

Antioxidants

Antioxidants will not prevent the growth of bacteria and should not be confused with preservatives. Many people get confused and believe an antioxidant to perform the role of a preservative.

Whilst antioxidants will help to keep certain ingredients in your products 'fresher', they will not prevent the growth of mould, fungus or bacteria.

Antioxidants play two roles in our skincare products - one is to provide some protection against environmental damage to the skin by neutralising free radicals and the other is to help your oils from deteriorating and becoming rancid therefore helping the oils and our skincare products stay fresher for longer.

Free radicals are caused by over exposure to sunlight, lack of sleep, pollution, stress, etc. Under normal conditions our body would work hard at replacing these damaged cells with healthy new ones, but if the free radicals are not controlled or eliminated, the cells would not be repaired resulting in dull, dry, wrinkled and uneven skin tone. Antioxidants can help get rid of free radicals before they do too much damage. Therefore antioxidants can help reduce the signs of ageing.

Antioxidants reduce the rate of oxidization in oils. Oxidisation is a chemical process which occurs when oils are exposed to air. Antioxidants will extend the shelf life of your oils especially 'fragile' oils such as flaxseed, hemp, rosehip and evening primrose oils.

Examples of antioxidants are:

Vitamin E (Tocopherol) - Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant used in preserving oils and keeping them from going rancid. You can add it directly to your carrier oils to prevent them becoming rancid in their bottles, or you can add it to your cosmetic products that contain these 'fragile' oils. The ratio to use when adding an antioxidant to your oils is about 1-2%

This is a perfect ingredient to add to shorter shelf-life oils such as rosehip oil. Adding 10g vitamin E oil to 1kg (1 litre) of rosehip oil will extend the shelf life of the rosehip oil to 1-2 years.

Rosemary Oil Extract - is a powerful antioxidant. It also helps to minimize the oxidation and of some vitamins and amino acids. As rosemary has a smell of its own, you will introduce this aroma to your products if using it.

Green Tea has high levels of antioxidants and can be applied successfully to the skin via a herbal infusion and in a skincare product. Don't add green tea to your oils as it will not prevent them from going rancid, nor will it mix with the oil.