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37 Herbs & Remedies For Fabulously Healthy Animals

Brookby Herbs



FREE Herbal Guide To Natural Animal Health

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Index

Common Ailments for Horses

1. Horse allergies and hay-fever
2. Horses with arthritis can benefit from hawthorn
3. Useful herbs to combat colds and viruses
4. Best natural calmers for horses-herbs can be the perfect remedy
5. Relief for moody mares and PMS type symptoms
6. Immune boosting & hoof strengthening rosehips
7. Feeding the pregnant mare herbs - the last trimester
8. Herbal poultice for horses
9. Calming herbs for horses that are sensitive to the touch
10. Benefits of using rosemary for horses
11. Enhancing general horse appetite
12. Delicious smelling lavender for naturally happy horses
13. Growing herbal leys for healthy animals

Common Herbal Ailments For Dogs

1. Arthritis in Dogs
2. Calming herbs for your dogs' summer travels
3. Could your dogs' diet be contributing to poor health problems
4. Is your dog itchy?
5. Kennel cough and common winter health problems
6. Separation anxiety in dogs-natural calming herbs can help
7. Natural solutions for annoying fleas and irritating insects
8. Some frequently asked questions about herbs
9. Herbal guide for fabulous animal health
10. Contraindications
11. Herbs to avoid during pregnancy
12. Herbal remedies

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Common Ailments for Horses

Horse Allergies and Hay-Fever

Does your horse suffer from allergies and hay-fever like symptoms? Spring and summer can certainly be the time of year when such unpleasant problems can make themselves known. Just like humans, horses can suffer the horrible effects of hay-fever but luckily there are some wonderful herbs available to ease the discomfort.

Hay-fever in horses can often manifest as a recurrent cold like symptom with coughing and streaming eyes. It can be like a constant recurrent cold which your horse never seems to fully recover from. The lungs can become inflamed and your horse can be more susceptible to infections. Head shaking is another possible symptom. He may be tired and lethargic and generally seem quite miserable.

There are different causes to allergic respiratory problems. There are moulds, spores and weeds which can be found in hay or even in the pastures during spring and summer. The body can become sensitive to these elements and cause an allergic reaction. When feeding hay it is wise to wet the hay so you are decreasing the dust element.

Your vet will be able to possibly find the cause using a procedure that looks at the fluid and cells in the horse's lungs to see how bad the allergy is. There is also a blood test that can determine what 'in fact your horse is allergic to which in turn will make it a lot easier to treat.

From an herbal perspective the horse's immune system is usually seen to be quite low. You therefore can start treatment by boosting the immune system early in the season. Herbs such as Echinacea, Garlic, Rosehips and Kelp are all great general immune boosting herbs. Echinacea and Garlic will also be helpful for fighting any infection that may be developing.

Natural expectorants can help soothe a cough and clear the passages, making breathing easier for your horse. Herbs such as Mullein and Marshmallow are 2 such herbs. Vitamins found in herbs can help restore damaged tissues and build up the immune system also.

Natural antihistamines have an important part to play when it comes to allergies. Horseradish is a lovely effective herb and can help reduce streaming eyes and some of the uncomfortable symptoms. Also calming down an over reactive nervous system with herbs such as chamomile is a great way to go.

It is most effective to start addressing allergy problems well before the season begins. If you work on building the immune system early then being prepared with your herbal toolkit then you will find it possible to make a real difference in your horses' life.

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Horses with Arthritis can Benefit from Eating Hawthorn

Horses with arthritis can benefit greatly from eating Hawthorn, both the tops of the plant and the berries. Its proper botanical name is *Crataegus monogyna* & *Crataegus oxyacantha* and it is considered an extremely valuable medicinal herb.

Hawthorn berries are used extensively as a cardiac tonic and for increasing circulation which is very important for horses with arthritis. The leaves and flowers are used for the same purpose and it was known in the middle Ages as a symbol of hope and taken for many ailments.

Western herbalists consider it to be a “food for the heart” increasing blood flow to the heart muscles and restoring normal heartbeat. It is a wonderful herb for the elderly senior horse helping with circulation and strengthening the heart.

