

## Springtime Tune Up with Herbs and Acupressure

By Gloria Garland L.Ac, Dipl. Ac. & CH.

**T**he lengthening daylight, warming temperatures and upward growth of tiny green shoots serve as a reminder that it is time for our horses' annual spring tune up.

Spring signals the body's sleeping *yang* energies to rise and shine! Spring *Qi* energy moves upward & outwards. Horses often express the awakening *yang* in outbursts of exuberance, playful bucking and romping, aggression and moody shifts, and mares resume cycling.

From the Chinese medicine perspective, spring is associated with the wood element, the liver and gall bladder meridians, tendons, ligaments, hoofs and the eyes. Its color is green, like the new shoots of spring, and its flavor is sour.

We can support our horses' wood element, its organs and tissues with herbs and acupressure. By following the wood element's correspondences and affinities, we can provide our horses with spring time assistance.



*Spirulina*

### Herbs

Not surprisingly, *green* foods, including high chlorophyll plants, nourish and support the liver. ***Spirulina*** (*Spirulina platensis*) is just one plant ideally suited to the task. *Spirulina* is a variety of blue-green, micro algae. High in natural beta carotene, vitamins, minerals, protein, amino acids and essential fatty acids, it is hepatoprotective (liver protective). ***Spirulina*** is especially effective against free radical damage and useful in the prevention and treatment of respiratory allergies and sweet itch. Both conditions can follow the warming spring weather. A short course of ***Milk thistle*** (*Silybum marianum*)



*Milk thistle*

and ***Globe artichoke*** (*Cynara scolymus*) can be utilized in a gentle spring liver tonic. Both herbs are trophorestorative, protecting and restoring liver function especially if there has been damage from toxins.



The liver likes the sour flavor, ***Globe artichoke*** so a few tablespoons of **vinegar** is a great spring time addition to our horses' feed bucket. I like to use rice vinegar, but apple cider vinegar is fine also.

### Exercise

Spring time workouts should include long warm ups and gentle stretching to encourage *yang Qi* energy to the tendons and ligaments, thus preventing injuries.

### Acupressure

The following acupressure treatment is based on the Balance method. The Balance method of acupuncture treatment utilizes a unilateral approach, treating only one side of the horse at a time and alternating sides every treatment.

**Day one:** gently massage in small, quarter-sized circles the following points on the right side of your horse: LV3, LV14, GB39 and UB18.

**Day two:** gently massage in small, quarter-sized circles the following points on the left side of your horse: LV8, LV5, GB34 and UB19.

Gloria Garland is a Licensed Acupuncturist, Chinese Herbalist and the author of the ***Equine Acupressure Therapeutics Workbook Series***. Gloria provides acupuncture and herbal consultations for veterinarians and horse owners. Whole Horse Herbs™, her line of herbal formulas was developed to bring complimentary herbal medicine to the equine community. She teaches hands-on classes, empowering horse owners with accurate, useful information and equine health care tools.  
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