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Healing Horses Naturally Since 1997



## **Flower Essences**

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## **FLOWER ESSENCES**

The history of flower essence therapy dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and spans many cultures. It started with the great healer and mystic Paracelsus who collected the dew from flowers to treat his patients' emotional imbalances. The culture was also known to the Australian aborigines, the Egyptians, Malays and Africans and was probably used by other ancient civilisations. It was virtually lost until the great revision and expansion led by Dr Edward Bach in the 1930's. More recently Sydney naturopath Ian White has followed in his footsteps, applying the age old method to the flowering plants of the Australian bush.

The Bach and Australian Bush Flower essences are an essential part of today's holistic approach to healing. They have been found to be extremely effective for horses and other animals who often react more quickly to them than humans do. There can be no placebo effect with animals.

"Flower essences are not homeopathic, herbal or aromatic in their preparation. They are similar to homeopathics in that they are vibrational in nature and physically dilute.." (4)

"The mode of action of the flower essences does not use pharmacologic means but influences the patient by manipulating "energy", affecting the mental, emotional and physical balance of the individual." (4)

"When an animal is ill, a change in behaviour may accompany changes in physical function. The psycho-emotional state of the animal may influence the immune and endocrine systems by altering various neurotransmitters... Use of the essences balances the psycho-emotional state, thereby helping the animal reach homeostasis." (4)

### **The Bach Flower Essences**

Developed by the highly successful bacteriologist and homeopathic physician Dr Edward Bach in the UK in the 1930's, the Bach flower essences are now universally popular.

At the age of 43 Bach gave up his lucrative Harley Street practice to spend the last 6 years of his life developing these unique remedies. Today the Bach Flower remedies are still prepared from wild flowers, using the same

locations and the original methods of Dr Edward Bach, by the Bach Centre in Oxfordshire.

He developed a method of harvesting his selected flowers, all of which are non toxic in their natural states, at the height of their energetic power, when the flowers were freshest and the dew still present, their properties being extracted by decoction in spring water in full sun, then filtered and mixed with grape alcohol solution for stability.

Flower essences are perfectly safe to use – if the remedy is not appropriate, it will do nothing. The appropriate remedies may give extremely rapid results or may take up to 3 months to work. It is a gentle process, a steady development of the positive side of the being. There can be no over dosage, no side effects and no incompatibility with other methods of treatment.

The dosage rate for a horse is the same as for a human, a kitten or an elephant, because the dose is not a physical one.

Bach flowers work especially well when used on both sides of a partnership – for example horse and rider.

There are 38 Bach flower essences, 37 being flowers of wild plants, bushes and trees Bach selected from species which are non-toxic in their natural states. Water coming out through rock – Rockwater – is the last.

### **Rescue Remedy**

The most famous of the Bach flower remedies is Rescue Remedy. It is a combination of five of the essences – Cherry Plum, Clematis, Impatiens, Rock Rose and Star of Bethlehem, working together as one. Rescue Remedy is applicable to any situation where shock, panic, trauma and or stress of any kind is involved. The faster it is given the better. “Rescue Remedy has saved the lives of many animals in acute conditions” (12) However combinations of the individual flower essences can be used years later to mitigate the after effects of shock, panic and stress.

The essences are ideally given as a few drops in water and syringed directly into the mouth or they can be rubbed into a pulse straight and can also be added to compresses, washes for topical use or added to herbal extracts for oral use.

It is a good idea to have several dosage bottles of Rescue Remedy on hand so that they can be easily and quickly accessed if needed – for horses, other animals and people. Keep one in the tack room, one in the first aid kit, one in the house and one in your handbag, but they must be kept out of sunlight and cool, or they will lose their potency.

