

All about fenugreek

Horses that compete in sports where big, strong muscles are needed will benefit from having this herb in their feed regularly, says **Kim Dyson**.

Fenugreek seeds contain protein, Vitamin C, niacin, potassium and diosgenin (which has similar properties to oestrogen). It is high in L-tryptophan and makes a wonderful tonic to elevate depressed horses (and owners). It also contains steroidal saponins. If you have a horse that is recovering from an illness or has just come down with an illness, fenugreek can speed up the recovery of the animal.

Because of the presence of diosgenin, fenugreek is an effective tonic for the reproductive system. It can increase libido, lessen symptoms of menopause and help a mare suffering from moodiness when on heat. It is beneficial in treating arthritis and asthma bronchitis, improves digestion, maintains a healthy metabolism, and helps to prevent skin rashes, colds and flu. It also helps to lower the acidic PH.

Fenugreek can assist in lowering blood glucose and cholesterol levels. I have even used it with animals with heart conditions.

Breeding stallions have excellent quality sperm when fed fenugreek regularly, and brood mares tend to be very fertile. It is a good idea to stop the fenugreek while the mare is pregnant, however.

The seeds can be sprinkled on the feed or boiled in water for five minutes first and added to the feed. I feed fenugreek three times a day. This eventually helps reduce the amount of concentrate that a horse needs.

I find horses that get one or two tablespoons three times a day in feed gain weight rapidly, picking up muscle mass. Horses that were once choppy or stiff start to move with much more ease. Joints that already benefit from regular consumption of fenugreek. But it is always better to prevent than to treat.

SKIN PROBLEMS

If your horse has a skin problem, eczema, flea allergy or an abscess, a topical application of this herb will bring relief.

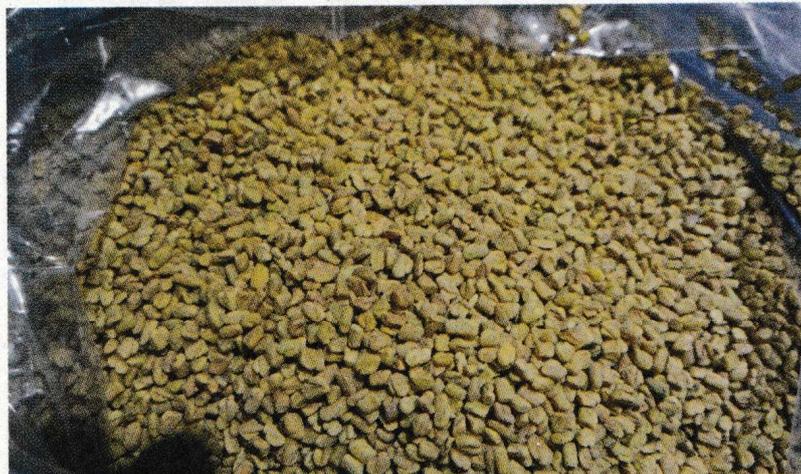
Take a tablespoon of the herb and grind up into a powder. Then gently add warm water. Put the paste onto a clean piece of cloth and apply directly to the affected area or skin (never the eyes).

Horses prone to digestive ulcers and colic may benefit from fenugreek too. This is because the seeds contain a lot of mucilage, which helps soothe gastrointestinal inflammation by coating the lining of the stomach and intestine. For an effective remedy, simply sprinkle one tablespoon of fenugreek seeds onto the horse's food.

FEVERS AND FOALING

If you have a horse with a fever, take three tablespoons fenugreek, grind them up and add to one cup of green tea with one tablespoon honey and one teaspoon of lemon juice. Mix well and give your horse half a cup every two hours.

If your mare is overdue to foal down and your vet



ABOVE: Fenugreek is a useful supplement to help a horse gain muscle mass.

BELOW RIGHT: Horses love fenugreek – and those that were once choppy or stiff start to move with much more ease.
PHOTOS: KIM DYSON

feels the time is right, you can give a tablespoon every half hour until labour has started. Once the foal is born, give the mother one tablespoon of fenugreek hourly for 72 hours. Milk production can go up by as much as 500%.

Fenugreek is considered completely safe when

used conservatively. Some horses do develop diarrhoea or gas from too much fenugreek.

Keep in mind that, as with all herbs, a smaller amount is usually better.

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