

# ~ An Ingredient Guide ~

## Specialist Oils:

### *Selecting Ingredients for your Skin Type*

**LEVEL:** Skincare Ingredients

*Formulating for your Skin Type*

Nowadays there is a dazzling range of oils available for use in natural skincare and haircare. Trying to choose which ones to buy can be completely over-whelming. Until you understand ingredients well, it's easy to over-spend on these types of oils and waste them further by doubling up on ingredients you don't need because they tend to work in the same way anyway. These oils usually have a short shelf-life so that's all the more reason not to buy more than you'll need, because it's such a shame to have to throw away such special (and pricey) ingredients. I aim to help you to avoid these pitfalls!

In this guide I group together ingredients in a way that I find helps people to understand them, how they work and how much of them to use in a product. That way you can select ingredients from a group type and use them appropriately in a product e.g. facial oil serum, face cream etc. The terms '**Enriching Oils**' and '**Specialist Seed Oils**' are terms I use to group together oils into categories that help people learn how much of them to use. These are not terms that you are likely to see in other books, courses or websites but I have used them for 10 years and I find that they are very useful for helping people to begin to understand ingredients and have a logical approach to suitable ways to use them.

This is not a definite guide or by any means the only way to learn to select, blend and formulate with specialist oils. It is simply the method that I've developed over the years to give people a reliable foundation to start from and refer to, as they begin their journey working with specialist natural ingredients, discovering what they like and dislike.

## **What are ‘Enriching Oils’?**

This is a term that I use to group together oils that are enriching and only need to be used in small amounts. Like carrier and base oils, they are fixed oils i.e. pressed out from nuts and seeds of plants. However, it is better not to use them undiluted because it only takes small amounts of them to be effective. They are added to creams, serums, butters, balms etc. in small amounts. Using them undiluted would be wasteful and expensive. It tends also to change the texture of what you are putting them into e.g. making serums or creams too heavy, too oily etc.

I recommend using them at **10% - 25%** total of your ingredients in a recipe. At this range you’ll get the benefits of these richer oils while keeping the structure of the product you want to make. Adding more than this amount of any of the enriching oils would be likely to make your product too heavy, greasy and unpleasant to use. Sticking to the recommended percentage will also help to prevent you wasting money by using more of these ingredients than is necessary to benefit from their effects.

[NOTE: Please don’t panic at the thought of doing maths! I’ve already given an example of how to use them in the **Serum Blending Form**; all you need to do is choose the ingredients you’d like to use and fill that in, the maths has already been done there].

### **Avocado Oil (*Persea gratissima*):**

A rich, heavy and nourishing oil. Added to creams in small amounts.

Contains vitamin E & essential fatty acids. This oil is pressed out of the fruit of the plant (i.e. the green bit that we usually eat as guacamole).

**Skin Type:** Dry/mature skin.

### **Borage Seed Oil (*Borago officinalis*):**

Also known as ‘star flower oil’ (because of the shape of the borage flower). Rich in anti-inflammatory omega oils. Nourishes & helps to repair damaged skin. Helps skin to retain moisture.

**Skin Type:** Dry, aging & problem skin

### **Evening Primrose Seed Oil (*Oenothera biennis*):**

Similar properties to borage oil. Rich in anti-inflammatory omega oils. Soothes dry, irritated skin.

**Skin Type:** Dry, irritated & mature skin

### **Hazel Nut Oil (*Corylus avellana*):**

Rich in vitamins, minerals & protein. It suits oily skin because it is astringent. Combine with other oils for dry skin.

**Skin Type:** Oily Skin.

### **Hemp Seed Oil (*Cannabis sativa*):**

This oil is rich in Omegas 3, 6 & 9 and GLA (gamma-linolenic acid). These make it a very useful oil to use to try to reduce inflammation. It is heavy, rich and has a dark colour. It has a very distinctive strong smell that is so characteristic of Cannabis derived extracts (warning: you may or may not like this smell!). It is NOT the same as CBD extracts (CBD is produced from the flowers of a different variety of the cannabis plant).

**Skin Type:** Dry, cracked skin (e.g. some types of eczema).

### **Jojoba Oil (*Simmondsia chinensis*):**

A waxy oil that softens the skin. It is similar to sebum, a natural substance made by the body to lubricate the skin.

**Skin Type:** Dry, damaged & irritated skin.

### **Macadamia Nut Oil (*Macadamia integrifolia*):**

A very rich oil that helps to re-hydrate the skin, but has the benefit of not being excessively greasy.

**Skin Type:** Dry skin & mature skin.

### **Rosehip Seed Oil (Rosa canina):**

A light, regenerative, non-greasy oil. Helps to reduce scarring. Useful for acne, mature skin, scars and burns. Because it's so light in texture this one is also nice used undiluted at up to 100% of your recipe (just to prove that there's always an exception to the rule!).

**Skin Type:** All skin types.

### **Wheatgerm Oil (Triticum vulgare):**

Unrefined wheatgerm oil is heavy, has a strong aroma and is rich in vitamin E. Be aware that people who are sensitive to wheat or gluten as foods usually cannot use this oil topically.

