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Medicinal Uses Of Herbs Used In Biodynamic Preparations

This lecture will give a basic over-view of biodynamic farming/gardening. We will then cover the medicinal aspects of the herbs used in the biodynamic compost preps #502-#507.

Compost Prep Herbs Prep numbers #502- #507

#502 (Yarrow)

502 assists plants in attracting trace elements in extremely dilute quantities for their best nutrition. 502 is made from *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow blossoms) collected in June before St. John's Day. The flowers are picked prior to pollination or at least while they are fully vibrant, prior to making seeds. They are used fresh or dried and reconstituted later. An empty stag or elk bladder is filled with these flowers. The bladder is hung in the air and sun until Michaelmas when it is buried. It is dug up between Easter and Ascension. (Helps assimilation of minerals as a bio prep and as a medicinal herb ingested by humans.)

Yarrow - *Achillea millefolium* in the Asteraceae or Aster family.

Character and habitat: This plant does best in poor soils. She can grow anywhere but she is strongest when living in poor soil and a sunny location. Found wild in meadows, pastures, along roadsides; common in North America. Grows 1-3 feet in height, alternate, feathery leaves. The name *millefolium* means "thousand-leaved." The flowers are dirty-white, white, (sometimes pinkish-colored) arranged in flat topped heads.

This is a perennial with many virtues. She is a manipulator and concentrator of energy. She assists other beings in the assimilation of minerals and the assimilation of strength. She makes the body feel strong and resilient to ailments, and dangers. She provides strength to those who are weak minded or weak in character.

Part used: Flowers, leaves. Flowers are more aromatic and the leaves are more astringent and bitter.

Weight after drying: 15% of fresh plant.

Taste/smell: Bitter, aromatic, pungent, astringent.

Tendencies: Cooling, drying.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 teaspoon per cup of water; or 1:1 fresh strength liquid extract: 10-30 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specifics: The individual feels restless, has vertigo when moving slowly and feels as if something is forgotten, the mind is dulled. The head seems congested. Yarrow is specific for fevers with hemorrhage. It will help in fevers where the skin is hot, dry and the patient is restless and delirious. It is best for atonic and relaxed tissues where there is free discharge or massive bleeding of bright red blood, or diarrhea. The tongue is red, the complexion sanguine, the pulse is rapid and usually full.

Use: (a) Bitter tonic, (b) Antiseptic, (c) Antifungal, 75 (d) Astringent, (e) Styptic, 381 (f) Stimulating diaphoretic, (g) Anti-inflammatory, 381 (h) Anodyne.

Yarrow exerts a tonic and stimulatory influence on the urinary tract, the female reproductive tract, respiratory tract and gastrointestinal tract mucous membranes. It is also a tonic for the vasculature. 399 A hot infusion of yarrow produces a stimulating diaphoretic effect and a cold infusion produces a diuretic effect or tones gastric organs. 381 Some of the ability to relieve pain may be due to its prostaglandin-inhibiting action. 72 It is used in the initial stages of colds or fevers, bleeding hemorrhoids, urinary tract bleeding, gastrointestinal inflammation with bleeding, excessive menstrual flow with uterine atony or uterine spasms and vaginitis with vaginal atony. It is also useful in amenorrhea, urinary incontinence and sore throats where there is lack of tone and or inflammation. Yarrow both stops bleeding as well as breaks up congested blood. It is a good remedy to have in your first aid kit for bleeding wounds, bruises and to decrease the chance of infection in open wounds. It can be helpful with inflamed ovaries, prolapsed uterus, and uterine fibroids and yeast infections. It contains achilletin and achilleine (hemostatics), B-iso-thujone, coumarin, chamazulene, apigenin and steroidal B-sitosterol.

Contraindications: The constituent, B-iso-thujone, can cause vomiting, stomach and intestinal cramps, retention of urine, and in serious cases, renal damage, vertigo, tremors, and convulsions. B-iso-thujone is alcohol soluble, but aqueous extracts contain less of it. Allergic contact dermatitis can occur with external use of yarrow on sensitive individuals. Discontinue if a rash occurs. It is contraindicated in pregnancy due to the emmenagogue and abortifacient effects. 404

Fun tid-bits: The stalks have been used as I-ching sticks for divination.

