



## Rose Canina

Family: Rosaceae

Common Name: Rose Hips

Part Used: Fruit

**A**fter roses die off in early autumn, they leave behind a small orange to red ball called the rose hip, which is packed full of seeds. These seeds are highly sought after as a source of vitamins, minerals, volatile oils and bitter compounds of flavonoids and saponins. The seeds and casing are quite mucilaginous, containing nearly 20 percent pectin.

Rose hips' medicinal properties are: antimicrobial, antispasmodic, astringent, diuretic, antiscorbutic and nutritive. The fruit and seeds are a very high source of vitamin C but must be extracted fresh to capture this medicinal constituent. Once dried, there is very little vitamin C remaining. Vitamin C is not a typical part of a dog's diet but it nourishes the connective tissue, cartilage, tendons and supports overall musculoskeletal health. Many commercial dog food brands list vitamin C but it's primarily synthetic, which can wreak havoc with a dog's gastrointestinal (GI) tract and is not well absorbed by the body. Rose hips offer antioxidant properties helping our pups' overall immune function, creating a stronger environment to ward off viral or bacterial infections.

Rosehips are also high in these nutrients: vitamin A, which is necessary for healthy lungs, liver, kidneys and healthy skin; selenium, a mineral that supports the heart and metabolism and can help your

dog maintain a healthy weight; vitamin B (niacin), which helps dogs build a healthy central nervous system and maintain healthy skin; essential fatty acids that help moisten dogs' skin including dry nose, discolored belly skin, even dry, brittle nails.

Other minerals in rose hips include manganese, magnesium, potassium, calcium, zinc and iron.

For a topical application you can infuse a carrier oil that's unrefined and unheated, so it will have the strength to absorb the phytochemicals and protect the fruit's healing properties. Good carrier oils are avocado, grapeseed, olive, jojoba or coconut (if the temperature is above 74F so it isn't solid). For each 4 oz of oil, use 1½ oz of freshly chopped rosehips, seeds included. Place the herb in a glass jar with an airtight lid, fill to the top with the oil and use a chopstick or other clean tool to remove any air bubbles, then fasten the lid tightly. If the weather is consistently above 65 degrees you can do a solar infusion by placing the jar on a table directly

in the sun and leave it for 20 to 40 days, depending on the amount of sun each day. If the temperature is below 65 during the day, place the jar in a sunny window for two to four weeks.

Rose hip infused oil will absorb well into the skin, helping the nutrients work throughout the entire body.

You can also make rose hip tea to add to your pup's food.

Use freeze dried and chopped rosehips (mountainroseherbs.com is a good source) in a 1:6 ratio (one-part rosehips to six parts water) bring to a light boil, then simmer very low for 45 to 60 minutes. Let it cool and keep refrigerated up to a week. Add 1 tsp of tea per 15 lbs of body weight to food once daily for antioxidant supplementation or twice daily for GI tract, respiratory or irritable bowel issues as well as vitamin C supplementation.

*Caution:* Rosehips or any vitamin C based food or supplement should not be used if your dog or cat has calcium oxalate crystals or stones, which are caused by a high acid concentration in the urine. 🍋



*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)*