



Stinging Nettle

Mineral- and vitamin-rich **Stinging Nettle** is a naturally nutritious way to help maintain a *healthy urinary tract and flush toxins from your system*. It is said to *uplift a weary body, reduce fatigue* and also *improve thyroid, kidney and bladder functions*. Nettle is also considered an age-old *remedy for allergies and respiratory problems*.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Urtica dioica*

Family: *Urticaceae* (nettle)

Other common names: Nettle, Common Nettle, Devil's Leaf, Net Plant, Great Stinging Nettle, Dwarf Nettle

***"Tender-handed grasp the nettle
And it stings you for your pains.
Grasp it like a man of mettle
And it soft as silk remains."***

History: Although Stinging Nettle is widely recognized as a stinging weed that produces a burning rash when touched, it deserves greater appreciation for its nutritive and medicinal uses. It was once widely drunk as a nutritious spring tonic (the boiling process removes the sting), as it is rich in protein, iron and vitamins. Its use may be traced back to the Bronze Age when it was greatly valued in Scotland and Ireland for its fibers that were made into a durable cloth, a use that continued into the twentieth century. In the second and third centuries B.C., Stinging Nettle was prescribed for hemlock and henbane poisoning and as a cure for snakebite and scorpion sting. The legions of Julius Caesar were said to have introduced Nettles to Britain, thinking they would need it to flog and rub their limbs to keep warm in the colder climate of the north; and the Roman, Pliny, prescribed the juice of Stinging Nettle in the first century as an anti-allergen to alleviate the plant's own sting. Since ancient times, Stinging Nettles have been an important treatment for hay fever, arthritis, asthma, tuberculosis and even

baldness. It was also considered an excellent rubefacient, an agent that irritates and causes blood to flow to an affected area and consequently relieving inflammation; and until recently, "urtication," or beating with Nettles, was a standard folk remedy for arthritis, rheumatism and gout. Stinging Nettle is highly nutritious and has been cooked as a spinach-like vegetable (harvested when the plant is young) or pureed into soups. The plant provides a commercial source of chlorophyll and yields a green dye that has been used in paints and cloth dyeing. Some of the many constituents in Stinging Nettle include protein, B-vitamins and vitamins A and C, high amounts of chlorophyll, formic, caffeic and malic acids, serotonin, glucoquinones, exceptionally high amounts of iron, silica, potassium, calcium, magnesium, copper, manganese, phosphorus, selenium, sulfur, zinc, tannins, histamine, mucilage, ammonia (which causes the stinging), lecithin, lycopene, essential fatty and other acids, folate, beta-carotene, choline, phytosterols, lignins, polysaccharides and the lectin, UDA (*Urtica dioica* agglutinine).

Beneficial Uses: Stinging Nettle has been used for centuries to nourish the urinary tract. Long used as a diuretic, it cleanses the entire system by promoting the flow of urine and also aids kidney and bladder function. The herb is used to expel gravel from the bladder, flush toxins from the system and combat urinary infections.

In the specific case of men's health, the herb has been helpful in treating benign prostatic hyperplasia. The fact that Stinging Nettle root affects hormones and proteins that carry sex hormones (such as testosterone or estrogen) in the human body may be the reason that Germany's Commission E recommends Stinging Nettle root preparations for the treatment of "Difficulty in urination in benign prostatic hyperplasia stages 1 and 2."

As an anti-inflammatory, Nettle appears to inhibit the manufacture of prostaglandins, which may cause inflammation, and has thus been helpful in easing neuralgia, sprains, tendonitis, sciatica, arthritis, rheumatism and gout. The herb is also thought to purify the blood and neutralize and prevent the crystallization of uric acid, further helping to alleviate inflamed arthritic joints, gout and rheumatism.

As an astringent, Stinging Nettle has been effective in stopping external (with topical use) and internal bleeding. It helps to reduce menstrual flow, uterine and internal hemorrhage, blood in the urine, diarrhea and dysentery. The herb's astringency also shrinks inflamed tissues and helps to alleviate hemorrhoids.

Stinging Nettle is a nutritive that has been used for centuries as a tonic that nourishes and detoxifies the entire system. High in iron content, it is considered beneficial for anemia by building red blood cells, and the high vitamin C content ensures that the iron will be absorbed by the body. It is also mineral and vitamin rich and is good for debilitated conditions. Stinging Nettle is used to cleanse the digestive tract, promote healthy digestion and ease stomach problems.

With regard to women's health issues, Stinging Nettle is believed to be effective against vaginal infections, such as *Candida*, a yeast infection. In cases where there is excessive menstrual flow, the herb helps to control uterine hemorrhage and also treat anemic conditions that result from excessive blood loss. Moreover, Stinging Nettle is supposed to be good for expectant mothers as both a nutritive and by guarding against bleeding and it is also believed to promote milk production in nursing mothers.

Stinging Nettle is said to be a fine circulatory stimulant, opening blood vessels and increasing blood circulation throughout the body. This circulatory action is believed to uplift a weary body and relieve fatigue and exhaustion.

The iodine content in Stinging Nettle is said to stimulate healthy thyroid function and is thought to be helpful in treating goiter.

Stinging Nettle is a well-known folk remedy for hay fever and other allergies. It helps to relieve inflammation caused by allergic reactions and clears congestion in the nose and chest. Moreover, it is considered an expectorant that expels phlegm from the stomach and clears mucus from the lungs, which is helpful in cases of respiratory problems.

Used externally, modern herbalists use Stinging Nettle as a hair tonic and growth stimulant and also an antidandruff shampoo. Nettle tea is also considered an effective hair tonic that may bring back the natural color of the hair. A poultice made of the leaves alleviates pain due to inflammation, and the dried powdered leaf is said to stop nosebleed. As a wash, Stinging Nettle is good for burns, eczema, insect bites and wounds. Ironically, although Stinging Nettle is a stinging plant, it is sometimes used in cosmetics as a facial.

Stinging Nettle tea is an old-fashioned remedy for fever, colds and la grippe, and it has also often been used to relieve backache.

Contraindications: Do not take Stinging Nettle if you have high blood pressure, and some people may experience mild gastrointestinal upset with the use of this herb. There are concerns that Stinging Nettle may interact with prescription medications used for diabetes, high blood pressure, sedation and inflammation; therefore, if taking these medications, please consult your physician before taking the herb. People with fluid retention due to congestive heart failure or kidney disease should not use Stinging Nettle, nor should those who think they are coming down with flu, because the herb reduces the body's production of immune chemical interleukin-6. Because of its diuretic properties, Stinging Nettle should not be used regularly unless high potassium foods such as bananas and fresh vegetables are consumed or potassium supplement is taken.

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