

Marula Oil

Latin Name:	<i>Sclerocarya birrea</i>
Source:	Marula kernels
Origin:	Southern & Eastern Africa
Extraction:	Hydraulic hand pressed



Background

Marula (*Sclerocarya birrea*) is an ancient African tree which has been used for thousands of years by both humans and animals alike. Almost all components of the tree can be used – the bark, leaves, fruit, nut and kernels. In South Africa and Mozambique the Marula kernel is hand-pressed to produce an oil with many end uses – women have used it as a replacement for water to clean themselves and to moisturise their babies, it has been used in the preservation of meat, and it is commonly used in African cooking.

Native to Southern and Western Namibia but now grown in other parts of Southern and Eastern Africa, the Marula tree grows to around 18 metres in height – producing a fruit which once ripe falls to the ground. Inside, the fruit is a walnut-sized stone which will expose 2 to 3 seeds. Marula is known as a base for a famous South African liqueur (Amarula), and is a favourite with many types of African animals including elephants and monkeys.

Earthoil sources Marula oil from a very unique project – the nuts are sourced through women's collection groups in the tribal lands of the Limpopo province of Southern Africa. These women's groups collect, crack, dry and process the oil themselves and use basic but effective hand-presses. Earthoil arranges the collection of the drums from these rural locations, then road-transport them to Earthoil's Kenyan warehousing facility before shipment on to clients worldwide. The project directly benefits the local communities and the nuts are sourced in a sustainable way to ensure the protection of the wild Marula trees. Independent fair-trade certification for the project is to follow in the future.

Oil Composition

Colour:	Clear Light yellow
Odour:	Nutty
Viscosity:	Mobile at room temp 20°C
Principal Composition:	Palmitic Acid 9 – 14% Oleic Acid 70-80%



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Technical Data

INCI Name:	<i>Sclerocarya birrea</i>
CAS Number EU:	68956-68-3
CAS Number US:	68956-68-3
EINECS Number:	273-313-5
Specific Gravity:	0.91 – 0.92
Flash Point:	250°C

Fatty Acid Profile – Typical

Fatty Acid	Common Name	Composition%
C16:0 Hexadecanoic	Palmitic acid	10.9
C18:0 Octadecanoic	Stearic acid	5.6
C18:1 Octadecenoic	Oleic acid (9c)	74.8
C18:2 Octadecadienoic	Linoleic acid (9c, 12c)	7.8
C20:0 Eicosanoic acid	Arachidic acid	0.5
C20:1 Eicosanoic	Gadoleic acid	0.4

Potential Use

Marula oil is ideal for cosmetic use because of its rich moisturising properties owing to its high oleic percentages. Marula has been tested and results tend to show that the oil is readily-absorbed with the ability to have significant impact on dry skin conditions by counteracting TEWL (transepidermal water loss). The marula kernel itself is rich in protein and fat and when pressed produces an oil with a fatty acid profile similar to olive oil. It is highly emollient and has very good resistance to oxidative rancidity – which makes it ideal for use in cosmetic formulations. Marula oil is rich in antioxidants and also contains vitamin E and C. Marula oil is currently favoured for use in hair care and body oil applications.

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