Natural Herbal Remedies for Alpacas

By Candace Wingo L.M.T., C.A.T. (Licensed Massage Therapist, Certified Animal Therapist)

At our ranch, we use many holistic therapies on the animals here. Natural remedies & herbal remedies are a big part of what we use – especially for rehab animals that come here. Currently we have 103 alpacas at the ranch and 24 are rehab cases. They have been brought to our ranch from several different ranches & farms in this part of Texas. We prefer that the rehab alpacas or llamas stay at their own location with their own herd but when we have room – they are welcome.



Alpacas at our barn.

Rehab animals can only come here after they've been to their veterinarian for a diagnosis and a health check. We then choose the natural therapies & natural products that compliment the veterinarian's care.

Several veterinarians are now referring clients to us for a consultation or to order certain natural products that will help with their recommendations. And this has been a big help to many farms and ranches located in different parts of the USA. We are getting great results using holistic approaches with what the veterinarians are doing. The body is designed to heal itself but sometimes the body needs extra help. Our goal is to help the veterinarian by using natural therapies and natural products.

These are some of the many natural therapies & natural products that we use:

- Herbs
- Tree Essences
- Flower Essences
- Homeopathic remedies
- Essential Oils
- Magnet Therapy
- Auricular Therapy
- Massage Therapy

- Emotion Code Therapy
- Nutritional Products

We don't depend on one natural product or therapy but select according to what the animal needs and sometimes several are needed and they work together in the healing process. I concur with Dr. Christina Chambreau, DVM for homeopathy. She's a holistic homeopathic veterinarian and has taught me a lot. She presented a workshop here at our ranch a few years ago and it was a great learning experience. I need to schedule her again....

Check out her website: http://www.christinachambreau.com/practice.php

<u>Natural Remedies come from different sources:</u> <u>herbs, trees, plant roots, flowers, tree bark, seeds, leaves, minerals, etc.</u>

Many herbs & plants can help certain health problems. Throughout history you can find reference to different herbs & plants that farmers and ranchers have used on their livestock to help them with certain illnesses & situations. This article is not meant to give you the impression that herbs & natural remedies will cure all illnesses or help all situations.

No information in this article should be used to diagnose. Any products that I mention are considered nutritional supplements only. These products are not to be considered prescriptions or specific veterinary or medical products. They are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease. Give the body what it needs; the body has the ability to heal itself.

Always consult with your veterinarian when needed. It is one of the responsibilities of the caregiver to work with their veterinarian and a holistic practitioner when using herbs or any natural remedy or therapy for their alpacas and other animals. The information in this article tells you what has worked for us and how we've used natural remedies on our herd & for the rehab clients. Lets continue......

<u>Rehab Alpacas</u> –

Twenty four rehab alpacas are more than we usually have here on the ranch but 14 of them were brought from one location. This group of alpacas came after they had been on pastures with the toxic weed senecio, also called butterweed or groundsel; there are many species of senecio. These plants contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids that cause liver cirrhosis. For acute poisoning, livestock must eat a dose of 1 to 5 percent of their weight over a few days. Most livestock losses are from being on the pastures consuming as little as 0.25 percent of their body weight but over a period of several months. So, this is a very toxic plant.

This toxic weed is a common range plant in Colorado and Utah and south to Texas and Mexico. The whole plant is toxic and is hard to identify when it's first coming up from being dormant. Yellow flowers emerge in the fall and other species of senecio bloom in the spring. Llamas and alpacas seem to be either more sensitive to the plant or less selective grazers than cattle & horses, so the plant has to be eliminated from the pastures.

There are concerns about using some chemical treatments to get rid of this toxic weed and we have learned that 2,4-D will make the senecio plant sweeter and more attractive to eat. So, the animals need to be off the pastures until the plant is no longer available. Getting rid of this toxic weed is a big chore.

Check with your county agent to find the best solution. If they recommend Grazon or Grazon P+D–, remember this chemical stays in the soil for several years. I don't recommend using Grazon in any pastures that you plan to let animals on within 4 years.

This should tell you something $\dots \rightarrow$ The poop from animals that have been on pastures treated with Grazon is toxic. If you use it as a fertilizer for landscape or veggie gardens, it stunts the plant growth. So, be selective when using chemicals. Find out from your local organic dairy farmers what they use to get rid of weeds. Each state has different toxic weeds and there are many ways to control the weeds.

There is no treatment for pyrrolizidine alkaloid poisoning because the liver damage is severe, progressive and permanent. It can take 6 months to a year for the animal to show symptoms and die. The owners of the 14 alpacas knew that some of their alpacas ate the senecio and they acted quickly to get them off those pastures. They found out the hard way about this toxic weed when one of their alpacas died last year – the necropsy results told them what happened & identified the toxic plant, senecio, as the cause of liver failure/death.

