



A FREE GUIDE · FOR BEGINNERS

The Botanical Skincare Guide

Start here. What plants actually do for skin, how to read a label, and how to build a routine you will actually keep.

re3u.com





BEFORE YOU START

This guide assumes you know nothing.

That is deliberate. Most skincare writing is aimed at people who already know what a humectant is, and it quietly skips the part where you learn to tell a real claim from a printed one.

So we have started further back. By the end of these pages you will be able to read an ingredient list, work out your own skin type without buying anything, and build a routine from three products rather than ten.

Nothing here requires you to buy from us. It is simply what we wish someone had handed us at the beginning.

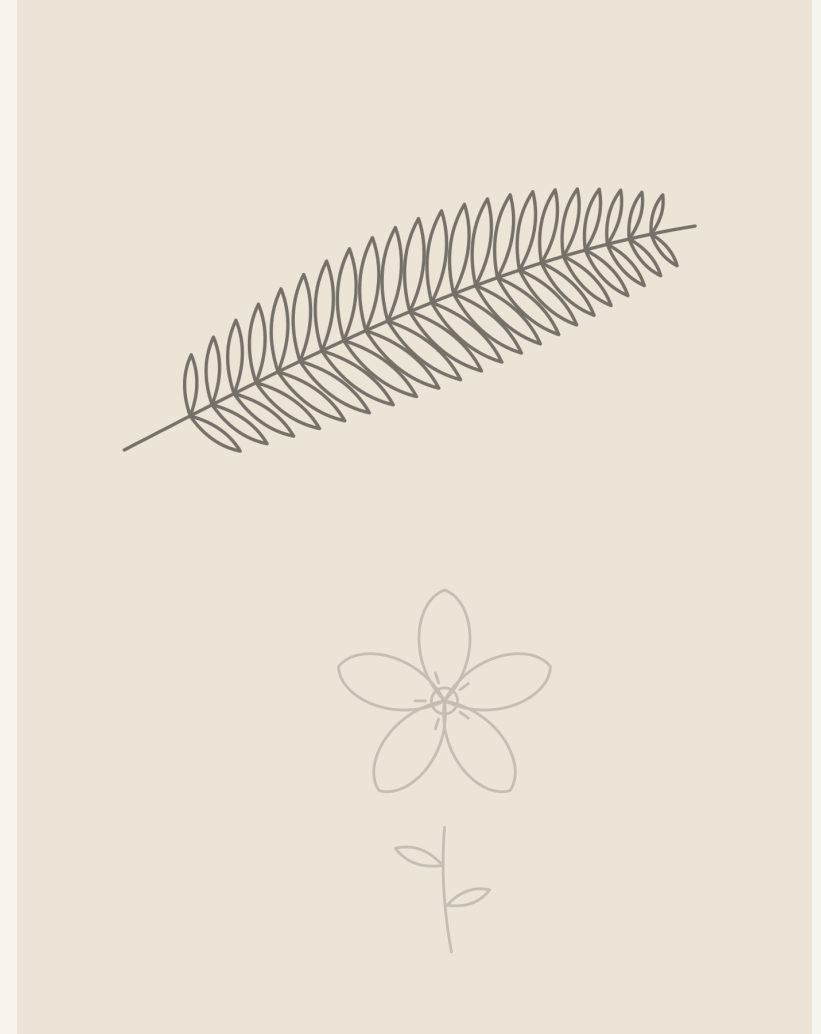


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- 04 Build Your Routine**
Order, first four weeks, patch testing, and the mistakes to skip.

Plus a printable starter checklist at the back



01

PART ONE

Start Here

Two things to get straight before you spend anything: what the word botanical actually promises, and how to check whether a label is telling the truth.



What “botanical” actually means

Skincare where the working ingredients come from plants — extracts, pressed oils, butters, clays and flower waters. That is the whole definition. Here is what it does not mean.



Botanical does not mean gentle

Poison ivy is botanical. Citrus oils can burn skin in sunlight. Cinnamon bark is a common allergen. Potency is potency, whatever its source.



Botanical does not mean chemical-free

Water is a chemical. Every plant extract is a mixture of hundreds of naturally occurring chemical compounds — that is what makes it work.



Botanical does mean complexity

One plant oil carries dozens of fatty acids, vitamins and antioxidants at once. That is why botanicals tend to work broadly and slowly, rather than sharply and fast.

The honest trade-off: botanicals are generally slower and gentler than synthetic actives, and generally less targeted. That suits some goals and not others.

Six words on labels, decoded

Most of the words on the front of a bottle are marketing, not regulation. These six come up constantly.