Hawthorn is also used for joint remedies for horses with arthritis as it increases circulation and is great for helping rid the body of toxins which can build up in the joints. It is considered an astringent, antispasmodic, cardiac, diuretic, sedative and tonic.

Hawthorn is also very useful in horses that have navicular syndrome as it dilates the blood vessels. Often you can see horses with navicular or laminitis nibbling on the new leaves of Hawthorn bushes if they are so lucky to have easy access.

Hawthorns are normally planted as a hedge and are perfect for creating a hedgerow containing other edible herbs for horses. The sharp thorns protect the edible herbs from being completely eaten to the ground by voracious horses but allow them to nibble any tasty morsels within their reach.

Hawthorn is in fact considered a noxious weed in Victoria and South Australia and is native to Europe, North Africa and West Asia. Hawthorn is very common throughout Victoria, south east New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia where there is moderate to high rainfall.

Hawthorn has been relatively well researched and its main medicinal benefit is due to its bioflavonoid content. The active constituents relax and dilate the arteries, especially the coronary arteries. This then increases the flow of blood to the heart.

Hawthorn is also considered to be highly antioxidant, which in turn helps reduce degeneration of the blood vessels. It is used today for angina and irregular heartbeat but also requires a few months to produce noticeable results. Like many herbs, hawthorn works in tune with the body which requires time for change to occur.

Not only is this herb used for high blood pressure but it also raises low blood pressure and herbalists have found it can restore blood pressure to normal. Combined with Ginkgo it is used to improve memory by improving circulation to the head and oxygen to the brain.





The 2 species of Hawthorn are very similar, differing mainly in the number of seeds per fruit. They are erect shrubs or small trees around 4-6 metres though can grow up to 9 metres. There

are many spreading branches with thorns and triangular to ovate leaves. Flowers are white and appear in clusters with a sweet scent. Hawthorns have bright red berries in autumn but with a mild flavour.

Flowering tops (leaves and flowers) are harvested in late spring and the berries are gathered in late summer and early autumn. The optimum time for harvesting the tops is only about a week so you need to be vigilant to get the correct time. The flowers should be mostly open but not yet fading.

You will need gloves when harvesting the berries. They should be harvested once they turn red. At this stage their level of active constituents is highest and the berries are less likely to be damaged as they are firmer at this stage. Strip the berries into a basket with gloved hands. The berries will need good drying conditions.

Hawthorn leaf and flowers dry quite easily but should be dried quickly in order to retain good colour. This can then be used as a tea or infusion or you can steep the berries and feed to your elderly horses. A wonderful herb for maintaining a healthy older horse with arthritis or when competing on a regular basis.

<p>Devil's Claw (root) (<i>Harpagophytum Procumbens</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps maintain a healthy skeletal syst. • Ideal for healthy flexible joints • Shouldn't be fed to pregnant mares. 	<p>White Willow (bark) (<i>Salix alba</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin of aspirin • Tonic and astringent • Good for digestive system.
<p>Meadow Sweet (herb) (<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antacid • Neutralises the acid in the system. • Great for digestive system 	<p>Nettles (aerial parts) (<i>Urtica dioica</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature's own cleansing tonic. • Rich in iron and vitamin C. • Increase circulation.

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Useful Herbs to Combat Colds and Viruses

Autumn and winter can be a miserable time when there are colds and viruses circulating freely amongst our horses. Herbs can be a wonderful natural remedy for such situations and prevention is a great place to start. If we remember that most modern medicine originated from herbal medicine we know we are in good hands.

There are four different categories of herbs that are commonly utilised to help combat the common cold and we will discuss the different herbs as we go. To start with prevention we must first look at boosting the immune system so it is better able to fight off any bugs.

Herbs such as Rosehips which contain vitamin C are wonderful for overall health and they are said to improve strength in the hooves as well. Kelp is another general herb which is brilliant for its natural composition of vitamins and minerals. It is stacked full of goodness and can easily be added to your horses daily feed.

