



THE WOMEN'S HERITAGE SOURCEBOOK



BRINGING HOMESTEADING TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Cooking • Herbalism • Canning • Fermenting
Beekeeping • Natural Beauty • Keeping Chickens
Milking Cows • Raising Pigs

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BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE



I first began making my own skincare and beauty products because I have very acne-prone, sensitive, difficult skin. I also wanted to avoid the toxic ingredients that are in practically every commercial product. Additional bonuses to making my own skincare include saving money, tailoring it to my wants and needs, and having the products I put on my body be as fresh as the food I eat. Making many of the products that I use on a daily basis also creates a wonderful self-care routine.

My favorite plants for beauty and personal care are calendula, rose, helichrysum, and orange blossom for topical applications. I also grow plants that I use internally for beauty, in teas and tinctures. These plants include burdock, calendula, and dandelion.

Homemade vs. Store-Bought

Most of the skincare options out there, even items at health food stores, are full of toxic ingredients. Many of the ingredients are preservatives, the benefit of which give the product a long shelf life, but only at the expense of your health. I like to compare skincare to food. The food that is best for your body is not the food that lasts the longest, but rather the food that is freshest, that must be consumed relatively soon. If you pump your food with all kinds of toxic preservatives, you can have it look the same and last longer, but you lose the nutritional value and also ingest poison.

If you consider this same approach when buying skincare, you will no longer be impressed at the lotion that still looks and smells new after 6 months of sitting in the hot car. You have to wonder why it has not gone bad in those conditions. The skincare I prefer is the kind that does get moldy after 6 months or a year, especially in conditions that are not ideal—just like the food I buy at the farmers market or harvest from my garden, which goes bad if I don't eat it within a few days. Shelf life comes at a cost, and I think it's important to realize what that is.

Unfortunately, the word *natural* on a label means very little and is not protected at all. Any

company can use it however it wishes. The word *organic*, however, is very protected and regulated; it cannot be slapped on any label. This can be a disservice, though, because many small companies (such as mine) cannot afford the prices and process of becoming certified organic and thus cannot put those words on the front of the label. Always check the ingredients list. There, any organic ingredients may be noted, even for the small companies that have not yet become certified. That said, it's better to make your own skincare. That way you can be sure the ingredients are safe and pure, and you can make it just the way you like it.

Drying Herbs

You can purchase already dried herbs to use in your skincare recipes, but truthfully they will never compare to your own freshly dried herbs. Drying your own herbs is remarkably easy. Most herbs will dry well if they are scattered in shallow baskets with plenty of airflow. Giving them a gentle stir or shake every few days will help discourage any chance of mildew.

You could also use a dehydrator on a setting at or under 100°F, checking them a couple of times a day. You will know when they are done because they will crumble in your fingers.

Another option is to hang herbs or flowers in small rubber-banded bundles upside down until they crunch and crumble a little in your fingers. I tie my herbs with string, but before I do, I use rubber bands to bind them because they lose their water content as they shrink. Without the rubber bands, many of them will fall out of their bundles as they dry.

As soon as your herbs are dry, store them in glass jars with tight-fitting lids. Their color, taste, and medicinal qualities will last much longer if you store them in a dark, dry, cool place, always out of any direct light from the sun. With proper storage, your herbs should stay in fresh, usable condition for at least a year.





Herbal Oils

Herbal oils can be used as is or as the base of many homemade personal-care products. There are two main techniques to making an herbal oil: solar and Crock-Pot. The solar technique is generally preferred over the Crock-Pot technique because the plants have time to give their healing gifts to the oil without losing strength due to heat. Oil also has the potential to go rancid if it becomes too hot. The only time I use the Crock-Pot method is if I need the oil quickly and cannot wait the 4 weeks it takes to let it infuse in sunlight. All oils are unique. Before you choose one, you should consider the qualities of each oil and compare them to your desired effects (see page 310).

SOLAR-INFUSED HERBAL OIL

The solar-infused method is by far the preferred method among herbalists to make an herbal oil. This method not only prevents the carrier oil from overheating, but also imbues the oil with the beautiful rays of the sun.

Dried herbs of choice

Base oil of choice

1. Fill a jar one-quarter to one-third full with your desired dried herbs. My favorite herb for skincare, hands down, is calendula (*Calendula o cinalis*).
2. Fill the jar the rest of the way with your base oil of choice, leaving a 1-inch space at the top.
3. Cover the jar with a lid and give it a gentle shake.
4. Leave the jar in a sunny window, shaking once a day to keep the plant material covered in oil.
5. After 4 weeks, strain out the solids, reserving the oil. Now your infused oil is finished and ready to use in recipes or as is!

CROCK-POT HERBAL OIL

In very dark and cold climates, it just might not work to make a solar-infused herbal oil.

