



GOING GREEN

BY LAURA TURNER SEYDEL

Green The Skin You're In

Just as the seasons change, so must we and as we retire our summer stock of heat-defying skin care products for the moisture-rich products of fall, now is the perfect time to give our look a green makeover in the truest sense of the word.

A few years ago I participated in

Environmental Working Group's (EWG) BodyBurden Study to determine the levels of industrial chemicals found in my bloodstream. When the results came back that I had tested positive for 36 chemicals, including plasticizers, artificial musks, lead and mercury, I realized that most of these toxins could be traced back to the ingredients found in the personal care and beauty products I used on a daily basis.

Our skin is designed to be a protective barrier to outside elements while at the same time uniquely permeable to allow certain liquids and gasses to easily pass through. Not a day goes by that we don't pamper our skin, and every time we lather on soaps, lotions and other sweet-smelling potions, our bodies are directly exposed to the myriad of ingredients found in these products. According to EWG, one out of eight chemicals registered for use in personal care products contains toxins such as carcinogens, pesticides, reproductive toxins and hormone disruptors.

Recent studies have raised red flag warnings about these toxic ingredients and heightened our awareness about their potential hazards. For example, parabens, an estrogenic industrial chemical, have been found in breast cancer tissue and researchers have posed the theory that parabens found in skin care products, like deodorant, are to blame. Unfortunately, there has not been enough research done to directly link the two, but EWG does consider these results, along with similar studies, to be cause for concern.

While we await the necessary studies



MADE WITH NOTHING HARMFUL OR SYNTHETIC, THE PANGAEA ORGANICS SKIN CARE LINE USES PURE AND ORGANIC INGREDIENTS THAT ARE THERAPEUTIC FOR BOTH MIND AND BODY AND BENEFICIAL FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET. MAKING THIS PRODUCT EVEN MORE AMAZING, THE PACKAGING IS PLANTABLE AND WILL GROW INTO THE MEDICINAL HERBS FOUND IN PANGAEA PRODUCTS. PANGEAORGANICS.COM.

to determine unhealthy exposure levels of these chemicals and their resulting health risks, it's important to know that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not require health studies or any premarket testing. Also, there is no law that requires companies to highlight the contaminants that result from ingredients. Did you know that some commonly used preservatives are known to release small amounts of formaldehyde? It becomes our responsibility to educate ourselves and read ingredient listings carefully to make informed decisions about the products we buy – not only for our own personal health, but for the wildlife and waterways that are impacted by the chemical runoff when these products are washed down the drain.

Reading an ingredient list, however, doesn't come easy. Pick up any skin care product in your makeup bag and you'll read through a list of hard-to-pronounce ingredient names. Under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, personal



THE JOHN MASTERS ORGANICS LINE IS DEDICATED TO EXTRAORDINARY ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND HOLDS MANY GLOBAL CERTIFICATIONS FOR ORGANIC AND ETHICAL INGREDIENTS AND PRODUCTION, INCLUDING USDA ECOCERT. USING HIGH-PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS, THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND LINE LEAVES YOU FEELING GREEN AND GORGEOUS! JOHNMASTERS.COM.

care products are required to adhere to the International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients (INCI) system of ingredient names to create an industry standard and promote public safety. It's important to become familiar with the INCI system because ingredients such as *Triticum vulgare* and tocopherol are simply wheat germ and vitamin E, not the least bit toxic like their official sounding names suggests.

Atlanta-based skin care product expert Sally Larsen, founder of Sally B's Skin Yummies, says a sure fire way to ensure the health of your skin is to look for products made with organic ingredients. "Just because an ingredient is from nature, it's not necessarily healthy," says Sally. "An organic ingredient ensures that it was grown without the use of chemicals or pesticides making it unquestionably safe not only for your skin but for our environment."

There are many organic products on the market today giving you the option to create the beauty regime that is perfect for you without having to sacrifice any luxuries. While it's great to buy from local vendors like Sally B's Skin Yummies or HollyBeth's Natural Luxury (hollybeth.net), the national organic skin care market is thriving with affordable and healthy products that are widely accessible. John Masters Organics, a pioneer in the organic personal care industry and a mainstay in my personal beauty regime, and Pangea Organics, one of my recent favorites, can both be found online or at Whole Foods Markets nationwide.

A great guide to help you navigate through the many products is the EWG's Skin Deep (cosmeticdatabase.com) resource, an online safety guide of cosmetics and personal care products. Through countless hours of research compiled by EWG, Skin Deep provides

safety ratings for 44,217 products and practical solutions for families to protect themselves from industrial chemicals.

However, if you're not into the do-it-yourself pampering and would rather leave it to the experts, Atlanta has many resources to shower you in organic luxury. Essential to any green makeover is a trip to Authentic Beauty (authenticbeautyllc.com) for a personal "Image Journey" to find a makeup routine that enhances your natural beauty through the use of organic and natural cosmetics. Passionate about educating her clients on the latest organic industry trends, Alyson Hoag, founder of Authentic Beauty, believes that mineral-oil free cosmetics, like those from ama-

la (amalabeauty.com), are important to the longevity of both your personal beauty and the environment. Also dedicated to organic applications and natural beauty are New Moon Skin Care (newmoonskincare.com) and OH2 Medical Spa, both located in Atlanta. The spas have their own unique approaches to skin care, but share a similar passion for the environment, beauty and overall wellbeing.

As you green your look this season, take advantage of local experts to find



SALLY B'S SKIN YUMMIES MAKES YOUR NEW GREEN MAKEOVER EASY AND FUN WITH A BAG FULL OF ORGANIC SKIN CARE GOODIES. HER GOOD-FOR-YOU CREAMS, SOAPS, AND LOTIONS ARE DEDICATED TO SIMPLE APPLICATIONS AND LUXURIOUS RESULTS. SALLYBSKINYUMMIES.COM.

the beauty regime that is perfect for you! Beyond their passion for healthy living is their desire to educate clients on the latest products and industry news to help us make our own informed decisions about our health. Until the cosmetic industry can police itself, we must continue to ask questions and read ingredient labels to ensure that we are not exposing ourselves to harmful toxins and instead pampering ourselves in organic luxury.

FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO SAFE COSMETICS, VISIT SOUTHERNSEASONS.NET.

WALK INTO OH2 VEIN TREATMENT AND MEDICAL SPA AND YOU'LL FEEL LIKE YOU'RE AT A BEACHSIDE RESORT. HOWEVER, YOU'LL BE STANDING IN THE FIRST LEED-CERTIFIED COMMERCIAL MEDICAL BUILDING OF ITS KIND, A TRUE TESTAMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY OF THE SPA. OH2MEDICALSPA.COM.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANNY ACRES PHOTOGRAPHY

LAURA TURNER SEYDEL IS A NATIONAL ECO-LIVING EXPERT AND CHAIR OF THE CAPTAIN PLANET FOUNDATION. FOR MORE ECO-LIVING TIPS VISIT WWW.LAURASEYDEL.COM.