

Equisetum arvense
Family: *Equisetaceae* - horsetail
Parts Used: stems

Horsetail is one of the oldest plants, the only one left of the *Equisetaceae* family. Known as scouring rush, shave grass, bottle brush and corncob plant. The high silica content of this plant turns to calcium in the body which is used for building and strengthening bones, joints, tissue, and nerves. Horsetail is best absorbed into the body by being combined with a nutritive herbs such as alfalfa, nettles, or red raspberry leaf.

Properties

Astringent, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, lithotriptic, nutritive, styptic, vulnerary.

Energetics: cooling, drying
Systems Affected: skeletal, muscles

Uses

- Strengthens and builds nails, hair, and skin. Use for brittle nails, thin hair with split ends and skin conditions.
- Strengthens and builds teeth, bones, joints, and tissue.
- Aids body in healing bone fractures, sprains, strains, and after surgery care.
- Strengthens and clears fluid channels of the body such as blood and lymph.
- Joint pain and inflammatory conditions such as bursitis, tendonitis, rheumatism, and arthritis.
- Reduces hemorrhaging internally and externally. Use for heavy menstruation.
- Can stop bleeding and aid in healing ulcers and sores.
- Nosebleeds and bleeding wounds and sores. (Sprinkle with powder or use juice from plant).
- Aids in healing cuts, scrapes, wounds, burns, and sores.
- Kidney and urinary tract support, use for incontinence, bedwetting, bladder irritation and infections, stones.
- Gum infection, mouth sores, and throat inflammation (use mouthwash and gargle).
- Strengthens and cleans teeth.
- High source of calcium, combine with nutritive herbs.

Herb Preparations

- Tea (prepare as a decoction)
- Tincture, liniment
- Gargle, mouthwash
- Syrup
- Poultice, compress
- Herbal oil
- Salve, ointment, cream
- Bath
- Powder, capsules
- Juiced

Foraging/Harvesting

Horsetail has no leaves or flowers but spreads by spores. The immature plant is a solitary, hollow, jointed stem with a "cone" on the top that resembles asparagus. As it matures segmented, stems will sprout from the nodes and resemble pine needles. The mature plant has a higher source of silica than the single stem immature stage, therefore it is more medicinal.

- Found in roadsides, waste ground, trails, and gardens.
- Harvest in early summer by cutting several inches above the ground. Dry immediately or make into a tincture or tea.

*Note about Calcium:

Calcium is needed for nerves, veins, artery walls, bones, teeth, etc. It is leached from the body through consuming processed and refined foods, especially sugar. Lack of calcium can cause all sorts of problems within the body including varicose veins, cramps, bone density loss, and nervous upsets, to name just a few. Lesson 6 has an Herbal Calcium Formula using horsetail as the main herb with supporting nutritive herbs for a great absorbable source of calcium.