

Medicinal Plants for Skin Care

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EDITORIAL

Presently, skin-care products and cosmetics are part of the day-to-day life of numerous people. Skin care products are the healing preparations that are applied to some external parts of the human body. A number of herbal products has been used and evaluated for innovation and treatment of skin diseases in ancient time. Herbal extracts have numerous properties such as they have pigmentation inhibition, antioxidant capacity, and antimicrobial activity and hence, herbal extracts are predominantly added to skin care preparations. The traditional medicines which individuals use currently are made from medicinal plants and minerals.

Museum collections disclose the significance of cosmetics in ancient Egypt, where it was believed that the spiritual substances of healing plants possessed supernatural powers. The Egyptians used oils and creams for protection against the hot dry desert sun and winds, whose basic ingredients were myrrh, peppermint (*Mentha L.*), lily (Liliaceae), thyme (*Thymus L.*), marjoram (*Mentha L.*), chamomile (*Matricaria L.*), lavender (*Lavandula L.*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis L.*), cedar (*Cedrus libani A. Rich*), rose (*Rosa L.*), aloe (*Aloe barbadensis Mill.*), and olive (*Olea europaea L.*), almond (*Prunus dulcis Mill.*), and sesame (*Sesamum indicum L.*) oils, the plant species that provide the basic ingredients of most perfumes. Manniche has described the composition of body oil from the Egyptian period as based on sesame, castor oil, Thron tree [*Balanites aegyptiaca (L.) Delile*], horseradish tree/moringa (*Moringa oleifera Lam.*), and olive oil.

Herbs play a vital role in the formulation of natural products. Herbs used in herbal skin care products; herbal eye care cosmetics; herbal lip care cosmetics; herbal Haircare, cosmetics; lotions and gels, herbal creams; herbal perfumes, herbal oils and fragrances. Some of the natural components used in natural cosmetics are sandal (Chandan), ashwagandha, saffron (Kesar), neem etc. Herbal cosmetics are free from any kind of harmful synthetic chemicals.

Common herbal drugs beneficial in preparation of cosmetics are, *Curcuma longa* (turmeric), *Aloe vera*, *Santalum abum*, *Azadirachta indica*, Asphalt (Shilajit), *Andrographis paniculata* (Kalmegh), *Ocimum sanctum*, *Citrous limon* (lemon), *Camellia sinensis* (Green tea), *Crocus sativus* (saffron), *Citrous reticulata* (orange), *Asparagus racemosus* (Shatawari), *Cassia angustifolia* (Sena), *Boswellia serrata* (Salai Guggal), *Centella asiatica* (Mandukparni), *Embilica officinalis* (Amla), *Bacopa monnieri* (Brahmi), *Chlorophytum borivilianum* (Safed Musli), *Multani Mitti* (Fullers Earth), *Acasia cancina* (Shikaka) etc. One of the benefits of herbal cosmetics is, medicinal plants are extensively available, affordable, eco-friendly and having less or no harmful effects as compared to synthetic drugs and even can be grown in household/kitchen gardens.

A few plants have economic qualities and are used for edible or therapeutic purposes. They are being recorded since days of yore and are described to have side benefits in place of adverse effects usually created by the synthetic and chemical based harmful products. The plants used in cosmetics do not just enhance beauty but have certain medicinal value also.

Formulations for cure of sunburn, hair remover, complexion brightener and preservatives can be made from herbs. Ayurvedic texts contain several recipes, which might be useful in cosmetic industry with fruitful results. Safe and effective, some of these recipes are commonly used for beautification during auspicious occasions in every Indian home where the traditional concept of 'Solah Shringar' exists since time immemorial. These items have side benefits, besides being effective in main problem: they tone up whole system thus ensure effective cure. There is a lot of scope for research on natural preservative, colour and herbs for internal use in cardiac, nervous and immune system diseases, which are sometimes induced by the artificial life. Medical specialists and creators can take the help of Mother Nature to provide safe and harmless substitute for harmful chemicals and synthetic products.

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