

## Make your own natural cosmetics

I deal for you and your children

by Anitra Carr

For many years I have made my own natural cosmetic because I have sensitive skin and there are very few, if any, commercial products which do not cause an adverse reaction with my skin. Making your own natural cosmetics is easy, great fun and very rewarding. They are not only useful for you, but are also ideal for your baby's sensitive skin, and if you have older children they will enjoy making them with you. Because you have made them yourself, you know exactly what has gone into the finished products. If you use ingredients that are pure and free from harmful chemicals they do not require testing on animals, nor do any animal products need to be included as ingredients. You can also use "earth friendly" packaging, such as glass containers and cellophane wrapping, which are recyclable and/or biodegradable. In addition, the final products make lovely gifts and can be shared with other family and friends.

Your skin is like a two way barrier, eliminating waste, but also absorbing what is applied. Therefore it is very important to use only natural ingredients. Many ingredients found in commercial products can be quite detrimental to not only your body, but also the environment. These also require extensive testing on animals. Some examples include: **mineral oil** - a by-product of crude petroleum which depletes the skin of the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K so is very drying as well as being carcinogenic; **paraffin wax and liquid paraffin** - which are synthetic compounds and are known to be carcinogenic; **coal tar** - which is used in the production of colouring agents and is a common carcinogen; **petroleum jelly** - a petro-chemical by-product which forms an impenetrable layer in the skin; **synthetic scents** - which are produced from precious fossil fuels; **preservatives and emulsifiers** - which are usually allergy forming chemicals.

Many of the ingredients used in natural home made cosmetics can be found in your local supermarket or health food store, or grown in your own garden. These include: **vegetable oils** - which are cold pressed and hence rich in the lipid soluble antioxidant vitamins A and E and essential polyunsaturated fatty acids that nourishing the skin; **unbleached beeswax** - which feeds and perfumes the skin (try your local bee keeper); **apple cider vinegar** - which restores the natural acid mantle of the skin; **vegetable glycerine** - which attracts and holds moisture against the skin to soften and lubricate; **unpasteurised honey** - which is highly moisturising and full of vitamins and minerals; **essential oils** - which are synthesised naturally by plants from carbon dioxide, water and sunlight; **dried herbs and flowers** - which can

be organically grown and gently dried in the shade to retain their beneficial properties.

A basic skin routine for facial care should involve: **cleansing** - to remove dirt and grime which can contribute to blocked pores and lead to blackheads and pimples; **toning** - to help tighten and firm the skin and restore the protective acid mantle removed during cleansing; **moisturising** - to nourish the skin and keep it supple by replacing natural oils which prevent wrinkles and help speed up skin renewal, and to provide a protective film against moisture loss and the harmful effects of the weather. Herbs and flowers which can be used for their beneficial properties include lavender, rose, calendula, rosemary, lemon and manuka, among others. Your kitchen should be able to provide all the equipment required for making the cosmetics. These include: measuring spoons, measuring cup or jug, fork or small whisk, small funnel, plastic scraper, tea strainer or muslin, small stainless steel/heatproof glass bowl, double boiler (or bowl sitting in pot of water).

### **Herb or flower water**

1 tbsp dried herbs or flowers  
1 cup (250 ml) boiling water

Herb or flower water is made very simply by infusing the herbs or flowers in boiling water for 10 minutes. Once strained through a tea strainer or muslin it is ready to use. You will require about 175 ml of the herb or flower water for the cleanser/toner and moisturiser. The herb or flower water can be stored for several days in the refrigerator. Any remaining herb or flower water can be added to your bath water for a healthy soak.

### **Herbal cleansing and toning lotion**

0.5 cup (125 ml) herb or flower water  
5 dsp (50 ml) vegetable glycerine  
2.5 dsp (25 ml) apple cider vinegar

A multipurpose cleanser and toner can be easily made by mixing together the herb or flower water, glycerine and cider vinegar. Once mixed well this can be poured into small bottles. This cleansing and toning lotion should keep indefinitely. A teaspoonful of unpasteurised honey can be dissolved into the lotion for added vitamins and minerals. If you wash your face regularly with soap and water this lotion should be applied to the face and neck with cotton wool since soap destroys the delicate acid mantle of the skin. This lotion can be used as a substitute for soap since it is also a gentle deep cleanser.

### **Herbal moisturising cream**

3 tbsp (15 g) beeswax  
5 dsp (50 ml) vegetable oil

5 dsp (50 ml) herb or flower water  
few drops of essential oil  
0.5 tsp (2 g) sodium borate

Melt the beeswax and vegetable oil together in the double boiler. Warm the herb or flower water until about body temperature and dissolve the sodium borate in this. Remove bowls from heat and stir oil vigorously while adding herb or flower water. Beat continuously until the mixture starts to cool and become creamy. Add the essential oil of your choice and mix in well before pouring into small jars. This cream should keep indefinitely if stored in the cool and dark and applied with clean hands. Sodium borate, or borax, is a mineral salt which occurs as crystals in natural deposits. It is an antiseptic which is used as a preservative and also helps to emulsify beeswax. A teaspoonful of unpasteurised honey can be added for extra moisturising properties. Apply the cream daily to the face and neck after cleansing and toning to help keep the skin free of wrinkles. It is also excellent for rough, dry hands.

### ***Herbal lip balm***

2.5 dsp (25 ml) vegetable oil  
few drops of essential oil  
1 tbsp (5 g) beeswax

Warm the beeswax and vegetable oil in the double boiler until the beeswax is melted. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly before mixing in the essential oil of your choice and pouring into small jars to harden. This balm is a soothing salve for dry lips and helps protect them from the harmful effects of sun and wind burn. Half a teaspoonful of unpasteurised honey can be mixed in before it hardens for extra moisturising. Apply a little to the lips daily for a lustrous sheen (the balm will go a long way). An essential oil cream perfume can be made in a similar manner using larger amounts of essential oil (rose and lavender oils are excellent). The perfume produces a lovely fragrance as the warmth of the body releases the essential oil and it is not drying to the skin like alcohol based perfumes.

*Feel free to contact me if you have any questions (anita\_carr@clear.net.nz, ph 337 8129). I also have some starter cosmetic kits available which contain all the ingredients, containers and instructions required to make a selection of the above recipes.*

