



***Equisetum* spp.**
Horsetail, Scouring Rush, Jointed Grass,
Puzzle Grass, Pewterwort

Equisetaceae Family (*Horsetail* Family)

Blooming season: Spring

Plant: Annual. Aerial stems dimorphic; vegetative stems green, branched, 2--60(--100) cm; hollow center 1/3--2/3 stem diam. Sheaths squarish in face view, 2--5(--10) × 2--5(--9) mm; teeth dark, 4--14, narrow, 1--3.5 mm, often cohering in pairs. Branches in regular whorls, ascending, solid; ridges 3--4; valleys channeled; 1st internode of each branch longer than subtending stem sheath; sheath teeth attenuate. Fertile stems brown, lacking stomates, unbranched, shorter than vegetative stems, with larger sheaths, fleshy, ephemeral. (eFloras, 2006)



Leaves: Scale-like and dying to a dark color, resembling sheaths surrounding the stems at the joints.

Reproductive organ: Strobilus which is initially green at the apex of plant. Spores within the strobilus mature in early spring.

Geographic range: Greenland, all states except Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Eurasia to Himalayas. China, Korea, Japan. (eFloras, 2006)

Habitat: Moist meadows, wooded areas, stream banks, roadsides, riverbanks, fields, marshes, pastures, tundra, lakeshore from sea level to 10,000 feet. It grows well in coarse, fine, and medium textured soils.

Common local companions: Witchhazel, White Oak, Red and Black Oak, White Pine, Mayflower, Skunk Cabbage, wintergreen.

Usages:

Human: Equisetum provides a natural source of silicon that the body can assimilate on an “as needed” basis. It is regarded as one of the best herbs for treating bone fractures and tendon and ligament injuries, and may help with preventing senility. It is an excellent hemostatic and is used to stop internal and external bleeding. “It is also mildly diuretic, and can be a useful urinary tract tonic for ailments ranging from cystitis to incontinence.” (Tilford, 1998)

Kasey Hartz Natural Area Reference Sheet



Equisetum spp.

Horsetail, Scouring Rush, Jointed Grass, Puzzle Grass, Pewterwort

2

Why is it called *that*?

Equisetum bears a strong resemblance to a horse's tail, hence its common name of horsetail and its genus name of *Equisetum*.

Prepared by: Hope Buell October 2010

Works Cited

eFloras. (2006). *Equisetum arvense*. Retrieved October 6, 2010, from

http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=1&taxon_id=233500616

Tilford, G. L. (1998). *From Earth to Herbalist* (pp. 1-159). Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company.

**United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service*. (2010, September 20). Retrieved September 22, 2010, from <http://plants.usda.gov/index.html>

* Used as a main source of information.