

# Natural Vs Synthetic Beauty: Have We Got It All Wrong?

GEORGIA MURRAY

26 OCTOBER 2017, 23:30



Over the past several years, natural and ‘green’ beauty has seen astronomical growth, with The Soil Association [reporting](#) a 13% rise in certified natural products in the UK in 2016, and sales soaring to £61.2 million. [Cult Beauty’s ‘Farm To Face’](#) page champions homegrown products, [Space NK](#) allows you to filter brands via ingredients – ‘natural’ being one of the options – and a [Kari Gran 2016 survey](#) found that 73% of millennial women would prioritise green beauty, more than any other age group. Yet at the same time, we’re using more manmade ingredients than ever, with SPF, retinol, and acid peels now a vital part of many people’s skincare regime, and science-backed brands like [The Ordinary](#) becoming cult hits overnight.

Whether we want a 100% natural guarantee or need lab-based proof, as consumers we are more switched on than ever, and pay attention to detail (and ingredients lists) before trialling products and offering our brand loyalty. The side-by-side existence of natural and manmade beauty has led to a kind of binary, meaning that customers often fall into one of two camps. Are we right to be wary of the chemicals in high-tech products? Or are we blindly buying into natural brands that have little impact on our skin? Or, in fact, is the polarisation of natural and synthetic products increasingly outdated?

Founder of [Lixir Skin](#) and the brains behind some of skincare’s leading brands, Colette Haydon, thinks so. “There is a misconception that if you’re removing something you don’t want in your product, you’re replacing it with an effective natural ingredient. But actually, it’s just as good as a basket of fruit or some pretty flowers,” she tells Refinery29. While Lixir products include phytic and lactic acids, which are naturally derived, Colette places importance on the the active of a plant rather than the plant itself. “Do you want natural in that you don’t want nasties? Yes. Do you want natural in that you don’t want nasties, but what you have got in there are not-terribly-effective plant extracts? No!” It’s a refreshingly transparent opinion from a brand founder but, if we’re to measure this debate, we need to ask how this binary came about in the first place.