**Skin Type:** Dry/mature skin.

## **Special Seed Oils**

This is a term I use to group together oils that have great benefits, but only need to be used in very small amounts to be effective because they are so potent and also because they are very expensive!

I recommend starting to use these oils at **5%** of a recipe formula. [NOTE: Again, please refer to the example of how to use them this way in the Serum Blending Form; don't get stressed about maths!].

Specialist seed oils are becoming very popular now. They are pressed out of the seeds of fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, sea buckthorn, elderberries, pomegranate etc. They are added in small amounts to face creams and serums. They are usually very rich in essential fatty acids (Omega oils/GLA) and several vitamins. Many of them are powerful antioxidants. You'll see claims on the internet about some of them having SPF sun-protective properties. These claims are very exaggerated. They only offer SPF of around factor 3 so are not much use as a sunscreen! These oils help to moisturise the skin and improve the suppleness of the skin. These oils are very expensive (as you can image if you have ever noticed how tiny the seeds of raspberries and strawberries are!). Some of them have very unusual, beautiful rich colours: elderberry is purple, sea buckthorn is bright orange etc. They are often made from seeds that are left over from the fruit juice industry so they are good to reduce waste. Because these oils are so high in anti-oxidants and essential fatty acids they are less stable than other oils: this means that they have a much shorter shelf-life and go off quite quickly. Another reason not to buy too much or too many of them. It would be such a pity if you bought several and they went off before you got the chance to try them out!

### **Chia Seed Oil (*Salvia hispanica*):**

It is very high in Omega 3 essential fatty acid and protein as well as vitamins A, B1, B2 and B3 as well as iron and zinc. It is a rich and nourishing oil that is easily absorbed in to the skin and does not leave a greasy sensation. It tends to suit all skin types, from dry to oily and sensitive. It has a reputation for leaving the skin feeling very soft and soothe. This is a good oil to use if your skin is prone to acne. It can help to reduce this. It is popular in anti-aging products because it helps to reduce wrinkle and fine lines, by improving the elasticity of the skin.

### **Milk Thistle Seed Oil (*Silybum marianum*):**

Pressed out from the seeds, this oil is rich in essential fatty acids, sterols, anti-oxidants and Vitamin E. It's recently become of interest as a skincare ingredient because these properties help to protect the skin.

### **Raspberry Seed Oil (*Rubus idaeus*):**

Suitable for sensitive skin. Deeply nourishing. It provides a protective layer on the skin and helps it to retain moisture. Rich in vitamins E & A and Omega oils (anti-inflammatory essential fatty acids). While it does have some SPF/sun-protective factors, results from studies have been mixed and claims about its SPF are often wildly exaggerated. Please don't rely on this ingredient as a sunscreen.

## **Sea Buckthorn Seed Oil (Hippophae rhamnoides):**

Very rich and nutritious. Sea buckthorn really does have wonderful therapeutic properties. It is a deep orange/ red in colour and has a strong aroma. It is very nutrient-rich and contains vitamins A, E, C and beta carotene. It is a powerfully anti-oxidant oil. It is very high in essential fatty acids (Omega oils/GLA) which helps it to be anti-inflammatory. It is added to cosmetics for its rejuvenative and anti-aging properties. It is used in therapeutic herbal products to help to regenerate the skin in cases of mild burns, minor injuries and scarring. Sea buckthorn oil is very rehydrating and soothing. It can help dry skin, itchy skin and problem skin. It can be applied neat but is best blended with other oils.

**NOTE:** There is also an oil extracted from the fruit of sea buckthorn and it is excellent too. This is usually a CO2 extract (produced using carbon dioxide). CO2 extracts are brilliant (and are safe processes, not harmful chemical ones!) but are much more concentrated than cold-pressed oils so they usually cannot be used undiluted. If you're buying a sea buckthorn oil be sure to check if it's the seed or fruit oil, and if it's a CO2 extract so that you know whether or not you need to dilute it.

## **Other Special Seed Oils**

There are more and more of these seed oils available every time I look! Have a look at what your supplier has in stock. And remember that you don't need to buy 20 of these oils. Using 1 or 2 at a time in your product usually really is plenty to be effective. Don't waste money doubling up on expensive ingredients that tend to do the same thing anyway.

Other similar oils available are:

- blackcurrant seed oil (*Ribes nigrum*)
- blueberry seed oil (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)
- broccoli seed oil (*Brassica oleracea*)
- cranberry seed oil (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*)
- cucumber seed oil (*Cucumis sativus*)

- lettuce seed oil (*Lactuca sativa*)
- passionfruit seed oil (*Passiflora edulis*)
- plum kernel oil (*Prunus domestica*)
- pomegranate seed oil (*Punica granatum*)
- prickly pear seed oil (*Ficus indica*)
- sacha inchi seed oil (*Plukenetia volubilis*)
- strawberry seed oil (*Fragaria ananassa*)