

Homemade Fly Spray recipes

- equal amounts of each: 1/3 water 1/3 vinegar 1/3 Pine Sol
- Cheap gallon-o'-useless at Tractor supply and add a bottle of 100% deet to it. shake it up and voila, no more gnats or mosquito bites.
- US Forest Service Recipe for Fly Spray - Safe and effective for people and horses: 1 cup Avon Skin So Soft. 1 cup water. 2 cups apple cider vinegar. 1 tbsp. eucalyptus oil.
- Vinegar, water and Blue dawn...
- Clear dish detergent, eucalyptus, Listerine (original) and vinegar
- 1.5 litres of cold stewed tea, 10ml of Citronella, 500ml of Malt Vinegar.
- Cider vinegar, tea tree oil and citronella

- **Ingredients** 2 cups white vinegar, 1 Tablespoon Eucalyptus oil, 1 cup water

Instructions Mix ingredients together in a spray bottle. Shake well before every use and spray the horse.

The Results

For house flies and stable flies this recipe worked very well. In our opinion it worked better than several store-bought fly sprays we had recently used. It wasn't perfect - the house and stable flies still landed on the horse but the actual bites he experienced were definitely less. However, it was a different story with deer flies. When we rode the horse away from the barn and house and out into the pasture the deer flies swarmed to him like he was a free, all-you-can-eat buffet. The fly spray seemed to be of little or no help as the deer flies bit him constantly, all over, and in large numbers. This fly spray lasted between 45 minutes – hour.

Our Opinion

For house and stable flies we liked this fly spray recipe. It only has three easy-to-mix ingredients, and the ingredients are all natural (remember, as we stated above we're defining "natural" as an ingredient that is not a man-made insecticide). However, it did not work at all for deer flies.

- **Ingredients** 1/2 cup hair conditioner for humans (the kind you leave on for a minute or two then rinse out). We used an inexpensive generic brand without a strong scent (Suave), 3 Tablespoons Eucalyptus oil, 1/2 cup baby oil, water to fill the remainder of a 32 ounce spray bottle

Instructions Mix ingredients in a 32 ounce spray bottle. Shake well before every use and spray the horse.

The Results

Like recipe #1, above, this homemade horse fly spray worked well around the barn and house, but was of no help in the pasture for deer flies. This fly spray lasted between 45 minutes and an hour.

Our Opinion

While this recipe worked about the same as recipe #1 it has more ingredients to purchase and mix, so is therefore slightly more complicated to make. We also didn't like trying to get 1/2 cup of thick hair conditioner out of a measuring cup and into the top of the spray bottle. The conditioner kept plugging up the top of the bottle and using a kitchen funnel wasn't much help. Since this recipe worked about the same as recipe #1, we prefer recipe #1 because it has fewer ingredients and is easier to mix.

- **Ingredients** 1 teaspoon Cedarwood Essential Oil, 1 teaspoon Citronella Essential Oil, 1 teaspoon Peppermint Essential Oil, 1 teaspoon Eucalyptus Essential Oil, 1 teaspoon Lemongrass Essential Oil, 3 ounces Coconut Oil, 12 ounces of water (after first putting the above ingredients into a spray bottle, this is enough water to fill the bottle to the 16 ounce line).

Note: Coconut oil is a liquid in hot summer temperatures (above 76 degrees Fahrenheit). In cooler temperatures, it is a solid. Therefore, coconut oil may not be suitable for a fly spray recipe unless the temperatures are warm.

Instructions

Put all of the essential oils and the coconut oil into a spray bottle. Add enough water (which should be about 12 ounces) to fill the spray bottle to the 16 ounce line. Shake vigorously before every use, and occasionally during use. This mixture separates very easily.

Since essential oils can cause skin irritation, the first thing we did with this fly spray recipe was spray our own forearms and wait 24 hours. When we didn't have any kind of skin irritation we tested it on the horse.

The Results -> **Epic fail**. Unlike with the other homemade fly spray recipes on this page we never even got the horse groomed or saddled before this recipe failed. We sprayed him, and there was a brief pause when he was really damp that the flies and other

insects slowed down for a few moments. Then he went back to fighting flies as if nothing at all had been sprayed on him. We had to follow with a different fly spray in order to groom and ride him. Our horse did smell heavenly, but as an insect repellent **this homemade recipe was totally useless.**

- **Ingredients** 1 part white vinegar, 1 part store-bought horse fly spray (we used a brand that had permethrin .25% as its active ingredient). Mix equal amounts of white vinegar and store-bought fly spray in a spray bottle. Shake well before every use and spray the horse.

The Results

We feel like this semi-homemade fly spray recipe worked just as well to keep house and stable flies from biting our horse as when the store-bought fly spray was used alone. In fact, though it was hard to tell for sure, we thought it may even have worked slightly better. Although flies still landed on the horse the actual bites were greatly reduced.

