

Urtica dioica and *Urtica massaica* (stinging nettle)

Family: Urticaceae

Botanical description: Stinging Nettle is a coarse perennial with small green flowers. It grows readily where the soil is rich in nitrogen. *Urtica dioica* is widespread in Europe. *Urtica massaica* grows in East Africa. Both have very similar properties.

Parts used: The whole plant is of value including the leaves, roots, stems and flowers.

In brief: This herb has astringent, diuretic and tonic properties. It helps to control bleeding, clear toxins and slightly reduces blood pressure and blood sugar levels (the leaves). The root has similar properties and is used to reduce prostate enlargement.

Constituents: The leaves contain minerals, including potassium, iron and boron), vitamins (including A and C), amines, flavonoides, phenolic acids, scopoletin, b-sitosterol, as well as tannins. The roots contain polysaccharides, a lectin, phenolics, sterols and their glycosides.



Preparation of nettle, as food or medicine

Use the leaves from strongly growing, young healthy plants. Collect using gloves to prevent being stung!

As a vegetable: Steam or briefly boil fresh leaves. After cooking the leaves no longer sting.

Nettle leaf tea: Make an infusion with dried or fresh leaves. The usual recommendation is to drink one cup a day for 10 days, then pause for two days, then continue for ten days and so on.

Nettle root tea: Wash the root thoroughly, cut into small pieces and make a decoction.

Nettle tincture: Cut fresh leaves into small pieces and add 40% alcohol. Shake well twice a day and store in a dark place for two weeks. Filter and store in an airtight, dark glass bottle.

Medicinal uses

Stinging nettle is a diuretic and purifies the blood. Many health problems are significantly helped by removing toxins from the body, especially arthritis. Taken occasionally for a few days at a time it acts as a tonic.

allergies including hay fever: vegetable, leaf or root tea.

anaemia: as a vegetable or nettle leaf tea. The combination of iron and vitamin C helps women of child bearing age and breast feeding women.

arthritis and rheumatism: Many treat arthritic pain by collecting nettle leaves with gloves and then deliberately causing the nettle leaves to sting the affected area. Arthritis may also be helped by taking nettle internally as it helps to remove the uric acid which collects in the joints.

gout: leaf or root tea

haemorrhage (especially of the uterus): leaf tea

haemorrhoids: leaf or root tea

hair loss: try nettle tincture

kidney stones or poor kidney function: drink several cups of nettle leaf tea each ay.

memory loss and to prevent Alzheimer's disease: include nettle regularly in the diet

menstrual pains and bleeding: nettle in any form.

prostate enlargement: root tea or tincture made from the roots.

skin complaints, especially eczema: nettle in any form.

Disclaimer: Discover has compiled this information with the best possible interests of its readership at heart. Discover cannot be held responsible for any negative consequence of following the procedures described in this paper.