The veterinarian, the owners and I concurred that a treatment using the <u>milk thistle combination</u> would be the best thing to do and should be given for at least two months. This herbal remedy combination includes: milk thistle seed, wild Oregon grape root, wild yellow dock root, Echinacea purpurea root, dandelion root, licorice root, and cinnamon bark.

Milk thistle combination helps cleanse, tone and protect the liver. These herbs also can assist in balancing liver enzymes and in strengthening the immune system. So, we are hopeful & believe that this milk thistle combination is going to be the treatment they need as the prevention to support the liver at this stage of ingesting the toxic weeds. I've used this herbal combination many times for alpacas and llamas to balance high liver enzymes with great success. This milk thistle combination comes in a liquid tincture form and can be found at: <u>http://www.alpacasALLnaturale.com/</u>.

Other Herbal Remedies -

Several of my alpaca rehab clients have benefited from an herbal mixture called <u>Animal Herbal Formula</u>. This comes in a powder form & is easy to give orally mixed with water or added to moistened beet pulp or top dressed on the grain.

The <u>Animal Herbal Formula</u> is used on most of the rehab animals that I work with. I recommend giving this along with the <u>Llama-Zyme</u>, which is a probiotic & enzyme combo. Llama-Zyme can help the body absorb the nutrients and can help the gut become healthy again. These two products work great together. I mix these two together as their special herbal mixture.



Giving herbal mixture to a rehab alpaca with a dosing syringe.

Most of the herbs in the Animal Herbal Formula are from the regions of Peru and I believe that is why this has worked so well and compliments the veterinarian's care.

Listed below are the herbs in the <u>Animal Herbal Formula</u> along with information about what benefits these herbs are known for:

- Una de Gato –immune stimulation, pain & inflammation reduction, cellular protection and detoxification, anti-viral & anti-bacterial properties, free radical defense, bowel & blood cleansing.
- Chanca Piedra supports the kidneys, expels and dissolves stones, anti-bacterial & anti-viral, prevents cellular mutation, reduces fever, detoxifies the liver, expels worms, reduces pain & inflammation, aids digestion.
- Jatoba anti-yeast, fungal & bacterial, decongests bronchioles, reduces spasms, increases energy, protects the live bacteria, stimulates digestion, expels worms, fights free radicals.
- Boldo stimulates digestion, supports the heart, protects & detoxifies the liver, reduces gas, reduces inflammation, expels worms, kills parasites, relieves pain.
- Chuchuhuasi reduces inflammation, relaxes muscles, relieves pain, prevents tumors, stimulates digestion, enhances immunity, supports the adrenals.
- Camu Camu fights free radicals, anti-ageing, immune booster, natural antihistamine, promotes the cardiovascular health, increased collagen production, antibody production.
- Licorice anti-viral & anti-inflammatory, anti-parasitic, anti-tumor, mild expectorant, improves overall cardiovascular health.
- Stevia natural sweetener, anti-bacterial, lowers blood sugar, kills fungi & virus, lowers blood pressure, reduces inflammation.

Another Formula that I use is <u>Mama Llama Herbal Formula</u>. Most of these herbs are also from the regions of Peru and have been used for many generations to help humans and animals balance & support their hormonal system, increase stamina, strength and endurance and boost their immune system. This

formula comes in powder form and is easy to give. Mama Llama Herbal Formula has been helping females that have trouble getting pregnant or holding a pregnancies full term. It's also good for moms that are nursing but tend to get thin. Plus - this formula is very supportive to breeding males to keep them in top shape during breeding season. I always combine this formula with the Llama-Zyme to make sure they are getting good probiotics and absorbing these good nutrients.

Listed below are the herbs in the <u>Mama Llama Herbal Formula</u> along with information about what benefits these herbs are known for:

- Maca has a rich profile of protein, amino acids and other nutrients that support stamina, endurance, promotes hormonal balance and facilitates increased strength and muscle tone. This is an adaptogenic herb, which supports endocrine health and helps regulate metabolism and energy. It's one of the earliest known food crops of the Incas.
- Kiwicha a gluten free grain full of antioxidants provides an excellent source of protein with a good balance of essential amino acids. Known to promote cardiovascular health and provide strength and energy. This is another known food crop of the Incas.
- Muira Puama Known as "potency wood". Is historically used to enhance physical and sexual energy. Helps combat occasional nervous exhaustion and physical fatigue.
- Suma is often called 'para todo' (for everything). Is a rich source of amino acids. It's known for its adaptogenic properties for energy & longevity.
- Other ingredients in this formula are Beta-Glucan, Colostrum & Acidolphius

