

# Horses Gold

VETERINARY



by Lamya Habib  
Photos by Lamya Habib

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It is not always easy getting a horse back into condition, whether a mare just after foaling or a poor doer that needs help putting on flesh. There is a special herb that can easily be fed to your horse... Fenugreek.

The nutritional and medicinal benefits of Fenugreek may well be grossly undervalued. Many Equine experts are becoming increasingly aware of the great nutritional importance this little herb contains. Its fine chemical composition makes this herb similar to cod liver oil.

*'If my people knew what there is in Fenugreek, they would have bought and paid its weight in Gold.'* (Prophet Muhammed P.B.U.H) 570-632 AD)

The Latin name of this herb 'Trigonella foenum-graecum' means 'Greek hay' and emphasises its long-time use as a fodder crop. In the past, Greeks discovered that sick horses and cattle, would eat Fenugreek when they would not eat anything else. Although the leaves may be eaten, it is the seeds that are often used. The seeds contain a great deal of mucilage and when mixed with water, mucilage becomes gelatinous and soothes inflamed or irritated tissues. Egyptian physicians use Fenugreek in ointment to treat wombs and abscesses. The Fenugreek seeds are nutritious being 8% oil and 20% protein.

Fenugreek contains;  
Choline, biotine, iron, lecithin, mucilage, thiamine, folic acid, riboflavin, protein, calcium, niacin, carotene, magnesium, sodium, copper, potassium, zinc, chromium, manganese and phosphorus. Vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B12, C and D.

Vitamin A: Enhances immunity. Important in bone and teeth formation. Protects against colds and infections.

Vitamin B (Thiamine): Promotes growth, improves mental attitude, aids digestion, prevents stress, strengthens nervous system.

Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin): Needed for red blood cell formation, improves growth and reproduction, promotes hair and skin condition.

Vitamin B3 (Niacin): Essential for proper circulation, increases energy, aids digestion.

Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic Acid) Prevents anemia, enhances stamina, helps wounds heal.

Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) Needed to produce hydrochloric acid. Aids in absorption of fats, and protein.

Vitamin B12 (Cyanocobalamin) Helps prevent anemia, protects nervous system and aids digestion.

Vitamin C (Ascorbic acid) Helps calcium and Iron formation, enhances immunity, aids in production of anti-stress hormones, helps in tissue growth and repair.

Vitamin D – Essential for calcium and Phosphorus utilization. Needed for growth of bones and teeth. Aids thyroid function, regulates heart beat, aids blood clotting, and improve muscle strength.

Fenugreek leaves contain:

Moisture 86% – protein 4.4% – fat 0.9% – minerals 1.5% – fibre 1.1% – and carbohydrates 6.0% per 100 grams.

Fenugreek seeds contain:

Moisture 13.7% – protein 26.2% – fat 5.8% – minerals 3.0% – fibre 7.2% – and carbohydrates 44% per 100 grams.





## Fenugreek is excellent for the following conditions:

### Abscesses, boils, ulcers and wounds

Containing both anti-inflammatory and anti-fungal properties, this herb can reduce the production of thick mucous and fungal infections.

### Anemia

Either leaves or seeds can help with anemia and rundown conditions due to their valuable richness in Iron and vitamins.

### Broodmares

Helps increase milk production and improves mares' condition after foaling.

### Blood sugar levels

Being rich in Fibre, the seeds help lower the rate of glucose absorption in the intestines thus controlling blood sugar levels.

### Colic

Fenugreek tea can help in cases of colic, as it helps soothe gastric inflammation and gas by absorbing toxins from the bowl. It helps to regulate colonic bacteria. ALWAYS call a vet in cases of severe colic.

### Cracked Hooves

Thanks to its nourishing and hydrating properties, Fenugreek seed oil helps in the treatment of cracked hooves.

### Digestion

Helps horses with digestion and nutrition problems. Encourages fussy eaters put on weight and condition as it promotes the appetite and acid production in the stomach, thanks to its bitter constituents.

### Equine metabolic disorders

Balances metabolism and rids body of built up waste material, toxins and fat from arteries.

### Gastric Ulcers

The mucilage content helps soothe cleanse and heal irritated tissue.

### AVOID FEEDING TO

**PREGNANT MARES:** As this herb may stimulate uterus contractions and can cause absorptions.

### AVOID FEEDING TO

**HORMONE IMBALANCED MARES:** Due to Fenugreek containing natural herbaceous chemicals similar to the female hormone oestrogen.

### Insulin resistance

Helps to slow carbohydrate metabolism and improves glucose tolerance and lowers blood glucose levels.

### Liver and Kidneys

It stimulates the metabolic functioning of the liver and kidneys which is an excellent liver toxin.

