

# SOLVING THE MUZZLE PUZZLE

By Lauren Foley

Photo Courtesy GG Equine



“The old gray mare, she ain’t what she used to be.” Actually, if we’re talking about my 16-year-old mare and her expanding waistline, she’s *more* than she used to be.

She may be a Hanoverian, but looking at Bella you would swear she’s just an overgrown pony. She’s 15.3 hands on a good day and has delicate features, with a midsection that’s prone to roundness. I worry about founder, and I’m also concerned about the effect of excess weight on her joints, particularly as she gets older. While her fieldmates are sometimes found chilling in the run-in shed or sprawled out and sunning themselves, every time I visit Bella she is grazing like a mare on a mission. I don’t think she ever takes a break!

But she’s also a sensitive gal. Bella is gray and prone to rubs, of which she got plenty from muzzles I’ve tried in the past. When I tried to counteract that by using faux-fleece pads or muzzles with padding, she got sweaty—and stayed sweaty thanks to summer humidity—while the pads just got dirty and smelly, and the rubs on her face didn’t really improve.

The GreenGuard Grazing Muzzle is like a small basket that goes around a horse’s muzzle; it doesn’t touch skin, so it doesn’t rub. It’s also lighter and more ventilated than other muzzles we’ve tried. The material, a non-toxic, food-grade polyresin manufactured in Europe, is firm yet flexible, not rigid plastic. While it’s roomy enough that it didn’t cause rubs, the muzzle was not so large that it impeded my horse’s ability to drink from her automatic waterer.

The GreenGuard is billed as different from other muzzles on the market because “the very center of the GreenGuard muzzle has no opening, so it does not allow for the horse to graze from the middle. Instead horses have to work to get grass from the side slots, similar to a slow-feeder.” Additionally, the company claims the design of the muzzle means it will last longer, because wear is not focused in just one place like it is with traditional muzzles that have a single hole in the center.

The muzzle I tested was “raspberry,” a bright shade of pink. It stayed on

much better than other muzzles I’ve tried, but when my mare did manage to shed it a few times—by removing her entire halter—the color made it easy to find in her field. (Other colors offered are lime green and black.)

The company provides extra breakaway straps to attach the muzzle to your horse’s halter at four points, but I found the straps were quite durable, and in the four-month testing period I didn’t have to replace a single one. The muzzle also looked as good as new at the conclusion of the testing period. We finally found a winner!

The GreenGuard Grazing Muzzle retails for \$109.95 and comes in three sizes: horse, pony and small pony/mini. Learn more at [gg-equine.com](http://gg-equine.com). 🐾



Editor’s Note: GG Equine provided a muzzle to Untacked staff for unbiased testing and review. After testing the product was donated to charity.