

## Growing a Beauty Garden

Go to any beauty counter and you'll see rows of products containing natural extracts that help to moisturize, condition, cleanse, tone, and prevent aging. While some sound exotic, others are plants that can be grown at home, and some may already be spreading their leaves in your garden. It's quite easy to grow, process, and create your own beauty products using fresh plant extracts.

To get started on your own beauty garden, research the plants that are currently in your garden to learn whether they have beauty applications. When it comes to choosing new plants to use for your handmade beauty arsenal, it can seem overwhelming. Some plants are great at soothing irritated skin while others moisturize, and yet others help clear up spots and acne. Here I will share just some of the plants you might like to use in your own personal care potions. Most of these choices can be grown in temperate gardens, and many of them can also be grown in containers and window boxes. The beauty garden pictured here contains sweet basil, peppermint, thyme, oregano, and rosemary. \*

#### Thyme (THYMUS VULGARIS)

Recent studies have shown that humble thyme is more effective at clearing acne than over-the-counter treatments that use benzoyl peroxide. Scientists used a tincture (herb infused in alcohol) to conduct the study, but if you'd like to use a less drying medium, try infusing thyme in witch hazel.

#### Rosemary (ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS)

An infusion of rosemary leaves can be used as an aromatic astringent for all skin types. It also promotes healing by stimulating blood flow to the skin. Use an oil or water infusion of this herb in making massage oils, toners, creams, hair rinses, balms, and lotions.

#### Aloe Vera (ALOE BARBADENSIS)

Aloe vera can be grown in your garden or indoors. The gel inside its leaves can be used to calm and repair skin damaged by sun and heat as well as reduce inflammation. Aloe can also be used as an oil-free moisturizer, though regular use may over-dry normal-to-dry skin. Extract by cutting open the leaves and scooping out the gel inside, and use it on its own or in creams and lotions.

#### Lavender (LAVANDULA ANGUSTIFOLIA)

A common and fragrant garden shrub, lavender has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties that make it beneficial for those with skin irritation and inflammation. Lavender oil has also been shown to help speed the healing of cuts, burns, and abrasions. Use fresh or dried flowers to make an infusion and use in creams, lotions, or as a facial toner.

#### Roses (ROSA)

Rose water is a mild astringent and toner that is excellent for all skin types but for mature skin in particular. It helps cleanse and tone while encouraging regeneration and boosting moisture levels. Both wild and cultivated rose petals are suitable. An infusion of rose petals used as a skin spritzer or in creams and lotions can help moisturize the skin.

#### (Yarrow (ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM)

Every garden has weeds but some are more useful than others. In a beauty garden you might want to encourage yarrow, a common wild plant that has been used in herbal medicine to treat wounds. An infusion of the leaves and flowers can be used as an astringent toner, helping remove oil, improve skin tone, and reduce inflammation.

#### Violet (VIOLA ODORATA OR VIOLA CANINA)

Fragrant and only slightly astringent, the extracts from violet leaves and flowers are juicy and moisturizing. Perfect for dry skin, violets are also anti-inflammatory and help heal cuts and wounds. Infuse fresh plant material in oil or water, and use the extract to make creams, lotions, balms, massage oil, and toners.

#### Sage (SALVIA OFFICINALIS)

Although this herb has natural astringency that helps to cleanse oily and acne-prone skin, you can also use it as a rinse for dark hair. Infuse the fresh or dried leaves in water and apply to hair daily. Though it won't permanently tint your hair like chemical dyes, it can gradually darken hair. Gray or coarse hair may be resistant to picking up color. Use sage in combination with rosemary, crushed black walnut hulls, nettles, and coffee for increased darkening effects. \*





### Lemon Lavender SUGAR SCRUB

BY KRISTY DOUBET HAARE

Whip up a batch of this sugar scrub in your kitchen and you'll have your skin feeling silky smooth in just 10 minutes! Sugar scrubs are quite exfoliating and moisturizing to the skin. Scrubs can be applied to most areas of the body and are especially beneficial to the hands and feet. Apply 1 tablespoon to your skin in circular motions to smooth rough areas.

