

# Green Grooming for Your Horse

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After a day in the saddle, most of us jump into the shower, grab the soap, shampoo and conditioner without a second thought. I know I did, until a few years ago when I realized that I couldn't identify, let alone pronounce most of the ingredients listed on the labels. That prompted me to do a little research, and I was seriously taken aback by my discovery! What I discovered made me think twice about what I was slathering on my body. Most shampoos are made up of "industrial strength products," and there is very little regulation regarding what can actually go into body care products.

Many ingredients are actually identified as carcinogens, pesticides, endocrine and reproductive disruptors, plasticizers, degreasers and surfactants and actually dry and damage the hair, causing hair loss and skin irritation. A quick label check of my equine grooming products really caused me to rethink the safety of what I was showering on my horses, as well as what I was leaving in the paddock, pasture and my septic tank.

By utilizing a few herbs, common kitchen items and essential oils, we can get our horses squeaky clean with a healthy glow. Green, healthy grooming products are easy and fun to make. The ingredients are found in most grocery, health food and drug stores. A home-made bottle of shampoo or detangler makes a really thoughtful gift.



**Chamomile**  
Anti-inflammatory,  
strengthens skin,  
and scalp

Here are some of my favorites:

## Easy Horse Shampoo

**10 chamomile tea bags**  
**1 cup of liquid castile soap**

**1/2 tablespoon glycerin**

**A few drops of essential oils from the list provided – optional, but nice!**

Steep chamomile tea bags in boiled water, covered for about an hour. Remove tea bags, add castile soap, glycerin and essential oils (if using) to the cooled tea mixture. Bottle and place it in a dark, cool place or in the refrigerator. Since your homemade shampoo is preservative and paraben free, keep the lids tightly closed and store in a cool place.

## Easy Horse Shampoo #2

**1 cup distilled or spring water**

**1 cup of liquid castile soap**

**1 cup aloe vera gel**

**4 teaspoons glycerin**

**1 teaspoon avocado or rice bran oil**

A few drops of essential oils from the list provided - optional

Mix well and store in a bottle. Bottle and place it in a dark and cool place or in the refrigerator. Shake it well before use

## Purifying Rinse

To remove silicone and product build-up

**2 cups cider vinegar**

**8 cups cool water**

**6 tablespoons baking soda**



**Aloe Vera**



Mix the cider vinegar and water together in a bucket, then add the baking soda and lightly stir. Pour over mane and tail let sit for fifteen minutes, rinsing is optional. You can follow with conditioner or shampoo.

### **Mane and Tail Conditioner**

**4 tablespoons clear or natural henna - optional**

**6 to 8 eggs - beaten**

**7 tablespoons of avocado, hemp, rice bran or flax oil**

**A few drops of your favorite essential oils**

You will need a bowl to whip up this conditioner fresh as needed. It is a nourishing meal complete with vitamin E and protein for mane and tail.



**Rosemary**

The clear henna leaves a rich shine. Massage the mixture into your horses' mane and tail and allow it to sit for fifteen minutes then rinse or shampoo as usual. Directions: Beat eggs, add henna and oil and beat until well mixed and apply.

### **Silicone-free Detangler**

Mix equal parts of avocado and rice bran oil in a sprayer bottle with a fine mister nozzle.

Add a few drops of your favorite essential oils and shake well.

Apply a light mist to mane and tail, let sit for



**Eucalyptus**

a few minutes and comb out tangles. The light avocado and rice bran oil penetrate the shaft without leaving the hair too sticky or oily and it leaves a nice shine. I spray this on my dogs' coats to repel fox tails and stickers.

### **Shampoo and Conditioner** **Essential oils**

Any of the following can be added to your shampoos or conditioners at 10 drops each. Use your favorites or choose one or two of the following:

**Patchouli** - Anti-inflammatory, antifungal, anti-allergic, antiparasitic and insect repellent.

**Eucalyptus** - (use 5 to 10 drops – due to strong odor) Good for fungal conditions or dandruff. Strongly antibacterial, anti fungal and anti-inflammatory.

**Rosemary** - Strengthens the hair roots and promotes healthy hair growth. Stimulates circulation and prevents damage.

**Chamomile** - Anti-inflammatory strengthens skin, scalp and tissue. Enhances highlights.

**Bergamot\*** – (use 4-5 drops) Blends well with other oils, anti inflammatory. \*Citrus oils can cause photosensitivity in some light-colored horses.

**Ylang Ylang** - Good for dry, dull hair, split ends and dandruff. Strengthens the hair and prevents loss.

**Tea tree** – (use 5 to 10 drops – due to strong odor) – due to strong odor) Antifungal, antiseptic and anti-allergenic.