

Fiona O'Donohoe

Away with Nature

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Fiona O'Donohoe admits to being something of an accidental entrepreneur. A long-term sufferer with rosacea – a skin condition that causes outbreaks of redness on a person's face – she used the isolation brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic to research her skin's ability to tolerate various treatments. The initial experiments, she says, produced transformative results.

"I narrowed it down to 20 ingredients. From that, I created a golden facial oil. I spent six months using it. When we could finally meet people again, my friends were astonished by the difference it had made to my skin," says Fiona, who left her career in customer service and accounts to set up her skincare company Away With Nature in 2020.

Working with essential oils had the added benefit of instilling the Tipperary native with a sense of calm. "I was on medication for anxiety at the time, but the working with the ingredients gave me a sense of wellbeing. A lot of skincare brands only focus on skincare. I realised that this was a business and my products could promote wellbeing as well," she says.

Beginning in her kitchen, Fiona renovated a room in her home to begin manufacturing. However, increasing demand means she is now beginning to outsource production, and has entered into discussions with a distribution company.

"We've won 15 awards in three years, some national, some European and global. I've worked with the Local Enterprise Office to get microfinance so that I could collaborate with a cosmetic chemist. Together we developed a soothing overnight mask, which we sold out in pre-launch and five times again since," says Fiona.

She continues: "ACORNS was an incredible experience. The support from the team and the lead entrepreneurs was vital and I would highly recommend the programme to anyone who is involved in the early stages of a start-up."