### Muscles and top line

Fenugreek is a natural anabolic steroids which help improve overall muscle tone. It is particularly good for poor doers who find it hard to put on muscle.

**WARNING** – Do not give to flirtatious mares due to the increase in oestrogen levels. It may make them more flirtatious!



### Reproduction

Helps promote oestrogenic activity, increasing fertility in mares ready for breeding. **NOT TO BE USED ON MARES ALREADY IN FOAL.**

### Respiratory

Fenugreek tea can help with respiratory tract infections by soothing respiratory complaints. Due to its ability to decrease mucus production it can help treat conditions such as bronchitis, influenza, sinusitis, irritating coughs and allergies.

### Show and Sport horses

This herb is an excellent supplement for improving energy levels and gives a gleaming coat along with improving overall health.

### Swellings

Due to their cooling properties, a poultice of the leaves or seeds can be applied for external and internal swellings, bruises and burns. It is also beneficial for the treatment of arthritis and rheumatic pain.



Fenugreek is indigenous to the countries on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, it is also grown in India, Argentina, Africa, China and Egypt. The seeds of Fenugreek have been used medicinally through the ages and were held in high repute among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. It is an erect herb,

maturing to about 60 cm in height. It has white flowers blooming in the summer which develops into long slender green pods. Mature brown pods contain twenty tiny yellow aromatic seeds, about 3-5 mm long and 2-3 mm wide.

Fenugreek often comes on the whole seed form but it is better milled. This is easily done using a coffee grinder. You may be able to buy the ready milled seed but be careful to make sure it is fresh. The powder will go rancid more easily than the whole seed. It should smell sweet and slightly reminiscent of curry powder.

Feeding approximately 20 to 75 grams per day depending on size.

Please note that the powdered form of Fenugreek seeds are more efficiently absorbed, than the whole seed.

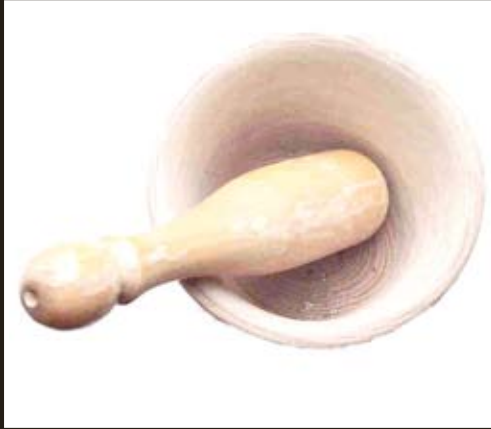


You can feed Fenugreek to your horse. Adding the seed, whole or ground, to his normal feed or by making tea. You can make the tea by leaving the seeds for five minutes in boiled water, adding a little natural honey to taste.

Recommended dose is 30 - 80 grams per day depending on the size. If feeding in a larger amounts, it is advisable to split the amount between two meals.

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# How to make a poultice



1.  
Grind dried herbs into a powder with a mortar and pestle or a coffee grinder.



2.  
Add enough warm water to make a paste. The paste should be thick enough to be applied to the affected area, but it shouldn't be stiff.



3.  
Spread the herbal mixture over a piece of gauze, cotton or muslin that is large enough for the affected area.



4.  
Clean the affected area before placing the poultice on it. Wrap the poultice with a towel or plastic wrap and secure it into place. Keep the poultice on for anywhere from 1 to 24 hours.



## Success stories

I have been using Fenugreek seeds on my young stallion, Rayyan, a beautiful bay Arabian. I wanted to supplement his feed with something that would help increase his muscle tone and general overall condition. After just two weeks, he has already shown great signs of improvement, his energy level, muscle tone and coat condition have all increased and I am very pleased.

Before



After



## Flowering Fenugreek Plant



A lady in New Zealand used Fenugreek on rescued horses with great success. She wrote, "I give my skinny rescue horses Fenugreek in their feed to help with all sorts of gut issues, ulcers included. It has helped in every case; they put on weight (muscle and fat) and it stopped one of my horses cribbing as well. What I like is the horses love it (it's their favourite flavouring), it's cheap and it works! I give it while the horse is showing gut issue symptoms. Once the signs are gone, I give between 40 to 80 grams per day or 30 grams as a general tonic. I put them back on their regular diet and most continue keeping their weight up. If you have a stressed horse though, I would be inclined to just keep them on the lower dose, permanently, giving full dose when needed".

Fenugreek was found beneficial when given to an under-nourished horse in America. Mr Whirly said "I fed it to a very old gelding I'm looking after. he wasn't getting any food previously (grazing only). His teeth are rather worn, so as a result couldn't get much grass in. The Fenugreek helps with digestion, so I fed it to help him pull as much of the nutrients out of the feed as possible, without upsetting his tummy. His condition improved dramatically though, within 2 months."