

# Nature's Field

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An Electronic Journal for NSP Distributors

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## Sarsaparilla

*Smilax spp.*

By Steven H. Horne

When I was young, we'd often have home-made root beer at family reunions or church socials. Old fashioned root beer was actually made with roots, and one of the principle flavorings in that tasty soda concoction was sarsaparilla. Years later, when I was figuring out how to make good-tasting herbal formulas for my kids, one of the herbs that fit the bill was sarsaparilla. I called my glycerine preparation of sarsaparilla my "root beer extract."

It's odd that the forerunners of many of today's soft drinks were actually reasonably healthy beverages made with herbs. Unfortunately, most root beer today is made with artificial flavorings, but one can still gain the benefits of sarsaparilla as an herbal medicine.

A woody vine, cultivated in Mexico, Jamaica and Central and South America, sarsaparilla has been traditionally used to treat many kinds of skin problems and inflammatory diseases like arthritis, gout and rheumatism. Numerous species are used, but NSP uses *Smilax officinalis*.

Sarsaparilla root is classified as a blood purifier or alterative. This means it is used to clear toxic conditions in the body. There is scientific evidence supporting this use, as the saponins in sarsaparilla have the capacity to bind endotoxins. They also have anti-inflammatory properties and a mild hepatoprotective effect. This is why it finds its way into several of NSP's cleansing or alterative formulas, including BP-X, Enviro-Detox and Skin Detox. All of these formulas have beneficial effects on the liver and can help clear up skin conditions.

Sarsaparilla works well in combination with other herbs. When the skin is hot, red and irritated, sarsaparilla works well in combination with gotu kola. To cleanse the skin, blood and

liver, it works well with herbs like dandelion, burdock and yellow dock. To reduce inflammation, it combines well with turmeric and bupleurum. It can also be helpful for leaky gut in combination with Intestinal Soothe and Build or yarrow.

Sarsaparilla also has hormonal effects. It has both a testosterone-like action and a progesterone-like action. This helps account for its historical use in PMS, menopause and for increasing virility. It has also been used in formulas to help build muscle. NSP includes it in a number of hormone-balancing formulas, including C-X (for menopause), Menstrual-Reg (for heavy menstrual bleeding), Thyroid Activator (for enhancing thyroid function), DHEA-M (a male glandular formula) and X-A and X-Action for Women (formulas for increasing sexual desire).

Another use for sarsaparilla has been to reduce inflammation in arthritis, gout and rheumatism. It has a mild diuretic effect and increases uric acid excretion, too. It is also rich in minerals, including potassium, chromium, magnesium, selenium, copper and zinc, which may have a beneficial effect on joints and connective tissue. For these reasons, sarsaparilla is an ingredient in the arthritic formula, Joint Support.

Anyone in the mood for a little old-fashioned root beer?

### Selected References

*The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants* by Andrew Chevallier.  
*The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products* by Tree of Light Publishing  
*Herbal Therapy and Supplements* by Merrily A. Kuhn and David Winston

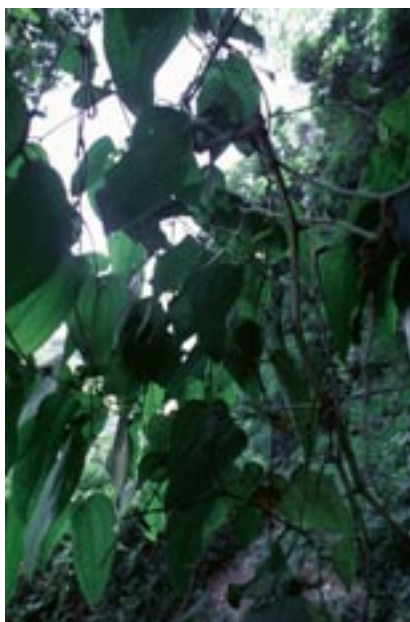


Photo by Stephen Foster

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# Can a 52-Year-Old Guy Teach Women Anything About Skin Care?

