

NETTLE LEAF

(*Urtica dioica*)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Anti-inflammatory
- Anti-allergic
- Antioxidant
- Astringent
- Diuretic
- Hepatoprotective
- Irritant (topical)
- Nutritive Tonic

Indications

- Inflammatory joint disease - arthritis, tendonitis
- Neuralgia
- Allergic rhinitis, allergies
- Atopic eczema
- Inflammatory conditions of the urinary tract
- Fluid retention
- Prevention of chemical toxicity and liver damage
- Fatigue and general weakness

Traditional Use

In many European cultures, nettle regularly crossed the bridge between being a food and a medicine. The young spring greens offered a mineral rich, pleasant tasting vegetable prized along with other greens such as dandelion as a 'spring cure'. In Western herbal medicine, nettle has traditionally been used as a tonic herb and recommended for complaints associated with rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and urinary tract infections. 'Urtication' or flogging with nettles was a traditional remedy for chronic rheumatism and general muscle weakness. This has led to modern research into the herbs action in respect to this. Being rich in minerals such as iron, nettle was used for lethargy and depleted states and recovery after childbirth.

Energetics

Cooling, drying.

Constituents

Formic acid, histamine, mucilage, minerals (including iron and calcium), vitamins, ammonia, carbonic acid, chlorophyll and water. Specific constituents include beta-sitosterol, trans-ferulic acid, dotriacotane, erucic acid, ursolic acid, scopoletin, rutin, quercetin, polysaccharides and p-hydroxybenzalcohol.

Use in Pregnancy

Use with caution in the first trimester.

Contraindications and Cautions

People with known sensitivities or allergies to stinging nettle should use this herb cautiously. Local application of nettle can be irritating, and cause contact urticaria, but preparations taken internally are generally well tolerated.

Drug Interactions

Caution with lithium and warfarin. Monitor with antidiabetic and antihypertensive drugs.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 45% alcohol
15 to 80mL weekly