



## Growing Seaweed

Diane Bernard of Sooke is the “seaweed lady,” harvesting everything from bull kelp to sea lettuce along a 69-kilometre stretch of coastline from Sooke to Port Renfrew. Spas and high-end restaurants have been her main customers for the fresh product.

Her six-year-old business, Outer Coast Seaweeds, supplies growing amounts of fresh seaweed and recently added a line of seaweed-based cosmetics. “Now we have a brand and the brand is Seaflora,” she says.

They have a seaweed content of 70 to 90 per cent and Bernard promises no artificial preservatives, such as formaldehyde, are used in the all-natural products. Seaflora is used at spas across Canada and is “becoming more and more established in the U.S.”

There are challenges in distributing the products and increasing production, which Bernard describes as “lots of good problems.”

“The notion of going to the ocean for good health has been around for thousands of years,” she says. “Thalassotherapy” is the term, derived from the Greek, that spas use now for the many ways of slapping seaweed on your body.

Locally, they include the Delta Victoria OPR and the Sapphire Day Spa.

“We still work exclusively with spas,” she says. Seaflora isn’t in stores, but individuals can buy online at [www.sea-flora.com](http://www.sea-flora.com) some two dozen products priced from \$24 to \$49.

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