Answer by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)

Since, I'm a male, and like many males, I don't put a lot of time, money or effort into skin care. Let's face the obvious facts: it's women who are primarily motivated to spend money on lotions, cleansers, toners, cosmetics and other beauty-care products and spend the time necessary to use them. Many guys really don't care much about the subject.

So, as I got ready to write about this month's topic, natural skin care, the question naturally arose in my mind, "What qualifies me to write about this topic?" This is why I sought Kim Balas' help in putting together the herbal hour video and the research for Sunshine Sharing. But still, this column is my "soapbox," so I had to consider what I could really discuss from first-hand experience.

As I pondered this question, I remembered that I've had numerous compliments on my skin from women. This includes a number of massage therapists who have worked on me, and while it didn't mean much to me at the time (see footnote), it did cause me to consider why I have such good skin at my age.

I mean frankly, I look around at other people my age, both men and women, and I'm surprised at how *old* they look. It made me take a serious look in the mirror and ask, "Do I look that old?" The honest answer is, no. I know this because people regularly under-guess my age by 5-10 years.

So, that's set me to thinking about aging and asking myself, "Why do I have skin that's much healthier than most people my age?" And the natural question that follows is, "And, what is my secret or secrets?" That's what I plan to address in this article. (Now understand that I may be totally wrong. After all, my healthy skin could be just the luck of my genetics, but I don't really believe that.) So here goes.

## Secret #1: Only Use Natural Soaps

I don't use bar soaps for bathing or showering. In fact, I haven't purchased a grocery store brand of bar soap in over twenty years. It started when Jack Ritchason told me about the acid mantle that protects the skin. The acid mantle is a thin coating on the surface of the skin created by secretions from the sweat glands and oil glands. This coating has a slightly acid pH and forms a natural barrier against infections. It also protects the skin from environmental irritants and keeps the skin moist.

Jack Ritchason also taught me that bar soaps, which are highly alkaline, dissolve away the acid mantle and change the pH of the skin to an alkaline state. This actually makes the skin more prone to infections. In fact, these harsh anti-bacterial soaps everyone is now using are especially bad for the skin. There is an obsession with the idea that if we kill all germs, we aren't going to get sick, and that's hogwash.

Like the intestines, the skin is home to friendly microorganisms. And, like our intestines, the skin is a natural ecosystem, playing host to numerous friendly microbes. You're never going to be able to kill all the microbes on the skin, and you don't want to. Killing the friendly microbes just makes the skin more susceptible to colonization by unfriendly microbes.

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Footnote: I know the ladies meant these comments about my skin as a compliment, but ladies, let me make a suggestion—many guys prefer to be complimented on their manly qualities. Being told you have soft skin doesn't feel like that much of a compliment to a guy. It doesn't "get inside" him, the way telling him he's strong, brave, a "hunk," etc. I experience similar reactions when a women tells me she likes my new clothes or haircut. It's nice; and compliments are always appreciated, but it doesn't mean as much as when a lady comments on something that makes me feel she sees me as manly. I could say more about this, but it's off topic, so I'll save it for a future tele-seminar I want to do on the energetics of human relationships.

As a result of what I learned 20 years ago, I started using Dr. Bronner's Castile soap for bathing, because I was told it didn't destroy the acid mantle of the skin. I consider all such information as interesting ideas until I've actually tested them, but in this case, the test had a very positive result. After I'd used the Castile soap for a while, I did notice a difference in the way my skin felt, so I've continued to use it ever since.

The only exception to this is when I'm traveling. I used to take some with me in a small bottle, but after it leaked in my suitcase a few times, I gave up and just use the little bar soaps at the hotels for a few days. I really don't like it when I have to do this, and it reinforces for me that there is a big difference between a pure soap and the commercial bar soaps, body shampoos, etc.

