

All About **Ubuntu** Marula Virgin

The Ubuntu range of African oils has been developed by PhytoTrade Africa and Aldivia® since 2002. Our aim is to introduce the cosmetics industry to the ancient beauty secrets of Africa through a unique range of high quality oils that offer traditional active properties.

Ubuntu oils are not only good for the skin, they are good for African people and the environment too. Rural people in Southern Africa earn life-changing income by harvesting the natural ingredients from which Ubuntu oils are made. And, by placing a value on the trees and plants, we encourage local communities to protect them. This in turn helps to conserve the environment and local biodiversity.

The Ubuntu range comprises six oils, including **Ubuntu™ Marula**.



Collecting fruits below a tree

Ubuntu Marula Virgin

African women have long treasured marula oil for its remarkable moisturising and healing properties, and its capacity to prevent stretch

marks during pregnancy. The oil contains predominantly oleic acid, which makes it an excellent component in skincare formulations. Rich in natural antioxidants, it is also tremendously stable, outperforming all known natural liquid oils. The combination of high levels of skin nutrients and outstanding stability makes marula oil an excellent choice for modern cosmetic formulations. Easily absorbed, it can be used as a light body oil in aromatherapy, or as the focal ingredient for moisturising lotions.

Marula oil is pressed in Africa then sent to France where Aldivia® upgrades it to Ubuntu Marula Virgin. The Ubuntu process uses proprietary green technology to ensure homogeneity, microbiological safety, toxicological safety, and the absence of deposits.



Extracting kernels from the stones

About Marula

The marula tree - *Sclerocarya birrea* – belongs to the same botanical family as the mango. Its plum-sized fruits have a yellow-green skin and juicy white flesh with an exotic flavour described as a cocktail of guava, lychee, apple and pineapple. The delicious fruits are enjoyed not only by people, who use them to brew beer and prepare jams and syrup, but also by elephants that will travel miles to gorge on them at harvest time.

The fruit contains a large hard stone, inside which are two or more edible seeds that are very rich in oil. Marula trees are known for their ability to withstand droughts and harsh

conditions and are found in great numbers throughout Southern Africa, especially in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and South Africa.

Wherever they grow, they are revered and protected by African people for the reliability of their harvests and the abundance of fruit and oil that they produce. The tree plays a great role in local culture, providing strong social link and shade for people to work and discuss. Within the Zulu tribe, the marula tree symbolizes women's fertility, softness and tenderness, and new-born baby girls are welcomed into the world with traditional marula ceremonies.

Where Ubuntu Marula Comes From

We buy most of the oil for Ubuntu Marula from a non-profit company set up to help rural women in Swaziland. Their long term goal is for the company to be both owned and operated by the community.

Before they began to harvest marula kernels, most of the women got their household income from making and selling reed mats, from small scale agriculture and from livestock farming. The income from these sources is low and very unreliable, especially when the rains fall.

Here, Khelina from the Hlane village in southern Swaziland tells us about the impact the marula trade has had on her life.

"My life has changed completely. I am the sole provider for five children at home and since I started supplying marula kernels almost three years ago, the money I have earned has taken care of my family. I use it to purchase household necessities, pay school fees for the children and buy school uniforms. I have also used cash from marula to pay membership fees for a credit and savings scheme that offers loans to community members."

"In 2005, I began work supplying marula from wild trees in our communal lands. I now earn 20% more than I did as a mat weaver. More importantly, collecting and cracking marula kernels does not take me away from home as the mat weaving did. I used to have to leave my children for one week each month to go and harvest the reeds."

"The company has trained us for organic certification. No I know how to collect organic fruits, how to store them properly to avoid contamination and how to grade the kernels to ensure high quality oil. I cannot imagine how my family and other community members would have managed without income from marula, especially in times of drought."

Ubuntu Oils : Bringing You the Ancient Beauty Secrets of Africa



A group of harvesters in traditional clothes