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H *natural* **HORSE**

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HANDS ON:
Solutions for SHOULDERS

HOMEOPATHY:
*Changing Susceptibilities,
Not NATURE*

SOIL & PASTURE:
*What's in
Your Horses Forage?*

THRUSH:
*Restore
Hoof Health
Naturally!*



Slippery Elm Bark: *Ulmus fulva*

by Katharine Lark Chrisley

This herb, obtained from the inner tree bark that is dried and ground or powdered for ease of use, is a remarkable treatment for any digestive disturbances, coughs or lung dis-ease. Slippery elm bark is anti-inflammatory, will balance the bowel (used for loose or hard stool), is full of anti-oxidants, flavonoids and polysaccharides (which create a mucilage base to sooth any irritated tissues), will detox throughout the digestive tract, supports beneficial gut flora, is a catalyst for cellular regeneration, aids hormone balance (by eliminating estrogen-like anaerobes), supports renal health and healing, and alkalizes the body.

As a spring tonic internally and a poultice externally, slippery elm bark will help the horse recover from winter and regain strength.

Its tonic effect is especially potent for mares as it clears the kidneys and bladder, balances hormones, and supports the stomach and intestines as the fresh forage becomes available.

Because it has a “bulking” quality in the digestive tract, the powdered bark should first be soaked for 20 minutes in water until it has the consistency of egg whites or only be fed in very wet, large wheat bran mashes or sloppy, water-soaked meals. A tea infusion can also be made and dosed or poured over the bucket feed – its ratio should be 1 part bark to 10 parts water. The tea is often used for coughs, sore throat and lung problems, but be certain that the liquid, if dosed, does not aspirate into the lungs.

I use 1/4 cup of the bark powder for an average-sized horse. I make sure that the powder is thoroughly mixed and wetted in a feed ration. To brew the infusion (tea), add the herb to just-boiled water and steep for 20 minutes. I strain the tea for dosing. I just pour the tea with the brewed powder over the bucket feed without straining.

I use slippery elm bark for any of my horses or dogs (or me) if they get loose bowels, often after dosing some charcoal. Stopping diarrhea with chemicals can be risky – sometimes, the body is trying to evacuate the bowels for a reason that the detoxing charcoal can help or the mucus-like slippery elm will assist. Always consult your practitioner if diarrhea persists because it will dehydrate the body. ♡

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA or USDA; they are provided as information only.

About the author:

Katharine maintains an “herbal” stable yard.
Her company is Dharmahorse where the dharma (sacred path) for horses is a nature based one.
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Hoof Care from the Inside: Feed the Feet

by Katharine Lark Chrisley, NHC, RMT

“No hoof, no horse” is a saying that has been around forever for a very good reason. Our horses rely upon the foundation of healthy hooves in the same way that a building relies upon its foundation – without a good one, everything above is compromised.

The hooves, like all body systems, are created from the foods ingested. Certainly external forces are at play as well, but with-