Okay, I know I'm supposed to be promoting Sunshine Concentrate (and I do use Sunshine Concentrate as a cleaning product), but I just love my Dr. Bronner's, so I stick with it. Sunshine Concentrate is obviously a good choice, too, as it also protects the acid pH of the skin.

The bottom line is that I think using this natural soap is the main reason why my skin is as healthy as it is. So, my first recommendation to all of you lady's (and guys) who want healthy skin is to throw away the harsh alkaline soaps and start using a natural cleaner that doesn't destroy the acid mantle of the skin.

**Secret #2: Avoid Putting Chemicals on Your Skin**

I liked what Kat James had to say about most cosmetics and personal care products when she spoke at Leader's Conference in 2005. She said that a lot of this "stuff" that people are putting on their skin and in their hair is actually harming their health, and damaging their body in the process. So, in the long run, it doesn't make you look good.

Of course, being a guy, I never wear make-up. Okay, that's not quite true. The lady at the studio gives a dusting of facial powder so my high forehead doesn't "shine" under the bright lights when recording video. And, I've also worn make-up when I was in a play.

But, other than that, I never wear make-up. On those few occasions where I have to have that stuff on my face I feel sorry for the ladies. I pay a lot of attention to the feedback my body gives me about things, and it just doesn't feel "right" to have that stuff on my skin.

I feel the same way about lotions and hair care products. I'll put a little natural lotion on my hands after they've been dried out from working in the clay soil of my garden (the clay pulls the oil out of the skin), but that's about it for the lotions.

Likewise, I've tried putting some of those gel products in my hair, and I hated it. I didn't like the feel of the stuff on my scalp. It just felt "wrong." Then, because I needed something for when I had to look professional (I have very thin, fine hair), I read the labels of every product at the health food store until I found an all natural gel product that didn't contain ANY chemical ingredients. I bought it, and it feels fine on my scalp.

The bottom line is, I'm as careful about what I put ON my body as I am about what I put IN my body. Most of those personal care products are just loaded with completely unnatural chemicals. Just read the labels. I avoid that stuff just the way I avoid food additives.

So, healthy skin secret number two is to trash all those chemical-laden personal care products. Find some more natural alternatives, or do without them entirely. If you're taking care of your body properly, there's a natural beauty that comes from healthy skin and hair that all that make-up/personal care stuff will never be able to create.

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### Secret #3: Eat Your Skin and Bones

Around the same time I learned about the acid mantle, I read a great article on silica by an Australian naturopath, Dorothy Hall. I'm sure most of you have heard that silica is important for healthy skin, as well as healthy nails, hair, bones, teeth, nerves and glands. The article really opened my eyes to the relationship between minerals and specific qualities of tissue.

Silica makes things tough but pliable. So, foods rich in silica are chewy. In plant foods, for instance, silica is found in the shiny coat (i.e., skin) of seeds and in the peelings (skin, again) of fruits and vegetables. Silica is also found in the chewy parts of animal tissue (i.e., bones and connective tissue). Unfortunately, because we're kind of addicted to "soft" food, those are the parts we tend to throw away.

I mean, think about a horse. Does a horse peel and core his apple before he eats it? Of course not, he eats the entire thing. And where does the worm head? For the mineral rich core of the apple. So, in plants like cucumbers, squash, pears, etc. most of the minerals that are needed for healthy skin are found in the skin, the parts we peel off and throw away.

So, I started learning to eat peelings (and cores, too). When I eat my organic apples, there's nothing left but a tiny piece of stem when I'm finished. I eat the peelings of potatoes and lots of other produce, too. I think this not only keeps my fingernails pretty tough, it also helps my skin look great. Of course, you can also take HSN-W (which I have done occasionally), but why not eat your fruit and vegetable skins?

