Indigenous Polynesians claim that the fruit from coastal fetau trees are more beneficial for topical and cosmetic uses than the oil from inland fetau trees.

**Sustainable Harvesting**
Fetau collection is a low-impact, environmentally sustainable activity. The nuts are collected after they drop on the ground, resulting in no negative impact on the trees or the surrounding environment.

In Samoa, the harvesting of fetau nuts from beach areas is a growing source of income for native people. The families crack the nuts and are then paid for the kernels by weight. Due to the oil having a high market value, the families receive a very high price per kernel, contributing positively to their small village economies.

**The Production Process**

When the fruits are cracked open, the blonde nut kernel contains little evident oil. But once the kernel is dried on a rack for a month or two, it turns a deep chocolate brown and becomes sticky with a rich oil.

The fetau kernels have a very high oil content (55-70 per cent). The fetau tree takes roughly four years to start producing fruit and subsequently produces up to 100kg of fruit each year, typically resulting in about 18kg of oil. The oil is then cold pressed using powerful presses, resulting in an oil with a rich texture and a greenish amber colour. The means by which the fetau kernel becomes oily remains unknown. At present, no studies explain this process.

**References**

ORDERS: Women in Business Development sell pure fetau oil, and organic virgin coconut oil infused with fetau oil. Email albertam@womeninbusiness.ws to place your order.

Women in Business Development Inc is an organisation dedicated to strengthening village economies in Samoa in ways that honour indigenous customs, use traditional and modern technology, and promote fair trade.

Research shows fetau oil is a significant topical healing agent with skin healing, anti-neuralgic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and antioxidant properties.
**What can fetau do?**

Relieves Pain
Traditionally fetau oil has a history of topical use for relieving pain of sciatica, shingles, neuralgia, rheumatism and leprosy neuritis. In one incredible case, a woman was admitted to a hospital in Paris with a large ulcer that wouldn’t heal and amputation was inevitable. However, with regular dressings of fetau oil, the skin healed leaving a smooth flat scar.

Reduces Swelling
Fetau oil can reduce inflammation, helping rashes, sores, swelling and abrasions heal when the oil is applied to the skin.

Generates New Skin Tissue
Fetau oil applied to wounds can promote the generation of new tissue (a process called cicatriziation), accelerating healing and the growth of healthy skin. Polynesian women massage it onto babies to prevent diaper rash and skin eruptions. It can be applied to cuts, scrapes, burns, insect bites, abrasions, acne, psoriasis, diabetic sores, anal fissures, sunburn, dry skin, blisters, eczema and herpes sores.

Heals new and old scars
In one study, fetau oil was applied to six subjects with visually obvious, aged scars. After six weeks of applying fetau oil, a significant improvement in the appearance of the scars was seen and the size of the scars consistently decreased throughout the study.

Antibacterial & Antifungal
Several studies have demonstrated that fetau oil contains several powerful bactericide/fungicide agents. It is effective against fungal diseases such as jock itch, ringworm, athletes’ foot and rashes of the scalp and beard.

Antioxidant
Fetau oil is able to protect skin cells from damage by reactive oxygen species (ROS) and other oxidative agents, helping to slow aging and damage to the skin.

**History**
Many remedies sold today in the markets of developed nations contain ingredients that have a long history of use by indigenous peoples.

This is the case with fetau oil, also known as tamanu oil, a traditional remedy with a long history of native use in Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Southeast Asia. Calophyllum means “beautiful leaf” from the Greek Kalos (beautiful) and phullon (leaf)

Only within the past few years has fetau oil begun to penetrate the European and US markets, primarily in the cosmetic sectors.
The chemistry of fetau oil is complex and unusual, perhaps explaining some of the impressive physiological actions possessed by the plant.

Since the 1930s the effectiveness of fetau oil has been studied in hospitals and by researchers in Europe, Asia and the Pacific islands.

**The Fetau Tree**

The fetau tree grows between 25 and 30 meters, with long spreading limbs. The mature fruit are about the size of an apricot and have a large blonde nut inside.

The fetau tree flowers twice a year. However, families in Samoa have noticed that as the climate has begun to change the fetau tree flowers continuously.

The nut-containing fruit disperse throughout the Pacific by dropping from the trees and floating on the seas to other coastal areas. Fetau trees are unusual in that they favour salty, sandy soil.

The deep roots of the fetau tree provides protection from tsunamis and soil erosion.