

BLOG ARTICLE

The journey of acai from the jewel of the earth to a superstar cosmetic ingredient

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Delivering on Clariant's purpose »Greater chemistry - between people and planet.«

This story is an example of how Clariant delivers on its [purpose-led strategy](#).

The Amazon is the largest tropical rainforest on our planet and home to around 40,000 plant species, including the açai tree. Its berries contain abundant antioxidants which make them a powerful natural ingredient in high-performing and sustainable cosmetics, central to many oils, actives and scrubs developed by Clariant's Personal Care Specialties company, Beraca.

Endemic to the Amazon, açai is a very popular fruit in Brazil and one of thousands used by Amazonian native people for medicinal and health purposes. Açai can be found in the Amazon year-round but its harvesting season, which happens in the Amazonian summer from August to November, is considered an »event« to the communities that work with the plant and who collect and transport several tons of the berries during this period.

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Tadeu de Melo, President of AMPRUNAM

It's seven o'clock in the morning in the rainforest near Ananindeua in the Pará province of Brazil and, as he does every morning during harvest season, Aldo Pantoja da Costa, a local resident and açai agro-extractive producer, is pulling on his work pants and boots, while his colleague is already shimmying up the trunk.

»Along with our work clothes, we take our equipment, including a pole. The açai represents a lot here, it's our source of income, our source of food. This has been going on for a long time. Before me, my father worked with açai for about 30 years, that's how we started working with the berry, this is how we earn a living,« he explains.

After reaching the bunches of berries towards the top of the tree Pantoja da Costa gently pulls them off the branches that look a bit like weeping willow, and places them in a basket that he carries on his shoulder. The baskets are then weighted and loaded onto a boat and then a truck to be taken to the Beraca factory, which belongs to the Clariant group, in Ananindeua that will receive the raw material and transform it into the all-important açai oil and açai extract.

»Beraca helped broaden our vision with a new reality, with suggestions on a new structure and management practices to have a quality product. The company also shared with us the vision of what organic diversity means and it was through the partnership with them that we acquired knowledge and learned more about the processes within the açai market,« said Tadeu de Melo, President of AMPRUNAM, a local rural producers' organization.

»In addition to being a partner, Beraca provides incentives such as training, the development of local projects and fair pricing to help producers. They don't just buy raw materials and leave but help producers, getting an idea of the work they do and the importance of the work being done,« he continued.

Every October during harvest season, the whole factory focuses on processing the açai. As it's a very sensitive fruit the steps need to happen quickly so that the berries are not spoiled. »After the product arrives at the factory it is evaluated by the quality control team, approved and then goes on to extraction. The oil goes through a quality assessment process before refinement and then the oil is bottled and leaves as a finished product to customers around the world,« explains Thiago Galvao, Production Manager at the Beraca factory.

In addition to Beraca's ethical sourcing commitment and close collaboration with local farmers and communities, as part of its dedication to a sustainable supply chain, the objective of zero waste is extremely important. Clariant makes use of as much of the açai raw material as possible. The vegetable oil is extracted from the pulp, as is the anthocyanin active ingredient to be able to manufacture the extracts. With the cake formed from the pulp Beraca creates natural scrubs. All these incorporate the concepts of upcycling and zero waste.

»We work with the açai berries from when they are picked until the final product, therefore we have an entire quality control process for this raw material from the moment of receipt to when it leaves the factory. With this we have internal certification processes, focused on good manufacturing practices that ensure that the entire production process is effective and safe,« said Karla Magnago, Quality control coordinator at Beraca.

Outside the factory and back in the rainforest, the Beraca biodiversity team works with local communities to support the health of the forest and the well-being of the people living in the region. »It's a relationship that transcends economics and includes social and environmental aspects,« says Galvao. »In the end we offer Beraca's natural açai products in a sustainable way, guaranteeing that the forest stays standing.«

Watch the [video](#) with insights on the açai harvest, how Beraca, a Clariant company, collaborates with the communities and our production facility processing the fruit until the final cosmetic ingredients.

Check out more information on our product range based on the açai fruit:
<https://www.clariant.com/en/Business-Units/Care-Chemicals/Personal-Care/Actives-and-Natural-Origins/Natural-origins/Organic-acai-products>.



Açai berries grow on branches and need to be gently picked and placed in baskets before further processing.



Açai berries contain abundant antioxidants which make them a powerful natural ingredient in high-performing and sustainable cosmetics.



Once the açai oil has been extracted from the pulp, it goes through quality assessment processes.

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Clariant is a focused specialty chemical company led by the overarching purpose of 'Greater chemistry – between people and planet'. By connecting customer focus, innovation, and people the company creates solutions to foster sustainability in different industries. On 31 December 2022, Clariant totaled a staff number of 11 148 and recorded sales of CHF 5.198 billion in the fiscal year for its continuing businesses. As of January 2023, the Group conducts its business through the three newly formed Business Units Care Chemicals, Catalysts, and Adsorbents & Additives. Clariant is based in Switzerland.

Clariant Actives & Natural Origins

Clariant Actives and Natural Origins is on a mission to make a change from the beginning, with the plant all the way to the ingredient that we provide, ultimately impacting the whole Personal Care value chain positively. Under the motto "*The Science of Sustainable Beauty*", the new portfolio offers responsibly collected and extracted naturally derived ingredients with traceability, proven efficacy, and science-backed claims for skin, hair, and body care to support the creation of more sustainable and efficient products addressing consumer care needs. Discover natural plant extracts, actives, oils & butters, clays & exfoliants and more at www.clariant.com/actives-naturalorigins.

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About AMPRUNAM

The Association of residents and rural producers of Nazarezinho do Rio Meruú, or AMPRUNAM, was created in 1991, and stands as the first legally constituted association dedicated to work with açai in the municipality of Igarapé-Miri, renowned as the »World Capital of Açai«. The association has become essential in the commercialization of non-timber products as, before that, the local people sold through middlemen, who paid low prices for the fruits. Today, the cooperative sells mainly to industries, with guarantee of purchase and a fair price negotiation, which is done in advance. The relationship with Beraca began in 2009 with the sale of açai berries, but the successful partnership opened doors to the supply of other species as well. Production diversification is important for expanding the income of riverside population, who are able to harvest the fruits in different periods of the year. AMPRUNAM currently supplies Beraca with organic açai for the production of the ingredients: Beraca Açai Oil Organic, Beraca Açai Extract Organic, Beraca Açai Scrub Organic and Beraca Triple A Organic.

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