



10 Minutes For The Planet

Green-up with some DIY – part 4: Plant Oils

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by Valentine Rinner

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's episode of 10 Minutes for the Planet. This is the fourth and last episode of our D-I-Y series of everyday solutions to green-up your lifestyle. Our topic today is plant oils.

I use plant oils – or vegetable oils – on a daily basis and for a wide variety of uses, mainly in the kitchen and bathroom. There are literally dozens and dozens of different plant oils, some are better known than others, such as olive oil, coconut oil or rapeseed oil – but have you heard about borage oil, evening primrose or hemp seed oil? Did you know that calendula oil is the best after-sun product there is? And that castor oil is the best remedy for damaged nails? Our grandparents certainly did, but modern generations know little about these oils and their rich properties. Maybe it's also because they're so inexpensive, long-lasting and multi-purpose, that they are not very interesting for the modern hygiene industry.

Plant oils are very good for us as they are extremely rich in amino acids and vitamins. The variety of their chemical compositions gives them different properties, textures, colours and smells, to suit all tastes. For oily skin, hydrating oils such as jojoba, hazelnut or apricot kernel oil are all recommended. Dry skins love richer oils, such as borage, rose, argan or evening primrose oil. Macadamia, coconut or avocado oils work well for everyone and all of these oils can be mixed and matched very easily between themselves, as well as with essential oils, for an easy homemade product. Unlike our modern beauty products, they do not contain water and therefore do not need preservatives, as long as they are kept in a cold and dark environment. They are also so rich that there is no need to add chemicals, they can last for years, are biodegradable, and do not pollute our air or waters. Their cultivation also has a considerably lower carbon footprint than all of the industrial products we use today. For the modern hygiene and cosmetic industry, they're simply not lucrative enough.

If you're still looking for more reasons to make a switch, just remember that raw, high-quality plant oils are much cheaper, more efficient, and because they are multi-purpose, they help to save space and produce less waste.

Now is the fun part! Different plant oils are more adapted to different people and tastes, so look them up, and try different ones before you pick your favourites. My own

“go-to” plant oil is coconut oil. In the past few years, it has replaced the vast majority of my hygiene products: I use it mostly plain; sometimes adding a few drops of essential oils, for lip balm, face wash, moisturiser, hair mask, mouthwash, make-up remover and deodorant. It works to get rid of dryness on any part of your body and also relieves burns, as well as cuts and bites of any sort. As a complement to coconut oil, I sometimes use sweet almond oil for massages and skin care, and evening primrose oil to treat eczema, and also as a food supplement. All three oils are edible too!

It’s usually quite easy to pick oils that you’ll be able to use for a variety of needs. You can find plenty of extra information in recipes online or in books, on which oil would best suit your own specific needs – plus you’ll be saving money, space and waste!

Bye everyone, happy greening, and see you next week for a new episode of 10 Minutes for the Planet.