

Superstitions About Beauty Have Roots In Times Past

You may not insist on bathing in crushed strawberries like one famous queen did, but chances are you hold at least one beauty superstition.

Have you ever eaten boots for rosy cheeks or garlic for sparkling teeth and shining tresses? Maybe not, but there is food for thought in many a famous and some infamous beauty concoctions!

The women of both Greece and Rome anticipated Theda Bara by about 20 centuries when they painted their faces with white lead foundation and then applied chalk powder for a "vamp" look.

The juice of strawberries was thought, at one time, to be good for getting rid of freckles and for whitening and preserving the skin. Marie Antoinette owed her peaches and cream complexion, some say, to the fact that she insisted on taking baths in crushed strawberries!

NOT ALL beauty practices were as harmless as Marie Antoinette's strawberry baths, however. For example, one 16th-century inventor of a process for preparing carbonate of lead for rouge and lip salve described how the men working with the substance became dizzy, had headaches and often went blind. This information was kept secret from the public, though, and the women went right on using the make-up. Even the lemon juice that is still used occasionally today by women who want to lighten their freckles can be harmful, because the harsh citric acid can cause eruptions to break out on sensitive skin.

BUT WHILE some beauty practices have been hazardous, others were far ahead of the scientists.

The recipe for Helen of Troy's famous facial included such ingredients as ground-up narcissus bulbs, powdered hart's horn, honey and gum. Apparently it worked -- for historians estimate that Helen was 60 years old when Paris abducted her and touched off the Trojan War!

The narcissus bulbs, hart's horn and honey lost their popularity somewhere along the way, but certain vegetable gums are still used in the manufacture of a variety of cosmetics. European peasant women of a few centuries back thought their kitchens were the best source of cosmetic aids. They powdered their faces with plain, everyday flour and used beet juice as rouge.

NOW IF YOU THINK this has more to do with baking than with beauty, you're wrong! A new beauty aid has recently come out of grandma's kitchen. Would you imagine that corn cob dust is so fine that it makes into a face powder that can't clog

Predict Drop In Housing Volume

WASHINGTON -- A "substantial" drop in housing starts during the next few months is "virtually a certainty," according to housing economist Michael Sumichrast, research director of the National Association of Home Builders. Sumichrast predicted that in the coming months the volume of home building will drop from the recent seasonally adjusted annual rate of better than 1,500,000 units to a level as low as 1,100,000 or 1,200,000 units before easing in the mortgage money situation permits a resumption of the recovery in construction.

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pores? The odd fact is that it works. Made by Shulton, Inc., Corn Silk is such an improvement over ordinary powder, say fashion models, that it's hard to believe that the peasant ladies were on its trail centuries ago while the modern miss puffed away with a coarser powder that even turned her orange (instead of beet red).

Rinsing your face with red wine was a sure-fire way to save your skin -- or so thought many ladies of Queen Bess's time.

One woman of the day, who apparently thought it was impossible to have too much of a good thing, was Mary Queen of Scots. When she ruled, she asked for and received a regular government allowance of wine in which to bathe.

BUT WHILE WINE was a cosmetic fit for a queen, most of the ladies of the court had to content themselves with milk baths. Before long, milky skin caught on all over town, and tubs throughout Europe started filling up with the white, foamy beverage.

Taking milk baths has soured as a beauty "must" but for many modern women, bath-time plays as important a role in

their beauty programs as it did for Marie Antoinette and Mary Queen of Scots. The latest in royal treatment for women who prefer to take a scientific rather than a superstitious approach to their beauty treatment is a moisturizer after the bath.

One contains the moisture-retaining properties of the cactus-like Aloe Vera plant, plus proteins and other ingredients to keep the skin looking and feeling soft. It's Shulton's "Desert Flower Aloe Vera," available in cleanser, toner, moisture base and night cream.

Hair-care has also come a long way since Cleopatra tinted her tresses with henna. When golden curls became the fashion in ancient Greece, women who wanted to lighten their locks sat sunny-side up with a sticky mixture of honey and hard-boiled egg yolk draped on their locks.

Women in the late 19th century also used egg yolk in homemade shampoos, and today, egg is still in an ingredient of many shampoos on the market.

Victorian ladies used dyes derived from lead, iron and walnut. But today, women can

cover the gray or even change the color of their hair with much less harsh potions thanks to the advances that have made a wide variety of effective, easy-to-use tints, dyes and color shampoos available.

Superstitions still prevail, however, and you're not alone if you believe the old adage, "Pluck out one gray hair, and seven will grow in its place," or avoid covering gray, because dyed hair looks "hard."

ANOTHER SUPERSTITION that got its start a few centuries ago and is believed by some people even today is that women who retire after midnight will develop a pale, haggard look. Going to bed early is still referred to as "getting beauty sleep."

Whether or not you believe any of these beauty superstitions -- or have some of your own -- separating fact from fancy and not sleeping on the job when you set up your own beauty program may work like magic to create a new, more glamorous you.

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