

Quench the Summer Heat with Greenthread Tea

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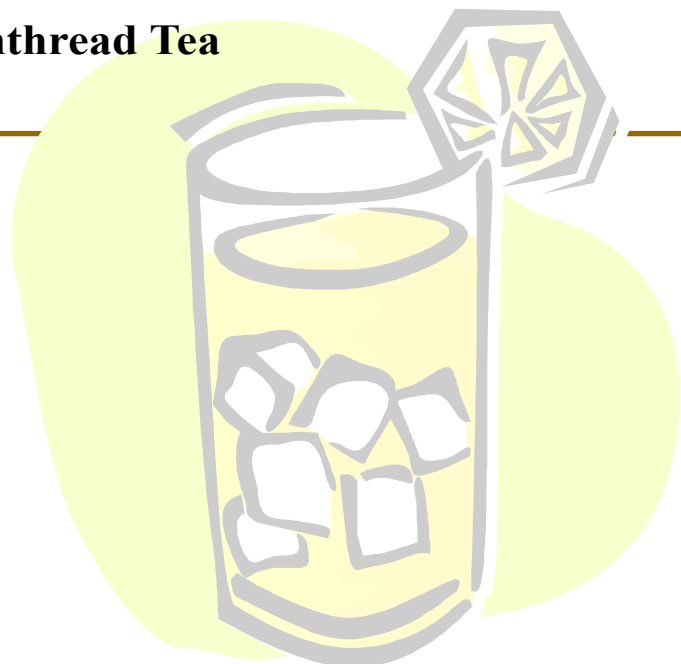
Keeping your cool during the summer heat can be a real challenge for riders spending quality time with their horses. Instead of reaching for a soda to cool down I like to sip a glass of Greenthread tea to help turn the heat down. I was introduced to this wonderful, cooling beverage also called Navajo tea while visiting the beautiful Canyon de Chilly (pronounced shay) on the Navajo Nation in Northern Arizona. *Thelesperma megapotamicum* is also known as Hopi tea, Cota or Greenthread. Greenthread is found throughout the west from Nebraska to Wyoming and south through the plains states to Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. It has a long history of use among desert dwellers as a refreshing beverage during the summer.



Greenthread, a member of the Sunflower family is a perennial bush with deep, moisture seeking roots. It can grow to 2 to 3 feet in height with abundant long narrow

blue-green stems topped with small, tufted creamy flowers. It is described by some as the fragrance of the reservation.

To brew a cooling tea of Greenthread bring ½ gallon of water to a boil. I recommend glass or stainless steel pots. Never use aluminum or non-stick cookware for herbal preparations. Add one bundle, approximately 10 ounces, of Greenthread stems and flowers. Gently simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Re-



move pot from heat, cover and let steep an additional 20 minutes. Greenthread brews into a lovely, non-bitter, slightly sweet tea. It is ideal as a summer refreshment. Many desert folks use sugar to sweeten Greenthread. However, I like to add raw honey or Agave nectar. Serve chilled over ice.

A tasty, non traditional, addition is mint which I like to add for its cooling and heat dispersing qualities. A small sliver of fresh ginger lends a spicy zing.



Riding in Canyon de Chilly on the Navajo Nation in Northern Arizona.