

BLOG ARTICLE

Sustainable sourcing: Protecting the skin by protecting the Amazon forest

MUTTENZ, SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

During rainy season, in the summer months of the southern hemisphere, strange thumps can be heard from deep within the Amazon forest. They come from Brazil nut trees, sometimes called the »Queen of the Amazon« because of their majestic height, which drop large, coconut-like pods from the dripping canopy. Each pod holds up to two dozen Brazil nuts, big, rough-shelled seeds that are prized throughout the world both for their taste and the precious nutritious oils they contain.

Brazil nuts are the only globally traded nuts that mostly don't come from plantations but directly from the wild. With its innovative new skin care ingredient Ethience® Protect, Clariant supports the important role they play in the economy of the Amazon region. The highly effective active is based on a byproduct of Brazil nut processing and is part of a whole range of innovations that Clariant is showcasing at this year's in-cosmetics Latin America held in São Paulo on 21 and 22 September. Ethience Protect is also a prime example of how Clariant incorporates Beraca's know-how in natural ingredients as well as its sustainable sourcing practices since taking over the remaining 70% in the Brazilian company in late 2021.

A close partner to Clariant, Beraca had previously gained wide recognition for its social and environmental commitment and received several awards for sustainably sourcing natural ingredients from Brazil's rich biome before the acquisition. Clariant has held a 30% stake in the company since 2015. Now, after acquiring the remaining stake, Clariant has now fully incorporated Beraca into its Business Line Personal Care Ingredients as part of its Actives & Natural Origins portfolio.

Ethience Protect shows Clariant's continued commitment to Beraca's social and environmental responsibility. By valorizing a byproduct of the Brazil nut Clariant helps local communities make a living – thus offering a unique way of protecting the skin by protecting the Amazon forest.

Harvesting of Brazil nuts is still nearly exclusively done by hand in the forest. The *castanheiros* specializing in it like to set out in the morning, when there's no wind and they're less likely to be struck by one of the heavy pods. Some also use special sticks to pick them up because of snakes that can hide in the undergrowth. If not collected, many of the pods would go unused because the only animals able to open them are agoutis. Like squirrels, these long-legged rodents either eat the nuts inside or bury them in the ground – thus supporting natural cycles by planting new Brazil nut trees.

The dynamic of relationships surrounding the trees is complex. They can only be pollinated by special bees, which feel most at home in pristine forests. This is one of the reasons why Brazil nuts don't grow well on plantations. And it presents a strong motivation for the local communities to keep the rainforest natural and healthy.

Ethience Protect as a skin care ingredient perfectly embodies this idea of natural balance: a sustainably sourced Brazil nut extract upgraded with cutting-edge science that helps to preserve both the skin's barrier function and the rainforest's socio-biodiversity. The extract comes from the press cake left when oils are made from Brazil nuts, a byproduct rich in potent polyphenols that the local people can now turn into extra income, and afterwards even use as fertilizer. This upcycling of residues supports the circular economy concept where nothing is wasted, and the result is a sustainable active with extraordinary effects on the skin's own natural cycles.

»The skin is just as sensitive to stress and external aggressions,« explains Alexandre Lapeyre, Global Head of Marketing and Business Development for Clariant Active Ingredients. »Ethience Protect acts as a barrier function balancer that quickly relieves symptoms like dehydration and redness, whether they stem from shaving, UV exposure or mask wearing. It does so by supporting the intricate pathways that lead to a more healthy lipid layer, stratum corneum and epidermis, and has performed remarkably in our tests on volunteers with compromised skin.«

Like the bees that visit the »Amazon Queen,« the agoutis that bury its nuts or the locals who gather them, the way we source and use our new ingredient is just one piece in a huge puzzle. Each piece we add not only helps to support the [UN's Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 17](#) of strengthening multi-stakeholder collaborations but also another highly important SDG: SDG 12, which calls for ensuring sustainable global patterns of production and consumption.

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Clariant is a focused, sustainable, and innovative specialty chemical company based in Muttenz, near Basel/Switzerland. On 31 December 2021, Clariant totaled a staff number of 11 537 and recorded sales of CHF 4.372 billion in the fiscal year for its continuing businesses. The company reports in three business areas: Care Chemicals, Catalysis and Natural Resources. Clariant's corporate strategy is led by the overarching purpose of 'Greater chemistry – between people and planet' and reflects the importance of connecting customer focus, innovation, sustainability, and people.

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