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BUF 4700

15 March 2021

Critical Argument #1: Irish Moss

 There are many ingredients today that are natural and versatile in use. Due to the pandemic, women and men are formulating their own protein shakes, conditioners, shampoos, and face masks. People are discovering new ingredients every day to include in their daily routine. The problem is finding that one thing that works for you so there is a lot of trial and error. Most people are creating YouTube channels, TikToks, Instagram Reels, etc. to share with others what and how certain ingredients works for them. Irish moss, also known as sea moss and carrageen, has been one of those ingredients that has been a discovery for many people today. Sea moss has the ability to be used as a cooking ingredient, a face gel/mask, and as a hair mask. Its traditional health benefits are for immune support and beauty and radiance support. According to the Pinterest 100, its annual rundown of the trends worth knowing, sea moss has been growing in popularity—up 380% to be precise (Lawrenson, 2021, par. 1).

Irish Moss has various benefits to one’s body, inside and out. It is an edible seaweed from the North Atlantic that has a mucilaginous substance. Hence the name Irish moss, it can be found on the Atlantic coasts of Ireland, Europe, and the United States. Its name stems from the potato famine in Ireland in the 1800s when people were desperate for food and needed a source of nutrition. Therefore, the red algae seaweed, located on rocks, was added to warmed milk with sugar and spices to create a nutritious drink. Over the course of time, when Irish immigrants left famine and arrived in the United States, they established the first American seaweed farming production off the coast of Massachusetts. The Irish harvested the red seaweed to make pudding and clarifying beer for those that stayed in Ireland. To have fresh sea moss, it has to be boiled, broken down in fresh water and once dried, Irish moss was sold to companies for a variety of uses (Toomey, 2019, par. 6). Since the 1800s, it has been used in holistic spaces for aiding in immunity and digestion but more recently making a name for itself in the beauty skin care category.

Irish moss is popular now due to the pandemic and with people learning about new, natural ingredients. Skin care is one area that Irish moss is prospering in. Due to sea moss containing 92 of the 102 minerals that our body needs, it helps improve psoriasis, eczema, and acne break outs when applied directly on to the skin. Also, it is often used as a skin softener in commercial cosmetic products and lotions. It supports the skin’s ability to retain vital moisture lipids and helps to support healthy skin appearance (Herbs, 2018, par. 2). Irish moss can be made as a sea moss handmade gel for best results while still preserving its minerals. First, it has to be cleaned and soaked with unfiltered water. Then, blend it up and after, just let it sit overnight so it can come out more pliable and easier to mix. The sea moss gel would then need to be mixed through until there is a consistent and smooth paste. There are options to add other ingredients, but the sea moss works just fine on its own. For facial use, the sea moss gel can be applied to the face and neck and left on for about 20 to 30 minutes. While on skin, it should feel like a tightening sensation which is also a way to get rid of wrinkles and clean out pores. One can either use a warm towel cloth to wipe it off or just rinse with hands; either way it still gets the job done. After three to four weeks, there should be a definite change in appearance if consistent with use. Others have mixed the Irish moss in with all-natural conditioners to give an added boost to their hair proteins. Also, it has been added to smoothies and cooked foods such as eggs, pancakes, biscuits, pasta sauce, etc, in order to receive all nutrients and minerals like during the potato famine. Furthermore, there are others who would just drink it straight or take a couple of spoonsful a day. The Irish moss works for everyone and works in numerous methods to best fit ones needs.

 The COVID-19 pandemic allowed certain ingredients to have be discovered when it came to staying home. Beauty enthusiast were able to try out products, ingredients, and rituals to see what will work for them while saving money. Irish moss was the ingredient that took over its time in the 1800 and the stay-at-home order in 2020. Originally, it was a food ingredient then over the course of time it was known for the other areas. The different minerals used to make up sea moss allowed it to be used in multiple different ways, for the face, skin, hair, and in food. Irish moss can be homemade or found in other items and all the nutrients are still up to par either way. There are Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram content that depicts the various methods of how to use the Irish moss. It is very convenient when one ingredient or product works multiple different ways and is natural. Irish moss may have been here since the 1800s, but it is just getting started and here to stay.

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