

By Mary Jo Matsumoto



The fashion world is all about florals right now--from Stella McCartney's sheer fields of wild flowers, Dries Van Noten's mix of leaves and buds, Balenciaga's baroque blooms, to Marc Jacobs' posies galore. Not surprisingly the best beauty products of the season reflect blossom-mania at its best! True to the natural goodness of a great garden, these goodies will not only help you look beautiful, but they're good for you!

KEEP ON BLUSHING

Keep your glow going with a set of vegan makeup brushes. Animals shouldn't have to suffer just because you're adding a bit of color to your complexion, right? In keeping with the growing demand for cruelty-free beauty products, Morphe Brush Company has now introduced a line of eco-friendly Taklon vegan brushes. Created by using an advanced technology of synthetic and natural fiber, these makeup brushes are comparable to animal hair brushes in both functionality and durability. The advantage of Taklon brushes is their anti-bacterial properties. Brush sizes and textures range from extremely soft to very coarse, making it perfect for the application of powders, creams, and liquids. You can purchase these brushes at www.morphebrushes.com.

BOUQUET OF SPRING COLOR

Each polish in Nubar's Pink Rose Bouquet Collection is named after a rose. A favorite of Jessica Alba and Scarlett Johansen, the collection offers eight meaningful pinks from deep pink roses to symbolize gratitude and respect to light pink roses which express love and happiness. Try Tea Rose Petal, Apricot Silk, or Camelot Blossom for a sweet spring look. Best of all, there's no need to suffer the consequences from the harsh toxins often found in nail polish--this brand is formaldehyde, phthalate, and toluene free! Carcinogenic free Nubar Nail Lacquer is available at www.bynubar.com.

NURTURE THE NATURAL

Your skin will love the earthy goodness of Amala's skin care collections. This new skin and body care collection is manufactured in Germany, certified organic by Ecocert, and strives to raise the bar in the "natural" beauty category. There are zero preservatives, petrochemicals, parabens, or genetically modified agents in this line. I could go on, but instead I will just urge you to try these wonderful products which are rich in organic, whole plant nutrients and contain healing botanicals from around the globe custom blended to rejuvenate, hydrate, purify and detoxify the skin. There are four collections to chose from: Detoxify, which cleanses and smooths with Myrtle; Purify balances and heals with rare Blue Lotus; Rejuvenate revitalizes the skin with Cocoa Bean; and Hydrate quenches dehydrated skin with Jasmine. Amala cultivates their organic whole plant ingredients in their natural habitats around the world, partnering with local fair trade farmers in these regions. You can order products at the website www.amalabeauty.com.

LASHING OUT (IN A GOOD WAY)

Finding a good all-natural mascara is no easy feat, but I am thrilled to finally say that I have a great find! QVC is now selling 100% Pure Lengthening & Conditioning Mascara with Fruit Pigments (QVC Item# A74684; \$27.50). A natural way to highlight the eyes, this formula is made of fruit pigments, oat and wheat proteins, and black tea pigments--making this mascara feel garden-grown! I've been sampling the Black Tea and it not only works, but it goes on just like any other luxury brand mascara. Make sure to also try the Black Berry and Blue Berry!

FRAGRANT FEET

As you probably have noticed, this is the season of luxurious sandals. There's no better way to keep your tootsies comfy than with Fragrant Footings by Summer Soles. Every time you slip on your favorite pair of heels, these scented insoles will release subtle bursts of jasmine, mint or lemon, while cushioning your feet and absorbing foot perspiration. Available in a full trim-to fit size as well as convenient ball-of-foot pads and three-quarter length Mini's at www.summersoles.com.

HEALTHY PROTECTION

Since this is the month to watch your garden bloom, make sure to keep your skin safe from bugs and pests with TheraNeem Herbal Outdoor Spray, a water-based spray with Neem and other essential oils for your outdoor comfort. Another great product by OrganixSouth is Neem Oil, their healthy botanical alternative to chemical pesticides, repellents and fertilizers. Neem Oil protects the environment, and in turn, our health and is widely used in India and other countries as a soil additive and foliage spray. The components in Neem oil have been shown to keep your garden and plants healthy, while enhancing crop yields. TheraNeem Herbal Outdoor Spray and Neem Oil are available at the website www.organixsouth.com.



GARDEN IN COMFORT AND STYLE

I am a huge fan of Oka B. spa shoes, and even bigger fan of their gardening clogs. Their specially designed garden clog just for women is ergonomically supportive for women's feet. Microplast Technology in the new line of Oka b. offer relief to those who suffer from pain

from walking or standing. Arch supports and massage beads are available in each style of the line that is described as the "shoes that love you". All I know is that they are easy to slip on and perfect for the garden--plus I love the colors. To order go to the website www.shoesthatloveyou.com.

REFLECTION FOR YOUR COMPLEXION.

Finally, please stop and reflect on how much time you're spending in the sun with Spafinder's photosensitive "I Will Reflect" wristbands. The wristband changes color when exposed to harmful UVA rays and is a fun reminder to cover up and be sun-smart. There's also a more serious purpose: they're the centerpiece of the Melanoma Initiative, a campaign whose mission is to educate the public about melanoma detection and prevention. The Spafinder Melanoma Initiative's chic bracelet is available <http://spafinder.com/melanoma>. Proceeds go towards melanoma research and programs to raise awareness of this deadly but largely preventable disease.

MODERN WATERING

Even if you're not a major gardener, it's hard to resist this fabulous watering can that will make you feel like spending time communing with your plants. The Blomus Aguo Watering Can is the ultimate in modern garden accessories with its sleek design and stainless steel construction. Functional and fashionable, this is the ideal watering can for the stylish gardener. Available at www.AllModern.com

SAVE YOUR MANICURE

Tired of over-sized, poor quality gardening gloves? You'll get lots of gardening done and



keep your manicure intact with these lovely gloves by Ethel. They come in a few different patterns and are made with four-way stretch fabric with a rubberized grip, extended cuff and reinforced fingertips. Ethel Gloves are available at select Lowe's stores nationwide and www.ethelgloves.com.

Wishing you all the blooming best this month!

Style expert and fashion/beauty journalist Mary Jo Matsumoto writes a style blog at www.trustyourstyle.com. She is debuting a new line of women's couture evening dresses and separates as well as expanding her successful handbag line to include a luxury selection. To view her beautiful designs please visit www.maryjomatsumoto.com.

