**Horsetail**

**Name:** Horsetail. *Equisetum arvense.* Mare’s tail, shavegrass, pewterwort and bottlebrush.

**Parts Used:**

* Aerial portion.
* Harvest in spring and early summer while “bright green and tender.”

**Native To:** Grows in damp areas.

“Many species prefer marshy areas, but horsetail can grow in the most unlikely places including waste areas, fields, open slopes, packed gravely soil and even through cement in sidewalks. Horsetail often emerges in places where topsoil is removed or disturbed – a remarkable expression of nature taking care of herself.”

**Uses:**

* A very nutritive herb, high in several minerals
* Very high in silica. Helpful for brittle bones, hair, teeth and nails, white spots on nails
* Helpful for osteoporosis
* Inflammation of the mucous membranes of the mouth, gingivitis and tonsillitis
* Strengthens immune system
* Builds healthy connective tissue
* “Tonic remedy that strengthens tissues of the body including the lungs, sinuses and kidneys”
* “Used for treating bronchitis and tuberculosis.” High silica content aids lungs that have been damaged by tuberculosis.
* “Lung complaints and arteriosclerosis”
* “Helps to guard against fatty deposits in arteries”
* Helpful in treating stomach ulcers because it can stop bleeding
* “Used to treat an inflamed or enlarged prostate and cystitis”
* Urinary tract issues and stones
* Cleanses kidneys as it is a diuretic

**Actions:**

Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antimicrobial, antioxidant, coagulant, demulcent, diuretic and astringent.

**Constituents:** Silica (possibly up to 70% soluble silica), saponins, alkaloids (nicotine, palustrine and palustrinine) flavonoids, calcium, iron, manganese, potassium, sulphur, magnesium and tannin.

**Tincture and Capsules (Dosage):**“No typical dosage has been established for horsetail. However, commercial preparations typically recommend the following amounts:

Standardized dose: 300 mg, three times daily, standardized to contain 10 - 15% silica, 3% blackish rhizome fragments and no more than 5% stems or branches from other horsetail species.

Tincture (1:5): 1 - 4 ml, three times daily.

External (compresses): 10 g of herb per 1 liter water daily”

**Harvest:** In early spring tan-colored shoots can be eaten. Later in spring the green stalks are used for medicinal purposes (not edible).

“Spring green tops are gathered when the leaves are still vibrant green and pointing upward or outward– usually between March and July. As the plants age, leaves begin to droop and turn army-green. Silica crystals in the leaves become more developed and less water-soluble – and therefore, less useful for human consumption.”

**Taste:** Taste grassy but not bitter.

**Flower Essence:**

Keep in mind that horsetail is a gymnosperm which means that it does not produce a true flower. It does however produce a flowering head that releases spores.

“Distorted communication with any or all levels of one's consciousness; difficulty communicating with the higher selves of others, including animals.”

“Connectedness; opens and expands channels of communication between the conscious, subconscious, and super conscious levels of our being; improves inter-species communication.”

**Combines:**With other nutritive herbs such as nettle, alfalfa and oat straw.

“Excellent daily tea for people with asthma, especially when mixed with mullein leaf. It strengthens lung tissue and prevents inflammation, while mullein helps to remove congestion and increase pliability of lung air sacs.”

**Contra-indications:**

* Use for maximum 2 months at a time and then take a break. Spring is the main time of use.
* Be certain of the species of horsetail that you are using as “other species of horsetail, *E.palustre* looks similar and is toxic to horses and possibly people.”
* “Fresh horsetail can block vitamin B1 (thiamine) absorption” but not an issue once used dry in tincture.
* “May interact with some medications, such as diuretics, heart medications, lithium, and nicotine.”
* Take care to source horsetail from clean and reliable locations as it has the ability to “bio-accumulate kidney-toxic nitrogenous compounds from farms (fertilizer manure waste), agribusiness, and chemical plants upstream.
* Has the potential to irritate kidneys and is not advised to be taken daily.

**Helpful Resources**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5JN9UKgeBk