

Back to nature...

Medicinal Herbs



Before pharmaceutical drugs and medicines, wild horses roamed throughout the Earth free from any illnesses and diseases. They independently cured themselves and survived. Many hours of their day were spent grazing on various plants in their environment and eating all the nutrition they needed. But in today's world of horse lovers, these beautiful creatures rely on their owners to provide them with all the nutrition they need to stay healthy. However, with little knowledge of natural herbs, owners tend to look at what can be purchased from a pharmacy. Although many pharmaceutical drugs originally come from herbs, the

actual use of herbal medicine is often declined. Little do people realize that once the active component of a herb is extracted out, it will lose its after effect and no longer work as efficiently.

There is an interesting story found on the internet from a Chinese folklore regarding such behaviours. "Many centuries ago, a farmer in Yunan found a snake near his hut and beat it senseless with a hoe, leaving it for dead. A few days later, he discovered the same snake slithering in his yard and again he tried to kill it. When the apparently indestructible reptile appeared again a few days later, the farmer gave it another beating, but this

time he watched the bleeding snake crawl into a clump of weeds and begin eating them. By the next morning, its wounds were healing again and it was already recovering its vitality".

Sometimes it is better to trust in nature that has existed for over thousands of years rather than on drugs that have only been tested on animals in more recent history. On saying this, it is imperative to note that for some emergency cases, it is best to turn to man-made drugs that your vet suggests giving. It is important that owners turn to their vet before they give their horse any herbs or pharmaceutical medicines.

Healing with Chamomile

Muscle Soreness

Once chamomile is compressed, it can help reduce muscular pain and decrease inflammation.

Depression & Nervous condition

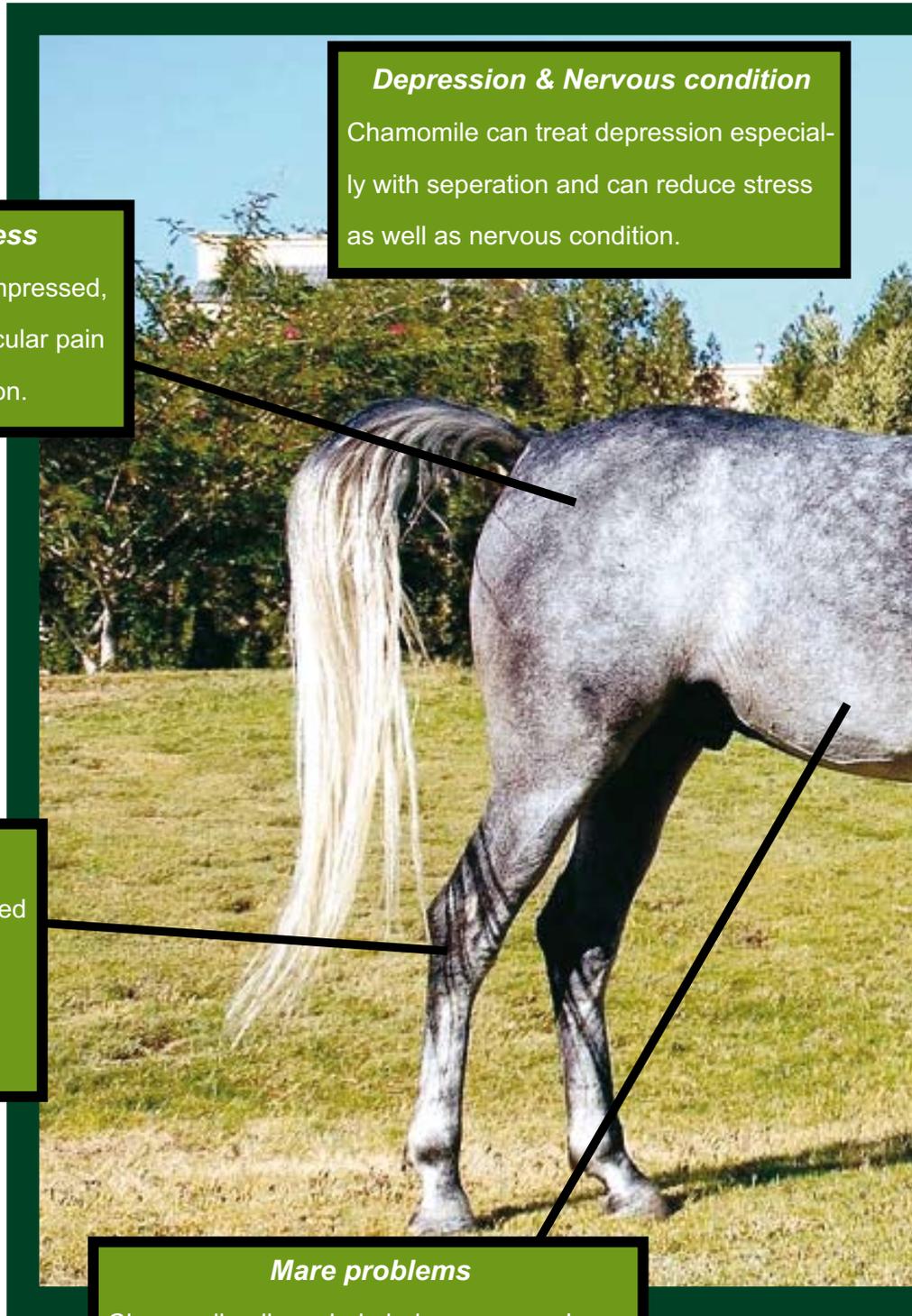
Chamomile can treat depression especially with separation and can reduce stress as well as nervous condition.