When it came to deer flies, the mixture of vinegar and store-bought fly spray was helpful to keep them from biting the horse, but not as helpful as we had hoped. However, when the store-bought fly spray was used alone the results were only marginally better. In both cases deer flies still bit the horse in noticeable numbers, but slightly less than when no fly spray was used at all.

How Long It Lasted

This semi-homemade fly spray lasted about an hour, perhaps a little less. This is about the same amount of time the store-bought fly spray lasted when it was used by itself.

Our Opinion

In our opinion the mixture of white vinegar and store-bought fly spray worked just as well for house, stable, and deer flies as when the store-bought fly spray was used alone. The mixture also lasted about the same amount of time, and since vinegar costs quite a bit less than store-bought fly spray using the mixture cut our costs significantly.

- Whatever concoction you like -- / put a tablespoon of raw fish oil in the mix... (spray bottle) -- flies hate it
- Apple cider vinegar , tea tree oil , and lemon juice . It never fails
- •1 quart (Raw) Apple Cider Vinegar •20 drops rosemary essential oil •20 drops melaleuca essential oil •20 drops lavender essential oil
- 10 drops of citronella essential oil, 8 drops each of lavender and eucalyptus essential oil, 3 drops of blue Dawn detergent, then the rest of the bottle is a 50/50 mix of water and vinegar (or pickle juice... we use a lot of pickles at camp and it's basically vinegar). They might smell a little different, but honestly it works better than commercial fly spray, and cheaper. The cost of the oils is the most expensive part, but I bought one 5oz jar of each oil and they lasted the whole fly season and enough to start this season left over.

- **Skin So Soft Recipes**

6 caps full of Skin So Soft

1 cup white vinegar

A good squirt of Ivory liquid soap

Filled 32 oz spray bottle of water

Sprayed it on the horses legs, flies fell DEAD !!!

1 cup vinegar

1 cup baby oil

1/4 cup original Pinesol

1 tbs dish soap

1 tbs Skin So Soft

1 cup water

I used a mixture of half Pinesol and half water. I used it all year last year and it worked wonderful. My horses were never bothered with flies or gnats and their coats were shiny.

4 oz Skin So Soft

1 oz citronella oil

12 oz vinegar

12 oz water

Mix all together and it lasts as long as any of the expensive ones do and smells a ton better! It is also good for their coat.

2 cups white vinegar
1 cup Avon Skin So Soft (Bath oil)
1 cup water
1 tablespoon eucalyptus oil

I have used this mix for years, and it works great. —Laurie LaSalle, Rockin' Tree Ranch

1 oz. Citronella Oil
2 oz. Skin-So-Soft or Coat-So-Soft
1 Cup Cider Vinegar
1 cup Water
Mix in a 20 oz. spray bottle.

Pour six caps full of Skin-So-Soft in a 20 ounce spray bottle, and fill the rest with water. Shake and spray.

- **Best Fly Repellent**

Made by Shaklee – **BASIC H**. It works. You can use it to spray areas where flies breed or congregate; once they have been misted, they can't fly anymore and die. They hate it, and will not bother or bite horses who have been sprayed with it. You can make a diluted spray with 5-7 parts water and one part Basic H. You can adjust the mixture to suit your area, but trust me, that concentration is plenty strong. You can also use to bathe your horses, yourself and your tack too. PH is in the range of human and horse skin, so it is great for sensitive skinned horses and people. No yucky smell either. Try it once and you will NEVER buy another fly repellent.

You can purchase off the Shaklee website (www.shaklee.com), or from a member or distributor. The price is great too. Buy a gallon and imagine how far it goes – makes about 7 gallons of fly spray. Great price, great product. I began using it at the stables where I board, and the whole stable was using it within the month, and continues to use it even after I brought my horses home.

- **Citrus Insect Repellent Spray**

2 cups light mineral oil
1/2 cup lemon juice
2 tsp. citronella oil
2 tsp. eucalyptus essential oil
2 tsp. lemon dish soap

Combine all ingredients in a spray bottle. Label. To use gently shake and spray on your horse avoiding his eyes. NOTE: Do not use this spray before a show as it attracts dust.

- **Quick Fly Spray**

18 oz white vinegar
2 Tbsp dish washing soap.

Mix in a 20 oz spray bottle and shake gently until well blended. You may add water to dilute. Spray liberally on your horse

- **Easy Fly Spray**

You can mix seven parts water with one part citronella as a fly spray. It's not oily either. Mix it four parts water to one part citronella during the worst of the fly season.