Herbs that directly stimulate the immune system to fight the infection are used during and possibly even to prevent colds when given prior to the obvious signs of illness. Echinacea and Asian ginseng are two examples in this category. They are ideally given at this time of year when you know bugs are circulating and the herbs can quietly be working before the bugs start flying.

Herbs that promote a mild fever, hence sweating (known as diaphoretics) may be useful when horses have colds and viruses as this helps fight the infection. Because a fever is a sign of the immune system working, it may be that diaphoretics are also immune stimulators like the first category. Elder, boneset and yarrow are three examples.

The third category of helpful herbs includes herbs that may directly kill the viruses that cause colds, based on test tube studies. Goldenseal, myrrh and usnea are examples. These herbs have been shown to work directly on viruses so can also be helpful when your horse is unwell.

Finally, some herbs are used just to alleviate symptoms such as sore throats. These herbs tend to be high in mucilage and are soothing and anti-inflammatory or have tannins that are astringent. Marshmallow and mullein are two examples. Symptom-relieving herbs may have other active constituents and mechanisms of actions. As you can see in the following list, many herbs fit in more than one category, such as goldenseal (immune stimulating and antiviral).

Immune-stimulating:

Asian ginseng, astragalus, boneset, Echinacea, eleuthero, goldenseal, hyssop, linden, schisandra, wild indigo.

Diaphoretic:

Boneset, elder flower, hyssop, linden, yarrow.

Symptom-relieving Astringent (soothe sore throat):

Blackberry, blueberry, red raspberry.

Mucilage (soothe sore throat):

Marshmallow, mullein.

Reduce nasal stuffiness:

Eucalyptus, peppermint.





Relieve aches and pains:

Meadowsweet.

Miscellaneous sore throat relief:

Sage, yarrow.

Therefore when it comes to helping your horses through autumn and winter this year, think about the wonderful array of possibilities in nature's medicine chest. The results can be very fast and very satisfying as you know you are feeding natural goodness to your horses.

<p>Echinacea (root) <i>(Echinacea purpurea)</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boosts the immune system• Maintains healthy respiratory system• Enhances immune system.	<p>Fenugreek (seed) <i>(Trigonella foenum-graecum)</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aids digestion.• Stimulates appetite• Improves condition. Extremely nutritious.• Avoid during pregnancy.
<p>Garlic (bulb) <i>(Allium sativum)</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High in Sulphur• Good for digestive system• Antiseptic• Helps repel nuisance insects	<p>Marshmallow (root& leaves) <i>(Althaea officinalis)</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent herb for digestive system• Tonic.• High in mucilage• Used for minor skin inflammation

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Best Natural Calmers for Horses

If you have been looking for the best horse calmers out there on the market these days, then have you considered the natural alternative? Mother Nature has provided the most wonderful array of healthy calming herbs that are perfect for calming a stressed or excitable horse.

When you consider what is the best horse calmer for your particular horse, it is important to consider what is in fact causing the behaviour in the first place. If you know what is causing the problem then you are in a much better position to help.

First you want to eliminate the possibility that there is an injury or pain which could be causing erratic behaviour. If your horse has a sore back or pinched nerve then bad behaviour can be the result. Just like humans, pain can cause an upset and it is important to rule this out.

Diet is of course another possibility when it comes to excitable behaviour. Too much grass and the wrong feed can cause problems so be aware of what your horse is eating. Today's horses have to cope with a number of stressful situations. Competitions and moving properties can all cause stress. This can have an effect on horses' happiness and health but herbs can help your horse adjust quite nicely.

Where-as humans might reach in the cupboard for a cup of Chamomile tea or a rescue remedy to calm the nerves or boost the immune system, a horse can also benefit from natural remedies. Supplementing a horses' diet with calming herbs can be an important part of good animal health; Herbs are a natural way of improving your animals' sense of enjoyment in life and they are packed with essential vitamins and minerals for a balanced nervous system and can make a big difference to how your horse responds to exciting or different stimuli.

Horses that are hyperactive or anxious can often have an unbalanced nervous system. This can have an effect on the skin, behaviour and digestion. Herbs such as Chamomile, Scullcap and Vervain, can help soothe the nervous system; These herbs reduce the anxiety or excitability that your horse may be experiencing and can also work by relaxing the muscles and the gut without causing the drowsy state that conventional sedatives can induce".

