

# HORSETAIL

**Botanical Name:**

Equisetum arvense

**Common Names:**

Scouring rush, shavegrass, bottlebrush, pewterwort, mare's tail, horse willow

**Parts Used:**

The summer stems (fresh or dried)

**Active Components:**

The main components are minerals (e.g. silica and silicic acids; potassium, magnesium), flavonoids, and alkaloids.

**Looks like:**

The plant is a perennial with hollow jointed stems and shoots that resemble asparagus (spring phase) or a small pine tree (summer phase).

**Where it's grown:**

Horsetail is a non-flowering plant found throughout parts of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America.

**History:**

Use of horsetail goes back to ancient Greek and Roman medicines when it was used to stop bleeding, heal ulcers and wounds. In folk medicine, it was used for brittle fingernails, loss of hair and fractures (content of silica and silicic acids explains this as they help mend broken bones and form collagen, an important protein found in connective tissue, skin, bone, cartilage, and ligaments). Additionally, dried stems were used for metal polishing (hence the name pewterwort).

**Use:**

Horsetail is often used in cases of urinary tract infections and in kidney and bladder stones. It can also be applied externally as a form of supportive therapy for poorly healing burns and wounds.