To make up dosage bottles purchase a 20 ml stock bottle of Rescue Remedy, three 100 ml brown or blue glass medicine bottles with dropper tops, one bottle of still spring water and a small bottle of brandy or organic apple cider vinegar. Fill the bottles seven-eighths with the spring water, one-eighths with brandy (or organic apple cider vinegar) and add 10 drops of the Rescue Remedy. This is the dosage bottle. To dose squeeze a dropper full into a clean plastic medicine cup, egg cup or similar, pick it up in a 5 ml syringe and use that to dose the horse. Keep the dropper and contents of the bottle clean. Store bottles in a cool place out of sunlight. The dropper contains about 2 ml which is plenty for one dosage.

Dose a horse for stress, shock, trauma or panic as quickly as possible, give the second dose 15 minutes later and the third dose 30 minutes later. Maintain treatment up to five times daily for 24 hours or for longer periods at 2 to 3 times daily. Rescue Remedy is also ideal for preventing any or all of these – for example before travelling, on arrival at a show or anything which is likely to produce stress, trauma, panic or shock, including surgery.

If it is necessary for a horse to receive an injection, always give Rescue Remedy immediately beforehand and again 15 minutes later. Injections produce metabolic shock and routinely given weaken the immune system.

Special mixtures of Bach flower essences for each individual horse can be made up in the same way as for Rescue Remedy using the most appropriate selection from the 38 Bach Flower essences. Try to limit the number of essences in a mixture to five. When including Rescue Remedy in a mixture count it as one essence.

The author's Nervous Neddies and Nellies Mix is a popular remedy for both horse and rider and contains Rescue Remedy, plus Larch, Aspen, Mimulus, Walnut and Water Violet.

There are different interpretations as to the selection of the most suitable essences and no harm can be caused by experimenting. Holistic

veterinarians use the Bach flower essences as an integral part of their practices.

The following is a guide to help horse owners make an appropriate selection of Bach flower essences to obtain and use. This guide has been developed from the author's considerable experience in practice and with her own horses. Other selections may be just as effective for certain individual horses.

This guide divides the remedies into four groups – FEAR, LOW ENERGY, HORSES BEHAVING BADLY and EXCESS ENERGY.

## **Fear**

Agrimony, Aspen, Cerato, Cherry Plum, Elm, Heather, Larch, Mimulus, Mustard, Red Chestnut, Rock Rose, Scleranthus & Water Violet.

Agrimony is helpful for detoxification. Aspen is most applicable to horses as it is for fear of the unknown or apprehension. Useful as part of a mixture for nervous horses and for competition days. Good for horses that habitually shy.

Cerato is effective for horses that are easily distracted, either during training or at a competition, also for shying and general lack of concentration.

Cherry Plum is excellent for horses that panic and/or tend to lose control in a stressful situation or a situation they regard as being stressful. For example racehorses who play up going into the barriers, horses who are poor travellers, horses whose behaviour changes as soon as they get to a competition. Often used together with Rock Rose.

Elm is for fear of responsibility so helps in recovery from injury or illness, maiden mares who are not coping well, and similar situations.

Heather is for fear of being alone and shows up as excessive whinnying in those horses that are dependent on other horses or certain horses in particular. Needs to be given continuously for 3 months, usually with others for dependence, for example Centaury.

Larch is for lack of confidence, for horses that have been abused in the past, for horses who need to be bolder and as part of an injury rehabilitation mix.

Mimulus is for known fears. Often used with Aspen. One of the best and most widely used Bachs for horses for obvious reasons.

Mustard is mainly useful for hormone balancing in mares together with herbs.

Red Chestnut is for over concern for the welfare of others, for mares overly anxious about their foals, and other horses who are the same about their owners or other herd members and as a result are always anxious about any changes to routine.

Rock Rose is for extreme fear, terror and panic. Indicated for horses that sweat when they panic and who have a highly developed flight response. Often used with Cherry Plum.

Scleranthus is for loss of balance and lack of co-ordination so is especially indicated in treatment of physical illness and injury.

Water Violet is for fear of damage from others. This is excellent when horses have been injured physically by other horses or physically or emotionally by people. Also for horses that are “field shy” and can’t tolerate horses coming towards them or up behind them when under saddle. Also for horses that are particularly aloof from horses or people. Horses that need treatment with Bach flowers for fear of different kinds are all experiencing depletion of adrenal energy to some extent and Rosehips and other herbs are also needed.