Or perhaps you need your oil right away and can't wait the 4 weeks it takes to fully infuse in the sun. In either case, you can still make a lovely herbal oil using a Crock-Pot.

Dried herbs of choice

Base oil of choice

1. In a small Crock-Pot, add a ratio of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ part dried herb to 1 part oil.
2. Set it on the lowest heat setting and let it infuse for 24 to 48 hours.
3. You may need to periodically turn your Crock-Pot off to keep the oil from getting too hot and going rancid. Do not let it smoke or simmer. If your oil has gone rancid, you will know by the characteristic, waxy smell.



Face

I love making my own face-wash blends, and usually they don't require a lot of ingredients. Water is very important in any skincare routine, as it brings moisture to the skin, plumps it, and reduces the appearance of wrinkles. Even if you use an oil-based cleanser, it's important to wet a washcloth with very warm water and hold it over your face to open your pores and moisturize your skin. Follow the cleansing with a few sprays of hydrosol or flower water, four to five drops of serum, and lotion.

Aloe-Honey Face Wash

This face wash is so simple, and it works wonders for sensitive, dry, aging, and acne-prone skin. For an extra treat for your skin, make a mask of pure honey and leave it on for 10 to 20 minutes before rinsing it off with warm water.

1. Mix the aloe vera and honey, either in a small bowl or right in your hand, and massage into damp skin.
2. Rinse off gently with warm water, pat dry, and follow with a hydrosol, serum, and lotion.

¼ to ½ teaspoon aloe vera
1 teaspoon honey



Chamomile-Rose-Lavender Cleansing Grains

Another face wash I use often is cleansing grains. As with the calendula oil-based cleanser and aloe-honey face wash, it leaves the skin's natural protective barrier—the acid mantle—intact. The cleansing grains exfoliate without stripping moisture. A bonus feature is they can also be applied and used as a mask. I use bentonite clay in my cleansing grains, along with gluten-free oats and my favorite skin-nurturing herbs.

1. Grind all the ingredients in an herb grinder. You can also use a coffee grinder that hasn't been used for grinding or a mortar and pestle.
2. Mix together, and store in a glass jar with a tight lid. If stored properly, cleansing grains will last a few months.
3. To use as a cleanser, put a scoop of the cleansing grains in your hand and mix with a little water or hydrosol. Massage onto your face, and then wash off with warm water or a warm, wet washcloth. Follow with hydrosol, serum, and lotion.
4. To use as a face mask, apply as described in the previous step but leave it on until it is dry. Once completely dry, wash it off with warm water or a warm, wet washcloth. Follow with hydrosol, serum, and lotion.

1 cup organic,
gluten-free oats
½ cup bentonite clay
½ cup dried herbs
(any combination of
calendula, chamomile,
lavender, and rose)

HONEY CLEANSING MASK

If I have a little extra time, I like to mix up my cleansing grain mask with organic, raw, local honey and some hydrosol. This is the ultimate treat for your face. Blend a scoopful of cleansing grains with a tablespoon of honey and enough hydrosol to make it the right consistency—not too runny but not too dry to spread. Leave it on for 10 minutes before rinsing it off.





Antiaging Serum

Serum is my favorite part of my skincare routine. It helps my skin retain balance and moisture, and it fights the signs of aging. I use it at night after cleansing and spraying my face with hydrosol, but before I apply lotion.

¼ cup (2 ounces) jojoba oil
1 tablespoon rosehip oil
1 tablespoon sea buckthorn oil
10 to 15 drops helichrysum essential oil
5 drops jasmine or rose essential oil

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a small container. (I use a glass measuring cup with a spout.)
2. Store the serum in amber dropper bottles away from sunlight, heat, and moisture.
3. To use, after cleansing your face and spraying with hydrosol, apply four to seven drops of this serum to your face and massage until absorbed. Follow with lotion.



Body

Water is the best moisturizer for your skin. The problem is, water quickly evaporates and leaves your skin drier than it started. In order to get the longest-lasting effects, moisturize after a bath or shower while your skin is still just barely damp. This will help keep the plumpness of your skin and reduce the chances of dry, scaly-looking skin. Good choices for body moisturizers are my age-reverse face and body lotion (see page 323) or an herbal-infused body oil.

Calendula-Rose Body Oil

This body oil is wonderful for dry or itchy skin. It smells lovely and feels divine. For the best results, massage into your skin immediately after bathing.

Dried calendula petals

Dried rose petals

Sweet almond oil

Sesame seed oil

Essential oils of choice
(I love rose and jasmine
or a combination of
frankincense, lavender,
and sage)

1. Fill a jar one-third full with a combination of dried calendula petals and dried rose petals. Then fill the jar half full of sweet almond oil and half full of sesame seed oil.
2. Put on the lid, and place the jar in a sunny window.
3. Give the jar a gentle shake every day for 1 week.
4. Keep the jar in the sunny window for 1 to 3 weeks after that, and then strain out the petals. Add a few drops of your desired essential oils to give it a lovely scent.
5. To use, massage approximately 2 tablespoons of the oil into towel-dried skin immediately after bathing while skin is just slightly damp.