“Natural”

Not legally defined in India or most markets. A brand can print it on almost anything. Treat it as a mood, not a fact.

“Organic”

Only meaningful alongside a certification mark — India Organic, USDA, COSMOS or Ecocert. Without the mark it is just a word.

“Chemical-free”

Not possible. Water is a chemical, and so is every plant compound in the jar. This claim tells you about the marketing team.

“Clean”

A marketing term with no standard behind it. It usually means free from a list of ingredients the brand chose itself.

“Dermatologically tested”

Confirms a test happened. It says nothing at all about what the results were, or how many people were tested.

“Non-comedogenic”

No standardised test sits behind this. Useful as a hint about intent, not as a guarantee your pores will agree.

Read an ingredient list in thirty seconds

Ingredients are listed by weight, most first. That single rule does most of the work.

01 Read the first five, skip the rest

The top five ingredients are the bulk of the formula. On a first pass, nothing else matters much.

02 Water first is normal

Most creams are mostly water. That is how they stay light enough to spread. It is not a red flag.

03 Find the one percent line

Once you hit preservatives or fragrance, everything after is present in tiny amounts and the order stops meaning anything.

04 A hero ingredient at the bottom is decoration

If the rose extract on the front is second-to-last on the back, you are buying the idea of roses.

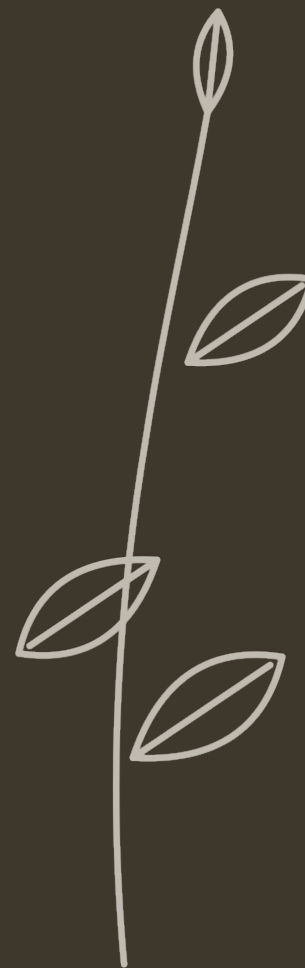


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PART TWO

What Plants Actually Do

Four jobs, a short list of botanicals worth knowing by name, and how to tell a light oil from one that will sit on your face all day.



The four jobs

Almost every moisturiser ever made is some combination of these four things. Once you can name them, most products stop being mysterious.



Humectants

Pull water into the skin.

FOUND IN

Aloe vera, plant glycerin, honey, hyaluronic acid



Emollients

Smooth and soften the surface.

FOUND IN

Jojoba, rosehip seed, sweet almond, olive squalane

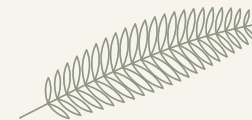


Occlusives

Seal that water in.

FOUND IN

Shea butter, kokum, cocoa butter, beeswax



Antioxidants

Defend against daily damage.

FOUND IN

Green tea, vitamin E, astaxanthin, pomegranate

Rule of thumb: dry skin usually wants all four. Oily skin usually wants the first and the last, and very little of the third.

Eight botanicals worth knowing

You do not need to memorise a hundred plants. These eight cover most of what you will meet on a label.



Aloe Vera

Water-binding and calming. The safest place for a beginner to start.



Jojoba

Technically a wax, and the closest thing in nature to skin's own oil. Rarely causes trouble.



Rosehip Seed Oil

Light and fast-absorbing. Reached for most often for uneven tone and texture.



Shea Butter

Heavy, sealing and protective. Best on the body, or on genuinely very dry skin.



Oats

Soothes itching and irritation, and has more clinical evidence behind it than most botanicals.



Green Tea

An antioxidant. Calms visible redness and helps defend against pollution.



Clay

Absorbs excess oil and lifts grime. Pink and kaolin are the gentlest; bentonite is the strongest.



Manjistha

An Ayurvedic root used for generations to support an even, clear-looking tone.

Oils, decoded

The single most useful thing to know about a plant oil is how heavy it is. Weight decides whether it sinks in or sits there.

Light

Absorbs quickly, leaves almost nothing behind.

Rosehip · Grapeseed · Watermelon seed · Squalane

Best for oily and combination skin

Medium

Balanced. The general-purpose middle ground.

Jojoba · Sweet almond · Argan · Sesame

Best for normal and slightly dry skin

Rich

Slow, heavy and sealing. Sits on top by design.

