



# dogs **naturally**

January 2016

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## Boneset

Botanical Name: *Eupatorium perfoliatum*

Family: Compositae

Part Used: Dried aerial parts

**B**oneset is a common plant that grows around marshes and streams in the eastern part of the United States and Canada. It has a distinctive double leaf that is alternate and joined around the stems, and the flowers are “bone white.” The plant grows three to five feet high and flowers at the end of summer, attracting many pollinators.

When European settlers first came to America, they had diseases particular to the new climate such as intermittent fever with chills and aching in the bones, like our flu symptoms. Northern Indians used boneset for flu, chills, fever and pain. Many practitioners find the primary use of boneset to help with the healing of bones, though most published information doesn't support this use.

The main published information on boneset is for use in northern cold climates where the bones ache because of flu symptoms. This used to be referred to as Bone-Break Fever. Other uses are urinary tract infections, bruises, allergies, fever and rheumatism. The most common ways I use boneset in my canine formulas is as an ad-

ditional ingredient in Hoxsey Formula to help relieve bone pain from osteosarcoma, as a bitter tonic to help strengthen and rebuild digestion to increase appetite after chemotherapy, to help heal bones after a break or serious trauma (reducing swelling from bruises), and as an adjunct in an acute pain formula that is used for deep musculoskeletal pain. It works quickly to relieve structural aches and pains; use a tincture (1:3 parts herb to menstruum, if you make your own), dosed at 6 drops per 10 lbs body weight.

While I'm not a fan of a single herb medicinal, in an acute situation this will relieve your dog of pain; just be sure to introduce it gradually. For chronic pain or geriatric dogs, boneset combines well with anti-inflammatory and analgesic herbs as well, such as boswellia, devil's claw, wild lettuce and perhaps some willow bark.

Be mindful not to add other bitters as boneset is packed with a bitter glycoside called eupatorin, which is quite strong and you wouldn't want to create a digestive upset by overdoing that constituent in the formula.

Boneset can be used for your dog to break fevers and reduce chills that may be caused by infection, for respiratory issues, whether sneezing or coughing (cold or flu-like symptoms); for this purpose it's best given as a warm infusion. You can add elderberry (flowers or berries), yarrow and ginger to this, to soften the bitters. Use 2 to 4 tsp of fresh herb or 1 to 2 tsp of dried herb to 20 oz water, bring to a boil, lower to simmer and steep for 10 to 12 minutes. Cool to a comfortable temperature before using. The dose for this brew would be ¼ cup 2 to 3 times daily or as tolerated.

Boneset is very high in calcium, magnesium, niacin and phosphorus and contains one of the broadest arrays of chemicals in our herbal apothecary: essential oil, resin, chromenes, triterpenes, diterpenes, dendroidinic acid, sesquiterpene lactones, eupafolin, alpha-amyrin and others. The bitter compounds are saponins, sitosterol and alkaloids. Mucilaginous compounds are polysaccharides, containing 15 percent inulin; inulin is the constituent that has the mucilaginous properties, as well as being a great prebiotic. 🌱



*Joyce Belcher is an herbalist/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)*