#503 (Chamomile)

503 stabilizes nitrogen within the compost and increases soil life so as to stimulate plant growth. 503 is made from reconstituted *Matricaria recutita* (German chamomile) flowers which are stuffed inside the intestine of a cow, bull, steer or heifer. The sausages are buried at Michaelmas and dug up between Easter and Ascension.

Chamomile - *Matricaria recutita* in the Asteraceae or Aster family.

Parts used: Fresh flowers prior to fully opening.⁸⁴ Fresh or dry flowers can be used.

Taste/smell: Sweet, aromatic, and slightly bitter.

Character and habitat: This annual plant spreads herself around. If you invite her to your home, she will come up year after year to spread cheer and goodwill. She prefers to be in a sunny location with her feet in healthy soil. Chamomile grows one - two feet high. The flower has white ray flowers and yellow disk flowers. The cone shaped flower head is hollow inside. The stems are pale green, smooth and shiny. There are many branches of finely divided linear leaf segments. Germination is best when the tiny seeds are

scattered on top of the ground in the fall, mid-winter or very early in the spring. The seeds should be gently tamped into the ground. Thin to 6 inches apart.

This plant spreads cheer by the very fact of her existence. It provides a visual beauty and olfactory delight to all who are within her reach. She gently stimulates and soothes your nervous system at the same time. An encounter with Chamomile assists us in accepting the state of affairs in our lives and leaves us with the knowledge that all is as it should be in the world.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 heaping tablespoon of fresh flowers per cup of water, infused 5 -10 minutes; or 1:1.4 fresh + dry liquid extract: 20-75 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: This nervine is specific for neural irritability in persons with a strong and active nervous system. Chamomile is superb at decreasing inflammatory states in our nervous system. Mental picture is restless, irritable, sensitive, complaining, wants to have their way, argumentative, acting like a baby and cannot be comforted. Pains are unbearable to them. They are hot, thirsty and numb.⁴⁰¹ The pulse is tense and rapid. The tongue is coated whitish-yellow and they note a bitter taste. Discharges tend to be yellow. Symptoms are worse on the right side, with motion, touch, change of weather and in the early morning. They are better after dinner and with pressure.

Use: (a) Antispasmodic, (b) Anti-inflammatory, 42, 84 (c) Anti-allergenic, (d) Analgesic, 86 (e) Antipyretic, (f) Antiseptic, (g) Antibacterial against *Strep. pyogenes* (in vitro research), 44 (h) Antifungal, (i) Carminative.

Chamomile is used for indigestion, gas and accompanying pain, gastritis and gastric ulcers and externally for burns, ulcers and wounds. ⁸⁵ Its anti-inflammatory action can partially be attributed to chamomile's ability to inhibit arachidonic acid metabolism. ⁸⁶ Being a mild sedative for nervousness and nightmares, it is especially beneficial for infants and elders who are restless when attempting to sleep. The sedative activity is thought to largely be due to the constituent, apigenin, which can produce mild sedation and decrease anxiety without producing marked depression of CNS activity. ³⁵⁶ Chamomile is indicated for menstrual cramps and babies with colic or who are teething. Poultices used over the spine are helpful for viral meningitis. Chamomile is useful in fevers with perspiration and a red face or one red cheek and one pale cheek. The ability to relieve pain may be due to its prostaglandin-inhibiting action. ^{72, 86} It contains anti-inflammatory constituents, alpha bisabolol and chamazulene. Alpha bisabolol additionally has antispasmodic and anti-ulcerogenic properties. ⁴² Matricin and apigenin are also active constituents in chamomile.

Contraindications: The flowers and tea, as well as other products made from chamomile may cause an allergic sensitivity in susceptible individuals. It has caused contact dermatitis, anaphylaxis and other hypersensitive reactions in persons allergic to plants in the Asteraceae, formerly the Compositae, family. These reactions are rare occurrences.

#504 (Nettle)

504 or *Urtica* spp. (Stinging nettles) stimulate soil health, providing plants with the individual nutritional components needed. It enlivens the soil.

504 is made with Nettles. The whole top of the plant is collected in flower in June, before St. John's Day if possible. They are bundled together and placed into a hole lined with peat.

Nettles are also used as a fermented tea. This is sprayed on sick or stressed plants as liquid manure.

Nettle herb - *Urtica* spp. in the Urticaceae or Nettle family.