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1/2 cup olive/coconut oil

- ◆ 1 tsp. vitamin E oil
- ◆ 1½ cup granulated sugar
- 8 drops lavender oil (optional)\*
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1 tsp. lavender buds\*
- ◆ 4 oz. mason jars (2)\*

To Make

In a small bowl, mix the olive oil, vitamin E oil, and sugar together. Blend in lavender oil if desired. Next, zest the lemon rind until only white is remaining on the outside of the lemon. Add the zest to the sugar and oil mixture.

Roll the lemon firmly on a cutting board to burst the juice capsules. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze over the mixture. Stir to combine. Add lavender buds, and use a fork or spatula to blend and mash the mixture to create a body scrub. Store scrub in an airtight container for up to one month.

Kristy Doubet Haare, author and published photographer, writes of simplicity, country life, and seasonal living in the "Bittersweet Walnut Grove" cookbook series and on her blog at lifenreflection.com. If you're passing through her farm country, you might find her trekking into rows of corn in knee-deep mud, documenting rural American lifestyle.



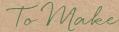
It's so easy to head to the drugstore when you're in need of a gift bag to wrap a present in. However, it's even easier to create the perfect packaging just by scouring the contents of your pantry. With just a regular lunch bag and a couple other supplies, you can create this simple, stunning gift bag. «











Place the gift inside the paper bag. Fold over the top of the bag, about 1–2 inches. Punch two holes in the bag, thread jute or twine through the holes, and secure a bundle of fresh herbs.

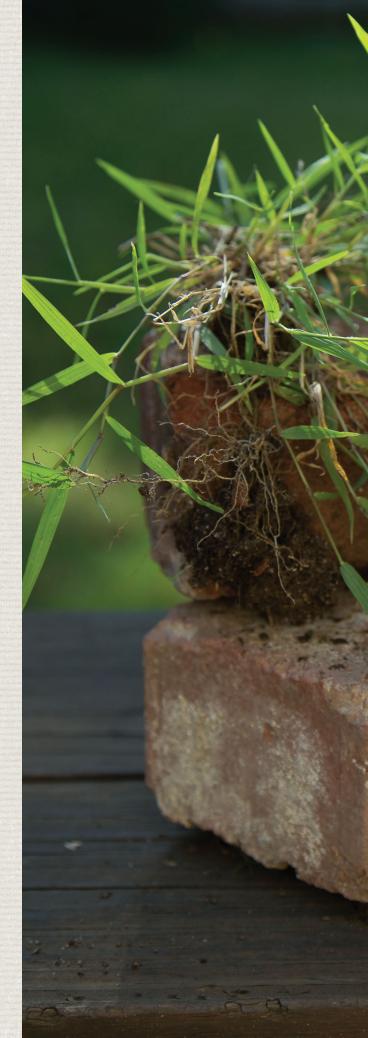




# Natural Ways TO KEEP YOUR FLOWER & HERB GARDEN WEED-FREE

BY LAURA HELLER

When growing your own herbs and flowers to use in homemade bath and body products, the last thing you want to deal with is weeds. While keeping weeds at bay may require a little work and diligence, the task does not have to require harmful chemicals. With just a few ingredients that can be found in your kitchen cupboards, you can take care of those pesky weeds, allowing your garden greens to flourish. Listed here are several different solutions that vary in strength, so if the weeds are being especially stubborn, experiment until you find the right one. \*\*







#### Hot Water

This is as simple as it sounds. Boil some water and pour it on the weeds you are targeting. Wait a day or so, and then remove the dead weeds.

#### Vinegar Spray

#### YOU WILL NEED

- 2 cups vinegar
- 5-10 drops essential oil (cinnamon/thyme/clove)
- Spray bottle

#### TO MAKE

Mix this quick recipe in a spray bottle, and then cover the weed's leaves with a mist when it is hot, dry, and sunny outside. Wait a day or so, and then remove the dead weeds. Vinegar with a higher concentration will be more effective, as the acetic acid is what causes the damage to the weeds; but it can also cause more damage to humans so use caution when handling. Use a spray bottle that has an accurate aim — this mixture does not know the difference between a weed and your flowers or veggies — and spray the plant, not the dirt; too much acidic vinegar added to the soil can alter its pH balance. \*\*



