

Violet Leaf Oil

Traditional Plant Wisdom for Modern Skincare



Viola odorata

Violets are a remarkable plant with gentle healing properties.

Infusing the leaves into oil makes a very green oil with a scent of sweet green leaves and grass.

Plant compounds in violets are cooling, which is another way of saying anti-inflammatory; where skin is red and irritated, the oil calms and cools.

Fluid movement in the body relieves stagnation, puffiness, and swollen tissues, which begin to move with massage using violet leaf oil.

Skin eruptions, eczema, and irritations are reduced as the skin begins to repair and renew itself with daily massage of violet oil.



Hildegard of Bingen, an abbess of the 12th century in what is now Germany, was one of the first to document the healing powers of violets from her observations in the garden and infirmary.

The predominant actions of violets are **soothing and calming**, qualities that can calm heat, reduce inflammation, and maintain moisture in the skin.

These cooling and soothing properties are primarily located in the plant's saponins and mucilage, which work together to regulate the actions on the skin.

Mucilage

Mucilage is made up of water-loving polysaccharides that retain water, protect and buffer the environment, and provide a soft, hydrating layer that counters heat and inflammation.

Saponins

Saponins are amphiphilic, meaning they interact with both water and oil, helping regulate our membranes and support tissue resilience. They help tissues receive moisture evenly while softening and relaxing membranes.

Mucilage holds and soothes moisture in the skin tissues, while saponins help tissues respond, creating calm, flexible hydration rather than surface slip and feel. It helps to maintain the structural and ordered lipids in the skin.

Green is the hallmark of the oil infused with violet leaves, and they are oil-soluble compounds that migrate into the infusing oil readily:

The strong green color of the oil comes from chlorophyll and carotenoids, both of which are helpful antioxidant compounds.

Carotenoids

We connect orange with carrots because they contain **β -carotene**, a strong antioxidant. Here, color is a nutrient.

β -Carotene, one of many carotenoids, can become vitamin A when part of our diet. Only a few carotenoids do this.

In the skin, carotenoids are stored in tissues as antioxidants to protect lipid structures, playing a major role in defending the skin against oxidative damage.



Chlorophyll

Chlorophyll's actions are also antioxidant, able to neutralize free radicals, and relieve the day-to-day oxidative stresses, calming inflammation, the number one cause of unwanted aging of the skin, breakdown of collagen and thinning of the skin.

Chlorophyll's properties help heal wounds, protect the body from microbes, while purifying and deodorizing tissues.



Phytosterols

Plant sterols, also called Phytosterols, in the leaves are oil-soluble and migrate easily into an infusing oil, where they help supplement the body's cholesterol to regulate fluidity and flexibility of skin lipids.

Ceramides, cholesterol, and fatty acids are the basis of the skin's lipid structure, its healthy barrier.

Plant sterols are structurally similar to cholesterol, a core lipid of the stratum corneum, which plays a role in barrier function.

Infusing oils

Animal fats would have been used in the 12th century when Hildegard was making her remedies, using lard or tallow. And there are many other plant oils and fats to experiment with.

I'll share three examples of infusing oils with you, olive, meadowfoam/jojoba, and sesame oil.

Experiment with other oils that maybe more readily available, less costly, or more suited to your skin and your work.

As a general rule oils or fats with extended shelf life will help maintain the use of your infusion for a longer period of time.



Olive oil

Olive oil is the herbal standard, dominated by oleic acid with a good shelf life and extracts the constituents in violet leaves effectively and delivers them to the skin.

The feeling on the skin is immediately comfortable, soft, and protective of the skin however, not everyone's skin tolerates oleic acid dominant oils.



Meadowfoam and Jojoba oil

Meadowfoam seed oil has an exceptionally long shelf life and has similar properties to jojoba oil.

Both oils are composed of very-long carbon chains of 20 carbons and longer so the oil is protective and compatible with the skin.

Shown is an infusion of violet leaves in meadowfoam seed oil, with a green cast that is not as potent as in other oils.



Sesame oil

Sesame oil has some benefits as an infusion oil as it is protected by polyphenol lignans in the unsaponifiable fraction giving it an extended shelf life.

Sesame oil has a balance of linoleic acid and oleic acid that support the skin's lipid structure, especially the ceramide lipids of the stratum corneum, the barrier function.

Sesame is able to extract a significant amount of the green from the leaves.



Picking and processing the leaves

Pick leaves that are dry after any dew or rain has evaporated and bring to a dry shaded area where they can spread out over a basket or screen to wilt for a period of time.

This will depend on the growing conditions, early spring when the leaves might be full of moisture from rain will need longer than leaves from a dry period on high summer.



Hildegard's careful observations from the herbal garden and infirmary showed the power of plants to overcome illness.

We are fortunate she recorded her work, and it was passed down through the ages.