One of the advantages of using herbal supplements is that they allow for early intervention before clinical signs become severe. Medicinal herbs are a time honored tradition and when used in conjunction with modern science have proven to be extremely beneficial to our four legged friends.



Relief for Moody Mares and PMS Type Symptoms

Have you ever wondered what nature has in its medicine chest for moody mares? Often when we look at our mares that present with “mareish” behaviour we don’t immediately relate it to the human symptoms of pre-menstrual tension, but in fact it is very similar.

Just like humans, mares can suffer from hormonal issues which can cause very unpleasant behaviour. In fact it can be quite dangerous if not well managed. Squealing, biting, kicking and general moodiness on a cyclic basis is a possible sign that your mare is suffering from hormonal issues.

Again just like people the symptoms can be quite painful and cause your moody mare to be quite upset. PMS affects an estimated 30-50 per cent of women in their childbearing years and who knows how many of our horses. The symptoms appear approximately two weeks before the menstrual period begins but luckily nature has provided some wonderful herbs designed to help regulate the hormones and can help reduce a lot of the pain and anxiety associated with this condition.

Chaste Tree is an herb that has been well studied and research has found it to be very effective in the treatment of hormonal issues. Although it is still unclear what exactly causes the hormonal issues, fluctuations seem to be what causes the unpleasant symptoms. It is therefore thought that by regulating the hormones you can help relieve the symptoms.

It has been shown that by taking Chaste tree over a period of months you can help regulate the hormones in your mare and help ease the nasty cramps and irritable moodiness. Chaste tree is said to imitate estrogens and progesterone because of its phyto-hormonal actions and a German study found chaste tree to be more effective than Vitamin B6 for PMS .

Other herbs that can be really useful for aggressive hormonal mares are Chamomile and Vervain which are relaxing herbs that will ease away stomach cramps that are making your horse oversensitive to the touch. Chamomile will soothe the nerves and help with general discomfort. All these herbs can be fed in a dried form or you can find them in a more concentrated liquid form.

Chamomile is a safe, gentle and effective digestive tonic plus a mild sedative, which eases griping pains. Traditionally used to calm tension and stress. It is also said to be an effective painkiller and anti-inflammatory for arthritis, rheumatism and general aches and pains. Chamomile contains potassium for general healing.

Chamomile is one of the most highly researched herbs and probably the first herb to reach for in the case of mild stomach upsets caused by nervousness or hyperactivity. Chamomile serves to ease any nervous spasms in the digestive tract and helps to expel gas and improve digestion.

Be patient when using herbs to treat your horses. It is not a quick fix but an effective, natural fix. Allow a good few months to see a difference in your mare. Also know that you are utilising the power of Mother Nature when feeding herbs to your horses, without the side effects of synthetic medicines. Bring tranquillity to your mare today with wonderful healing herbs. Bring tranquillity to your mare today with wonderful healing herbs.

Immune Boosting & Hoof Strengthening Rosehips- The brilliant anti-oxidant food for horses.

Rosa Canina- Dog Rose

Dog Rose is native to Europe and is considered a weed in parts of Australia which is unfortunate as it has such wonderful health giving properties for both ourselves and our horses.

The hips of the dog rose were a popular sweetmeat in the Middle Ages. The term sweetmeats usually refer to candy or sweet confections. Doctors in the Middle Ages often concealed bitter medicine in candy form, so that it was more palatable to patients. However, many patients believed that medicine wasn't working unless it tasted awful.

Description: Climbing perennial growing up to 3 metres. Has pink and white flowers with curved thorns and scarlet fruit called ("hips").

GROWING- In Australia Sweet Briar is the more widespread rose and Dog Rose is found in more scattered and older settlements. Dog rose is used for medicinal purposes and when mature the petals will fall off leaving the hip to be harvested. The hips are ready for harvesting as soon as they have attained full colour. They can be harvested from around mid-March to late May. The hips need to be dried quickly and at quite high temperatures.