Part used: Aerial tops when young, prior to buds or flowering. Note: Never harvest after flowers appear. The herb harvested at this time may cause urinary tract irritation.

Taste/smell: Nutritious taste resembling spinach.

Tendencies: Drying, stimulating.

Character and habitat: A bold, strong plant. This prickly herb likes moisture and partial sun. You will find it growing near creek banks in partially shady areas. It can grow just fine in the sun but must be kept moist. Nettle prefers moving water where its roots do not get bogged down in stagnant muck. This plant tends to spread out by sending its roots in all directions. Therefore you find the plant growing in thick patches. If you invite nettle to your home to live provide a semi-shaded spot and give her plenty of liquids and a rich, well-drained soil. If she is grown in poor soil, she will enrich the soil herself. *Urtica* has both annual and perennial spp. The *Urtica dioica* that is often used is a 2-4 foot high perennial. The plant is a dark green herbaceous being with a 4 angled stem and opposite leaves. The tiny, green, inconspicuous flowers consist of staminate and pistillate flowers on the same plant. Nettle has tiny rigid hairs containing a venomous fluid that is transmitted beneath your skin when you come into contact with the plant. This occurs more often with light touch. The best way to keep from getting stung by these hairs is to use gloves when collecting the greens, however grabbing the plant carefully and roughly can also decrease the chance of getting stung. For germination the seeds must be sown direct in the fall. If sowing in the spring they must be subjected to moisture and cold.

Nettles shares its strength with us in the form of strong rope that can be made from the skin of it's stalk and in the strength it gives all who partake of Nettle tea. The nutrition locked inside this plants cells supports many of our bodily functions including the growth and maintenance of strong bones.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 heaping tablespoon per cup of water or decoction if minerals are desired; or 1:1 fresh + D strength liquid extract: 10-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: It is indicated for profuse discharges from mucous membranes, sensations of heat and itching. Nettle favors elimination of uric acid. Nettle benefits the spleen. Symptoms are worse from very cold air, water, cool moist air, touch and the symptoms return at the same time each year. 401

Use: (a) Alterative, (b) Alkalizing diuretic, (c) Urinary tract tonic.

Nettle is beneficial as a spring tonic and rejuvenator. It has a supportive effect on the immune system, the circulation, the urinary tract, nervous system, respiratory tract, digestive system and the endocrine system; including the adrenals, the thyroid, and the pancreas. It nourishes the entire body as well as nourishing us in a way that allows receptivity to the natural energetic flow of our spirit. Nettle tea benefits anemic, undernourished individuals. It is rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron and silicic acid. The high mineral content may be the reason for nettle tea's ability to reduce the severity and occurrence of leg cramps as well as menstrual cramps. It is also beneficial in menorrhagia. Nettle assists in cold and damp health conditions, as well as conditions involving heat such as intermittent fevers and burns. It is used for chronic respiratory, digestive and urinary tract illnesses that involve excessive mucus. It is used in hay fever, asthma, gouty arthritis and edema and best used for long term in treating chronic illnesses. 154 The young greens make a nutritious and tasty food in soups, stir-fry, steamed and in casseroles. Long term use of this herb is necessary for true effects in malnutrition.

Contraindications: Excessively large doses are contraindicated in pregnancy due to the emmenagogue and abortifacient effects. 404 The decocted tea is commonly consumed by pregnant woman in small quantities for the mineral content. The use of this plant as a raw green is contraindicated due to skin and mucous membrane irritation from the plant. This irritating feature disappears when the plant is cooked.

Tid-bits: Nettle is much stronger than cotton and has been used as rope and as clothing as well as other textile materials.

Nettle root - *Urtica* spp. in the Urticaceae or Nettle family.

Part used: Root.

Taste/smell: Bland.

Tendencies: Astringent.

Dosage: Decoction: 2 teaspoons per cup of water; or 1:2 fresh strength liquid extract: 20-40 drops 1-4 times per day.

Use: (a) Astringent gargle, (b) Diuretic, (c) Healing agent to arrest bleeding, (d) Treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia. 122,151-153, 347, 348

The action of nettle root on BPH is thought to be an interaction with sex hormone binding globulin.

Constituents are able to inhibit the binding of epidermal growth factor to its receptor and cause inhibition of aromatase. 347

Contraindications: Information unavailable at this time.

