

YUMMY NORTHWEST

MARY ROSEWOOD, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
LESLIE PHILLIPS, COPY EDITOR
KENT, WASHINGTON

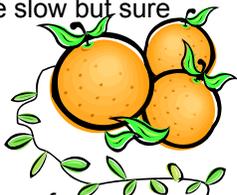
BEAUTIFUL ENOUGH TO EAT

Beauty begins in nature. Here in the Pacific Northwest we are blessed with the natural beauty of tall trees, clean skies and pristine mountains. Stand in the produce section of a market and enjoy the cornucopia of colors and smells.

Yet even in this lovely corner of the world lurks a danger that is found everywhere. Though commercial soaps, make-up and perfumes smell good and help us look good, their appeal is mostly due to artificial chemicals. When these chemicals overwhelm a body, a person can suffer from what is called – among other names – Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS).

On page 2, reader Candi Hyatt, Federal Way, Wash., tells how she learned to cope with MCS. Candi's account reminds us that long before commercial beauty aids, nature provided what are still healthy alternatives.

The following are a few beauty recipes from natural sources. Candi suggests a few more ideas in her article. Take time mixing, applying, waiting and removing. Dim the lights, relax and enjoy the slow but sure process of beautification.



Citrus Bath Soak

Squeeze into a jar the juice of one orange, one tangerine, one lemon, one lime and one grapefruit. (Or use whatever combination of citrus fruit is available.) Process the peels of each fruit in a blender until very fine and then put in the jar of juice.

Put this mixture in a warm bath. Any leftover can be frozen in an ice cube tray



The Nose Doesn't Always Know

Just because something smells good doesn't mean it is good for you.

"The aroma of food can be responsible for as much as 90 percent of its flavor.

...

"[Brian] Grainger [senior flavorist at International Flavor and Fragrances, the world's largest flavor company, New Jersey] had brought a dozen small glass bottles from the lab. After he opened each bottle, I dipped a fragrance testing filter into it. ... Before placing the strips of paper before my nose, I closed my eyes. Then I inhaled deeply, and one food after another was conjured from the glass bottles. I smelled fresh cherries, black olives, sautéed onions, and shrimp. Grainger's most remarkable creation took me by surprise. After closing my eyes, I suddenly smelled a grilled hamburger. The aroma was uncanny, almost miraculous. It smelled like someone in the room was flipping burgers on a hot grill. But when I opened my eyes, there was just a narrow strip of white paper and a smiling flavorist."

From *Why the Fries Taste Good* chapter in "Fast Food Nation," by Eric Schlosser

and stored in the freezer until the next bath – just pop a cube or two into the water.

This soak is especially good combined with:

Grapefruit Facial Mask

In a blender, mix 2 egg whites until they turn foamy. Add 2 teaspoons sour cream and 2 teaspoons unsweetened grapefruit juice, then blend again for about 30 seconds. Apply the grapefruit facial mask to your face, leave on for 15 minutes, then rinse off with tap water. Use chilled rinse water for a more refreshing experience.



Seaweed Bath

Don't just eat seaweed (see *Yummy Northwest*, July 2004), soak in it!

Fill your tub with hot water and throw in a handful of any dried or fresh seaweed. (Tie it in a muslin bag for easy retrieval – this is recommended.) The water might turn a lovely sea green or brownish depending on the seaweed. Its briny smell evokes ocean beach walks. Your skin will be soft after a 20-minute soak.

Oatmeal Scrub

Mix a handful of oatmeal with enough water to make a thick paste. Rub over your face or body. Rinse with warm water.

Green Tea for Eyes

Steep two green-tea bags in warm or cold water for one minute. Place the bags on your eyes for a few relaxing minutes to soothe and reduce puffiness.



For the Love of Scent

By Candi Hyatt

I used to pick large bouquets of lilacs and fill my house with their luxurious aroma. Drops of lavender oil transformed my bath, and rose-scented candles made me feel as if my home were my own fragrant paradise.

At first I thought I had a flu that mysteriously went away on the weekends only to return Monday morning. Perfume, cologne, air fresheners, fruit-scented felt pens, poor ventilation, and the odor of a new offgassing carpet began affecting my health. I read later that "everyone is unknowingly only one exposure away from chemical sensitivity."