Constituents: Rosehips contain vitamin C, A, B 1, B 2, B 3 and K, flavonoids, tannins, invert sugar, pectin, plant acids, polyphenols, carotenoids, volatile oil and vanillin.

Uses: Rosehips are a fabulous herb or fruit for ensuring great health for both horses and humans. Because of the Rosehips anti-oxidant properties they are a brilliant food for maintaining good health. Research has shown that antioxidants protect the body against certain diseases such as cancer, arthritis and cardiovascular diseases.

Antioxidants can protect against free radical cells which can damage tissues and are implicated in causing many diseases. Excessive free radicals are caused by poor nutrition, stress and damaged tissues. Infections will lower your horses' vitamin c levels and this can also inhibit the growth and repair of cartilage and bone tissue if it is constantly deficient.

Rosehips have an important role to play in neutralising free radicals therefore they are a wonderful food for keeping your horse healthy and in peak condition. Research has established Rosehips as the highest source of flavonoids and biotin which is great for strengthening horses' hooves as well.

Naturally occurring vitamin C has been found to be far more readily absorbed than artificial vitamin c; therefore the benefits of feeding rosehips to horses should be an obvious choice. Rosehips are a great source of Iron and can be used to rehabilitate weak kidneys. They are also a good tonic for liver based ailments and can help build a barrier against infection.

Rosehips can be made into a tea by mixing 2 dessertspoons of granules into 1 litre of boiling water and steeped until cool. This tea is then poured over your horses feed. For those of you who don't have time to make your own tea then Brookby Herbs have a Rosehip and Garlic tonic in cider vinegar already made up for you and available through selected stockists.

Feeding the Pregnant Mare Herbs - The Last Trimester

As well as a nutritionally balanced diet supplying the protein, minerals and vitamins required in the last trimester, there are a number of herbs that can benefit the pregnant mare, however care must be taken when feeding supplements of any kind to the pregnant mare.

Once in foal, there are very few herbs which are safe and generally these are only recommended for use in the last 75 days. For example, raspberry leaves are considered the ultimate pregnancy herb, as they help strengthen and tone the uterus and aid with delivery when fed in the last 45 days of pregnancy. The leaves contain an alkaloid known as fragerine, which relaxes and strengthens the uterine muscles, tones the pelvic muscles and assists with contractions during the foaling. Raspberry leaf may also help prevent miscarriage and haemorrhage.

Small amounts of garlic cleanse the blood and combat infection, although it is recommended to cease feeding within 30 days of delivery as it may flavour the milk!

Blessed thistle and fennel seed will help with milk production. Boiling barley with fennel seed and feeding to the mare during the last three weeks of pregnancy will greatly improve the quality and quantity of her milk. Fenugreek seed is also very enriching and will aid in milk quality as well.

There are also many 'mixes' available on the market designed to aid the mare in the final months of pregnancy that contain ingredients such as Nettle, Red Raspberry Leaves, Chamomile, and Rosehips, however it is recommended that a herbalist be consulted before using.

Herbs that may be considered a muscle relaxant or stimulant should be avoided - Devil's claw, rosemary, thyme and wormwood are among a list of many herbs that could negatively impact the pregnancy. Despite being recommended for many female purposes, Black Cohosh, Blue Cohosh, Motherwort and Yarrow are also some of the many herbs that should be avoided in the pregnant mare.

To be sure, consult an expert before giving any herbs to a pregnant mare, as even the 'safe to use' herbs have particular dosage rates and more is not always better.



Herbal Poultice for Horses

A poultice for horses is nothing more sophisticated than a soft object such as bread, clay or soft cloth, which is moistened and applied to an area for the purpose of healing. An herbal poultice for horses adds a specific mixture of herbs to the object to contribute to the healing process. Typically the herbs used are ones that are thought to have healing properties. A poultice is a type of remedy can be used on people or on animals and will offer the same relief.

Common Uses

Poultices for horses were traditionally used to treat ailments before the days of modern medicine. Many home remedies were developed back in the old days when more mainstream methods of healing were not yet available. Interestingly, much of what we know now about modern medicines evolved from many of the home remedies of the early days. Regardless of the modernization of medicine, many people still choose to use herbal treatments to treat common ailments or injuries. These remedies work especially well for horses.