Some examples of when I use these herbal formulas-

When I have "failure to thrive" rehab animals, I use the following products mixed together:

- 1. Animal Herbal Formula
- 2. Mama Llama Herbal Formula
- 3. Llama-Zyme

I give this mixture once a day, watching & making sure the body's system is handling it fine. If I see clumpy poop – I change that to every other day. The goal is to eventually give the herbal mixture twice a day. Give according to directions on the labels by weight of the animal. Each animal is different in how they handle adding something to their diet.

We weigh the animals the same time of the day each time we weigh them to get a consistent weight. Our routine is weighing the rehab animals every Friday morning to record their progress. Some "failure to thrive" cases don't show progress until the second month. Most took 5 months to see their weight get to a point that we knew they were on their way to being a healthy normal sized alpaca. What a thrill it is to see so many get great results.



Labeled "Failure to Thrive"

This is Bacall the day she arrived at our ranch

At 18 months old, Bacall was 56 lbs. All her lab work was normal. She was given the herbal mixture and 5 months later she was 124 pounds and ready to breed. She went back to her ranch and they continued to give the herbal mixture for a few more months and gradually weaned her off.



A month before giving birth to a healthy cria. Her weight averages around 156 lbs. now.

Most rehab animals aren't pregnant; if they are pregnant I use the following combination:

- 1. Mama Llama Herbal Formula
- 2. Llama-Zyme

Low weight breeding males with low energy & not keeping up with the breeding program get:

- 1. Mama Llama Herbal Formula
- 2. Llama-Zyme

I also use Dr. Pollard's herbs. He has several formulas that include Lactation Stimulator, Joint Repair and Tendon Repair. We have a rehab female that was brought here with a cut through her tendon on her back leg. Her leg has been in a splint for over a year. The veterinarian would change the splint regularly and each time she seemed to be progressing better than he thought she would. He would say, "keep giving her those herbs". She did fine through breeding and shearing wearing her splint. Recently she gave birth to a healthy female cria. The splint was removed and her tendon is stronger and supporting her weight; the bandages should be able to come off in a few months.

We gave her the following to help her body heal this injury:

- 1. Dr. Pollard's Tendon Repair Herbs
- 2. Mama Llama Herbal Formula
- 3. Llama-Zyme



Mom with tendon damage & her new cria.

Herbs & beneficial plants available free choice -

There are many beneficial herbs & plants that you can grow in your garden or pastures for the alpacas to nibble on.

- Dandelions are considered a weed but they are a great herb that is good for cleansing the blood and good for bones. Dandelions can improve functioning of the kidneys, spleen, pancreas and stomach.
- Stinging Nettle can be a nuisance in pastures but its benefits are: blood purifier, muscle aches & pains and joint problems.
- Comfrey is high in proteins & vitamins A&C and has many antioxidant properties. It can stimulate bone growth and development and has many other benefits.
- Fennel, basil and fenugreek are herbs that are in several lactation blends that help enhance mother's milk.

I have antique roses, comfrey, basil, blackberries & raspberry vines planted in the garden along the fence next to the female's pasture. There are times they will eat some of these plants and other times they never touch them. I make sure that the toxic veggie plants i.e., (tomato plants, potato plants, etc.) are planted toward the center of the garden and not near the fence. There are paths that separate those plants and the fence – so I know the alpacas can't reach their long necks over into the garden & take a taste.

Keep in mind, that having these free choice goodies only works if the animals also have good pasture to graze. Or they will only go for the green plants growing inside your garden. Too much of one beneficial herb or plant is not always a good thing – you must have good pastures or good hay. Extra free choice herbs and plants are then just a choice they will eat when they need it. So make these garden plants & herbs free choice along with good pastures to be beneficial.



Alpacas eating beneficial herbs & plants through the garden fence.

We have found over the years that natural products & therapies work for our alpacas and the rehab clients and they compliment the veterinarian's care. Some of these herbal combinations have made a huge difference in lots of cases. The herbal formulas and combinations can be found at: http://www.alpacasALLnaturale.com/

The goal in Holistic Animal Care is to help the animal heal itself, working to balance the mind, body and spirit. Healing is a team effort that involves God, the animal, the veterinarian and the people that love them.

Note: You've taken care of the alpacas and all the other critters. Now it's time to take care of you too! A new section has been added to the website -"Natural Products for People": <u>http://www.alpacasallnaturale.com/people_products.htm</u>