Avocado · Castor · Shea · Kokum · Coconut

Best for very dry skin, or the body

On comedogenic ratings: oils are scored 0 to 5 for how likely they are to clog pores. Coconut oil rates 4 and is a common cause of breakouts on faces; jojoba and rosehip sit at 1 to 2. These scores come from old and fairly crude tests — treat them as a starting hint, and let your own skin cast the deciding vote.

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PART THREE

Know Your Skin

You cannot choose ingredients for skin you have not identified. This part costs nothing and takes two hours.





PART THREE · KNOW YOUR SKIN

The bare-face test

Wash with a gentle cleanser. Pat dry. Apply nothing at all — no toner, no cream, no oil. Wait two hours in a normally heated room, then look in the mirror.

Tight and flaky all over

Dry. Wants emollients and occlusives. Oils will be your friend.

Shiny everywhere, especially by midday

Oily. Wants light hydration, not heavy butters.

Shiny on forehead and nose, tight on the cheeks

Combination. Treat the two zones as separate problems.

Comfortable — no shine, no tightness

Balanced. Protect it, and resist the urge to over-treat.

Stings or reddens easily, whatever you use

Sensitive. A state rather than a type — you can be oily and sensitive at once.

Skin type shifts with season, age, climate and stress. Retest every few months.

Match plants to your concern

Once you know what you are dealing with, the shortlist gets short fast.

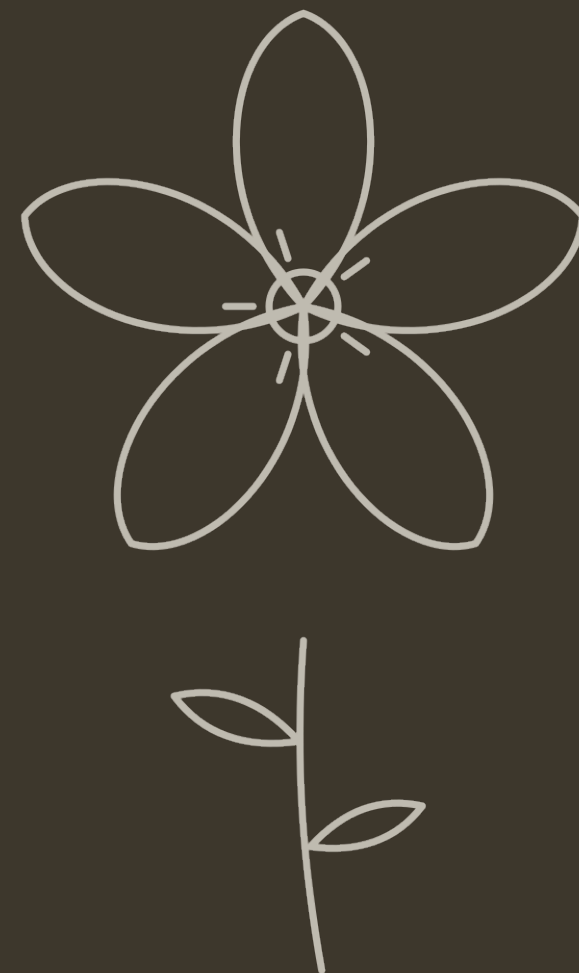
Dryness and tightness	Shea, kokum, avocado, oats, ghee-based creams	Look for occlusives high in the list
Dullness and uneven tone	Rosehip, manjistha, amla, gentle exfoliation	Twice a week is enough — really
Congestion and visible pores	Clay, tea tree, jojoba, light oils only	Keep coconut oil off the face
Redness and sensitivity	Aloe, oats, chamomile, calendula, bisabolol	Fewer ingredients beats more
Early lines and lost bounce	Rosehip, sea buckthorn, daily antioxidants	Sun protection matters more than any oil
Hair fall and scalp imbalance	Rosemary, bhringraj, amla, neem for flaking	Treat the scalp, not the strands

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PART FOUR

Build Your Routine

Order of application, a four-week starting plan, how to patch test properly, and the mistakes that cost beginners the most time.



The order of application

One rule covers almost every case: thinnest to thickest. Water before oil. Whatever stays on the skin goes last.

01

Cleanse

Remove the day.
Lukewarm water, never
hot.

02

Hydrate

Anything water-based —
hydrosol, essence, aloe,
serum. Apply to slightly
damp skin.

03

Treat

Targeted serums or facial
oils, if you use them at all.

04

Seal

Cream, balm or butter.
This is what stops step
two evaporating.

05

Protect

Sunscreen, mornings only.
No botanical replaces it.

Leave thirty to sixty seconds between layers — not for any chemical reason, but because rushing is how you end up using three times more product than you need.