Here are a few of the common uses for poultices:

- Pain relief
- Reduce swelling
- Reduce inflammations
- Draw out infections
- Rid the body of toxins
- Remove poisons
- Speed up the healing process

How to Make a Poultice





It is fairly simple to make an herbal poultice for horses. First you will need to gather the necessary herbs. The herbs you use will depend on the ailment you are trying to treat. Grind up the herbs in a blender then add a small amount of oil, vinegar or water to the herb mixture, just enough to make a paste like substance. Once the substance is pasty, spread the mixture into a soft cloth. The cloth should be big enough to cover the infected area. Apply the paste side of the cloth directly onto the affected area. It is advisable to wrap a bandage around the poultice to keep it in place, this is especially important when applying on horses. The poultice should be kept on the affected area until the mixture dries; this can be anywhere from a few hours to a day. Continue application until you receive the desired effect.

Herbs and Ailments

Specific herbs are used to treat specific ailments. Before making your poultice for your horse you will want to identify what ailment you are going to treat and determine how big the area is you are trying to treat. Make your herb mixture sufficient for each circumstance. When using herbs that may irritate an open wound such as salt or onion, you can apply a thin cloth between the wound and the poultice to keep the herbs from making direct contact with the wound.

Here are a few herb mixtures that are used to treat common ailments in horses:

- Onion and white willow barks are used for pain, swelling, sores and boils.
- Epsom salt can be used for hoof abscesses or founder.
- Cayenne pepper and wintergreen oil is used for pain and inflammation.
- Chickweed and/or calendula are used for joint pain and stiffness.
- Slippery elm powder mixed with castor oil is used for cleaning out wounds or drawing out infections.
- Plain mud poultices are often used to treat founder in horses and relieve the pain of laminitis.

<p>Echinacea (root) (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a healthy respiratory system • Boosts the immune system. 	<p>Fenugreek (seed) (<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aids digestion. • Expectorant for coughs. • Improves condition. • Avoid during pregnancy.
<p>Garlic (bulb) (<i>Allium sativum</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High in Sulphur • Cleanses the blood. 	<p>Marshmallow (root& leaves) (<i>Althaea officinalis</i>)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectorant for coughs. • Tonic. • Helps expel mucus. • Soothes irritation in airways.

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Calming Herbs For Horses That Are Sensitive To The Touch

Vervain is also known as Herb of Grace and has been well connected over the ages to sorcery, magic and other spiritual traditions. It was even used in ceremonies by the Druids of ancient Britain and Gaul. Dioscorides in the 1st century called vervain the “sacred herb” and it is a traditional herbal medicine in both China and Europe.

The Romans also called it herba sacra and herba veneris and it was used as an altar plant and was involved in the Christian tradition. Today it is used medicinally as a nervine herb. Vervain is native to the Mediterranean region.

Description: Vervain grows 350-900mm tall, with ribbed stems. It is loosely branched and only sparsely leafy. The opposite leaves are up to 60mm long and they vary from ovate and coarsely toothed. Flowers are small, lilac coloured.

GROWING-Vervain doesn't have many leaves and is quite a scruffy looking plant. But it is quite productive and quite easy to grow. Vervain grows well in a wide range of climates though it doesn't enjoy cold winters and can suffer from frost damage. Moderate fertility is required. Vervain grows wild throughout Europe, North Africa, China and Japan.

Uses: Nervine, Tonic, Mild sedative, stimulates bile secretion, mild bitter
Although Vervain has not been hugely researched some of its uses are widely well known. Vervain is bitter and stimulates digestion. It is considered a digestive tonic and thought to improve the absorption of food.

Vervain is particularly admired as a restorative of the nervous system and is especially helpful for nervous tension. In horses it is said to be very useful with horses who are sensitive to the touch and who need help in calming their nervous system.

It is also thought to have a mildly anti-depressant action and is used to treat anxiety and the nervous exhaustion which can follow a long illness. In the case of helping convalescence, vervain is said to aid digestion and to help restore the nervous system.

