

# organic & wellness

## Aronia Berry Skin Care Cuisine

by Elina Fedotova

The purple aronia berry deserves to be a royal member of the skin care ingredient family. This hardy fruit merits our close attention because it's simply bursting with antioxidants. It has an Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC)\* score of 15,280 umol TE/100 grams. This means that it has a higher concentration of antioxidants than blueberries, grapes, acai, elderberries and many other fruits.

This antioxidant powerhouse is truly a multitasker when it comes to health and beauty. Aronia has traditionally been used in Russia and other Eastern European countries to rejuvenate and heal the skin. Each berry offers an organic cocktail of vitamins, minerals and other skin nourishing nutrients. The berries can be used to make tinctures, and consumed in everything from tea to desserts. They are, however, quite tart. To reduce the tartness, try squeezing them into juice, or adding aronia powder to the smoothies you offer your clients.

I consider aronia berry extract to be an extremely effective ingredient for anti-aging skin care formulations because of its unique blend of phytonutrients. It is also particularly high in vitamin C (ascorbic acid), a scientifically proven collagen-builder and skin brightener.

Because of their antibacterial properties, aronia extracts are a good remedy for acne-prone skin. Due to their high polyphenolic content, aronia berries are thought to be so good for the eyes that they are actually recommended for pilots and drivers.

Aronia berries are also very high in anthocyanins, flavonoids responsible for the deep red, purple and blue colors of many fruits and vegetables.

Studies suggest that these flavonoids have a protective effect on the endothelial cells that line blood vessels. Compresses and tinctures with aronia have long been used in Eastern Europe to improve microcirculation and blood vessel elasticity in cases of rosacea and varicose veins. Tinctures of aronia have even been used to reduce high blood pressure.

Thanks to its high procyanidin content, along with other antioxidants, drinking aronia berry juice before go-

ing to the beach may increase skin's resistance to ultraviolet rays, similar to red wine or tomatoes with olive oil. Thus, aronia berry may slightly extend one's safe time in the sun, but emphasize to your clients that drinking aronia berry juice does not eliminate the need for a good topical sunscreen.

Another reason to love aronia berries is that they come from bushes that absorb very little, if any, heavy metals and pesticides from the soil or water. So even if you can't find a certified



organic source of aronia berries, you can have more peace of mind about using them topically, or as food, because they are naturally organic.

Formulators will enjoy using the extract of aronia berries because their antibacterial properties make it easier

to naturally preserve organic skin products. If you are ready to start introducing aronia berries into your skin care practice, try the very simple recipe in the sidebar below. Your clients will appreciate its pleasant aroma and wonderful results!

The fact that aronia bushes are easy to grow without pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilizers proves that high quality, natural skin care ingredients don't have to be rare or expensive. Organic formulators have been accused of depleting the earth of endangered botanicals. My answer to these critics is that some of the most effective and powerful beauty ingredients like sea buckthorn, red clover, burdock, dandelion and of course aronia aren't rare at all. In fact, they can be found in our own backyards! ■

\*The ORAC test is currently the standardized method used by the USDA for measuring the antioxidant content of different foods and supplements.

### Skin Restoring Aronia Berry Mask

- 1/3 teaspoon aronia berry powder
- 3 teaspoons of white kaolin clay (for normal to oily skin) or organic oat flour (for normal to dry skin)
- 1 teaspoon of raw, organic honey
- Several drops of pure, warm water

Mix these ingredients into a smooth consistency. Be sure to avoid using too much aronia powder. Because of its intense purple color it can stain the skin! Both white kaolin clay and oat flour are well known for their healing properties. Raw honey has wonderful antibacterial and moisturizing effects, and will nourish the skin.



**Elina Fedotova** is an award winning esthetician, cosmetic chemist and the CEO of Elina Organics. She uses the intelligence of nature to heal and beautify the skin. Her edible products and skin care expertise have been featured on "GMA Live!," as well as numerous local Chicago stations. For more information visit [elinaorganics.com](http://elinaorganics.com) or call 877.384.8300.

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