

By Anna Vivienne

WE talk about natural skin care all the time, but some of us usually associate this with washing our face with just water and soap. Natural skin care is actually caring for the skin using naturally derived ingredients such as herbs, roots, essential oils and flowers with natural carrier agents and preservations.

The most famous beauty care utilising such ingredients is the Indonesian's 'jamu' and 'mandi lulur'. They are so famous that they transcend borders and are even available in other parts of the world now.

Actually, we in Sabah also have our own array of natural beauty care products. Our products adhere to the classic definition of natural skin care as they are based on botanically sourced ingredients without the use of synthetic chemicals.

Catherine Kingan, who is in her early 40's, is one intrepid entrepreneur who concocts her own skin care and beauty products.

And her ingredients are one of the most common natural products among her Kadazandusun community, as well as the world. Rice.

This friendly vivacious lady who hails from Keningau says she has always known about the skin treatment values in rice as her mother has told her about it.

"When I was young, my mother used to tell me about the natural skin treatment values in rice. She used to pound rice into powder form and dry them. After that she would make a paste with it. She then would put it on her face like a mask before going to bed. Of course she would wash it off with clean water before going to sleep."

"I thought nothing about it. I believed that in this modern era, we can get all sorts of beauty products in the market. We just buy them off the shelf without having to go through the trouble of pounding and mixing various ingredients."

She adds that she went using modern beauty products for a while, forgetting her mother's mode of treating her face.

"Then one day, I had a bad attack of pimples. My face went out in rashes and pigmentation started to set. I was mortified. It was then that I remembered my mother's face treatment method. She always had smooth skin especially her face."

Recollecting the ingredients used by her mother was not easy but Catherine says she began to experiment with various ingredients with the basic powdered rice.

She managed to come up with three products. The first product is made of rice and herbs which when applied to the face will ensure smooth skin. This is the product she uses to ensure that her face is free of blemishes. The second product is made from black rice and honey. This product when applied to the face will ensure that the face is supple and moist. The third product which is made of rice and honey is a spa body scrub. This ensures that the body stays supple with youthful skin. This scrub is also good for those who just had a baby and need a post-natal massage.

"It took me years to perfect my products and now they are ready for the market," she enthuses, adding that she has named her products Aloris Masker.

She says she wants to share her beauty secret with the public, especially women who are having facial skin problems.

"I believe that most of us spend hundreds of ringgit in beauty treatment as we want to look pleasant and healthy. But we must remember that many of the beauty products available in the market contain chemicals. We do not know how harmful or harmless they are, so I believe that we should utilise beauty products with natural ingredients where we are sure of their safeness."

She also wants to share her beauty products with tourists.



Courting beauty that natural way



"I want to show our guests that there are natural Sabahan beauty products available here. I want to share the beauty secrets of the Kadazandusun with them, especially those who have skin problems."

"I hope to work with tour operators and guides to promote my products. I am sure many operators show their tourists the Lagud Seberang Agricultural Park in Tenom. They can always drop by my place so that I can show them my products."

"Promoting my products will also help to promote Keningau as a tourism destination in a small way. So that can be my contribution to our Government's effort in promoting Sabah as a tourism destination," she shares.

On her future plans, she says that she will look into better packaging for her products soon. She believe that with better packaging, the product will look more eye-catching.

"After all we usually judge a book by its cover. Right now the packaging is quite drab so people might think the product is inferior, but I assure you it is not," she says. Catherine is now distributing her products to beauty care outlet in Sabah. In fact some of her customers are from West Malaysia. It may not be too long before her products sit on shelves in other Malaysian States.

She is in the process of getting her products acknowledged by SIRIM.



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