

Chapter: Sourcing Organic Ingredients

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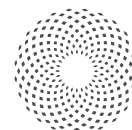
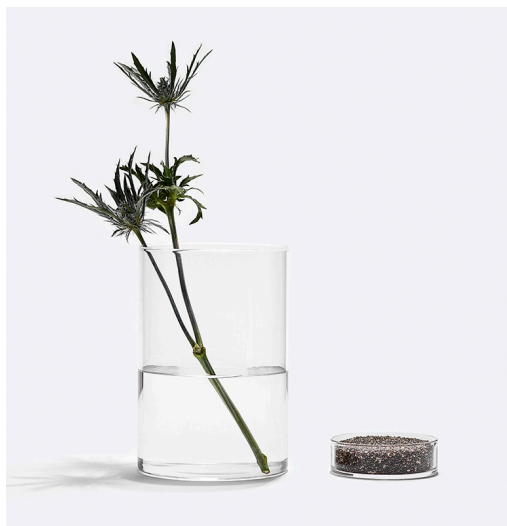
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Horticulture



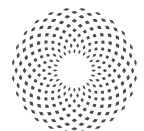
How does an ingredient go from the field or forest to your face?

Taking a plant from the ground to putting it into a skincare product requires care at every stage. Growing plants for use in skincare is just like growing grapes for wine—everything from the location, weather and soil type influences the quality of the final product.

First and foremost, we work with our growers and gatherers to ensure that we always start with the best plant materials. If a botanical ingredient is wild harvested, then it is done with respect for the local area. If it is cultivated, then it is done under the best conditions and harvested at the optimum time for that plant to ensure the most potent constituent profile.

We support fair trade and work with growers who are organically certified so that our herbs are grown without the use of pesticides and herbicides. We do this because we value the health of our customers and the health of our environment. Scientific evidence has proven that organic agriculture results in much greater biodiversity. It also protects the environment through legally binding standards that prevent pollution and ban herbicides and artificial fertilizers. Organic farming is playing an increasingly important role in mitigating climate change as well, by taking carbon out of the atmosphere and safely locking it away in the soil.

Our Quality Manager works with each and every one of our suppliers to guarantee that their growing and harvesting methods are done to the appropriate standards to produce safe, effective, and sustainable ingredients.



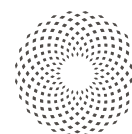
Organic Farming

Organic farming is a specific system of farming done without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, GMO (genetically modified organism) products and other additives. Crops are produced in a more natural way that is beneficial to the environment. It's a method of farming that coexists with the earth's natural systems, sustains soil fertility and protects the environment, wildlife and our non-renewable resources.

But organic farming is about more than what you avoid. It's a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity of everything that exists within the ecosystem already, such as soil organisms, plants, animals and people.



Organic farming does this through practices such as crop rotations, cover crops, and a balanced host-predator relationship. Residues and nutrients produced on a farm are recycled back into the soil. Composted manure is used to maintain soil organic matter and soil fertility. Preventative insect and disease control can also be achieved by companion planting and choosing resistant varieties, for example. Integrated pest and weed management and soil conservation systems are all implemented on an organic farm as well, for a result that's safe for all.



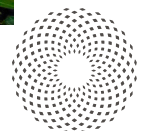
Wild Harvesting

Wild harvesting, or foraging, is the practice of harvesting botanicals in an environmentally conscious way from their natural environment. We take only the part of the plant required for extraction - the leaves, stems or flowers, and leave the rest of the living plant intact. There are, of course, more best practices with foraging - don't take more than a quarter of the plant, leave the plant healthy, don't pick endangered species and leave the roots intact, if you can.

We forage in order to access native plants that are rich in nutrients, but not available commercially, either because they are difficult to grow agriculturally or produce in large quantities commercially. These plants tend to be hardier and more vital because they are not grown in "monoculture," and thereby protected from every pest, weed, and adverse condition. This wild growing produces stronger, more effective plants that have adapted to their natural environment and that have developed a certain resiliency. And on a deeper level, we get plants that have tapped into the local rhizome - the system of roots and stems that runs underground - where local plants communicate with each other, and provide each other with mutual benefits.

At Codex Beauty, wild harvesting is essential to our practice. For example, we use foraged bog myrtle to create essential oil for our some of our products. We sampled bog myrtle essential oil from different geographical areas, and found significant functional and sensory differences in the samples. Irish bog myrtle grows wild on our ancient bogs, which were created over 10,000 years ago from decaying deciduous trees, whereas Canadian bog myrtle grows in coniferous forest-swamps. Today, there is no way to capture this in a commercial agricultural setting! We also use foraged honeysuckle and elderflowers in our formulas - again, hardy plants that cannot readily be grown in a monoculture environment.

We work with experts in plant identification who are completely in tune with their surrounding areas. Many are also qualified herbalists, whose knowledge has been passed down in their families for years. And so we know that we are getting the best quality materials.



Even our seaweed is wild harvested from the Atlantic Ocean by a family supplier whose knowledge of the ocean and all it provides has also been passed down through generations.

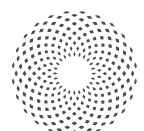
Interestingly, seaweed harvesting involves an opposite process to land plants: As the sun retreats, the sea produces seaweeds that grow best as the water gets colder and avoids bleaching from the sun. And once the stormy weather hits, the seaweed is washed ashore making it the ideal ingredient for foraging!

Seaweeds are vital to our formulas because they are full of the trace minerals that are lacking in our land plants. In terms of skincare, these marine ingredients provide vitamins, minerals, fatty acids and antioxidants. And of course, our seaweed is naturally organic, as there is never any need for herbicides or pesticides! It is also carefully cleaned and tested for shellfish or other contaminants that could lead to allergies, and submitted to ELISA (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay) testing prior to use.

Wild harvesting and foraging ingredients put us directly in contact with the wilderness—and connect us to nature. They fill the gap that conventional, monoculture agriculture leaves between us and nature. They bring us back to basics. They take organic to another level ensuring that we have access to plants that are not inert from decades of poor soil quality and over farming.

While it could seem that this trend for foraged ingredients could be a threat to sustainability of wild areas it is more likely that it will lead to a much-needed respect for wild places and a resolution to leave them as nature intended. Wild harvesting is a source of useful plant material and it also supports biodiversity.

In the end, wild harvesting is like a permaculture solution: The design and implementation of a system to access natural resources without harming their natural environment. This benefits both us and the earth, and directly utilizes the patterns and resilient features observed in natural ecosystems.



An International Organic Standard: COSMOS

COSMOS stands for COSMetic Organic and Natural Standard, and will become the most widely used organic and natural cosmetics standard used globally. In 2002, the five major European organic and natural cosmetics standard-setting organizations came together to unify their respective standards. The organizations recognized that the cosmetics industry and the cosmetics market are international. Therefore, it was in the best interest of both the industry and consumers to create a single, harmonized standard that would provide a transparent and equal standard for all products worldwide.

The COSMOS-standard applies to cosmetic products that are marketed as organic or natural. Its guiding principles are to:

- promote the use of products from organic agriculture, and respect biodiversity;
- use natural resources responsibly, and respect the environment;
- use processing and manufacturing that are clean and respectful of human health and the environment;
- integrate and develop the concept of “green chemistry,” which is defined by 12 principles for safer, cleaner and renewable chemical processes.

Companies must also ensure that their packaging is minimized and environmentally - friendly and their factories must have an environmental and waste management plan in place. For all of these reasons, our products are COSMOS certified.

Reading Links:

[COSMOS Standard](#)
[Green Chemistry](#)