- **Extend Your Fly Spray**

15 oz water
5 oz commercial fly spray (any brand)
5 oz vinegar
2 oz vegetable oil
2 oz green Dawn dish soap

Mix and use. All natural and will not harm coat.

- **Internal Fly Repellants**

If your horse is allergic to fly bites, try 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar on their grain once a day. This raises the blood acid level just enough to bother the flies, but it is completely healthy for the horse. It takes about one week to start seeing the effects.

Several old timers have told me that they always put vinegar in their horse's drinking water during the summer to repel flies and mosquitoes.

- For cheap fly repellent, mix about 1 1/2 cups of plain white vinegar into about every 75 gallons of water in your horse's water tub. If you use this in the water about a week before flies start biting, it will have circulated in your horse and it helps keep flies from biting. —Lindsey
- **Other Types of Fly Relief**
If anyone has problems with flies in the barn, try filling a quart jar with this mixture.
3 cups of water
¼ (one quarter) cup sugar
¼ (one quarter) cup white vinegar
Mix, punch holes in the lid, and set it where needed. It works great.
- **Bounce fabric softener sheets** -- Next time you go riding tie one to your Horse's headstall and stick one in your back pocket. It works better than ANY fly spray I've ever tried. The flies won't even fly around you. —Susan Cafouras
- **Dr. Mary Brennan's Recipe** 1/2 teaspoon oil of myrrh, 2 cups water, 1/2 cup cider vinegar, 1/4 teaspoon of pure citronella oil

Some information about ingredients to homemade fly sprays. This will hopefully be informative and highly entertaining.

- **-Avon's Skin So Soft.** This is the holy grail of fly spray ingredients for the do it yourselfer. This is a product designed as a mineral oil based moisturizer for humans, and it does contain chemical ingredients. The entire line of products now includes some bug repelling specific lotions, as well.
- **-Citronella oil.** There are two kinds of citronella oil - the highly concentrated pure essential oil and the highly dangerous flammable type used to make tiki torches burn. Go for the first type! Use these in a heavily diluted mixture, a little bit goes a very long way. For more information on essential oils and horses, you can read these amazing guest blogs, part one and part two. Citronella oil is effective at repelling mosquitos and also stable flies, as well as having a nice smell.
- **-Eucalyptus oil** is another choice, although it hard to tell from the lack of research what this oil repels. Lemon eucalyptus oil is an ingredient that is actually EPA registered for mosquito repelling.
- As with Citronella oil, eucalyptus oil is highly concentrated.
- **-Dish soap.** Many of the recipes for homemade fly sprays contain dish soap. I have seen recipes with just about every brand of dish soap. This is used as an emulsifier, so that the oils and water in your concoction can mix together, and stay mixed together.
- **-Vinegar.** About half of the homemade recipes out there specify white vinegar, the others say apple cider vinegar. Perhaps it depends on the smell that you prefer? I was also unable to find any research on what types of bugs that vinegar repels, although there are tons of stories about vinegar as a bug repellent. I also found lots of references to apple cider vinegar used as a topical treatment for insect bites. Vinegar used topically can also create a great sheen on your horse.

To make a dent in fly populations, and therefore help your horse be more comfortable, it's important to attack all stages of the fly's life cycle. When choosing a fly spray for your horse, you have zillions of choices. **If you do decide to go the homemade route, here are a few thoughts when it comes to being the chef:**

- **-Try a very diluted product first**, lots of water, tiny amounts of oils. Oils (and any ingredient) can cause reactions.
- **-Test on a small area.** Don't take your first batch and soak your horse!
- **-Use in combination** with fly sheets, fly masks, and fly boots.
- **-Attack all areas of the farm**, working to eradicate all stages of the fly life cycle!

Do Homemade Equine Fly Sprays Really Work?

Homemade fly sprays can be an effective alternative to manufactured fly repellents for your horse. The key to successfully using homemade fly sprays is in understanding how to properly use the spray. "You can't use fly spray (made with essential oils) once a day and expect it to work," Nan Martin, LSH, CRTS, founder of Experience-Essential-Oils.com said. "You need to spray it often." Fly sprays made with essential oils will repel flies, not kill them on contact. "For a fly repellent to be truly effective, the horse needs to be properly coated in the spray. It needs to connect to the coat," Georgette Topakas, founder of Zephyr's Garden, LLC (a company that produces all-natural, herbal-based products for horses and dogs), explained. "I see so many chemical-based sprays basically shot into the air, missing half the body."

