



Natural Horse Care Recipes

Natural Fly Repellent Spray

Yield: 1 gallon

Fill a gallon container about 3/4 full of water. Add 1 cup vinegar (apple cider or white), 1/2 cup Dawn dishsoap and 20 drops of the following essential oils: peppermint, eucalyptus, tea tree, citronella. Top off with water as needed to fill the container. Shake well. Store airtight and out of direct sunlight.

Variations: if you're having big problems with flies, you can "power up" the spray by doubling the amount of peppermint; same for mosquitoes/gnats by doubling the citronella. (Be sure you're using 100 percent pure essential oils, not synthetic "fragrance" oils.) I know some folks are concerned about using citronella after hearing it attracts bees, but I haven't had any problem with that either in Arizona or Colorado, both places where you can find Africanized bees.

Insect Repellent Healing Ointment

Yield: 4 ounces

In a double-boiler or a small pan set into a second pan of boiling water, combine 1/2 cup sweet almond oil and 1 ounce beeswax. After the wax has melted, add 20 drops of citronella essential oil and 10 drops of the following essential oils: peppermint, eucalyptus, tea tree. Mix well and pour into a 4 ounce glass or heavy plastic container and allow to cool before capping. For better healing properties, infuse the oil with calendula (marigold) for a few days before you make your ointment.

Soothing herbal Eyewash for Horses, Dogs, Humans

Yield: 1/2 cup

Heat 1/2 cup of distilled water or saline solution and, in a clean glass or stainless steel container, pour over 1 teaspoon Eyebright herb (*Euphrasia officinalis*) and let steep until it returns to room temperature. If you used distilled water, add 1/8 teaspoon sea salt. Strain two to three times using a fine tea strainer into a clean, airtight container. Administer a few drops from a dropper or small syringe as needed into weeping, irritated eyes to sooth redness and painful conjunctive tissue. Keeps refrigerated for several weeks, though if you notice the color deepening from light brown to dark brown or there is particulate in the liquid, throw it out and make a new batch.

Horse Hoof Thrush Remedy and General-purpose Antifungal, Antibacterial Liquid

Yield: 4 ounces

Fill a 4-ounce heavy plastic or glass container nearly full of distilled water, then add 20 drops of grapefruit seed extract, 30 drops of tea tree and eucalyptus essential oils and 60 drops of palmarosa essential oil. Top off with distilled water as needed.

This is a variation on a recipe suggested years ago in Horse Journal, which had studied the efficacy of grapefruit seed extract as a thrush treatment and found it outperformed the commercial treatments (and didn't turn your hands green!). Tea tree oil is said to have antiviral, antifungal and antibacterial properties, while eucalyptus is said to be effective against anaerobic bacteria, so I include it especially for horses that may have some version of "white line" disease.

All these recipes have been used safely for many years, but do be sure to test each on a small area in case of sensitivity. And, of course, consult the appropriate health-care practitioner in case any condition fails to clear up or worsens.