Recently, I read the book, *Nourishing Traditions*, by Sally Fallon. There, I learned that all traditional cultures made broths, which helped them maintain healthy teeth, bones, hair, nails, and of course, skin. What peelings they didn't eat, they threw in a pot with the bones and tough, chewy parts of the animals they consumed. Then they added some water (and a little vinegar), brought the stuff to a boil, skimmed off the crude and simmered it for 12-24 hours. This process pulled all those nice minerals out of the bones, sinews, peelings, etc. and into solution. The resulting broth is rich in calcium, phosphorus, silica, glucosamine and a bunch of other nutrients for a healthy structural system. (No wonder these people almost never had cavities or arthritis).

So, I've started making broths, too. It's how I've decided to consume some bones as well as some skin to keep my own skin and bones healthy. You might want to consider doing something similar.

### Secret #4: The "Skinny" on Fats

Just about everyone in modern society "knows" that fats are bad, that margarine is healthier than butter, that vegetable oils are better for you than animal fats, and that saturated fats cause heart disease. And, everyone who "knows" all of this is misled.

First of all, fats aren't bad. Yes, there are fats that aren't healthy for you, and too much of anything isn't good, but the right kind of fats are actually good for you. And, if you want soft, supple skin that feels great to the touch (like a baby's skin), then you want to eat fats.

Me, I'm a "food snob." I'll absolutely confess to the fact that I'm addicted to great tasting food. I grew up eating butter and I never liked the taste of margarine, so I shun the stuff. I like my butter and that's what I've spread on my toast my entire life, which is another factor I believe



### *Learn the Secrets to Creating Beautiful Skin from the Inside Out*

This month's Herbal Hour, *More Than Skin Deep*, will provide you with in-depth information about natural skin care and strategies for dealing with skin problems like:

- ✓ Inflammatory skin conditions like eczema, dermatitis and impetigo
- ✓ Chronic skin problems like psoriasis and rosacea
- ✓ Other skin problems like acne, dry skin, wrinkles, age spots and bruising

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has contributed to my healthy skin. Nowadays, I make “Better Butter” by mixing softened butter with flax seed oil to make soft-spread butter. It is delicious, and good for you, too.

More recently, I’ve learned what a good fat coconut oil is and I’ve started using coconut oil for frying, baking and applications where butter or olive oil just doesn’t work. I’ve also been using coconut milk to make breakfast shakes. I’ve noticed that the few blemishes I’ve tended to get on my legs have been clearing up since I started doing this. Chalk another one up for good fats.

Oh, by the way. Your thyroid needs to be working, too, if you want those fats to keep your skin soft. So you may need some iodine and support for your thyroid, especially if you have dry skin. And, one more thing, I don’t use bromide or chlorine in my hot tub. Not only does it kick iodine out of your tissues, it’s terribly irritating to your skin. I’m keeping my hot tub clean with 500 PPM colloidal silver, hydrogen peroxide and enzymes. It’s working great, too!

### **Secret #5: Cleansing the Skin with Herbs and Dirt (Clay)**

Of course, you do want to keep the skin clean, but there’s more to keeping the skin clean than just washing it. One has to keep the skin clean from the inside out, as well. Skin problems are typically indications of a toxic colon (intestinal inflammation and “leaky gut,” which is next month’s topic, by the way), an overburdened liver and stressed kidneys. Lymphatic drainage and circulation have a lot to do with keeping the skin healthy, too. All of this is discussed in detail in this month’s Sunshine Sharing and Herbal Hour video, but I’m just going to briefly cover a few highlights here.

I’ve seen many skin problems clear up with combinations traditionally called blood purifiers. These include BP-X, Chinese Blood Build, Liver Balance, LIV-J, Enviro-Detox and All Cell Detox. These combinations typically improve elimination through the colon, liver and kidneys, thus clearing up skin problems. A little fiber and extra water really helps, as well.

