

THE BEST OF NATURE

Julie Droux, Marketing manager, Berkem, looks in detail at plant extraction and the power of the plant world

Nature represents an undisputed source of inspiration. With an increasing trend for natural products, consumers often look for the use of natural, safe and efficient ingredients in a product.

Humans learned very early on about the many benefits of plants and developed techniques to obtain what we now call an 'extract'. These first extracts were obtained mainly from water-based extraction or alcohol fermentation using procedures such as infusion, maceration or decoction. The simplicity of these early plant extractions, as well as the tools, materials and ways of heating, required experience and know-how rather than science.

Even today, in spite of precise automation, more adequate equipment, advances in process engineering and analysis, as well as new extraction technologies such as high pressure, microwaves or ultrasound, the concept of plant extraction expertise still relies on these advancements mixed with tradition.

WHAT IS A PLANT EXTRACT?

A plant extract must, by definition, be obtained from a solid-liquid extraction. Solid-liquid extraction is defined as an operation to

separate elements contained in a solid body by solubilisation with a solvent. The extract is contained in the solvent. If the solvent is an edible solvent, it is not necessary to dissociate it from the extract. If the solvent is not an edible solvent, separation allows obtaining a dry extract.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITY CRITERIA?

Selection of raw materials, choice of solvent, process utilisation and equipment performance are determining factors. Berkem professionally combine these multiple parameters to produce high-quality plant extracts.

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

At Berkem, our extraction process goes a long way to help to minimise environmental impact and preserve the integrity of active compounds naturally found in plants. We also wanted to highlight the plant world through a different kind of products, the floral waters. Our floral waters are extracted by a distillation process. Floral waters act as real 'active waters' by helping to boost the effectiveness of active ingredients and as well as adding a delicate fragrance to natural formulas.

Our botanical extracts are obtained using a responsible extraction process in order to extract maximum molecules while maintaining efficiency. Preservative-free and based on a glycerin and water form, they are a natural source of active molecules.

DAMASK ROSE – THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS

Damask rose is one of the most used flowers in perfumery and is appreciated as much for the beauty of the petal pink flowers as for its delicate and sweet scent. The Damask rose floral water is recognised for its anti-ageing properties. It also works to reduce sebum excess and even out skin tone. Ideal for soothing irritated skin, this floral water has calming effects.

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ORANGE BLOSSOM – PURITY AND FERTILITY

Native to China, orange blossoms were traditionally worn by young brides – with white and highly fragrant flowers which grow into fruits, representing future descendants and fertility. Its scent is associated with calming properties to help aid peaceful sleep and dispel anxiety and agitation. Orange blossom floral water has recognised soothing effects. Used in skincare, it improves moisture balance and softens dry skin.

ARNICA MEXICANA – THE GENTLE PLANT

Arnica mexicana is a medicinal plant most widely used in Mexico, where it grows abundantly in the wild. This perennial plant with yellowish-orange flowers is particularly recognised in traditional medicine for its effectiveness in fighting against ecchymosis.

The regenerating properties of this flower stem from its high concentration of flavonoids, which stimulate the skin repair process. These molecules bring an antioxidant activity and a soothing effect; they relieve inflammation and calm irritation.

HONEYSUCKLE – ETERNAL LOVE LINK

A climbing plant with pretty pale pink to creamy white flowers, the honeysuckle is a symbol of devoted love. Phenolic compounds, such as hydroxycinnamic acids and flavonoids, contained in this traditional medicine plant have regenerating and antioxidant properties. Tannins regulate sebum secretion and add radiance to the complexion.

Producing natural products is all about finding the right balance between ingredients and processes.

Berkem USA, Stand D61

