



COSMETICS EUROPE:
N° 12: TEA-TREE OIL

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Approved by BOD
12. 2002

COLIPA RECOMMENDATION N°12 ***Use of Tea-Tree Oil in Cosmetic Products***

Introduction

Tea Tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) Oil has found increasing use in certain consumer products including also cosmetic products.

There are a number of recent dermatological publications indicating that the neat oil has a potential to induce and elicit skin allergies. Diluted solutions have a weaker sensitisation potential. On the basis of information available, Colipa experts concluded that Tea Tree Oil applied on the skin at concentrations up to 1% would not act as a skin sensitiser.

Whilst the sensitising potential of the oil is enhanced by oxidation of terpene constituents, also unoxidised tea tree oil seems to have sensitising properties.

Recommendation

Colipa recommends that tea tree oil should not be used in cosmetic products in a way that results in a concentration greater than 1% oil being applied to the body.

When formulating Tea tree Oil in a cosmetic product, companies should consider that the sensitisation potential increases if certain constituents of the oil become oxidised. To reduce the formation of these oxidation products, manufacturers should consider the use of antioxidants and/or specific packaging to minimise exposure to light.

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