However, if you’ve got itchy, irritated skin and/or want to detox the body faster, a good clay bath is the ticket. Clay is a fantastic cleanser for the skin. I’ve even read how some native tribes, living in areas where water was scarce, kept their skin clean with clay. They simply rubbed the wet clay

all over their body, and then, they waited until it dried and dusted it off.

I realize that this wouldn’t be very socially acceptable (or quite honestly desirable) in modern society, but clay is still wonderful for skin care. When I was in Rotorua, New Zealand many years ago at an NSP New Zealand convention, I learned how the local hospital took the mud from some of the hot pots (a mixture of fine clay and the mineral water) and applied it to joints and other parts of the body for healing and pain relief.

So, how does it work? If you think about what clay does to your skin when it dries on it, you’ll get an idea about what it can do for you. Clay dries your skin out. That’s because clay absorbs oils from the skin. This oil-pulling action of clay helps the skin detoxify, making clay a wonderful remedy for acne, pox, rashes, oily skin and itching. You see, a lot of skin problems involve rancid fats or fat-soluble irritants that clog up the skin pores and irritate the skin. Clay can pull these toxins out of the skin.

I love a good clay bath now and again. Years ago, Nature’s Sunshine used to sell Redmond clay. (It’s a fine clay mined from Redmond, Utah by the same company that mines the “pink” salt NSP sells.) I got hooked on the product back then, and have continued to use it regularly. (I order it in 15 pound boxes.) NSP’s Hydrated Bentonite also works well, but it takes a whole bottle to make a good clay bath and that’s a pretty expensive bath. You can also use any fine, clean clay.

Clay can be applied overnight to blemishes to help clear them up. It makes a great masque for the face, or a compress for any part of the body. It’s helpful for bee stings, insect bites, stinging nettle “stings” and minor skin irritations. It also helps pull heavy metals from the body.

There are many healing uses for clay. If you want to learn more about it, there’s a great book called *Our Earth, Our Cure* by Raymond Dextreit.

And you thought dirt was something you had to keep OFF your skin to keep it healthy.

Well, I hope this 52-year-old male has provided the ladies with some useful suggestions for healthier and better-looking skin. And you guys, it’s not unmanly to have healthy skin (and women like it, too); so you might want to apply some of these secrets yourselves.



## Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner

# Skin Care Questions

### Psoriasis Client

*I'm working with a client with psoriasis but she's not getting any better. Her blood work looks good. Here are the numbers:*

A/G Ratio	-57
Albumin	-40
Bun	-33
Chloride	38
Cholesterol	-46
Glucose	40
LDH	46
Phosphorus	40
SGOT	-48
SGPT	-54
TSH	-34
Uric Acid	31

*The analysis suggests that the organs that are the most in need of help are the stomach, then pancreatic tail, and finally liver. I have her on Mineral Chi Tonic, Omega-3 EPA, Yucca, Artemesia Combination and Thai-Go.*

*Tonja*

I would use three Vitamin A&D per day, plus Milk Thistle, PS II and Adrenal Support for her.

### Fats for Sagging Skin

*I heard Dr. Perricone on TV the other night say that losing muscle is what causes the saggy look as we age and when we diet. He also said Omega 3 would prevent this. He said "the skin is a perfect reflection of how you are doing inside". He also said that if you could only do one thing for weight loss and skin to do Omega 3 oil. What do you think?*

*LaVerne*

Definitely. When you increase fats in the diet you create supple skin. Fats in the diet also help reduce the cravings for carbohydrates.

### Rash on Neck

*I have a burning/itchy rash on my neck that I think may be due to a cleansing herb I'm taking. Is there anything I can put on topically to help it?*

*Gwinene*

The skin is the third kidney. If you are flushing through the skin then I would look at helping the kidney with Kidney Drainage, first. Also make sure you are drinking enough water.

As for something to apply topically, use Intestinal Soothe and Build as a poultice. Nature's Fresh is another good remedy to apply topically for rashes.

