



## Passionflower

Botanical Name: *Passiflora incarnata*

Family: Passifloraceae

Parts used: Fruit, flowers, stems and leaves  
(all above ground parts)

**P**assionflower is a vine that's native to the subtropical regions of the American hemisphere. It has five stamens, five petals, five sepals and three stigmas in a lavender to purple flower that is breathtaking to see.

The story of this incredibly beautiful flower is that Spanish missionaries saw the flower as a physical representation of Christ's crucifixion. Each part of the flower holds symbolic meaning to the story of the passion of Christ. The five stamens represent the wounds, the five sepals and five petals represent the ten faithful disciples and the three stigmas represent the nails of crucifixion.

Some uses of passionflower for dogs are to relieve smooth muscle spasms or pain, to regulate imbalances of the central nervous system (CNS), for anxiety, for gastrointestinal distress caused by anxiousness and stress, to calm tension, for colic relief, for seizures (when used with other herbs), to overcome depression, to reduce spasmodic coughs as well as twitches and tremors in legs.

The homeopathic remedy from passionflower, *Passiflora incarnata*, treats pain and insomnia. This is incredibly useful for older dogs who wander in the night time due to cognitive decline.

Passionflower is high in chromium, fat, magnesium, niacin, phosphorus, potas-

sium, dietary fiber and vitamin A and has moderate amounts of vitamin C, protein, riboflavin and cobalt.

Flavonoids and alkaloids make up the medicinal properties that work synergistically to enhance and balance the overall effect of the herb. For example, two groups of alkaloids bring a balancing effect to the central nervous system: the harman alkaloids stimulate the central nervous system, delivering effects similar to a light coffee, while the harmala alkaloids produce a relaxing effect by inhibiting the enzyme monoamine oxidase. Translated, this means it's a fantastic herb for your pup who may tend to overdo physical activity. It helps to keep focus and concentration with vigor while simultaneously soothing and calming the nerves.

The actions of passionflower are: anti-spasmodic, CNS depressant, antifungal, narcotic, hypotensive, analgesic, anodyne, antibacterial, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antitussive, diaphoretic, diuretic, hypnotic, nervine, and sedative.

The energetics are cool, bitter and dry.

The anti-fungal property in passionflower is called passicol, which can kill candida. It can be blended with goldenseal root, black walnut hull and olive leaf extracts for a safe and effective formula against persistent cases of yeast.

For calming, passionflower blends well with chamomile, St John's Wort, skullcap and – if needed for extreme anxiety or behavioral issues – valerian root. You can use powdered or tinctured herbs for this blend.

For dogs with seizures who need the neurological system brought into balance, passionflower blends well with hops, bacopa, white peony and bupleurum. This formula works best in a tincture form.

Passionflower can be used as a tea from fresh or dried flower or fruit by using one part flower to five parts water (for example, 1 oz plant material to 5 oz water), steep on medium heat for eight to ten minutes. Cool and give your dog 1 oz per 30 lbs body weight as needed for calming. Another option is to use dried powder at ½ teaspoon per 25 lbs body weight.

Use with caution during pregnancy. 🐾



*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)*