of product, put 25 drops EO in a container, fill to 50 ml. with vegetable oil.

Nail strengthening oil: Blend and store in a bottle: 2 tsp. apricot oil, 5 drops jojoba oil, 3 drops carrot EO, 8 drops lemon EO, 2 drops rosemary EO. To use, add 10 drops of the blend to 1 tsp. avocado oil, massage it well into fingers/toes and nails.

Nail oil: 1 oz. almond oil, 2 drops lavender EO, 2 drops sandalwood EO, 2 drops cypress EO. Warm almond oil in a small bowl, add EOs. Submerge the fingertips for 10 minutes. The warm solution can then be applied to the toenails.

Nail oil for brittle fingernails: 1 oz. vegetable oil high in EFAs, 20 drops lemon EO. Pour the oils into a small dark glass bottle, shake well. Apply to nails regularly.

An article in the May 1981 *British Journal of Dermatology* reported that brittle nails harden and become normal after 2–6 weeks when the subject consumed evening primrose oil (which contains LA and GLA) daily.

Cuticle softener: Blend 1 tsp. jojoba oil, 5 drops carrot EO, 2 drops peppermint EO. Massage well into cuticle.

For skin fungus: Treat the affected skin area daily with a blend of 2 oz. jojoba oil, 50 drops tea tree EO, 20 drops lavender EO. An alternative carrier for the EOs is floral water. If the affected areas are extensive, aromatic baths with these oils are helpful.

Lip salve: This can be made in cylindrical molds or small, sealable jars; cylinder-shaped salve can be stored in an old lipstick holder. 3 tsp. cocoa butter, 2 tsp. beeswax, 2 tsp. avocado oil, 2 tsp. wheat germ oil, 2 tsp. castor oil, 5 drops rose EO, 3 drops chamomile EO. Melt all ingredients except EOs in hot water bath (be sure glass container has a spout or lip). Remove from heat, stir in EOs carefully. Pour into molds. Set in freezer for 5 minutes or refrigerator for 10 minutes. Store unused containers in refrigerator.

Seaweed gel: Use 1 oz. agar-agar or carrageenan (Irish Moss) in 2 cups water. For agar-agar, add it to the boiling water and let sit. For the carrageenan, let sit overnight, boil, drain.

Fragrant body powder: Start with a powder base of talc, arrowroot, and/or cornstarch. Add, if you like, fine kaolin or montmorillonite clay (1–2 T. per ½ cup of other ingredients). Optionally, add finely powdered herbs like orange peel, lemon peel, chamomile flowers, lavender flowers—try 2 T. per ½ cup powder. Add an essential oil blend chosen to please, about 9–12 drops to ½ cup powder base. Put it all through a sieve, mix well, store in a glass jar, and let sit a few days so the fragrance can mellow and be evenly distributed through the powder. At its simplest, this can be just talc and petitgrain EO (or neroli or sandalwood or—there are so many essential oils with lovely fragrances, you too may have trouble choosing).

Essential deodorant: Apply lavender EO neat. Some essential oils—like lavender—decompose and neutralize bacteria and viruses, thereby suppressing the organisms that cause body odor. This deodorant is especially useful after shaving, as it also heals and soothes the abraded skin. Other deodorant EOs: geranium, bergamot, petitgrain.

Air freshener: 4 oz. water, 6 drops bergamot EO. Put in spray bottle, shake well. Shake before using. Very effective, especially for cat litter box odors. Other deodorant EOs: citronella, clary sage, cypress, eucalyptus, geranium, lavender, lemongrass, patchouli, pine, rosewood, petitgrain. Choose based on your fragrance preference.

HAIR CARE COSMETICS

It is helpful to make in advance a batch of a strong herbal water of those herbs beneficial to skin and hair for subsequent use in body cleanser, shampoo, and rinse. Good herbs (those underlined are very recommended):

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comfrey root, nettle, horsetail, coltsfoot, aloe gel, yarrow, burdock, marshmallow, calendula, anise seed, thyme. Keep the mixture refrigerated.

Essential oils can be added to any commercial shampoo, rinse, or conditioner. For 16 oz. of product, add as much as 1/4 oz. EO (this is about a 2% dilution). Herbal tinctures can also be added.

Shampoo

Because your hair changes with your age and environment and because no commercial shampoo contains every important ingredient, it can be advantageous to use several (as many as 3 or 4) commercial shampoos and alternate between them every few days. If you make your own shampoo, you can include every beneficial ingredient!

