

the haircare aisle

Green Your

A close-up portrait of a woman's face, framed by lush green grape leaves and clusters of green and purple grapes. The woman has dark hair, pink eye makeup, and a neutral expression. The background is filled with more grapevines and leaves, creating a natural, organic feel.

Routine

Ditch the harsh chemicals for these natural yet effective hair products. **By A.J. Hanley**

It wasn't all that long ago that natural and organically sourced hair products were a rare find—likely just a no-lather shampoo or two sandwiched between the tahini paste and fish oil capsules at your local health food store. But in recent years, we've become hip to how those hard-to-pronounce chemicals in our tress tamers can harm our health and the environment.

According to *The Journal of the American College of Toxicology*, shampoo staple sodium lauryl sulfate can create skin inflammation and damage the immune system. Propylene glycol has been known to cause dermatitis as well as hives, while parabens, a common preservative, have been linked in studies to breast cancer.

The good news is that beauty companies have been making up for lost time, subbing in plant-derived ingredients for their synthetic counterparts. The bad? Navigating the myriad offerings in stores and online can be a dizzying experience.

Experts recommend you do some sleuthing before buying. Look for "sulfate-free," "phthalate-free" and "no

parabens" on labels, and scour ingredient panels for plant oils and essences like argan, jojoba, avocado, peppermint and nettle. Be aware that words like "natural" or "organic ingredients" won't guarantee that there aren't trace amounts of chemicals in those products. Some seemingly harmless ingredients may harbor unspecified toxins. For example, fragrance or parfum often contains phthalates, while DMDM hydantoin can release cancer-causing formaldehyde.

Prefer someone else to do the legwork? Defer to the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Cosmetics Database (ewg.org/skindeep). The searchable catalog of nearly 71,000 products scores items on overall hazard, cancer risk, developmental toxicity and allergen levels. Or check out GoodGuide, a nonprofit organization that rates 145,000-plus products based on health risks and environmental impact. (Go to goodguide.com or download the mobile app.)

To make your life a little easier, we've gathered 10 products that work well, smell great and contain a minimum of ingredients that were cooked up in a lab.

John Masters Volumizing Foam; \$28, johnmasters.com.



Gaffer & Child Hair Pomade; \$36, amazon.com.



Neuma neuStyling Blow Dry Lotion; SRP: \$24, neumabeauty.com for locations.



Aveda Shampure Thermal Dry Conditioner; \$31, aveda.com.



Everyone Style Hair Gel; \$7, eoproducts.com.



T'Zikal Curl Defining Serum; \$38, tzikal.com.



Kérastase Aura Botanica Essence d'Eclat; \$43, kerastase-usa.com.



Burt's Bees More Moisture Baobab Shampoo and Conditioner; \$8 each, burtsbees.com.



Badger Seabuckthorn Hair Oil; \$18.99, badgerbalm.com.



WEN Fall Tuscan Pear Nourishing Mousse; \$42, chazdean.com.

AVOID THESE NOT-SO-PRETTY INGREDIENTS

- ✗ Sodium laurel sulfate (aka sodium laureth sulfate or SLS)
- ✗ Parabens
- ✗ Formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing preservatives (like cyclopentasiloxane/cyclomethicone, imidazolidinyl urea and DMDM hydantoin)
- ✗ Petroleum
- ✗ Propylene glycol
- ✗ Diethanolamine (DEA) and Triethanolamine (TEA)
- ✗ Silicone