Your first four weeks

Start with three products, not ten. Add one thing at a time — then when something goes wrong, you will know exactly what caused it.

01 Week one — cleanser and moisturiser

That is the entire routine. Twice a day. You are establishing a baseline, not chasing a result.

02 Week two — add one treatment

An oil or a serum, at night only. Then watch it for a full week before touching anything else.

03 Week three — add gentle exfoliation

Twice this week. Not three times because it felt nice the first time.

04 Week four — add a mask, once

Then stop and assess the whole routine before adding anything further.

Sunscreen from day one, every morning, regardless of the week.



How to patch test properly

Skip this step and your face becomes the test site. It takes a day and costs nothing.

01

Choose the spot

Inner forearm for body products.
Behind the ear or along the jaw
for anything going on your face.

02

Apply a small amount

About the size of a coin. Then
leave it completely alone.

03

Wait twenty-four hours

Do not wash that patch. Do not
check it every ten minutes either.

04

Look for a reaction

Redness, itching, small bumps,
burning or swelling. Any of these
means stop.

05

Repeat once more

Some reactions are cumulative
rather than immediate. A second
clear test is worth the wait.

A note on essential oils: sensitisation can develop after months of using something perfectly happily. If a product you have loved suddenly starts to sting, that is not your skin “purging” — stop using it.

Seven beginner mistakes

Every one of these is common, and every one costs months.

01 **Buying a routine before knowing your skin**

Three products you understand will beat ten you do not.

03 **Reading “natural” as “safe”**

Undiluted essential oils, citrus and cinnamon cause real chemical burns.

05 **Coconut oil on an acne-prone face**

It is rich, heavily occlusive, and clogs a great many people’s pores.

07 **Quitting in week three**

Skin renews on roughly a 28-day cycle. You are judging before the first result has finished.

02 **Changing everything at once**

You lose any ability to work out what helped and what hurt.

04 **Over-exfoliating**

Two or three times a week is plenty. Tight, shiny, stinging skin is damage, not glow.

06 **Skipping sunscreen because it’s natural**

Nothing in this guide is a substitute for it. Nothing.



Natural does not mean forever

Fewer preservatives is the selling point and the catch. Botanical formulations spoil, and spoiled product irritates skin.



Check the PAO symbol

The small open-jar icon marked 6M or 12M. That is months after opening — not from the date you bought it.



Cold-pressed oils go rancid

Rosehip, flaxseed and hemp turn fastest. If it smells like crayons or stale nuts, throw it out.



Heat and light are the enemy

Not on a sunny windowsill, and not on a shelf inside a steamy shower.



Dark glass beats clear

And a pump beats an open jar — fingers introduce bacteria every single time.



Chill the delicate ones

Rosehip oil and vitamin C preparations last noticeably longer kept cold.



Water needs a preservative

Any homemade mix containing water lasts days, not months. This is not negotiable.

What to expect, and when

Skin renews on roughly a 28-day cycle, and hair grows about a centimetre a month. Those two numbers set the pace of everything you are about to try.

1–2

WEEKS

Comfort

Skin feels softer and less tight. Real, and worth noticing — but still only surface-level.

4–6

WEEKS

Turnover

One to two full renewal cycles in. Texture starts to smooth and tone starts to even.

8–12

WEEKS

Change

What most people would call results. Clarity, tone and resilience rather than a temporary glow.

12+

WEEKS

Maintenance

Fewer bad days rather than dramatic ones. This is the phase worth protecting.

If you are seeing nothing at all by week eight, the approach is probably fine — the specific product is probably wrong.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Your starter checklist

Print this page, or keep it on your phone. It is the whole guide compressed into ten decisions.

BEFORE YOU BUY

- ☐ I have done the bare-face test and know my skin type
- ☐ I have read the first five ingredients
- ☐ I have checked the PAO symbol for months-after-opening
- ☐ If it claims organic, I found the certification mark
- ☐ I have somewhere cool and dark to keep it

IN YOUR FIRST MONTH

- ☐ I patch tested before the first full use
- ☐ I am adding one new product a week, at most
- ☐ I am wearing sunscreen every morning
- ☐ I took a photo on day one, in daylight, for comparison
- ☐ I am not judging the results before week eight





R&3U
RESTORE. REBALANCE. REVIVE.

Start smaller than you think.

Almost nobody regrets beginning with three good products and learning what they do. Plenty of people regret the shelf of half-used bottles they bought in a fortnight.

Re3U makes small-batch botanical skincare rooted in Ayurvedic method. If this guide was useful, that is where we would start you.

[EXPLORE THE RANGE](#)

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