Many shampoos can be made with soap, and several such recipes follow. I find soap too drying, regardless of how little I used. You may be able to sufficiently mitigate the drying effect of soap by the addition of protein, vegetable oil, herbs, and essential oils. Also, you might further dilute the shampoo with water before use.

A good herbal shampoo contains herbs for cleansing, emolliency, color, conditioning, and scent (optional) according to *Jeanne Rose's Herbal Body Book*. She classifies herbs by uses, such as (the following list is not complete):

Cleansing	Emollient	Conditioning	Color
elder	comfrey	cherry bark	henna - red
kelp	marshmallow root	ragweed (or	calendula - red
witch hazel bark	mint	ragwort)	clove - red/brown
yarrow	slippery elm	nettle	chamomile -
	calendula	rosemary	blonde/brown
		chamomile	sage - red/brown
		burdock root	rosemary - dark

Egg shampoo: This is one of the oldest hair cleansers, and still one of the most effective. Leaves hair clean, shiny, light, and airy. 1 or 2 fresh eggs at room temperature, 2–3.5 oz. water at body temperature. Blend at low speed 30 seconds. Wet hair, massage mixture slowly and systematically into the scalp—a long massage is important for successful results. Rinse thoroughly under lukewarm water (warmer water will cook the egg!). Rinse with 1 T. apple cider vinegar per 1 quart water.

Herb shampoo: 2 tsp. tea tree EO, 1 tsp. glycerine, 1 C. strong herbal water. Combine and shake well until blended.

Soap bark shampoo #1: 100 parts powdered soap bark, 400 parts alcohol, 20 drops bergamot EO. This recipe comes from Mrs. Grieve¹, who says soap bark “is said to promote the growth of hair.” I can find no quantification of “parts”, so, however you choose, be careful to limit the amount of the EO to 2%.

Soap bark shampoo #2: Make a decoction of the bark by adding two tablespoons of dried herb to one quart of water in a pot and bring to boil. You may also add 1 tablespoon of dried emollient herbs (like comfrey, marshmallow, Irish moss). Cover. Reduce heat to medium and simmer twenty minutes. Strain. Cool. Add scent or nutrient ingredients as desired. Use as normal shampoo.

Fresh soapwort shampoo: “All parts of the [soapwort] plant produce a gentle, cleansing lather that does not sting the eyes or make the hair brittle.”¹⁴ Use about 10 leafy soapwort stems, 6–8” long, 16 oz. water, other herbs. Cut the stems into short lengths, put them in a non-reactive pot, bruise them lightly with a wooden spoon, and add the water. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. If the shampoo is for immediate use, add two large handfuls of fresh herbs while the liquid is still hot, cover and allow it to cool, then strain. If the shampoo is for

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later use, allow the liquid to cool, then strain it and store it in a glass container; before shampooing, add 3 T. strong herbal water. Use all the liquid for one hair wash.

Dried soapwort shampoo #1: 1 oz. dried soapwort root, 20 oz. boiling water, 1 oz. dried herbs. Cover the broken soapwort roots with the boiling water, cover the container, and let soak 12 hours. Place in a non-reactive pot, bring to a boil, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the dried herbs, stir, cover, and let cool. Strain into a jar and use for one hair wash. You may wish to add 1 tsp. vegetable oil and/or 1% EOs.

Dried soapwort shampoo #2: ½ oz. dried soapwort root, crushed, 4 C. boiling water. Cover the broken soapwort roots with the boiling water and let soak at least 1 hour. Strain into a jar. You'll need at least 2 T. for one hair wash.

Liquid soap and EO shampoo: 2/3 C. liquid soap (such as coconut), 1/3 C. water or herbal water* and/or aloe gel, 1 tsp. vegetable oil (jojoba, olive, avocado, whatever), 1 tsp. soy protein powder, 7 drops EO. Blend the protein powder with the water. Add the soap to the water to minimize foaming; pour all ingredients into a bottle, shake lightly. Only a little shampoo is needed at a time.

This recipe can be modified in various ways. The proportions of liquid soap to herbal water can be reduced; I have used soap in the amount of 1/3 of the herbal water. Use more vegetable oil if your hair is often exposed to strong sun; however, using more may cause hair to be greasy. For seborrhea, hair loss, and/or dandruff be sure to include aloe gel and to use jojoba oil (I think avocado oil would be another good choice). NOTE: I find that the jojoba oil gives a waxy finish to my hair that I do not like; I do like walnut oil.