## **Low Energy**

Centaury, Chestnut Bud, Clematis, Crab Apple, Gorse, Honeysuckle, Hornbeam, Oak, Olive, Sweet Chestnut, Walnut and Wild Rose

Centaury is for the submissive horse that is at the bottom of the pecking order and needs to learn to defend itself better. For example a young horse that is still making foal faces long after it should have stopped! Also for extreme dependence. Centaury is the opposite of Vine.

Chestnut Bud is for the slow learner so is useful in training and improving unacceptable behaviour. To help break bad habits use with Star of Bethlehem, Honeysuckle and Rockwater for three months continuously.

Clematis is one of the flowers in Rescue Remedy for possible loss of consciousness. On its own it is for lack of energy in the present so is useful to aid trauma recovery, for example from colic or long term drug usage.

Crab Apple is a cleansing flower which is excellent as part of a cleaning and healing wash for external use on wounds and skin infections. Also used internally as part of detoxification treatment.

Gorse is for very great hopelessness. Highly indicated if a horse is depressed and not recovering well from illness or injury.

Honeysuckle is essential for horses that have had bad experiences in the past so is unfortunately applicable to a lot of cases to help them in reforming nervous habits.

Hornbeam is wonderful for horses who are tired and disinterested to lift energy quickly. There is no need to continue usage after the desired effects have been achieved, as it will become very obvious!

Oak is for valiant horses that keep on going physically even if they are despondent. Rebuilds physical strength so is good for horses that require stamina such as racehorses, eventers and endurance horses.

Olive is for mental and physical exhaustion usually caused from chronic illness or injury.

Sweet Chestnut applies to the emotional state of extreme despair and desolation having reached the limit of endurance. Very good for a horse saved from conditions of abuse or is extremely depressed due to physical factors.

Walnut is a powerful protective remedy and link breaker. So it is indicated for sensitive horses that are influenced easily by circumstances. Very good as part of a mixture for travel, competition, surgery, going to a new owner or any change in circumstances.

Wild Rose is for very low energy, disinterest in life generally as well as passive disobedience. Can be very useful for the lazy, apathetic or stubborn horse that is difficult to motivate.

Once energy levels have returned, there is no need to continue giving the Bach flower essences for this purpose.

## **Horses Behaving Badly**

Chicory, Gentian, Holly, Pine, Willow

Horses do not behave badly without reason, but it may be difficult to fathom what the reasons are, so the use of these flowers may help to unravel these behaviours. The behaviour of horses in need of any of these essences, has been created by cruel treatment, chronic illness or injury, poor conditions, bad training, starvation, stress and trauma.

There is always a reason why horses exhibit angry or aggressive behaviour. Very rarely is a horse naturally bad.

Chicory is for extreme possessiveness. A good example is for mares who want other mares' foals and may cause damage trying to take them over. But it can apply to possessiveness of humans too.

Gentian is for nastiness. The horse uses the defence of kicking, biting or striking to keep people and horses away from them, because they have been damaged in the past and this is their way of trying to protect themselves.

Holly is for aggressiveness, anger and hatred. This may show up as self damage as well as violence to people, horses or other animals. Give with Rescue Remedy to mitigate the effects of anger being released.

Pine is for horses who accept or have accepted bad treatment from humans so is useful in rehabilitation mixtures.

Willow is for resentment in any form. The attitude is likely to be bitter and can be revengeful as well. For example laying ears back, trying to kick and bite, general warning to stay away.

## **Excess Energy**

Beech, Impatiens, Rockwater, Vervain, Vine, White Chestnut and Wild Oat

Beech is for intolerance – of people, animals, the environment and circumstances. Useful for horses who don't like any body except their master and in the treatment of allergies.

Impatiens as the name implies is for impatience as well as irritability and nervousness. Widely used for horses who want to rush everything – for example pawing, digging holes. It often extends to the intestines as well showing up as loose manure or even scours.

