



Africa's Miracle Plant-The Untold Story of Raw Shea

Just below the Sahara Desert, in a vast expanse of African Savannah land, sits the Nasia Village. Outside of the rainy season, this is one of the most unforgiving, dry, dusty places on earth. Brutal sun, wind, and Hamatan dust create dire consequences for exposed skin. For centuries, women of Nasia have used oil from the nut of the native Shea tree to combat these extreme conditions, turning the oil into raw shea butter for their skin.

Raw shea butter, thickened oil extracted from the nut of the Shea tree, is an extremely versatile product, containing both carotene and allantoin for excellent moisturizing, soothing, anti-aging, and healing treatment. Women and men all over the world have caught on to this secret-of-the-savannah and use shea to combat all types of skin conditions.

One of the most significant uses of raw shea butter is as an anti-aging treatment. In a remarkable six-month anti-aging study performed by F. Renard, 30 participants used raw shea butter as a daily moisturizer. Within a few weeks, the dull, grayish complexion of most participants had vanished, and smoother, clearer skin was revealed. Wrinkles caused by prolonged sun exposure were visibly diminished for half of the study's participants. Because of shea's unique ability to reactivate collagen synthesis, by the study's conclusion, evident skin regeneration had occurred in all participants.

Anti-aging is only one of the several conditions raw shea butter remedies, others include:

- Dry skin
- Rashes
- Peeling after tanning
- Blemishes
- Itching
- Skin cracks
- Wound healing time
- Scarring
- Sunburn
- Insect bites
- Rough skin on feet, elbows and knees
- Frost bite
- Chapped lips
- Muscle aches

However, according to Lynne Killey, founder of Queen Bee skin care, not all shea is created equal. "Most consumers don't realize that a refining process is typically used to make shea butter. This manufacturing process adds chemicals to the oil, then heats it to a point where most of the nutrients are killed off - virtually eliminating all healing properties of the original nut."

Raw shea butter (also known as unrefined shea) undergoes a traditional production method. In this process, the shea kernel is picked, cracked, grilled and pounded. It is then boiled in water until the fresh butter rises to the surface, which is scooped into gourds and left to set. Performed by hand, this extraction method uses no conventional processing techniques that will strip the finished product of original nutrients. At no point of production are dangerous chemicals or synthetic agents added to this shea butter.

More commonly found in retail outlets, **refined shea butter** goes through an entirely different production cycle than its natural counterpart. In an effort to speed up the extraction process, increase profits and alter the smell and texture of shea butter, most manufacturers have adopted a refining method which destroys much of the natural integrity of the shea nut. In this process, the seed oil is extracted from the kernels using a highly flammable, gasoline-like chemical known as Hexane, which usually remains in the product in trace amounts.

Side effects from exposure to hexane include dizziness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, weakness, unconsciousness, and abdominal pain. Production by-products containing trace amounts of hexane are commonly sold as animal feed, and excessive amounts of hexane are thought to cause anemia in livestock

transferring to the meat consumers' purchase. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Hexane compounds are carcinogens and are classed as a hazardous substance. Hexane also poses a serious environmental threat - implicated as a polluter and producer of harmful ozone build-up and air pollution when vented into the atmosphere during the flash-off (burning) cycle of manufacturing.

The side effects and environmental concerns surrounding the use of hexane are serious problems of refined shea butter production, yet other aspects of this refining process are equally as damaging to consumers. To remove the characteristic nutty smell of shea, the extracted oil is exposed to 450 degree heat and sodium hydroxide and carbonate chemicals are added. To change the texture and appearance of the product, it moves through an acid-treated filter and is bleached. Known carcinogens (BHT & BHA) are added to refined shea butter to enhance the shelf-life of the finished product.

"Refining shea butter removes natural essential fatty acids, valuable proteins and important minerals, leaving consumers with a questionable, ineffective and potentially dangerous product. In no way similar to refined shea butter, raw shea butter is significantly richer in vitamins, phyto-nutrients and UV absorbing factors. Raw shea is more difficult to find [than refined shea butter], but is well worth the effort," states Killey.

The American Shea Butter Institute agrees, "While altered shea butter may smell nicely or [when mixed with less expensive ingredients] appear cost-effective, it has lost significant health-properties....poor quality shea butter is ineffective in healing most conditions that raw shea treats."

To ensure your shea butter is raw, make sure it is beige or yellow, with a creamy texture and a nutty smell. If your shea butter has no smell (or a fragrant/floral smell), is white or is grainy, it is refined shea and does not hold the same healing properties of authentic shea. Because of several naturally-occurring antioxidants, raw shea has an indefinite shelf-life; however, refined shea has a maximum two-year shelf-life.

Shea butter is truly a remarkable, one-of-a-kind skin care product, treating wrinkles, stretch marks, scars, burns, muscle soreness and everything in between - every household should have a jar on hand. However, raw shea produces results that are far superior to those of refined shea.

Founded in 2004, Queen Bee offers simple, natural skin care products to health-conscious consumers. With a focus on personalized products and service, all Queen Bee products are homemade, by hand, from scratch, using natural and organic ingredients. The Queen Bee motto 'Made with Love' represents the philosophy of founder Lynne Killey that "each bottle or jar of product is made with attention to quality of ingredients, harmony with nature and care for the person who will be using our product."

To learn more about Queen Bee, raw shea, the dangers of the refining process, and how to purchase raw shea butter, visit www.QueenBeeSauce.com, call 970.731.3690 or email QB@queenbeesauce.com.