My symptoms included constant exhaustion, joint and muscle pain, insomnia, skin irritation, depression, nausea and anaphylactic-like responses that would tighten my throat and stop my lungs. At times I couldn't speak words just at the tip of my tongue. I was being poisoned by common, everyday substances.

I frantically researched for answers. Doctors informed me that avoidance of chemicals was my only hope for a life without constant illness. Eventually I was forced to quit my teaching career and avoid much human contact.

Between 800 and 3,000 chemicals make up the ingredients of one scent. They are rarely tested or their dangers acknowledged. Our olfactory system transports these dangerous compounds to our brain where they make us believe we smell a particular scent and simultaneously deaden our sense of smell so we are unable to detect the foul odor of the chemical. These toxins are stored in our fat away from vital organs and we become "overloaded." Obesity is common in chemically sensitive people.

To cope, I cleaned out the chemicals in my life. What could I live without? No more chemical cleaning supplies, cosmetics or potpourris. No more freshly cut flowers, essential oils or processed foods. I began reading labels and if it wasn't recognizably edible, it was the enemy.

Toothpaste is a chemical compound with sugar added, and teeth whiteners are now known to be responsible for the rise in mouth cancer. Our grandparents used baking soda – natural and reliable.

Deodorants made with chemicals that are believed to contribute to breast cancer. I now use lemon juice as the citric acid kills odor-smelling bacteria. But is it really so bad to smell like a human?

Perfumes and Colognes are falsely believed by many to attract the opposite sex when in fact they do the opposite by covering up our natural



Natural beauty is inexpensive

Replacements for chemicals have not only saved my health, but also my bank account as natural products are often less expensive.

Baking soda is an excellent cleaning agent for any surface. It softens your skin as it scours your tub! For more uses: www.bagelhole.org/article.php/Miscellaneous/12/.

Vinegar is also a versatile product. For some of its many uses see www.angelfire.com/cantina/homemaking/vinegar.html.

General reference sites include www.ruelle.com/homemade.html and www.ci.round-rock.tx.us/public-works/lestoxic.html.

Two good books with natural recipes are "Better Basics for the Home" by Annie Berthold-Bond and "Why David Hated Tuesdays" by Amilya Antonetti.

My advice: If you can't eat it, don't use it!

~ Candi Hyatt

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The Chemical Injury Information Network, White Sulphur Springs, Mont., has more information on chemical sensitivity: www.ciin.org.

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scents so needed in the mating game. Studies show men are more aroused by the smell of freshly baked cinnamon rolls and women by the natural scent of vanilla.

Essential oils are not edible and highly toxic if used improperly. Many chemically sensitive people cannot tolerate these oils as they are unnaturally potent. I prefer sprigs of rosemary or lavender and petals of roses. Natural is better.

Hair Products. Egg whites make a great mousse, especially if you want your hair to stand straight up! Vinegar will detangle, and lemon juice will lighten. Chadwick's Chemically Sensitive Salon in Mountlake Terrace, Wash., provides many unscented, chemically-free hair products and services.

Cosmetics. This was difficult. My mascara started making me sneeze and soaps made me itch. Titanium, found in lipstick, was adding to my toxicity. The hardest to give up was toenail polish; I must have been addicted to formaldehyde! Italian actress Sophia Loren, considered one of the most beautiful women in the world, has used olive oil for moisturizer all her life. Is beauty really what we put on our faces anyway?

For centuries humans used plants and natural products for food, medicine and personal hygiene: parsley and mint for mouth fresheners, basil and tansy for bug repellents, and the scent of roses as an anti-depressant. Nature has given us what we need to exist.

The changes I've made allow me to continue to exist in the world. I am sad lilacs aren't allowed in my house, but I can still see them outside. I miss my candles and my painted toenails, but I am thankful I am able to breathe every day.

As we struggle to live in a society filled with toxic pollutants – and getting worse with the addition of every new chemical product – we have the ability to make choices that will not only benefit our own health, but the health and safety of our whole planet.



About YUMMY NORTHWEST

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas and submissions are all most welcome. Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com

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