

dogs naturally

March - April 2020

TREATING EYE
INJURIES

BIOAVAILABILITY

HOMEOPATHY
FOR FEVER

BAD TO THE
BONE

CHINESE HERBS
FOR DIGESTION

YOUR ENERGY
AND YOUR DOG





Comfrey Leaf

Botanical Name: *Symphytum Officinale*

Parts Used: Leaf [Internal], Root [External]

Nickname: Knitbone

Symphytum comes from the Greek word *symphyton*, meaning *grown together*. The name *comfrey* comes from the Latin word *confervere*, which also means *to grow together*. This makes sense as *comfrey's* reputation is for “knitting” bones, connective tissue and ligaments after a break or a tear.

Records from the first century show *comfrey* leaf tea was used for gastrointestinal and respiratory ailments; the root was used topically on wounds that would heal by *knitting* the flesh back together.

Comfrey plants can grow more than three or four feet high and the large leaves can be twenty inches long. I recommend wearing gloves to harvest them, as the tiny hairs can cause uncomfortable dermatitis.

The doctrine of signatures for *comfrey* leaf is quite fun. If you hold the fresh leaf in both hands and gently tug on the inner stem, you'll notice a white, thin elastic inner strand that will continue to stretch slowly, just as connective tissue and ligaments do.

Herbalists have been using *comfrey* leaf tea since the 1500s to repair broken bones as well as torn flesh and other wounds.

In the early 1900s, *comfrey* was thought to be dangerous due the plant's pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs). Today, the FDA still states

the plant is dangerous and shouldn't be taken internally. In fact, many internal formulas are safe and effective, but they don't contain the root – just the leaf.

Many independent companies (including my own) have tested the leaves for PAs. The PA levels are very low (0.01ppm) to zero on the plants with the light purple flower. Tests done on the roots (in the whole form) show higher amounts.

Comfrey leaf is a vulnerary. It's high in allantoin, which helps wound healing and cell proliferation. It speeds healing and cell growth to regenerate wounds. It's unique in its ability to repair bone and tissue in bodies that are undernourished (or not overly healthy), as well as those boasting full health and vitality.

Comfrey leaf has amazing therapeutic value when used topically on a wound or injury. Moisten it with a penetrating oil like raw virgin coconut oil, extra virgin olive oil or grapeseed oil. Dredge the fresh leaves lightly in the oil, then apply them to the cleaned wound. Leave them on for 30 minutes or more, and reapply as often as you can until the wound is healed. If you don't have any oil to hand (perhaps for an injury on a hike), you can also use the leaf without it. First, rough up the leaf – this removes the tiny irritating hairs and brings the natural moisture to the surface

(it won't be wet, but slightly moist) – then apply it directly to the injury. It will start healing immediately.

You can also be prepared by infusing extra virgin olive oil with *comfrey* leaf. It's best to use the dried leaf as the moisture in the fresh leaves can create mold. Fill a quart jar 1/3 full with the dried leaf and top with the oil. Use a chopstick or other thin, clean tool to gently stir, making sure you get most of the bubbles out. Cover with a lid, then set in the sun for 30 to 45 days. (You can use this solar method in summer months; or in winter, use the lowest setting of your stove burner.) Strain the finished oil into a clean storage jar, then squeeze the leaves into a small ball to compost. Keep in a sun-free area to store up to one year. 🐾



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