



DEVIL'S CLAW

(Class: Herbal supplement for horses and dogs)
Reg no. V18378 Wet/ Act 36/1947

Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) is a low-growing plant that is indigenous to Southern Africa. Although the plant derives its name from the claw-like appearance of the fruit, it's actually the root of the plant that is used medicinally.

Devil's Claw has been scientifically researched in Germany, and was found to have anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties comparable to that of cortisone and phenylbutazone, without the unpleasant side effects, of course. It is used extensively in the treatment of arthritis, and is also effective for promoting healing of soft-tissue injuries. I have found it particularly effective in this regard, and also for relieving general muscle stiffness, when it is blended with MethylSulfanoloMethane (MSM) in equal proportions. Devil's Claw is also useful as an appetite stimulant.

There has been a lot of confusion as to whether Devil's Claw is safe to feed to pregnant mares, as some reports have suggested that it may be a uterine stimulant. However, there is no clinical research whatsoever to support this, and in fact the most up-to-date scientific research has shown that Devil's Claw may be considered completely safe for use during pregnancy. It may, however, be prudent to avoid the use of Devil's Claw during pregnancy until more long-term research has further clarified this matter.

The one condition for which Devil's Claw should be avoided is if gastric ulceration is suspected. Devil's Claw has a bitters action, and thus increases the secretion of gastric acids, and thus it may aggravate the condition. In these cases, it would be advisable to substitute Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) for the Devil's Claw, as it also has powerful anti-inflammatory properties, and also happens to be a specific herb for treating gastric ulceration as it has a soothing and healing effect on the gastric lining. It would be even more helpful to blend the Meadowsweet in equal proportion with Fenugreek seed (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), as it is very demulcent and carminative for the gastric system. In this way it would support the healing effect of the Meadowsweet, as well as being extremely nutritive and therefore helping to increase the condition that horses with gastric ulcers generally lack.

(Text by: Jennie van der Byl)