TIP: A good rule of thumb for essential oils is one percent dilution for face products and two percent dilution for body products. For 1 cup of herbal-infused oil, add no more than 48 drops total of essential oil if it will be used on your face. If you will only use it on your body, you can add up to 96 drops of essential oil per cup of herbal-infused oil—although personally I prefer a one percent dilution even on my body.



Lemon-Eucalyptus Body Scrub

Exfoliation is a very important part of every health and beauty routine. Your skin is the body's largest organ, and one of its major jobs is to help the body eliminate toxins. A buildup of dead skin cells makes this elimination difficult. Dry brushing is a really effective method of exfoliation. To do this, a special brush is used in long strokes on the body in the direction of the heart. Body scrubs are another wonderful way to exfoliate and enliven the skin.

1. Fill a half-pint jar one-third full with the eucalyptus leaves.
2. Pour the sweet almond or olive oil up to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top, put on the lid, and give it a shake.
3. Place the jar in a sunny window and shake it every day for 1 week.
4. After 1 week, strain out the leaves.
5. Next, put the sea salt in a large bowl. Add the eucalyptus-infused oil to the bowl.
6. Grate the skin of one to two lemons into the bowl and add the lemon or eucalyptus essential oil. Mix well.
7. Fill 4-ounce jars with your scrub and screw on the lids.

**$\frac{1}{3}$ cup eucalyptus leaves,
broken into small pieces
(optional)**

**1 cup sweet almond or
olive oil**

1 cup finely ground sea salt

**10 to 15 drops lemon or
eucalyptus essential oil**

1 to 2 organic lemons



Hair

I stopped using conditioner a long time ago, but I used to be a conditioner junkie. I have fine hair, and I would search out the heaviest conditioners to slather on to prevent tangles and split ends. What I didn't realize was that the same product I was using to prevent those tangles and split ends was actually causing them. It was also weighing my thin hair down, and making it appear even thinner. When I stopped using conditioner, my hair also had much more body. Then I started using hair rinses instead, which gave my entire hair and scalp an upgrade. The vinegar rinses kept my hair shiny and healthy, and it had more body because I didn't have any heavy conditioner weighing it down.

Herbal Hair Oil

Just like your skin, sometimes your hair needs a little moisturization. Conditioner is not the answer, since it can weigh down your hair and cause split ends. Hair oil, on the other hand, works nicely. I usually only use hair oil on the ends of my hair. I alternate between argan oil and olive oil, both infused with stinging nettle.

Dried stinging nettle

Argan or olive oil

1. Fill a glass jar a quarter full with dried stinging nettle.
2. Pour the argan oil, olive oil, or a mix of both over the nettle.
3. Let the jar sit for 1 week, shaking once a day.
4. Let the jar sit for another 1 to 3 weeks, and then strain out the solids.
5. Store in a dark-colored bottle away from heat, sunlight, and moisture.
6. To use, put a few drops in the palm of one hand. Rub your hands together, and then run them over the ends of your hair. Rinse out in the morning if needed; if not, leave it in for extra moisture.



Rosemary Hair Rinse

Rosemary is an excellent herb when it comes to hair, especially for those with dry scalps. Hair rinses can bring a shine to your hair and health to your scalp. They nourish the hair with the nutrients in the herbs and normalize the pH of the scalp, which can be helpful for anyone prone to dandruff.

1. Fill a jar with the rosemary sprigs.
2. Pour the vinegar to cover the rosemary.
3. Top with a plastic lid or wax paper under a metal lid.
4. Let the jar sit for 4 weeks, shaking once a day.
5. Strain out the solids, and reserve the infused vinegar.
6. For ease of use, I keep the infused vinegar in a bottle. When I'm ready to shower, I pour some into a big cup, about one-quarter full. I fill the cup the rest of the way with water. While in the shower, after shampooing, I pour the vinegar-water mixture over my head and massage it in. Then, I rinse it out and towel dry.

Handful of rosemary sprigs
Apple cider vinegar

HAIR RINSE VARIATIONS

CHAMOMILE HAIR RINSE

Chamomile also makes a good rinse. It is said to bring out the golden tones of blonde hair. Follow the directions explained here, but substitute chamomile for the rosemary.

WILD AND WEEDY HAIR RINSE

Weeds are nutrient- and mineral-dense, and I love incorporating them into my life in as many ways as possible. I fill a jar with mallow root and leaf, nettle, and chickweed, and cover it with apple cider vinegar. After a few weeks, I strain off the weeds and feed them to my chickens. I then dilute the infused vinegar with water and use it as a hair rinse.