Olive oil castile soap and herb shampoo: To make 8 oz. shampoo, begin with an infusion of 1 oz. or more mixed herbs in 10 oz. water, gently simmered 5–10 minutes, then strain the liquid into a bowl or large jar. Grate in 1–2 oz. solid olive oil castile soap, or use the same amount of liquid soap. Stir until soap melts. Add about 1/2–1% EO (15–60 drops). Used sparingly it will last one person 3–8 weeks.

Iris shampoo: Powdered orris root can be used as a dry shampoo. Orris root is the dried and ground violet-scented root of a Dalmatian iris (*Iris pallida*, *I. florentina*, and *I. germanica*) harvested wild in Italy.

Shampoo for chlorine-damaged hair could include corn syrup to help remove chlorine.

Rinse

The basic ingredients in a rinse are water, herbs, essential oils, apple cider vinegar, and lemon juice. They can be combined in different ways to meet a variety of needs. Choose appropriate herbs and EOs. You can make herbal waters (extracts) and/or use tinctures.

Vinegar rinse: 5 oz. water, 2 oz. apple cider vinegar, 10–15 drops EO (like rosemary, sage, geranium, rosewood). I like this rinse, it leaves my hair soft. It is especially useful after a soap-based shampoo.

Herbal rinse: Make an infusion of herbs beneficial to your hair. Add optional 3–5 drops EO. Pour over hair several times until the hair is thoroughly saturated, leave in or rinse out after 5 minutes. Recommended herbs: chamomile, lavender, rosemary, calendula, lemongrass, nettles, burdock, comfrey root, wild cherry bark. When this rinse is made with nettles, it could be left in to add strength, luster, and fullness.

Gel herbal rinse: Start with the herbal rinse above. Add for every quart of liquid: 1 tsp. agar-agar and ½ cup apple cider vinegar; bring to a boil and simmer for 3 minutes. As it cools, the rinse will gel. Store in air-tight sterilized bottles, refrigerated. Use the rinse in small amounts: one palmful for shoulder length hair or shorter, 2 palmfuls for longer hair. Do not rinse out. Use up opened bottles within one month.

* You can use the herbal water from steaming your face: Let it sit overnight, then strain it into a large glass jar.

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Shine rinse: 1 C. apple cider vinegar or juice from 2 lemons, 2 C. water, 25 drops rosemary/rosewood EO (for dark hair) or Roman chamomile EO for blond hair. Yields 4 C. rinse, enough to rinse short hair many times. Add peppermint EO if scalp itching is intense. Rinse may be left in the hair.

Conditioner

Conditioning herbal rinse: Make an infusion of 1–4 heaping T. mixed herbs in 1 C. water (a very strong infusion); simmer covered in a non-reactive pot 3–5 minutes, then strain. Add 1 C. cool water to the infusion. Pour infusion over damp (but not wet) hair several times, collecting it in a bowl under the hair; rub it gently into the scalp and let it drip down the hair shafts until hair is thoroughly saturated. Squeeze out excess, do not rinse. Good herbs: cherry bark, ragweed, nettle, rosemary, chamomile, burdock root, coltsfoot, horsetail, comfrey root, aloe gel, marshmallow.

Aloe gel conditioner: Combine ¼ C. aloe gel, juice of ½ lemon, and about 3 drops EO. Apply all of the mixture to damp, shampooed hair. Leave on 3–5 minutes, then rinse thoroughly. This conditioner is moisturizing and purifying.

Daily conditioning hair oil: Adds luster and gloss without oiliness, reduces snarls and tangles, stimulates growth. Combine 1 oz. rosemary EO and 1/8 – 1/4 oz. lavender or basil EO (whichever you prefer—choose based on fragrance and/or cost) in a dark glass bottle. An alternate proportion is 2x rosemary EO, 1x basil EO, 1x lavender EO. Use 1–2 drops daily applied to hair brush bristles and brushed through hair. Makes enough for about 6 months of use.

Shea butter pomade: Melt/soften a small amount of shea butter (start with 1/8 tsp.) between the palms, then stroke on hair, damp or dry. This is great when used before or during blow drying, as it melts into the hair, protecting it from the heat and countering any frizziness. If you use too much shea butter, your hair will look and feel a little stiff; if that happens, shampoo again and start over.