Vervain is said to alleviate headaches and in Chinese medicine is used for headaches related to the menstrual cycle. It is also used for jaundice, asthma, insomnia and helps labour contractions.

With regards to horses, Vervain is a great herb when combined with Chamomile for the nervy, tense horse that doesn't seem to settle. Ideally suited for the horse that is sensitive to the touch opposed to the horse that tends to hold tension in their muscles. Herbal blends can be fed on a daily basis to help relieve tension and can be used to help calm a nervy horse while you re-train and re-educate either a young horse or a horse that lacks confidence.

Herbs can be fed for 3 months in order to re-balance the nervous system and to allow time for re-training. A wonderful natural and gentle way to get the best performance from an excitable or nervous horse.

How to Grow Rosemary and the Benefits of Using Rosemary for Horses

Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, is a popular herb because of its distinctive scent and its many culinary and holistic uses. It has anti-inflammatory properties and is used as an anti-bacterial and anti-microbial herb. For horses, it is used as a fast-acting antiseptic to repel fungal infections and bacteria. It can also be used in a homemade insect repellent.

How to Grow Rosemary

Rosemary will grow from cuttings or from small plants bought from a nursery. They do not grow well from seeds. If you want to grow a new plant from a cutting, cut an 8-inch cutting from the plant during spring or summer, dip it in rooting powder and plant it in potting soil to allow it to form roots. Keep the soil slightly damp and it will be ready to transplant in about a month.

Rosemary needs a partial-sun location. If you live in a cold climate, consider planting it in a large outdoor container that can be moved indoors during the coldest parts of the winter. Rosemary can tolerate some below-freezing nights, but it will be damaged by long periods of below-freezing temperatures. To help guard outdoor rosemary against cold nights, pile 3 inches of mulch around the base of the plant to protect the roots from the cold. This is also useful in hot climates for keeping the roots from becoming overheated.

Rosemary needs a well-draining soil to grow well. If you have thick clay soil, break it up with a spade and add compost or potting soil to the mixture. For particularly thick soils, adding sand will further improve the drainage.

Your outdoor plant won't need to be watered often unless you live in a dry climate. The soil should become completely dry in between watering. If you receive regular rainfall, this will be enough to keep your plant watered. Each spring, apply fertilizer to the soil around the plant and water it to allow the fertilizer to soak into the soil. Once you have an established plant, you can snip off leaves and stems as you need them. However, always leave some on the plant to allow it to continue growing.

Using Rosemary

Rosemary has been used since ancient times for both its flavour and its medicinal qualities. It is high in vitamin A, B-complex vitamins, folic acid and vitamin C. It has been used for everything from improving memory to stimulating circulation. The many minerals contained in these tiny leaves make it a nutritionally complex plant that can calm the digestive system, protect liver cells from disease and alleviate rheumatism pain.

For horses, the scent of rosemary is useful for repelling flies. Essential oil from rosemary leaves is often used in horse shampoos and skin products to cleanse the skin and hair and repel insects. A homemade fly repellent for horses is made with rosemary leaves, lemons and water. Lemon and rosemary steeped into boiling water and left overnight can create a gentle insect repellent that can be sprayed onto a horse to keep bothersome flies at bay.

Enhancing General Horse Appetite

Fenugreek has been used since the Early Bronze Age; it was cultivated in Assyria (7th century BCE) and remains found in Iraq have been reliably dated to 4000BCE. In the Ebers Papyrus (c.1500BCE) it is mentioned as an herb to induce childbirth. Dried plants are sold as hilba in Egypt as a remedy for painful menstruation.

It was first mentioned in Chinese medicine in the 11th century and has a long tradition as a tonic herb in both Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine. Western interest in the herb centres on one of its constituent alkaloids, trigonelline, which has potential in treating cervical and liver cancer, and its saponins, which are extracted for use in oral contraceptives and other pharmaceutical products. Trigonella is from trigonus, "triangular", referring to the flower-shape. Foenum-graecum means "Greek hay", because the plant was grown as a fodder crop in Greece.