#505 (Oak)

505 provides healing qualities to combat harmful plant diseases. 505 is made from *Quercus* spp. (Oak bark) around Michaelmas. The bark is gathered from a living tree. It can't be mossy or flaky. You can't go too deep into the red bark. The bark is ground, moistened and inserted into the brain cavity of a skull from a large domestic animal. Cows are usually used. All the holes are sealed with bones, wooden pegs or dowels. The skull is placed on the side of a small stream, or in a damp, marshy place where water will trickle through. The prep is removed in the spring.

White oak bark - *Quercus alba* in the Fagaceae or Oak family. Note: other oaks can be used

Part used: Bark.

Taste/smell: Astringent.

Tendencies: Drying.

Character and habitat: This majestic creature is a slow growing entity. The slowness of her growth shows in how strong and durable her wood is. Her cells grow tightly together and provide strength. She grows 8-20 meters tall, has a thin, whitish, deeply checked bark. The leaves are 2-5 inches long, leathery, dark green above and shiny above; pale or rusty beneath with fine down. They have 5-9 rounded lobes on the side. They grow best with moderate moisture.

She provides that same strength to us as support for strength of character, strength when the going gets tough and general strength of tissues when our mucous membranes have become debilitated, flabby and congested. She is most helpful in providing strength to those who have the mental and emotional stamina necessary but their bodies are failing them in some way be it acute or chronic situation. Oak gives them that little extra support that gets them through a particularly hard ordeal.

Dosage: Decoction: 1-2 teaspoons per cup of water; or 1:5 dry strength liquid extract: 10-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: White oak bark is indicated in subacute and chronic conditions with exhaustion from disease, fevers, night sweats, ulcerations, relaxed and atonic tissues, prolapsed organs and putrid states. Specific symptoms are nervousness, trembling, intoxicated sensation, mentally and physically the person feels broken down but still manages to go on. The face is flushed and the eyes are puffy and have a yellow coloration under them. The tongue has a thick yellow coat, and they have terrible breath. There may be a bluish coloration to the tongue and lips. A swollen spleen and liver is common with edema of the lower extremities.

Use: (a) Astringent, 107 (b) Styptic.

Oak benefits the spleen and lymphatic system, being indicated when there are symptoms due to their removal or in states of splenitis or lymphatic congestions. It is used for mucous membrane irritation, especially with weeping excretions like gum ulcerations, sore throats, sinus congestion, wounds, local inflammations, weeping eczema and leg ulcers. It can be used as a compress for eye inflammations. It is beneficial for passive hemorrhages and venous laxity and congestion like bleeding hemorrhoids and other varicosities. It is specific for nodular varicosities with a bluish-yellow coloration. It benefits anal fissures, fistulas, gastrointestinal ulcers and rectal prolapse. Oak bark is useful in treating the symptoms of diarrhea.

Contraindications: It is contraindicated for external use with extensive skin surface damage. Strong, full baths are contraindicated in cardiac insufficiency stages III and IV, febrile infectious disorders, and weeping eczema over a large area. 400

#506 (Dandelion)

506 stimulates the relation between silica and potassium so silica can attract cosmic forces to the soil. 506 is made from unpollinated reconstituted Dandelion flowers. The flowers are wrapped in the fresh peritoneum of a bovine animal. It is buried at Michaelmas and dug up between Easter and Ascension.

Dandelion - *Taraxacum officinalis* in the Asteraceae or Aster family.

Part Used: Whole plant, leaves, flowers, roots.

Taste/Smell: Leaves and root are somewhat bitter but also slightly sweet taste in the root.

Tendencies: Cooling and drying.

Character and habitat: This is a plant that is well known. She has blanketed herself across the earth. Dandelion will grow anywhere. She makes the soil healthy wherever she grows by loosening compacted soil and aerating the ground. Dandelion restores mineral health to soils that are depleted. She presents herself to us at our doorstep and is visibly present throughout most of the year. This plant grows from a few inches high to 1.25 feet high. The leaves are thin and dark green with smooth or toothed leaves. The flower heads are bright yellow and can be seen flowering early in the spring and continuing throughout the summer. This plant is best started in flats in the spring and transplanted out one foot apart in rows.

All parts of this plant are eaten and used as a medicine. Indeed in this age of pollution and health hazards abounding, she is presenting herself to us as a gift to protect our bodies, and lift our spirits. This is a being that we can all benefit from being friends with. She teaches us that our quick and harsh judgements can be

harmful and incorrect. She also teaches us tolerance and acceptance of God's will. She allows us to see the beauty in the most mundane of our worlds treasures and the gifts in those we consider to be giftless.

