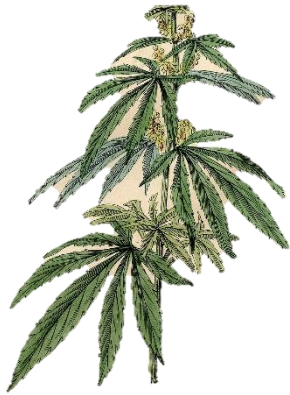


SUSTAINABLE STYLE

“Let’s Talk Natural Fabrics”



HEMP



BAMBOO



COTTON



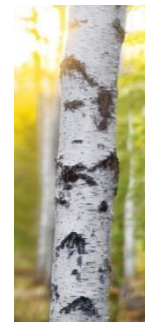
FLAX



Beech



Spruce



Birch

TENCEL FIBERS

Commonly derived from beech, spruce or birch trees.

LET'S TALK NATURAL FABRICS

(From the May 2025 FWIC Newsletter – Submitted by Brenda Devauld, BCWI)

Natural fabrics, which are all biodegradable, are derived from natural sources such as plants or animals. Some common examples of natural fabrics include cotton, linen, bamboo, hemp, and wool.

Some Fun Facts:

- From Plant Stems we get flax (linen), jute, hemp
- From Plant Seeds we get cotton
- From Plant Grass we get bamboo
- Natural fabrics have been used for thousands of years
- There is evidence of flax and wool being used for textiles over 30,000 years ago
- Cotton emerged in Egypt, about 3,000 BC, while silk was being used in China about 2,500 BC

Cotton

Both conventional and organic cotton types use large amounts of water, although organic cotton farming practices generally lead to more efficient and sustainable water use. Conventional cotton farming uses heavy amounts of pesticides and insecticides, while organic cotton is grown without harmful chemicals.

Linen

Linen is derived from the flax plant and is a smooth, strong cloth. While it is more expensive than other textiles, it is durable, sturdy, cool to wear, and breathable.

Bamboo

Bamboo clothing is known for keeping you dry, cool, and odour-free. It is widely used in active wear.

Hemp

Hemp is a plant from the cannabis species known for its fast growth rate and diverse applications. It is considered a low-impact, sustainable crop and, compared to cotton, requires little water and pesticides. Hemp clothing is breathable, durable, long-lasting, and hypoallergenic.

Wool

Wool is a type of product derived from animal hair, which, once harvested, is spun into yarn. Wool is naturally odour, stain, flame, and wrinkle resistant, has a very long lifetime, and can keep you warm even when wet. One disadvantage is that some wearers find it itchy, although this does tend to be the lower-quality types of wool.

Natural clothing does tend to be more expensive than synthetic materials, but it is all durable and long-lasting. It is wise to make choices based on our knowledge of what we are buying, keeping in mind the idea of sustainability and the environmental impact of fabrics.

QUIZ

How Well Do We Know Our Clothing?

1. What is the most commonly used natural fibre in the clothing industry?
 - a) Cotton
 - b) Wool
 - c) Linen
 - d) Silk
2. What synthetic fibre is known for its durability but also contributes to microplastic pollution?
 - a) Cotton
 - b) Acrylic
 - c) Polyester
 - d) Hemp
3. Which of the following is NOT a sustainable clothing material?
 - a) Organic cotton
 - b) Bamboo
 - c) Nylon
 - d) Tencel

Quiz Continued on Page 3

4. What is the primary environmental concern associated with conventional cotton farming?
 - a) Water usage
 - b) Air Pollution
 - c) Soil Erosion
 - d) Deforestation

5. Which clothing is biodegradable and made from the cellulose of beech trees?
 - a) Nylon
 - b) Tencel
 - c) Acrylic
 - d) Polyester

6. How long can polyester take to decompose in landfills?
 - a) 1 – 5 years
 - b) 20 – 30 years
 - c) 100 – 200 years
 - d) Over 500 years

7. Which of the following brands is recognized for its commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices?
 - a) Zara
 - b) H & M
 - c) Nike
 - d) Tentree

8. What does “ethical fashion” typically emphasize?
 - a) Low-cost production
 - b) Speed of production
 - c) Labour rights and sustainable practices
 - d) High Fashion

Quiz Continued on Page 4

9. What plant is linen made from?

- a) Cotton
- b) Hemp
- c) Flax
- d) Bamboo

10. Linen is a more sustainable option than cotton because it requires less water and pesticides to grow. True or False

ANSWER KEY

1. A-Cotton: Cotton has been cultivated for over 7,000 years and is a natural, biodegradable textile. It is a staple in the global textile industry.
2. C-Polyester: Polyester is a synthetic material made from petrochemicals. When washed, polyester sheds microscopic fibers (micro-plastics), which are tiny particles and can easily enter rivers, lakes and oceans. Once in the environment, they can be ingested by marine life, which poses a threat both to wildlife and humans.
3. C-Nylon: Nylon is a synthetic material derived from petroleum, so its production and disposal can have environmental impacts. Nylon is not considered a good material for direct contact with skin. It is not breathable, which can trap moisture and heat and lead to discomfort, rashes, and overheating.
4. A-Water Usage: Cotton production is a water-intensive process, requiring significant amounts of water with estimates ranging from 7,000 to 9,000 liters to produce just one kilogram of raw cotton.
5. B-Tencel: Tencel fibres are derived from sustainably sourced wood pulp, typically from beech, birch, or spruces trees. It is known for its softness, breathability and moisture-wicking properties.

Quiz Continued on Page 5

6. C-100 – 500 years: Polyester, being a plastic product, takes up space in landfills and takes hundreds of years to decompose. The toxic materials can leach into the soil and groundwater, causing contamination of local areas.
7. D-Tentree: Tentree is a Canadian company with headquarters based in British Columbia but founded in Regina, Saskatchewan. They focus on sustainable and ethical apparel. They ensure fair labour practices in their factories, using organic and /or recycled materials in their clothing.
8. C-Labour rights and sustainable practices: Unsafe working conditions, child labour, long hours, low pay, abuse and harassment, and environmental degradation are all widespread in the fashion industry.
9. C-Flax: Linen is derived from the fibers of the flax plant.
10. True: Linen is known for its breathability, durability, and eco-friendliness. It requires less chemical and water use than traditionally grown cotton. Flax is a naturally pest-resistant and drought-tolerant plant.