### Severe Oily Skin

*I just had a customer call to ask advice about her husband. He is 52 years old and for the last 5 years he has been having a problem with an over production of oil on his scalp and face.*

*She said when he gets up in the morning his pillow looks like he slept in a pool of oil. He has been having to shower twice a day to keep it under control.*

*I'm thinking of using tea tree oil topically to help control it, but I would like to figure out what the root cause is. A doctor said it was hormonal and wanted to prescribe medications for it, but they don't want to go that route.*

*Any ideas?*

*Toni*

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This is a congestive issue in the liver and that, in turn, affects the hormones. I would recommend Guggul Lipid and SF to help with combustion of fats in the liver.

### Child with Itchy Skin

*I just received this from a client too far away to muscle test.*

*"My son scratches all the time. It is so normal now, almost like a tick or twitch, that I didn't even recognize it until my mother-in-law mentioned it to me. He usually scratches his head or face. It's not continually, just one or two scratches at a time.*

*"Sometimes it's across his forehead or down his cheeks and sometimes he starts down at his neck and comes all the way around to his face. He doesn't scratch hard; it never leaves a mark. It doesn't seem to bother him. He never mentions it. Like I said, it's more like a tick or a twitch kind of action."*

*Do you have any suggestions? The boy is 4-1/2 years old.*

*LeRae*

I would look at this as possibly being a nervous condition and would consider something like wood betony.

### Essential Oils for Rosacea

*Do you have an essential blend for rosacea? I have a customer asking about this and it isn't my forte.*

*She wants something she can put on her face.*

*Kasara*

I use a Red Raspberry mask with one drop of Rose Oil in it to tone down the redness. I open up the capsules and empty out the powder. Then, instead of using water to make a paste, I use Nature's Fresh. Then, I add one to two drops of Rose Oil.

### Boils on the Back

*I have a client I've been working with for IBS. His program is as follows: Para Pak (ParaCleanse), Garden Essence (Proactazyme), Bifidophilus Flora Force, UC3-J (Intestinal Soothe and Build) and STR-J (Stress-J). These products were all chosen through muscle testing.*

*He was on Prednisone for quite some time and is now off of this nasty drug. He was breaking out with boils and pimples all over his back from the drug. When he didn't take his medi-*

*cations the boils and pimples cleared up. Now with the herbal program he's obviously detoxifying but his back is a real mess. He was using Pau d'arco lotion but this has not helped him.*

*Do you have any suggestions?*

*Janet*

Ho Shou Wu works great to pull boils out and make them stay away.

### Burn Therapy

*My daughter, who works as a server, burned her hand and upper arm at work last night. They put Neosporin on it at work and wrapped it lightly in gauze. Then she continued to work.*

*Six hours later, at home, I applied aloe vera gel, and then some vitamin E. I also used some Golden Salve. She has an area that looks like something popped, and the rest looks a lot better. What is the best way to treat this; just leave it unbandaged?*

*Annette*

I would douse it with lavender oil, then apply the Golden Salve and wrap it. Change this daily for a couple of days. For future reference, real vanilla extract and honey work great on burns and are often found in restaurant kitchens.

### Possible Spider Bite

*Last week my right hand was swollen and the entire wrist joint was painfully stiff, especially on the thumb side. The opposite side was painful, too, and most of my fingers were stiff, as were the tendons on the under side and on top of the hand between the wrist and the knuckles. I suspected an insect bite, but could not figure out what it was.*

*I took some APS II internally, but wasn't sure what else I could do. I didn't want to do the light fast stroking technique, because I thought it may have been an insect bite. It's better now, but not 100%. I thought about using drawing herbs, but didn't have any on hand. What else could I have done?*

Intestinal Soothe and Build has great drawing properties. I would try mixing it with Black Ointment and applying it topically. Nature's Fresh also makes a great topical application for most problems like this.

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The *Nature's Field* E-zine and website are published by Tree of Light Publishing, a division of Kether-One, Inc.

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