Special Treatments

Henna conditioner: Treatment to strengthen hair, add body, and control dandruff and excess oiliness. 2 oz. neutral henna, 12.5 oz. water. In a non-reactive pot, stir henna into water a little at a time, until it is lump-free and creamy. Simmer gently 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly. If hair is very oily, wash and towel dry it first, otherwise apply henna mixture to dry hair. Let henna mixture cool to lukewarm, then distribute over the hair and scalp using fingers or a flat paintbrush. Cover head with plastic shower cap to prevent the water from evaporating; the mixture only works when it is wet. Leave on at least one hour, more or even overnight when hair is badly damaged, very greasy, or has serious dandruff. Rinse under lukewarm water, removing as much powder as possible. Shampoo and rinse with vinegar solution.

Oil, egg, and honey treatment: Makes dull, lifeless hair soft and lustrous; also helps control dandruff and itchiness. 1 tsp. almond oil, 1/2 tsp. avocado oil, 1/2 tsp. castor oil, 15 drops rosemary or lavender EO, 1 egg yolk, 4 tsp. honey. Blend ingredients, the last two being optional but yield better results. Gently massage into hair and scalp. Cover head with an old towel and leave on for 15–30 minutes, 30+ with egg and honey. Rinse with tepid water, shampoo as usual, add 4 tsp. apple cider vinegar per quart to the final rinse. Longer hair may require more product. I would use flax oil (for its' high EFA content) and a whole egg (for its high content of cystine and methionine) to treat damaged hair.

Hair tonic is massaged in and left on the hair; it affects the scalp for many hours. It is especially useful for dandruff, oily hair, and itching scalp. To 1 pint of water add 20–25 drops EOs. Add 1 C. aloe gel to treat hair loss and seborrhea. Add apple cider vinegar (so that it comprises about 10% of the tonic) to treat oily hair and dandruff.

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Vinegar tonic: This can be used to treat dandruff, an itchy, sensitive scalp, or other conditions. Apply apple cider vinegar neat or an herbal vinegar extract (see Chapter 4 for directions) directly to the scalp after shampoo, massage in. Leave in. Choose herbs that are specific to the condition being treated. Lavender, oregano, and rosemary are nice. Depending on the nature of the condition, you may dilute 2 T. of the herbal vinegar with 1 C. water prior to use.

Blue rinses for grey hair: Make an infusion of elder berries. Apply it as a final rinse. This was used by the Romans to impart a bluish hue to grey hair.

Color rinse for grey hair: Make a strong infusion of sage (4 oz. in 20 oz. water). This can color grey hair if applied as a rinse every week for several months.

Lightening rinse for fair hair: Make an infusion of 2 oz. herb (like chamomile) in 20 oz. water. Apply as a final rinse.

Static remover: Some climates cause static electricity in hair, causing it to stand out from the head and in general misbehave. A drop or two of herbal oil rubbed between the palms of the hands and smoothed on the styled hair will control static electricity while adding shine.

Styling Potions

The following styling lotions and gels may leave the hair feeling a little sticky, but then so do their synthetic counterparts.

Setting lotion: 2–3 T. honey in 2 C. water. Warm water just enough to dissolve honey. This leaves my hair feeling like cotton candy, but could be useful when a firm hold is desired.

Setting lotion can also be made of a gel made from flax or quince seeds, or witch hazel distillate diluted with water.

Flax seed gel: 2 T. flax seeds, 1 C. water, 1 T. aloe gel, 1 T. 100 proof vodka, 3–5 drops EOs. Combine flax seeds and water in a pot, bring to a boil, simmer uncovered a few minutes, stirring occasionally. Off heat, cover and let sit 5–10 minutes. Strain out liquid, add aloe gel and vodka, stir thoroughly. When cool, add EOs. Store in airtight glass bottle in a cool, dry location. Use up within 2 weeks. The vodka preserves the gel and speeds up its drying once on the hair.

Lemon setting lotion: Combine 2 oz. fresh lemon juice with 5 drops rosemary EO. Use as much or little as needed for styling.

Shea styling pomade: Use shea butter to reduce frizziness and to coax sections of hair to curl the way you want it to. Apply the slightest amount of shea butter to fingertips—press fingertips to the butter with moderate pressure to get just enough to feel tacky. Then rub fingertips on unruly hair. Restyle with blow drier and brush. The heat melts the shea butter, the brush spreads it evenly on the hair, and the hair curls the way you style it.