While essential oils can be effective for repelling insects, mixing the oils with the proper base is imperative. "Plain water adds nothing to the effectiveness, so creating a liquid base that enhances the essential oils is important," Topakas said. She cautioned that working with essential oils requires research. "High levels can potentially cause burns and/or coat discolorations. Don't be afraid to use them, just do your due diligence before applying anything to your horse's body," she added. Using a fly spray made with essential oils is also environmentally-friendly and nontoxic. Some essential oils may offer additional benefits, as well. "Oils do more than deter flies," Martin noted. "Peppermint is good for concentration, too." Natural sprays have their limitations. "When customers ask if our spray repels all flies, I tell them no," Topakas said. "If you have biting flies the size of hummingbirds, I don't know of any natural product that can battle those pests. But if common black flies, gnats, no-see-ums, and mosquitoes are the problem, most natural products handle those readily."

Swapping synthetic horse fly sprays for natural repellent

Before swapping synthetic fly spray for one made of essential oils, it is important to know that not all essential oils are the same quality. "Therapeutic grade oils are pure," Martin said. "Perfume-quality essential oils usually contain 90-95% solvents, so their cost is a fraction of what it takes to distill pure grade oils."

"Natural" fly sprays advertised for sale may not be all natural. "What really is 'natural' vs 'uses natural products'?" said Topakas. Horse owners need to be diligent and research the products that are advertised as natural. "Read labels; that's my best advice," she concluded.

Horse owners can select from a wide variety of essential oils, as there are a number of them that contain insect-repelling qualities. "Many natural products contain Citronella, Lavender, Eucalyptus, Geranium, Neem, Peppermint, and Lemongrass, to name just a few," Topakas said.

Though natural fly repellents may be costlier to purchase or produce at home, the added expense brings peace of mind to horse owners concerned about toxicity.

What about homemade fly repellents for your horse?

Horse owners are creative. An internet search will reveal a variety of homemade fly repellents using items such as vinegar, baby oil, dish soap, lemon juice, garlic, bacon grease, and more. "I have not personally taken the time to mix and use (any of the recipes), but other people think they work because they share them on our website," said Carolyn Twardowski with the Moniteau Saddle Club.

Watch out for allergic reactions

Some horses may be sensitive to chemicals in both commercial and homemade fly spray products. When using these products, reactions such as rash, hives or discomfort may be an allergic reaction. Discontinue use immediately.

One contributor on the Moniteau Saddle Club website wrote, "An elderly gent who had worked in the forests with horses told me to use bacon grease where flies like to bite the horses, base of ears, under jaw, etc. I'd been using petroleum jelly in all those areas and it lasts about three days, but he said the grease works better."

Others have shared solutions that include a mixture of 1 cup vinegar, 1 cup baby oil, ¼ cup original Pinesol, 1 tablespoon dish soap, 1 tablespoon Skin So Soft, and 1 cup water. Before using homemade repellents with items other than natural oils, it is best to consult with a veterinarian to ensure the items in the mixture are safe for use on horses.

In addition to using common household ingredients to create a fly spray, some horse owners use internal fly repellants to keep biting insects at bay. Online suggestions include adding ¼ cup of apple cider vinegar to a horse's grain once a day or to add vinegar to their drinking water during the summer. Others have added fresh or powdered garlic to a horse's grain. While these additives can raise a horse's blood acid level enough to deter flies, it should be done carefully.

Consult a veterinarian prior to adding garlic or vinegar to the horse's diet and monitor the horse closely to ensure he does not go off his feed or stop drinking water, which could lead to other complications, like impaction colic.

Taking the next step

Considering your motivation for using homemade fly sprays will help you determine which option is the best fit for your barn. If your goal is to eliminate pesticides, products made with essential oils may be the solution for you. If your goal is to use commonly-found household items, other options could be the right choice. Whenever you start using a new product, closely monitor your horse for any reactions to the mixture used.

Homemade fly spray recipes that may work for you and your horse

- Refreshing Fly Blend by Nan Martin
 - ✓ 5-10 drops Peppermint Essential Oil
 - ✓ 5-10 drops Tea Tree or Melaleuca Alternifolia Essential Oil
 - ✓ 5-10 drops Idaho Tansy Essential Oil
 - ✓ 5-10 drops Eucalyptus Essential Oil
 - ✓ 5-10 drops Lemongrass Essential Oil
 - ✓ 5-10 drops Lavender Essential Oil

Drop each of the oils into a 32 oz spray bottle and mix with water and begin spraying. "I have to tell you, I make each one a bit different because I like to experiment and I usually just throw them together at the barn," Martin said. "I usually put in about 5 to 10 drops of each oil. Again, play with them and have some fun. You can't go wrong with mixing your own homemade fly spray."

- Bug Off Essential Oil Blend Therapeutic Grade contains a mixture of oils that will help in making your own home made insect spray. Containing Citronella, Eucalyptus, Cedarwood, Lemongrass, Lavender and other oils. When mixed with a carrier oil or spray mix, it acts as an insect repellent on both horses and humans.