Rockwater is for extreme energy of the will and inflexibility. As the name implies it is not made from a plant but from water which can wear away the hardest rock. Use with Star of Bethlehem, Honeysuckle and Chestnut Bud to help break old habits.

Vervain is for over conscientiousness and excessive nervous energy. Very useful for many horses who are highly strung and use up their excess energy in fence walking for example. Also for those big hearted horses who are prone to overdoing things and straining themselves physically. Vine is for horses who are extremely dominant and can therefore be difficult to train. Once they learn to work with you they are often amongst the best horses because of their toughness. The opposite of Centaury.

White Chestnut is useful for horses that is always worrying for no apparent reason, and have difficulty in relaxing.

Wild Oat is for horses who are unfulfilled, for example the retiree who is bored and obviously does not appreciate these circumstances. Has been used for low libido in stallions.

It was Dr Edward Bach's wish that his remedies would be universally accessible, for people to use in healing and self-healing. "To use the Bach remedies successfully calls for no training in medicine or psychology, but for perceptiveness, the ability to think & appreciate, and above all a natural sensitivity and feeling for the other being." (12)

## **THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH FLOWER ESSENCES**

Ian White has produced over 80 flower essences tapping into the energy and power in this ancient land, which manifests in the healing properties of its plants.

It takes a long time to become familiar with so many essences, so the following is a selection which has worked well in horses in the author's practice.

*Sunshine Wattle* is absolutely wonderful for lifting the spirits of horses whose energy is very low due to illness, especially chronic or terminal illness. The name and appearance of the flowers alone is enough to lift the human spirit with its joyful, yellow flowers!

*Wild Potato Bush* is essential for helping horses cope better with sickness or injury as it is a remedy for any body feeling burdened or frustrated by physical restriction or limitation with their body.

At the opposite end of the spectrum *Black Eyed Susan* works well on horses who need their energy levels reduced. For example when they need to be confined due to injury and are not settling and want to be physically over active. It is also useful to help balance over adrenalised behaviour.

*Grey Spider Flower* has given exceptional results on several horses who were terrified by certain experiences. It can sometimes be quite difficult to ascertain whether fear gets to the point of actual terror, and in these cases, it was, but it may be more appropriate to choose one of the fear remedies.

This flower is a good illustration of the Doctrine of Signatures. This doctrine explains how certain healing qualities of plants are illustrated by some element of the plant itself, such as its shape, colour, scent or taste. This flower resembles terrifying spiders in an uncanny fashion!

*Peach-flowered Tea-tree* is helpful to balance out quirky mood swings, especially as a training aid for sensitive horses.

*Red Suva Frangipani* is a remedy for relationship difficulties, so therefore will work much better if both sides of the partnership take it at the same time. Recommended for both horse and rider who are having training or relationship difficulties.

There are three flowers which work nicely together to protect horses in changing life situations or who have suffered abuse in the past and are going through a period of rehabilitation. These are *Bush Iris*, *Fringed Violet* and *Angel Sword* which should be used with Rescue Remedy. *Monga Waratah* is a favourite for dependent horses, either on a particular horse or horses in general, it won't change them completely but it will help to make them a lot more accepting of mates coming and going.

*Paw Paw* is specific for helping to heal all digestive problems and *Crowea* is excellent for helping to relax or repair muscles. Horses who are needing help with endurance to get through illness or injury will find *Macrocarpa* a boost. For old age *Old Man Banksia* helps with energy levels and even improves mobility.

*Mulla Mulla* has been successful in helping horses deal with excessively hot weather conditions, including one who was suffering trauma from being burnt in bushfire.

The flower essences can safely be used by anyone who would like to work out their own combinations. Australian bush flower essences and Bach flower essences can be mixed together. Try not to exceed five remedies per mixture and don't expect instant results, they should be given night and morning for a minimum period of a month initially before any real assessment can be made. Results are sometimes seen within a few days while others need to be given for several months to be effective. Many people prefer to use a practitioner to make up flower essence mixes for themselves and or their horses, especially if they are not familiar with the essences.