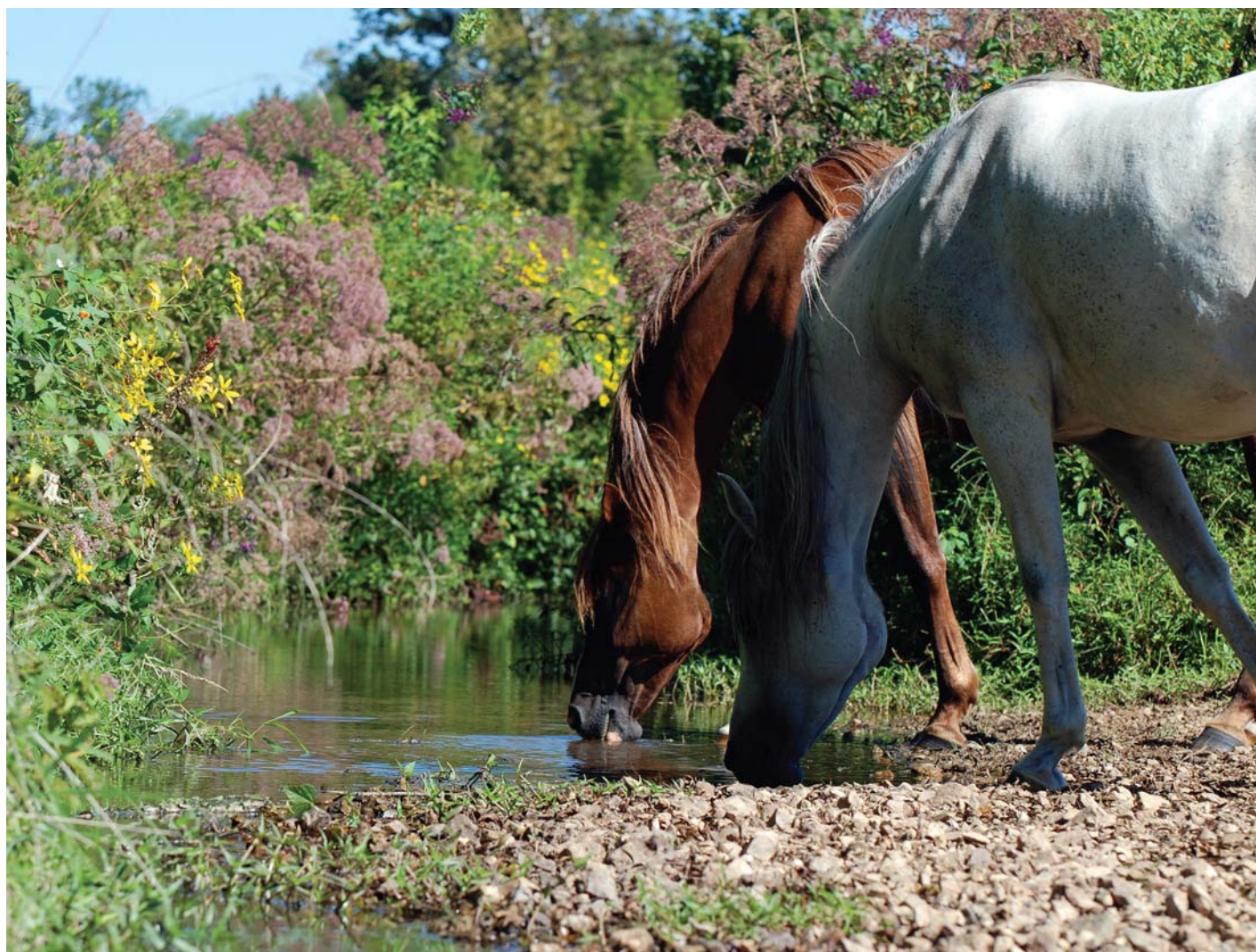
out the complete nutrition needed the hoof cannot meet these forces with strength and flexibility. While proper hoof trimming is absolutely essential, the creation of the hoof structure, strength and health will be determined by diet.

The horse, being designed as a browser/herbivore, requires the high fiber diet filled with herbs and forage that Nature provides (we can provide this, too). To ‘feed

the feet’, we need to supplement the grassy pastures and/or hays with herbs and foods that support hoof health by providing minerals, amino acids, enzymes and safe lipids (fats).

Not all feeds and supplements are healthy

Processing and extracting the components to then provide them in a bag of “complete feed” often corrupts the very nutrients that are desired. Heat destroys nutrients and



most processed feeds are created by steaming or cooking. Chemical extraction is used to isolate many nutritional oils before they are blended into feeds and the result is a less digestible lipid with potential residues of the extracting agent. Just as processed foods leave us feeling hungry because we've eaten "empty calories", the horse will feel undernourished and naturally seek roots, barks, even eat dirt, in an effort to find what his body craves.

Foods that are grown with chemical fertilizers, pesticides (herbicides or insecticides), or are genetically modified (GMOs) present health problems that may show up dramatically in the hooves. The hoof depends on proper blood circulation and nutrient availability to keep the multiple layers of tissue intact. This laminated structure holds the bones within the hoof and lower leg at precise angles. Since our horses walk on "digits" – their hooves corresponding to our finger(s) and toe(s) – anything out of balance degrades the entire structure and creates pain.

Humans will show traces of toxins or deficiencies in the growth, color, shape and structure of their finger nails – the cutaneous structure of the horse's hooves is the same and serves as an indicator in this same way. The choice of organic foods whenever possible will help lessen the body's exposure to toxins.

My personal belief is in simple solutions and simple, nature-based practices with horses. Of course, we need brilliant surgeons for injuries; experienced practitioners for diagnosis and allopathy to assist with overwhelming symptoms – but it is the body itself that knows how to heal and what to do with the nutrients we provide!

Foods that feed the feet

- A quality grass hay or pasture source is the basic foundation of an equine diet.

- To this base, a legume hay may be added such as alfalfa – *Medicago sativa* (lucerne) for gestating, lactating or growing horses. A 10% to 20 % ratio to grass is a safe margin for the addition of the rich legume. It will add protein, calcium, biotin, silica and vitamin A as well as many trace elements to the base diet.

