

{ SUMMER BEAUTY }

## IT'S FRESH, NEW AND NATURAL

KAVITA DASWANI

For the latest in beauty, people are turning to two places: their refrigerators and the Amazon rain forest.

In what is the antithesis of high-science beauty products, a current crop is based almost entirely on food — from everyday ingredients such as yogurt, honey and cucumber to more exotic things like acerola, buriti oil, pomegranate seeds and murumuru butter. Some of the products are designed to be so fresh that they need to be stored in the refrigerator and used quickly.

The Body Deli ships products from their Palm Desert headquarters in ice packs, and includes mini cooler totes for travel. Many of the brand's creams and lotions contain ingredients described as raw or "living" — basically fresh, unheated and unprocessed. Top sellers include Sea Cucumber Gelee, made of fresh cucumber juice and sea plant extracts, and Blueberry Fusion, a scrub made from organic blueberries. Elique Organic Skin Food, a line created by Venice-based aesthetician Elisha Reverby, is made from, hand-harvested lavender, eucalyptus and rosemary from Santa Monica Canyon, and raw honey and eggs from the local farmers market.

Farmhouse Fresh, a brand out of Frisco, Texas, has a body cream made from strawberry cells, a scrub that contains Kentucky bourbon and will soon be launching a toning treatment that contains sweet sage, milk and oats. Dr. Alkaitis, a Sacramento-based brand that has been making pure food-based products for several years and whose company slogan is "If you can't eat it, don't put it on your skin," has a new Organic Enzyme Exfoliating Mask made from oat buds, a selection of berries and barley grass and turmeric.

And the Organic Virgin Coconut Nourishing Body Cream from 100 Percent Pure is packed with unprocessed coconut oils, butters, fruit and honey, with a consistency that looks like a thick salad dressing. All the masks made by the brand have to be mixed with tea, juice or yogurt, and must be used immediately or refrigerated.

"It's happening like crazy," Karen Young, chief executive of the Young Group, a consulting company that works with beauty brands, said of the increased prevalence of food in skin care. "We're learning more and more about skin and nature, and about the interaction between the two." Young said segments of the U.S. beauty industry are increasingly leaning toward natural, organic and homegrown products as customers veer

'In other parts of the world, it is normal to use food and elements of nature for medicinal or beauty purposes.'

— KAREN YOUNG,  
Young Group

away from chemicals and synthetics.

"In other parts of the world, it is normal to use food and elements of nature for medicinal or beauty purposes," she said. "In America we are just waking up to that now."

The focus seems to be on purity. While beauty products have long relied on fruit, honey, herbs and spices such as vanilla to lend a particular scent or consistency, manufacturers are now trying to eliminate as many preservatives and chemicals as possible, distilling a cream or tonic to its most natural form. And it's happening at every price level. A survey of the companies listed above found prices similar to those in both drugstore and department store lines. And Nature's Gate, which can be found in big-box retailers, recently relaunched by removing all parabens and sulfates and bumping up ingredients such as shea butter, apricot kernel oil and pomegranate.

Certainly, pomegranate figures prominently in the movement. Oils distilled from the ruby red fruit are widely considered by nutritionists and experts in natural healing to be especially nourishing. They are the key ingredient in the reformulated Pomeg5 brand which launched this year with components that include extracts of papaya, damask rose water and oils of verbena, sage and lemon-grass.

Ingredients with exotic names such as cupacu (koop-oo-asoo) and murumuru (moo-roo-moo-roo), both harvested from the Amazon rain forest, are popping up in a range of high-end and mass-market creams. Others include L'Occitane's buriti oil in its sun protection products, Freeman's Mega 8 Complex Superfruits offerings with small quantities of goji and acai and Alba Botanica's Rainforest line, which contains tiger nut, andiroba oil and passion fruit oil. Soaps from Paraguay-based Wembé are loaded

with avocado, chocolate, coconut and cupasu butter. The trend is showing up in other categories as well: Chocolate Sun's Cocoa Illumine is a sunless tanner made from sugar beets and sweet orange oil that must be refrigerated, and Too Faced is a chocolate-loaded bronzer. Anti-acne formulations such as ACNEdote from Alba Botanica, which will be available later this summer, include licorice, lentil and parsley as key ingredients. And 100 Percent Pure even does makeup pigmented with plum, cranberry, cocoa bean and chili pepper instead of the more conventional chemical dyes.

Given that this end of the market is getting more crowded, Elique's Reverby — who will be holding classes at her Venice salon in July on making beauty products at home (details will soon be posted at [www.eliqueorganicskinfood.com](http://www.eliqueorganicskinfood.com)), offered some guidelines as to what to look for when buying.

"You want very few ingredients, and all the food-based ones should be listed toward the top," she said. "You don't need 20 different ingredients on the back of a jar. And smell is everything — it should smell fresh and clean. Go with your instincts. And, as much as possible, stay local."

image@latimes.com



MATHEW ZUCKER

**DR. ALKAITIS:** Mask made from oat buds, berries, barley grass, turmeric.

**BODY DELI:** Sea Cucumber Gelee, made of fresh cucumber juice and sea plant extracts, is a top seller.

Body Deli

