



# dogs naturally

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Special Orthopedic Issue

## ACUPUNCTURE

REMEDIES FROM THE  
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**WELLNESS  
MIRROR?**

LACKING SEX  
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## Nettle Leaf

Botanical Name: *Urtica Dioica*

Family: Urticaceae

Part Used: Leaves

**N**ettles grow along streams and in shaded areas throughout most of the world in temperate climates.

Nettle leaf is a wonderful nutritive herb that is packed with minerals, trace minerals and vitamins. It's high in calcium, chromium, magnesium, potassium, zinc and vitamins A and C.

The properties of nettles include: bitter, tonic, antitumor, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, vermifuge (expels intestinal parasites), anti-diabetic, digestive, hepato-protectant, anti-rheumatic, decongestant, expectorant, anti-histamine, rubefacient and nutritive.

Nettle is considered a body tonic – it strengthens and supports the whole body and tonifies organs with its ability to increase liver and kidney efficiency. Because nettle can increase the production of urine, many consider it to be a diuretic. It's my experience that nettle will help remove excess fluid in stagnant situations but will not deplete the body of essential fluids as a pharmaceutical diuretic does, while removing uric acid from the body. Due to the high amount of potassium and vitamin C, nettle should be considered for any fluid stagnation, internally and externally.

Nettle leaf is helpful in providing necessary vitamins and minerals as part of a supplement to any diet. It can help with respiratory issues related to asthma and bronchitis. It's an amazing digestive with

an affinity for the gastrointestinal tract. It can be used in cases of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and constipation, as well as ulcers. It's also unsurpassed in my experience as a prebiotic to feed probiotics in the gut. Nettle leaf can stimulate hair growth in balding areas so can be helpful with dogs after a shed-out, mange or hotspot for re-growth if made into a wash.

Nettle leaf is helpful for healthy gums in dogs. It can treat gingivitis and prevent plaque. Nettle powder or tea can help to control blood sugar, diarrhea and most urinary issues (both male and female); it can slow or stop reactions to allergens; it stimulates the lymphatic system, supports overall immune function, provides for a shiny healthy coat and can increase milk production in lactating females. Note: some herbalists caution against using nettle leaf for this purpose but I've never experienced any problems with it. Use the recommended dose for supplementation provided below.

Be sure to handle fresh nettle with great respect and with gloves too. Nettle leaf must be dried or extracted and strained

before administering. Its common name is stinging nettle and it does just that. Nettles have stinging hairs that contain chemicals like serotonin, histamine and acetylcholine that cause irritation to the skin and in some cases a rash. Heat and drying neutralizes the stinging hairs.

It's best to use only the young leaves as the older leaves can develop what are called cystoliths, which can cause irritation to the kidneys – the opposite effect of the young leaves. Hang nettles upside down by the stem until completely dry, then save the leaves in a jar for making a tea or a wash, or use the dried herb as a supplement. As always, do not harvest near a roadside or anywhere chemical sprays are used, and always opt for organic.

Dose: for a 50 lb dog, as a supplement: add ½ tsp to food to provide the myriad of vitamins and minerals to your dog's fresh diet. For therapeutic use, give ¾ tsp twice daily. Adjust these dosages for your dog's weight.

*Cautions: Nettle leaf is not for use in pregnancy as it is known to be an abortifacient. Do not use for dogs in renal failure.* 🌿



Joyce Belcher is an herbalist and formulator of pet supplements and herbal medicinals for veterinarians and is the founder of Herbs for Life Inc. She lives in York, Maine with her husband, two dogs and two cats; they are all rescues. Visit Joyce at [petwellnessblends.com](http://petwellnessblends.com)