Dosage: Decoction: 1 heaping teaspoon of root per cup of water; infusion: 1 heaping tablespoon of the leaf per cup of water; or 1:1 fresh + dry liquid extract: 1-60 drops, 1- 4 times per day in a little water.

Mental picture and specific indications: Dandelion is indicated for persons with a mapped tongue (covered with white coating that comes off in places leaving a red raw tongue in these areas), yellow tongue, white tongue, bitter taste in the mouth and pain in the sternomastoid muscle. 401 It is specific for low-grade internalized heat or infectious conditions, especially if related to allergies. Night sweats, heat at top of head, heat without thirst. Edema or boggy mucous membranes may be present. There is often a history of chemical insult or other environmental assaults pointing to liver involvement. The person may feel angry, agitated, nervous and dull-minded. The individuals symptoms are worse from resting, sitting and lying, and feel better from touch. 401

Use: (a) Diuretic, whole plant, especially the leaf, 408 (b) Stomachic, (c) Mild laxative, (d) Cholagogue, (e) Choleric, 260 (f) Anti-platelet aggregating action. 128

Dandelion is used for arthritis, gout, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, edema and abnormal blood sugar levels. It is indicated for many female problems and skin diseases due to its action on the liver. It is used for gastric headaches. The whole plant, especially the root, is beneficial to the liver but is slow in producing the desired action. Autumn roots are roasted and used as a coffee substitute.

Dandelion leaves contain aesculin that improves vascular resistance and reduces pathologically induced capillary wall permeability. 407 Dandelion contains bitter substances, eudesmanolides, germacranolides, triterpenes, sterols, carotenoids, flavonoids, carbohydrates (in the root), 18% fructose in spring, mucilage, 4.5% potassium found in the greens, 2% inulin in spring rising to 40% in autumn. In the spring Dandelion's bitter principles are at their strongest. One of the sterols, sitosterol, has anti-inflammatory effects. The diuretic action is due to inhibition of sodium reabsorption.

Contraindications: Physical contact with the fresh latex in dandelions can cause contact dermatitis. Dandelion is contraindicated in bile duct obstruction, acute gall bladder inflammation, acute gastrointestinal inflammation and intestinal blockage. 400 allergies. Night sweats, heat at top of head, heat without thirst. Edema or boggy mucous membranes may be present. There is often a history of chemical insult or other environmental assaults pointing to liver involvement. The person may feel angry, agitated, nervous and dull-minded. The individuals symptoms are worse from resting, sitting and lying, and feel better from touch. 401

#507 (Valerian)

507 is used the evening before a frost is expected. 507 stimulates compost so the phosphorus content of the compost can be properly used by the plant.

507 is made from *Valeriana officinalis* (Valerian) flowers which are ground up immediately after harvesting. The pulp is squeezed through cheesecloth and the juice put into amber bottles with corks.

Valerian - *Valeriana officinalis* in the Valerianaceae or Valerian family.

Part used: Root.

Taste/smell: Aromatic, sweet, spicy.

Tendencies: Slightly warming.

Character and habitat: This beautiful denizen of the deep forest has species growing at low and high altitudes. She likes the inner-forested areas where the humus is rich and she gets a semi-shady spot to park her body. If you invite her to a shady area of your yard and provide her with rich soil, she will happily spread her roots around. She can also grow in full sunlight just fine, but make sure you keep her moistened. Her odor is her telltale sign. Her delicate flowers are a delight to the olfactory nerves while her tangled roots can induce nearly stuporous states of consciousness when in close quarters with this odiferous creature. Some people think her roots smell like dirty socks but I'm not one of them. Valerian is a perennial that grows up to 4 feet tall with white to pinkish flowers in compound cymes. Her leaf edges have a gentle roll to them, they are hairless, thin and green. Valerian can be direct seeded early in the spring or grown in flats and transplanted.

Valerian lulls you into a relaxed state while she brings blood and nutrients to the brain. She stimulates atonic nervous system tissue and restores the normal state of the nervous system.

