

Fight aging— naturally

They may have sweet little names like bearberry and licorice, but the latest botanically based anti-agers are seriously tough on lines and dark spots. Meet the ones the pros swear by, because they *work*.

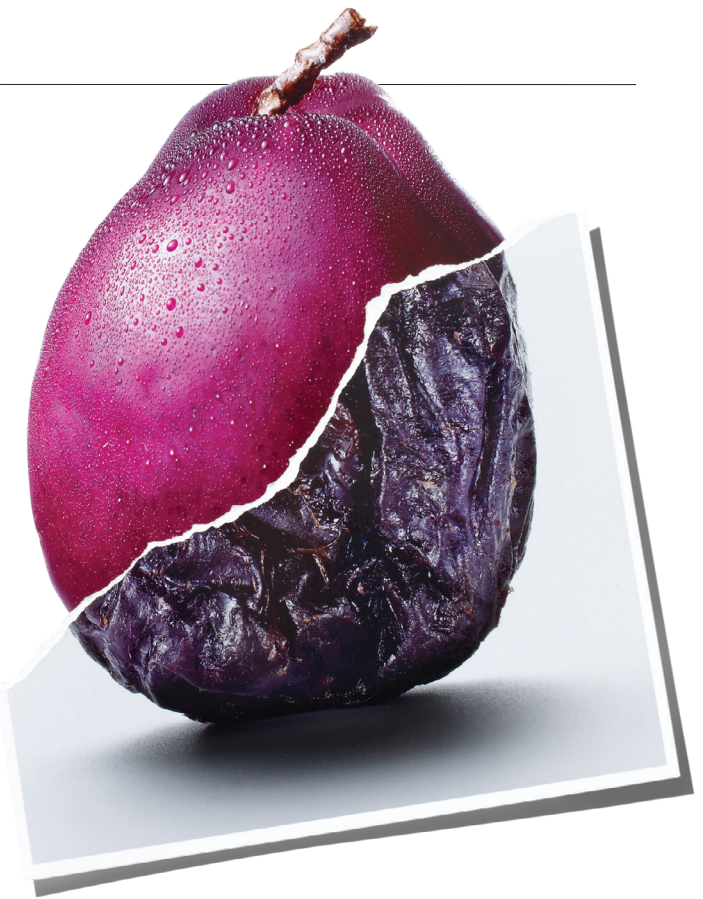
BY LESLEY ROTCHFORD

TO SMOOTH AND PREVENT WRINKLES

- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT ANTIOXIDANT** A high-quality one acts like your skin's own personal bouncer, helping to block damaging UV rays and pollution. One of the best natural antioxidants is a green tea extract called epigallocatechin gallate, or EGCG: "Research shows it's amazingly potent at combating free radicals," says dermatologist Macrene Alexiades, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Dermatology and Laser Surgery Center in New York City. Smooth on a serum with EGCG, such as **Paula's Choice Resist Super Antioxidant Concentrate Serum (\$36)**, every morning before you put on your face lotion and sunscreen.

- **LOOK FOR A MOISTURIZER WITH GOTU KOLA** To tackle lines, you need something that triggers your skin's collagen production—but if you don't want to use chemical retinoids, dermatologists say gotu kola is a good way to go. This plant-derived ingredient has been used in ayurvedic medicine for centuries to treat skin wounds, eczema, and psoriasis. "It's clinically shown to boost collagen production without the skin irritation that retinoids may cause," says Jeanette Jacknin, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist in San Diego and a member of the American Academy of Dermatology's Complementary and Alternative Medicine group. She likes **Acure Day Cream (\$16.99)**: "It combines gotu kola with chlorella growth factor, a form of green algae that studies show helps protect skin's collagen and elastin," she explains.

- **MAKE YOUR OWN SKIN-PLUMPING MASK** This quickie recipe from Jeannette Graf, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City, will get you all glowy and can instantly (if temporarily) soften lines. Once or twice a week—or whenever your skin looks a little tired—mash up half a ripe papaya and half a ripe avocado, then stir in 2 oz plain yogurt. Spread the mix all over your face, leave it on for 15 minutes, then rinse and apply your moisturizer. "The lactic acid in the yogurt dissolves dead cells to smooth and brighten your skin, the avocado is ultra-hydrating, and the papaya, which also exfoliates, is rich in antioxidants," Graf says.



TO FADE SPOTS AND EVEN SKIN TONE

- **PICK A PLANT-BASED BRIGHTENER** Botanicals are the new superheroes of spot fighting, and offer a gentler alternative to chemical bleaching agents. Skin experts recommend kojic acid, Arbutin (bearberry extract), licorice, soy, and vitamin C. "They work by preventing melanin from moving into nearby cells or blocking an enzyme that causes skin cells to darken," says Graf. Apply a serum or lotion twice a day that contains one or more of these botanicals; Graf likes the soy-packed **Aveeno Positively Radiant Targeted Tone Corrector (\$14.99)**.

- **USE A FACIAL OIL AT NIGHT** "Specifically, one that contains vitamins C and E," says Alexiades. "Antioxidant vitamin E helps protect skin from the damage that leads to spots and discoloration, while vitamin C helps slow down pigment production." All-natural **Ole Henriksen Pure Truth Vitamin C Youth Activating Oil (\$45)** includes both vitamins.

- **SPOT-TREAT WITH LEMON** "It's the D.I.Y. trick to correct discoloration," says Jacknin, who adds that if you have dark skin, stick with an over-the-counter treatment, as lemon could cause white spots. Cut the fruit into half-inch slices and squeeze the juice from one slice onto a cotton ball. (If you have sensitive skin, dilute 1 tsp juice with 4 tsp water.) Dab the cotton ball on any dark spots, rewetting it with more juice for each spot. Wait 20 minutes, then rinse your face with water and apply a basic moisturizer. "Do this daily—or every three days if you have sensitive skin—for six weeks, or stop sooner if the spots fade before then," says Jacknin. And as for those leftover lemons: Cocktail, anyone? ®