- Sea vegetables are supreme hoof-support nutrients. Kelp – *Fucus vesiculosus* – provides over 30 trace elements and iodine, calcium, magnesium, potassium, silica, sulfur, iron and vitamin K. One tablespoon daily of powdered kelp can be added to the bucket feed to nourish hoof health and growth (use one teaspoon for youngsters under 2 years old).

- Rose hips – *Rosa* species – are a good source of rutin, vitamin C, selenium and manganese. While horses do synthesize vitamin C, it is a water soluble vitamin that can be used up quickly during stress or illness. Bioflavonoids and vitamin C are required by the body to strengthen capillary walls, clear edema and maintain blood circulation – essential things for hoof health, laminar health. Crushed rose hips are easy for horses to chew completely.

- Flaxseeds – *Linum usitatissimum* – are full of valuable omega fatty acids. It is the omega 3s that are most nourishing and abundant in flax; omega 6s, while also valuable, are abundant in many foods so a balance of 3s to 6s (1 to 2 or 1 to 4 omega 3 to omega 6) is needed. Too much omega 6 can be inflammatory and detrimental, especially during injury or laminitis. For example, corn oil – not recommended – has high omega 6 fatty acids (10 omega 6s to 1 omega 3) and a high glycemic index. Flaxseeds should not be fed whole – they can be gas producing in the gut. Ground into meal, pressed into oil (not chemical solvent extracted) or boiled into jelly, flaxseeds will increase the strength and suppleness of the hoof wall, nourish collagen production, maintain moist shock absorbing properties of the hoof capsule and add multiple amino acid proteins to repair the wear and tear of the entire hoof. You can feed up to one ounce of the oil daily. Mix the meal with water into a mud-like consistency (building up to 8 to 12 ounces of meal over a 10 day period) with wet wheat bran (when phosphorus is needed) or soaked feed. Use one handful of seeds to a pot of water, soaked overnight then boiled for one hour to make a thick jelly. Or feed ½ cup of cold-processed stabilized ground flax. These ratios would be per horse, per day, except for the jelly, which can be fed 3 to 4 times a week.

- Nettles – *Urtica dioica* – when dried (the fresh leaves will "sting" the skin and cause histamine reactions), this can be fed at one handful dried leaves to the bucket feed or made into a tea, per day per horse. Nettles are full of silica, which holds intact the structure of all skin, nails, hair, hooves and claws. Nettles are rich in iron, which creates hemoglobin, the oxygen carrying property of blood. This iron is organic; inorganic iron has been proven to be toxic or fatal. Copper is also present in nettles and is required along with the iron for support of circulation and nerve/ muscle fiber functioning. Nettles aid hoof health by also strengthening nerve endings and receptivity.

- Fenugreek seeds – *Trigonella foenum-graecum* – are rich in lysine, an amino acid that maintains normal cell growth, regulates the pineal gland and is necessary for formation of collagen in connective tissue. Lysine is necessary for all amino acid assimilation (the building blocks of protein), vitamin A and vitamin D (it compares to fish liver oil, an animal source not recommended for herbivores). Fenugreek internally and externally aids in the release of abscesses.

- Black oil sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are rich in oils, vitamin E and minerals as well as the amino acid methionine, which is essential for hoof health (it is sulfur based to protect and maintain the integrity of skin, coat and hoof). Sunflower seeds with hulls can be fed from 1 to 2 cups daily; hulled, feed ½ cup. Raw, dried pumpkin seeds without the hull can be fed up to ½ cup daily. They also have anti-parasite properties and are prostate "friendly" (male horses do have prostates).

The horse on fresh pasture receives abundant enzymes. A horse with no fresh foods in the ration will need supplementation of enzymes for proper digestion of all the other good foods provided. Enzyme rich, fresh additions can be yams, carrots, bananas, oranges, fresh parsley, peppermint, garlic and/ or papaya flesh. If your horse is laminitic, insulin resistant, or Cushingoid, avoid the fruits and roots with sugar content.

Feed the feet and your horse will reap the rewards with better health and soundness. ♪

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About the author:

Katharine Lark Chrisley has degrees in Natural Health Consultation, Veterinary Assistance and Reiki Mastership. Her company, Dharmahorse, is a Center of Learning and Healing in the mountains of New Mexico where the "sacred path" for horses includes *Compassion, Simplicity, Clarity* to "Bring the Balance Back". Her first business was a school of gentle horsemanship and "natural" boarding facility in 1973. Trained early on by her grandmother who was a healer and midwife, Katharine owned and operated 3 schools of Dressage and was director of a Zen center. She now teaches clinics and workshops and offers books, products, and consultations. katharinechrisley@yahoo.com
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