

glossary

additive a substance added to fortify the soap mixture or finished soap.

alkali potassium and sodium hydroxides are used to make the caustic solution in soap making and represent the main alkali content.

aroma crafting the art of blending essential oils and fragrances for use in soap making.

borax a mild alkali with many uses, regarded as the silver bullet for liquid soap making.

caustic soda another name for sodium hydroxide.

cold process a soap making method that relies solely on the heat generated from the chemical reaction between the alkali and the fats and oils.

colourants substances used to add colour to the soap which can either be natural or synthetic dyes or pigments.

decoction a preparation made by boiling plant parts with water.

detergent synthetic, water-soluble cleaning agent.

emollients additives that have a softening effect on the skin.

emulsion the combination of two incompatible liquids such as oil and water.

essential oils the volatile oils derived from the leaves, fruits, berries, flowers, rinds, resins, seeds, barks, roots of plants.

ethanol is produced from the fermentation and distillation of carbohydrate and is used in the production of liquid soaps.

exfoliation the removal of dead skin cells from the body.

fatty acids the main constituents of animal and vegetable fats.

fragrance oils the synthetic version of essential oils; they are made by mixing essential oils with synthetic materials.

glycerin a substance derived naturally as a by product of the soap making process.

hard fats fats that are solid at room temperature.

hot process a soap-making method where the soap mixture is allowed to cook at high temperatures for a long time.

humectant an ingredient that is used to retain moisture.

infusion a preparation made by steeping plant parts in hot water or oil.

isopropyl alcohol a synthetic substance produced from petroleum used as a substitute for ethanol.

lye the common term used for both potassium and sodium hydroxides solutions.

pH the abbreviation of 'potential of hydrogen', which is used to indicate both acidity and alkalinity.

phenolphthalein a chemical compound used as an acid-based indicator for testing soap.

pigments mineral substances used to add colour to soap.

potassium hydroxide an alkali used in the production of liquid soaps.

rosin the amber crystals remaining after the essential oils are distilled from the oleoresins of pine trees.

saponification the chemical reaction between fatty acids and an alkali that results in soap and glycerin.

seizing the rapid thickening and hardening of newly-mixed soap emulsion.

sequester this refers to the resting period for liquid soap after dilution and cream soap after the addition of water.

sequestering agents additives used to clarify a liquid soap solution.

sodium hydroxide an alkali also known as caustic soda used in the production of bar soaps.

solvent a substance, such as alcohol, glycerin and sugar solution, used in soap making to dissolve another substance.

super creaming this is one of the final steps in making cream soap; it ensures a mild soap by allowing excess fatty acids to remain in the soap.

super fattening similar to super creaming, it ensures a mild soap by allowing excess fatty acids to remain in the soap.

trace the start of the saponification process when the soap mixture changes from thin liquid through to very thick liquid.