Fenugreek, a popular spice and cousin to the pea that is grown in the Mediterranean area of Europe and western Asia, was used by the ancient Egyptians for incense and embalming. The Romans preferred it as an aid in childbirth, while the Chinese employed it in cases of weakness and swelling of the legs. Today fenugreek is used to treat a number of ailments, including diabetes. In studies, an extract of fenugreek seeds was shown to lower blood sugar in people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Both a spice and a medicinal herb, fenugreek has a long and respected history, dating back to the ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Today, it is used to soothe stomach irritations and improve appetite. Recent studies indicate that fenugreek also lowers blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

This annual herb with clover-like leaves belongs to the family Leguminosae. It grows to a height of 20-24 inches. While the plant has a strong, sweetish-spicy aroma, the seeds taste slightly salty and when chewed have a mildly bitter taste.

Description: Strongly aromatic annual growing to about 32 inches. Has sickle shaped pods and yellowish white pea-like flowers. The seeds are harvested during autumn.

Constituents:

With their emollient effects, fenugreek seeds ground into a paste help heal boils, abscesses, swollen lymph nodes and skin inflammations. Because of its mucilage content, fenugreek can protect the mucous membrane of the stomach and relieve gastric irritations.

By the same token, it soothes inflamed respiratory membranes and quiet coughs. Fenugreek is also known to be anti-diabetic, lowering blood sugar, as well as cholesterol levels.

Fenugreek powder makes an appetite-stimulating tonic. The seeds contain a good proportion of mucilage and protein, as well as fatty oils, amino acids, alkaloids, sterols, flavonoids and vitamins A and B. Steroidal saponins account for the bitter taste; they are also thought to chemically resemble human sex hormones, which may be why fenugreek was once considered an aphrodisiac and why it is still used to stimulate the uterus and milk flow.

Delicious Smelling Lavender for Naturally Happy Horses

Those who are horse owners know how expensive it can be to own and care for a horse. Routine care and feeding is costly enough but when something goes wrong and calling the vet is the only option you think you have, it can really cause a financial hardship. There are ways to cut some of those unsightly vet costs by learning how to make some of your own home remedies that can be just as effective as any modern treatment, at a fraction of the cost; no vet necessary.

The Benefits of Lavender

The lavender plant has long held many healing properties. Not only is the plant fragrant but also very useful in home remedies that offer relief from many types of ailments for people as well as animals. When we think of lavender, typically we think of perfumes, soaps and lotions. In addition to its soothing smell, lavender also offers real health benefits and relief for animals and people. In various different forms lavender has been known to treat respiratory issues, improve the circulation of blood, relieve pain and been used as a disinfectant for the skin, coat and scalp. The soothing scent offers a calming property thought to reduce anxiety and nervousness.

Growing Lavender

To grow, lavender requires warm conditions and full sun with moist soil. Very cold weather or very wet soil will result in the loss of the plant. The good news is that once the plant is strong and well established it becomes very hearty and can grow in many conditions. The plant grows best in tight spaces that are moist but not damp and in pots or spaces that allow for root growth and air flow. If you do not have the luxury of a consistent climate all year round, planting lavender outside during the warm months and moving it inside in the cooler months allows you to have it all year round. Growing lavender in pots indoors allows for more consistent climate control and a better long term result. Compact variety seeds are the best for indoor planting.

Uses for Lavender

The therapeutic uses of lavender are countless. Horse owners have learned that incorporating the use of lavender in every day horse care offers many benefits. Wiping a horse down with a sponge soaked in lavender oil can offer a calming sensation; this is especially effective in neglected or very spirited horses. Soaking and cleaning hoofs in lavender oil contributes to strong hoofs and improves the overall hoof condition. Using a lavender oil soaks can reduce swelling or inflammation on leg areas. For a shiny, healthy coat give your horse a sponge bath using warm water mixed with lavender essential oil. The same treatment can be used to promote healing of minor cuts and abrasions. Lavender has many benefits to animals, just as it does for people.

Most herbs offer a wide variety of treatments that can cure many ailments that are common in horses from a minor cut to a hoof inflammation. Learning how to use lavender as a regular part of caring for your horse is really one method of care that should be in every horse owner's handbook. Not only is lavender a best kept secret but a major money saver.

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