

SPECIES OF THE WEEK



Common Horsetail

Equisetum arvense
Scuab eich ghoint

Common or Field Horsetail is a perennial and native to Ireland. It is a member of the Equisetaceae family; the sole survivor of a line of plants going back three hundred million years. It is a descendant of ancient plants that grew as tall as trees during the carboniferous period of prehistoric times and members of this family gave rise to many of our coal deposits.

Horsetail has separate sterile non-reproductive and fertile spore-bearing stems, growing from a perennial underground rhizomatous stem system. The fertile stems are produced in early spring and are non-photosynthetic, while the green sterile stems start to grow after the fertile stems have wilted, and persist through the summer until the first autumn frosts.

Since being recommended by the Roman physician Galen, several cultures have employed horsetail as a folk remedy for kidney and bladder troubles, arthritis, bleeding ulcers, and tuberculosis. The Chinese use it to cool fevers and as a remedy for eye inflammations such as conjunctivitis and corneal disorders, dysentery, flu, swellings and hemorrhoids.