

BY ADRIA VASIL



Don't slather petrochemicals and parabens on your skin when you can moisturize up with cheap almond, olive or sunflower oil.

Can you recommend a good natural anti-aging cream? When you're addicted to the planet

By Adria Vasil

Mirror, mirror on the wall, which anti-aging product isn't bullshitting me? They all tell us they can banish seven signs of aging with the magical help of nature-given ingredients, and – surprise! – they're full of it.

Virtually every wrinkle-fighting cream splashily advertises meadow-/forest-fresh ingredients like shiitake mushrooms plus vitamin C. But while their "active" ingredients may come from nature, they're buried in petrochemicals and questionable preservatives like parabens, BHT and formaldehyde-releasing DMDM hydantoin.

Mix in some eco-toxic siloxanes like cyclopentasiloxane and cyclomethicone (heavily marketed Nanoblur, for instance, uses persistent cyclohexasiloxane), then add estrogen-mimicking sunscreen chemicals like oxybenzone and octinoxate and, voila, you can charge for the fountain of youth.

The only truth buried in these products is that, yes, moisturizing helps your skin look its healthiest, and protection from the sun's rays is your surest route to fighting sun damage. If you want your SPF and all-natural anti-aging moisturizer in one, Devita's Solar Protective Moisturizer is top-notch and contains beneficial vitamin E, grape seed extract and hyaluronic acid (available at the Big Carrot and essentialdayspa.com). 100 Per Cent Pure's facial moisturizers with SPF are also lovely, with great ingredients like argan oil, rosehip oil, green tea and vitamin E.

Locavores Green Beaver's Certified Organic Daily Face Cream isn't as silky, and though it doesn't market itself as anti-aging, it does have raspberry extract (high in vitamin E) and omega fatty acids.

Looking for some sort of peeling effect? A slew of anti-aging products contain some form of vitamin A/retinyl palmitate/retinol, mostly because they're riding on the rep of prescription retinoids that have been clinically proven to speed up cell turnover. What's the problem? They can make skin more sensitive to the sun, and early evidence shows creams with retinyl palmitate may accelerate the growth of skin cancer tumours when exposed to UV light.

Plus, retinyl palmitate comes from palm oil – responsible for clear-cutting global rainforests and pushing Bornean orangutans to the brink. If you notice your fave products have palm-derived ingredients, let makers know palm oil's bad news.

As an alternative peel, browse for something from a health store or an organic spa line like Pure + Simple with gentler lactic acid, fruit enzymes or sugar-derived glycolic acid (which, by the way, can also increase skin's photosensitivity), or just smear some yogurt on your face for a cheap lactic acid mask.

Looking for some good basic moisture to plump up your skin and help minimize the look of fine lines? Try an economical drop or two of skin-rejuvenating oils like antioxidant-rich rosehip seed oil (great for really dry skin), argan oil (works for combination skin) or more budget-friendly jojoba and almond, or an even better value – sunflower, olive or grape seed oil.

Want a combo of kick-ass oils in one bottle? Awaken My Senses Organics Aging Gracefully Fine Line Vanishing Creme has awesome avocado oil, carrot seed essential oil and more. Living Libations' Best Skin Ever combines healing sea buckthorn, Tamanu, jojoba and more.

In the premium range, Toronto-based Pure + Simple offers top-quality organic oil combos, and I really like Intelligent Nutrient's Anti-Aging Serum crammed with a dozen luxe oils (this from the founder of Aveda), though the line isn't for the scent-averse. (Think heavy ylang-ylang.)

Not into straight oils? Look for quality lotions by brands like Devita, **Hauschka**, Weleda and locovores Mary Ginseng House, Consonant and west-coast Sea Flora.

Another T-dotter, Niko's USDA-certified organic line has really clean anti-aging cleansers, serums, creams and more at a higher price point.

Trying to undo a frown line without sticking a needle in your forehead? Tape your face. Frownies Facial Pads are an old Hollywood secret, the pre-botox trick for, while you sleep, relaxing the facial muscles that clench into wrinkles. I've tested these unbleached kraft paper stickies (made with veggie starch), and they do work, but they aren't subtle or sexy (frowniescanada.com).

Want to know the real money-back-guaranteed secrets to combatting wrinkles? Stay out the sun. Ease up on the alcohol. Sleep more. Put down that cigarette. Take a deep breath. Try micro-meditation. And stop frowning. Work on your laugh lines instead.



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