

Natural Substances: Ivory

Ivory is the natural white substance found in elephant tusks, as well as in the teeth and tusks of a few other mammals. It has long been used for piano keys, billiard balls, and precious decorative items. However, the demand for ivory has completely wiped out elephants in some areas such as northern Africa.



Natural Substances: Diamond

Diamond is the hardest known natural substance. Although about a quarter of a million pounds of diamonds are synthetically created for industry each year, almost nine billion dollars' worth are still mined from natural sources. Most natural diamonds come from Africa, but they are also mined in Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, and Russia.



Natural Substances: Aquamarine

Aquamarine is the blue-green or turquoise variety of the mineral beryl, which can also be orange, yellow, green, or colorless. This gemstone quality mineral is mined in Russia, Sri Lanka, and Brazil. Aquamarine is the state gem of Colorado, where it is also found.





Natural Substances: Pearl

Pearl is a protective natural substance formed by a few species of shelled mollusk, the pearl oysters and the freshwater pearl mussel. While harvesting pearls used to entail killing a great number of mollusks to obtain a single pearl, today most pearls sold are cultured - intentionally grown by expert pearl farmers.



Natural Substances: Amethyst

Amethysts are the purple varieties of quartz, from light rosy lavender to brilliant deep violet. Amethysts have been found in graves of ancient Egyptians and Anglo-Saxons, attesting to their widespread use and popularity in the past.

Today the gemstone has lessened in value due to the discovery of extensive Brazilian deposits.





Natural Substances: Sapphire

Sapphire is the name given to a variety of gems composed of the mineral corundum. However, when this same mineral is red in color, it is referred to as a ruby. Blue is the most desired color of sapphire, but they can also be colorless, brown, black, or grey. Sapphire is September's birthstone.



Natural Substances: Ruby

Rubies are pink to deep red in color, and are composed of the mineral corundum. The red color is obtained by the natural addition of the element chromium to the mineral. Diamond is the only gemstone harder than a ruby, and rubies are in the top four most valuable precious stones - along with diamond, sapphire, and emerald.



Natural Substances: Turquoise

Turquoise was perhaps made famous through its use in Native American jewelry and traditional decoration. However, this blue-green stone containing aluminum and copper was used two thousand years ago in Persia, and even before that by the ancient Egyptians. Prior to being mined in the southwest United States, it was mined in the Sinai Peninsula.



Natural Substances: Malachite

Malachite is a vibrant green mineral often found in association with copper and limestone. Most malchite is mined in the Ural Mountains which separate Europe from Asia, but the mineral is also found in Mexico, the UK and US, and southwestern Africa. In ancient times, malachite was used to make green paint.



Natural Substances: Quartz

Quartz is the most abundant mineral in the part of the earth's crust which underlies the continents. While pure quartz is either colorless or whitish, it also comes in colors such as grey and pink. Purple quartz is called amethyst. Onyx, Jasper, Citrine, and Tiger's Eye are also quartz varieties.



