



## ROSEHIPS

*Nature's own Vitamin C*

Rosehips are the bright red, smooth skinned fruit of the rose plant. Rosehips are harvested from the South American wild rose commonly known as the dog rose, as they are particularly rich in vitamin C (as much as 6000mg per kg) so they are ideal for nutritional and medicinal purposes. However, your horse would most likely enjoy a healthy rosehip snack from even the common rose plants in your own garden, just first make sure that the rose plants have not been sprayed with any inorganic fertilizers or pesticides.

For centuries rosehips have been used to encourage strong and healthy hoof growth in horses. It's believed that the reason for this is the high flavonoid content in rosehips, which in conjunction with the high levels of vitamin C, help to strengthen protein bonds. The other significant health benefit of high levels of vitamin C is in fortifying the body's defences against infections.

Rosehips would particularly benefit debilitated horses, and are also great as a spring tonic for a health boost for any horse, no matter what their condition! Rosehips are astringent, and therefore help to relieve scouring if fed at recommended dosages. However, feeding in excess can cause the opposite reaction by creating stomach upset and mild diarrhoea, as a result of the ascorbic acid content.

Recommended daily dose is 15-20g of dried rosehip shells for horses, the dosage being halved for ponies. If feeding fresh rosehips, offer one or two handfuls daily. Another option would be to plant dog roses along paddock borders, and allow your horses to browse their own rosehips, free choice!

(Text by: Jennie van der Byl).

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