Dosage: Infusion: 1-2 teaspoons per cup of water; or 1:1 fresh + dry strength liquid extract: 10-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: Valerian is specific for support of atonic and functional nervous disorders and situations arising from cerebral vascular insufficiency. The individual may feel intoxicated, have a tendency to personality changes, be agitated, and feel light, as if floating in air, oversensitive, and experience hallucinations at night. There may be symptoms of itching and muscle spasms at night and rheumatic pains in limbs with sciatica and jerking.

Use: (a) Sedative, (b) Relaxing and stimulating nervine, 156,157 (c) Antispasmodic, (d) Anticonvulsant, 158 (e) hypotensive.

Valerian is used for restlessness, hysteria, emotional stress, pain, insomnia, anxiety, nervous palpitations, nervous irritation, cardiovascular arrhythmias, attention deficit and hyperactivity syndromes, gastrointestinal cramping, menstrual cramps, shingles and backaches. It has shown antispasmodic activity in vitro on animal uteri. 205 Valerian contains many constituents with pharmacological activity. They include the essential oil, sesquiterpenoids (valerianic acid) and epoxy iridoid esters (valepotriates) and their decomposition products. Additionally Valerian contains the amino acids (arginine, GABA, glutamine, tyrosine) and alkaloids. 417

Contraindications: The volatile components of valerian increase sleeping time induced by pentobarbital. 404 It has been shown to potentiate the action of barbituates in general. 417

#508 (Horsetail)

508 is used to prevent fungal growth. It is helpful on seedlings to prevent damping off. 508 is made with *Equisetum arvense* (Horsetail). The sterile shoots are harvested in May through June prior to the silica losing its organic bond and becoming crystallized. The plant is dried and used as a tea.

Horsetail - *Equisetum arvense* *Equisetum arvense* in the Equisetaceae or Horsetail family.

Part used: Sterile spring stems.

Taste/Smell: Fairly bland, slightly sweetish.

Tendencies: Cooling and drying.

Character and habitat: A perennial plant with short lived fertile stems in the early spring. The stem is erect, flesh colored, smooth with loose sheaths. At the tip of the stem is a fuzzy headed spike. The sterile stem appears later with dense whorls of slender rigid branches. The sterile spike is the part used medicinally. It is harvested when the rigid branches are still close to the stem. When the branches have risen out straight away from the stem it is too late to harvest. Horsetail likes cool, moist areas. The best way to grow this plant is to dig up a clump of it and transplant it. It will spread fast. Be sure you really want it in the area you move it to. It will grow quicker if in a wet area.

Horsetail is a sturdy stout plant that provides strength to the structure of our bodies.

Dosage: Cold water infusion: 1 tablespoon per cup of water for 10 hours or 5 minute decoction followed by 15 minute infusion; or 1:1 fresh + dry liquid extract: 20-60 drops 1-4 times per day in a little water. Note: It is best used as a tea.

Mental picture and specific indications: Horsetail has specific indications for suppressed urination with blood, much mucus and severe pain at the close of urination. There is a constant feeling of fullness in the bladder not relieved by urinating. It benefits severely nervous individuals with a lack of confidence and a tendency towards chilliness. Problems are often associated with weakness of supportive structures, such as connective tissue. Pains worse on right side, with movement, pressure, sitting. Pains are better in the afternoon and when lying down.⁴⁰¹

Use: (a) Diuretic, (b) Astringent, (c) Vulnerary, (d) Increases connective tissue tone and resistance, (e) Styptic.

Due to horsetails high level of organic silica it is used to support all the structures of the body that utilize silica. The structures that horsetail nourishes are the bones, cartilage, skin, teeth, gums, hair, nails and mucous membranes. It is useful in urinary tract problems where irrigation is needed due to gravel or bacterial and inflammatory disorders. It causes diuresis without altering the electrolyte balance. It is also useful in passive urinary tract bleeding. Horsetail can be used for enuresis, incontinence in children accompanied by nightmares and incontinence in the elderly, acute bladder infection and urethritis, hematuria, renal calculi and enlarged and inflamed prostate gland.

It contains 5-8% silica, potassium, manganese, flavonoids, phenolic acids, organic acids and saponins.

Contraindications: Chronic ingestion of this herb can decrease the level of thiamin or B1 due to thiaminase content. Beriberi is the sign of chronic toxicity. This herb should not be consumed long term or by pregnant women. The diuretic effect can cause loss of potassium. ⁴⁰⁴