
Feeding Garlic

By: Beryl Shuttleworth

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Garlic - by Beryl Shuttleworth of The Herbal Horse.

Garlic – ‘as good as ten mothers’

History

Garlic is one of the oldest herbs used medicinally by man. As early as 3000 BC Chinese scholars wrote of garlic.

Ancient Egyptians worshipped it as a god. Garlic was of such value to them, that 15 pounds of it would purchase a healthy male slave. It was also reported that the pyramid builders went on strike when deprived of their daily garlic ration!

At the beginning of the twentieth century, garlic’s popularity suffered a decline and became to be regarded as slightly improper by bourgeois households in England and America. However, a comeback has been made and today garlic is widely used both medicinally and in food.

Magic

In the world of the occult, garlic is said to protect against known and unknown evils.

- A clove of garlic worn around the neck is said to ward off vampires and witches
- Jockeys have been known to rub their horse’s bit with garlic in order to stop other horses passing their horses in a race
- It is considered very lucky to dream of garlic, but not to dream of giving it away
- An ancient Telugu proverb proclaims that garlic is “as good as ten mothers”, referring to garlic’s healing powers

Horses

Horse owners throughout the world feed garlic to their horses in order to

- Repel flies and ticks
- Loosen coughs
- Fight off infection
- Improve peripheral circulation
- Aid digestion

Research

- Garlic extract was found by Singh et al in 1984 to be more potent than

- several conventional antibiotics in inhibiting 8 out of 9 strains of antibiotic resistant bacteria.
- The Equine Research Centre in Canada has recently completed an investigation into the antibacterial activity of garlic against common equine bacteria. They found that the ideal dosage for horses was about 65 g of fresh garlic.
 - The main active ingredient of garlic is thought to be allyl mercapton, the same compound that gives you “garlic breath”.

Danger?

A recent magazine article (Hayes 2001) stated that garlic is toxic to horses, giving rise to anaemic conditions. This has given rise to great concern in the horse industry, causing a lot of people to stop feeding garlic. But the research to which this article refers was actually done on the onion, not on garlic itself. After many years of feeding garlic to horses, no similar reactions have been recorded, so it is unlikely that this extrapolation is accurate. Nevertheless, further research is clearly needed and this is presently taking place at the Equine Research Centre.