



Label *Lust*

Organic beauty sales are booming but who decides whether a product is worthy of its label? Self-confessed beauty junkie Dawn Mellowship uncovers the truth

The health conscious among you may be lured by the promise of 'natural' and 'organic' beauty products, but are you being conned? According to the market experts at Organic Monitor, global sales of natural and organic cosmetics are increasing by over \$1 billion a year and even supermarket retailers, such as Asda and Tesco, have launched their own ranges. So, there's no denying it – we all care about our skin. But is the market explosion everything it seems? The answer is a resounding no and consumers are becoming increasingly confused about what these terms really mean.

What is natural and organic?

Feeling confused about the labels on your beauty products? These are the differences:

- **NATURAL:** products are made from natural chemicals extracted from plants, animal products or the earth that have undergone minimal processing. However, this is not always the case – shea butter is often extracted with solvents and treated with synthetic preservatives.

- **ORGANIC:** refers to non-genetically modified ingredients that have been derived from crops grown in an ecological manner, without artificial pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers and processed using natural ingredients. You have no way of knowing whether a product is genuinely organic unless certified by a stringent body.

The greenwashing game

The sad truth is that anyone can plaster 'organic' and 'natural' over packaging because there isn't a universal definition

for them. This has resulted in manufacturers assuming rather dubious practices.

■ Many products use high concentrations of synthetic chemicals with a minor percentage of natural ingredients. These products often contain vegetable oil derived from chemicals, touted as an eco friendly alternative to petrochemicals. However, their production utilises natural resources and creates toxic waste.

■ Some products contain watery herbal infusions or hydrosols to bulk up the organic content of largely synthetic concoctions. Ingredients must be listed in descending order of weight, so the herbal infusion appears first on the list.

■ There are organic-certified products that need only 10 per cent 'organic' ingredients to earn certification. The upshot is that a product containing 95 per cent synthetic ingredients may still bear the words 'organic' on its packaging.

Too many terms?

Definition discrepancies have resulted in the proliferation of incongruent organic standards. In fact retailers seem to be defining things independently with Boots developing standards for their Botanics Organic range and the Whole Foods Market developing a Premium Body Care Standard. Europe-wide efforts to harmonise standards have culminated in the Cosmetic Organic Standard (COSMOS) created by Bioforum, Cosmebio, Ecocert, BDIH, ICEA and the Soil Association. Numerous other standards have popped up, including OASIS, NaTrue, NSF-International and Certech. Confusing isn't it?

The labelling lowdown

To help you sort the good from the bad, here's some common organic and natural certification organisations:

■ Soil Association (soilassociation.org) – A Soil Association-certified product must contain at least 95 per cent organic ingredients or have at least 70 per cent organic ingredients to claim "made with xx per cent organic ingredients".

■ Organic Farmers & Growers (organicfarmers.org.uk) – An Organic Farmers & Growers (OF&G) product must contain at least 95 per cent organic ingredients, with the remaining ingredients coming from an approved list, and to be labelled as "made with xx per cent organic ingredients" must contain at least 70 per cent organic ingredients.

■ NaTrue (natrue.eu) – Organic cosmetics with a NaTrue certification contain at least 20 per cent 'natural' ingredients (95 per cent of which should be from organic farming). Meanwhile natural substances with organic content contain at least 15 per cent 'natural' ingredients (70 per cent of

6 organic favourites

Want a truly natural beauty product? Here's our pick of the best...

1 ESSENTIAL CARE ORGANIC COCONUT CANDY SCRUB, £28

This sugar-based scrub smells good enough to eat and is so amazingly natural and organic that, should you get a bit peckish, you could!

2 SAAF ORGANIC ULTIMATE MOISTURE FACE SERUM, £29.99

For a serum that cares for your skin Saaf have created this 97.5 per cent organic formula, which is veggie, vegan and natural.

3 NEAL'S YARD REJUVENATING FRANKINCENSE FACIAL WASH, £12

Neal's Yard products pioneer organic beauty and this wash is no exception. Made with 87 per cent organic ingredients, it boasts a well deserved Soil Association certificate.

4 SUZANNE AUX BAINS RELAXING MASSAGE OIL, £27.50

This Ecocert and Cosmebio-approved relaxing treat is paraben, PEG, phenoxyethanol silicone and GMO free; not tested on animals but dermatologically tested and even supports certified organic farming.

5 BALM BALM ROSE GERANIUM LIP BALM, £2.99

Few products can boast being 100 per cent natural and 100 per cent Soil Association certified



organic but this balm can. A truly reassuring buy for something so easily ingested.

6 GREEN PEOPLE SENSUOUS BODY SCRUB, £18.50

Infused with aromatic jojoba and rosehip oils, this 95.1 per cent certified organic scrub will get rid of surface toxins and impurities to reveal super soft skin.



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■ BDIH (kontrollierte-naturkosmetik.de) – The BDIH is the association of German firms for pharmaceuticals, healthcare, food supplements and personal hygiene products. The guidelines are based on a positive list of ingredients, which is only available to manufacturers.

■ Ecocert (ecocert.com) – The French certification body label a product as 'ecological' if it contains a minimum of 95 per cent natural ingredients, five per cent certified organic

ingredients in the finished product and at least 50 per cent of the plant ingredients must be certified organic. Ecocert also label products as 'Ecological and Organic' when they contain 95 per cent natural ingredients, 10 per cent certified organic ingredients in the finished product and at least 95 per cent of the plant ingredients must be certified organic.

For more info get Dawn Mellowship's book *Toxic Beauty* (£7.99, Gaia Thinking Books), from Amazon.co.uk and book stores worldwide.