

More and more companies are jumping onto the “natural” bandwagon, but it may not always be everything it is cracked up to be. Lack of legislation on natural and organic formulations is allowing anyone to make such claims, resulting in consumer confusion. Imogen Matthews, consultant to In-Cosmetics, finds out what is really natural on the beauty market today, and what isn't.



*Are natural formulations really better than „synthetic“ ones*

# How natural is natural?

photo: Mann & Schröder

According to **Mintel GNPD** (global new products database), less than 0.1 percent of all beauty launches in the UK in 2008 could claim to be completely natural and organic as well as environmentally friendly in terms of both product and packaging. Yet 38 percent of all new launches make a herbal or botanical claim. “In many instances, the herbal or botanical ingredient was an extract or essence and this does not mean that the entire product is natural,” explains Mintel\* senior analyst, beauty and personal care, Alexandra Richmond.

In total, “all natural” products accounted for less than 2 percent of the UK’s beauty launches and are led by niche companies such as **Burt’s Bees** and **Purely** skin care. Amongst the “all natural” products, less than 6 out of 10 are organic, suggesting that while the ingredients may be natural, they have been grown using chemicals, thereby diluting the product’s “naturalness”.

**Euromonitor\*** agrees that the line between “natural” and “all natural” is very blurred. It makes the distinction between those companies that define their products as 100 percent organic, with naturally derived ingredients from sustainable resources, versus those making “natural” or “green” claims, but which still contain toxic substances or chemicals that may be seen as harmful.

**Kline\*** has devised a method of defining beauty products by assessing 26 natural cosmetics and toiletries brands. Using a scale of 1 to 10, the company identified brands that used almost exclusively synthetic ingredients and virtually no natural ones,

right through to those using mainly botanical extracts from organically farmed sources and only a tiny percentage of non-natural ingredients. Out of the 26 brands covered in the report, the degree of naturalness covered a broad spectrum, but over half contained non-naturals, often incorporating heavy use of synthetics.

When UK retailer and manufacturer **Boots** launched its **Botanics Organics** toiletries range it was unhappy with the lack of EU legislation governing organic claims as well as the universally used independent criteria to validate the claims. So it developed its own policy to provide customers with a clear justification on how Boots ensures its organic claims are indeed organic. In a press statement, Stephen Johnson, Boots sustainable development manager, commented: “Organic farming is increasingly being recognised as a more environmentally sustainable system of farming over the long term, so with this in mind our formulation experts have developed all Botanics Organic prod-

*A new breed of more and more quasi-natural beauty products is hitting the market*



photo: Procter & Gamble



Photo: Burt's Bees

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ucts to contain as high an organic content as possible." Boots has recently extended the Botanics Organics range to include six new face and body products.

An example of the new breed of quasi-natural beauty products is **Olay Anti-Wrinkle Nature Fusion**, a new line of moisturisers inspired by living plants and nature. The range was designed in a collaboration between **P&G Beauty** and leading botanical experts studying the natural cycles of living plants and investigating the synergies between these natural cycles and the human skin. The technology sources the right extract with the right phyto-chemistry and maximises performance by selecting the most effective extract based on chemistry and in vitro screening. Key ingredients include grape seed, ginseng and sea buckthorn extracts, said to reduce the levels of MMP (Matrix Metalloprotease) which can result in damage to collagen and other skin structural components.

Currently, there is much debate in the beauty industry as to whether natural formulations are in fact better than synthetically derived ones. "Natural may not be better for the environment and local economies," pointed out Gillian Morris, in her presentation at this year's In-Cosmetics marketing trends presentation. "Furthermore, other factors arise when an ingredient is harvested from fragile environments." She stated that whereas natural formulations can provide a satisfactory level of performance in skin care, for many other personal care categories natural ingredients have performance limitations.

### All natural beauty products

**Burt's Bees** is a brand that has a large number of natural credentials to its name. Founded by Burt Shaviz in 1989, but now under ownership of the US conglomerate **Clorox**, Burt's Bees is very focused on working in harmony with mother earth. The company believes that natural not only means that

it comes from a natural source but that there is zero, or minimal, modification to bring it to the form in which it is used in the company's products. Burt's Bees claims to be unique in that it lists the percentage of natural content on their (recycled) packaging and the website.

**Yes To Carrots** is a new Israeli natural beauty line sourced from organic farmers who are certified by the Israel Bio-Organic Agriculture Association (IBOAA). The products are formulated from Dead Sea mud and minerals, along with organic fruits and vegetables full of beta-carotene, a natural form of vitamin A. The original six-product line has been extended into several sub-ranges, including **Yes to Tomatoes** and **Yes to Cucumbers**.

**Method** is a natural range of baby and kids' body care and household cleaning products which are biodegradable and 99 percent plant-derived, containing ingredients such as rice milk and mallow.

**Laveré**, founded by German Klara Ahlers, a pioneer of the natural cosmetics movement and the sister company of **Lavera Natural Cosmetics**, has been relaunched with an extended range of 31 products, many containing organic ingredients and in more contemporary packaging.

The number of natural brands also claiming to use recycled packaging is still relatively low. "Amongst the beauty and personal care products that claim to be all natural, less than one in five new launches could claim to have environmentally friendly packaging," comments **Mintel's** Alexandra Richmond. "Just one in eight 'all natural' products described itself as an environmentally friendly product." As environmental issues move up the political agenda, eco-friendly packaging will be the next big trend.

\*Mintel, Euromonitor and Kline are participants in the marketing trends presentations at next year's In-Cosmetics show which takes place in Munich on 21-23 April, 2009. For further information, visit the website [www.in-cosmetics.com](http://www.in-cosmetics.com)

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