Arthritis

Chamomile can either be used as a compress or poultice in order to reduce inflammation and ease discomfort.

Mare problems

Chamomile oil can help balance a mare's hormones. The oil is obtained from steam-distilling the flower heads which produces a pale liquid that eventually turns yellow.



Sweet Itch

If your horse has started scratching, feed him with chamomile tea. If it continues, apply chamomile tea or lotion as a rinse after medicated bath.

Allergies

Mix an equal amount of chamomile, comfrey, & witch hazel in boiling water and strain the herbs from the liquid when cooled. Then place the cooled herbs in a cheese cloth and apply it over affected areas for twenty minutes.

Eye problems

Place a chamomile tea bag into boiling water and leave it to soak for three minutes. Once it is cooled, place the tea bag directly on the infected eye.

Cuts & puncture wounds

Using Aromatherapy treatment, chamomile can soothe the irritated skin around the cut and help prevent further infection.

Swelling

Boil a liter a water and add a handful of dry chamomile. Leave it to steep for ten minutes and once it is cooled, soak a towel in it and place it on the swelling. If the swelling continues, you ca wrap the cooled herbs in a cheesecloth and apply it on the affected area.

Colic

Make chamomile tea by boiling water with a handful of chamomile. Wait until it is warm enough for your horse to drink it.



Chamomile... The calming herb

Chamomile is a well known plant native to Europe, Asia and also found in Egypt. It's anti-inflammatory properties makes this herb even more special as it helps to ease spasm and discomfort in the digestive system. The anxiety of many horses is processed through their digestive system which can lead to diarrhoea or colic when they are upset by change.

There are three different ways of using chamomile depending on the illness of the horse; tea, dried, and cream. However, the most common of the three is tea. Chamomile tea is great for curing colic, helping digestion, relieving muscle spasm, aches, pains, and reducing stress. Since chamomile is a natural calmer, it can be used for nervous



horses before a competition but it is advised to re-check the rules of the competition before feeding your horse with the tea.

Dried chamomile can be added straight into your horse's feed at times of stress and in order to improve his training. The flower head of a chamomile has an apple-like fragrance which is natural and relaxing and this makes it highly palatable.

If your horse suffers from sweet itch or other dermatitis, you can rub some cream containing chamomile which can either be brought or made by yourself. This is done by melting 150g emulsifying ointment and 70ml of glycerine. Then add 30g of dried herb and heat together for three hours. Strain, stir, and then store in a refrigerator.

Chamomile also includes nutritional factors such as calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, and zinc. Although these are all part of a horse needs, it is advisable, as



with all herbs, to have a break every so often. It has been suggested not to use chamomile everyday as it has shown to be toxic to the liver. If your horse is ill and is given chamomile, vets have recommended undergoing the treatment for no more than three months then to stop for a week and then continue the same procedure. However, if your horse has developed itchy skin while on chamomile, take him off it. It is not wise to become reliant on herbs. Always check with your vet if you notice something strange in your horse.

By Lamya Habib