

## Soak it and see

By HANNAH HOTTWAGNER  
and CORTLAN BENNETT

IT'S one of the secrets to why the pharaohs scrubbed up so well.

Now, a Maylands couple are going online to sell an ancient Egyptian beauty product that grows on the vine.

Diana and Joel Forrest import and export loofah sponges — a type of dried gourd that is a distant relative of the cucumber.

According to their Qetesh International company website ([www.qetesh.com.au](http://www.qetesh.com.au)), loofah is the only plant that can be raised and used as a sponge.

Apart from its vegetable fibres being gentle enough to exfoliate the skin, loofah sponges are a naturally renewable and biodegradable resource.

They are also one of Egypt's more recognisable exports. Mrs Forrest started importing the sponges herself before establishing Qetesh with her husband last year.

Since then, the WA company has been making a name for itself internationally through its website, which caters to online retail and trade supplies.

Qetesh has received orders from body-conscious customers in Britain, the US, Hong Kong and Singapore.

However, the couple's ultimate goal is to open retail outlets in Perth.

"We are looking into placing our product into mainly department and organic stores, and eventually into day spas," Mr Forrest said.

Mrs Forrest said: "Our vision for our products is to be the essential and desired commodity in everyone's showering and bathing routine."

The loofah has been used for thousands of years by Egyptians.

The company carries 12 loofah products, including facial, body and household sponges, as well as a range of Dead Sea mineral soaps, body lotions and shower gels.



CLEANING UP: Diana and Joel Forrest with their Egyptian loofahs.

Picture: RICHARD POLDEN