

NETTLE

Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is a popular herb with a wide range of uses and a pleasant taste.



Nettle (Urtica dioica) growing wild in Glasgow.

Actions:

- ❖ Anti-histamine
- ❖ Nutritious (including Iron, Vitamin C and B Vitamins)
- ❖ Blood cleansing

Possible Applications:

- ❖ Anaemia (low iron levels)
- ❖ Hayfever and allergies
- ❖ Gout
- ❖ As part of a spring detox
- ❖ Arthritis

Nettle is a common plant in all temperate regions of the world and is

perhaps most well known now for the irritation caused by its sting. It has been used medicinally for thousands of years and as far back as the first century AD was noted for its healing properties. Perhaps its most renowned traditional use was as a spring tonic to cleanse the blood and revitalise the system after winter.

It has a diuretic action, probably due to the flavonoid and high potassium content. By increasing urine production, it encourages the elimination of waste products from the body.

As an anti-allergenic it can be used for hayfever, itchy skin conditions and insect bites and stings. Its juice is also a remedy for its own sting!

Nettle can be taken as a tea or tincture or the fresh tops can be used in cooking and are a pleasant tasting nutritious addition to soups or cooked like spinach (make sure you cook it!).

Preparations:

Dried Herb: One teaspoon per cup, infused for 5 to 10 minutes in boiling water. Drink freely.

Herbal tincture: Tincture doses vary greatly depending on the condition being treated, ask for more details.

Bartram T, 1998. *Encyclopaedia of Herbal Medicine*. Constable: London.

Chevallier A, 2001. *Encyclopaedia of Medicinal Plants*. Dorling Kindersley: London.

Contraindications & Precautions

The contents of this newsletter are for information and education purposes and to assist in the use of herbs. It is not intended to replace the advice of a professional.

FOOD INTOLERANCES AND ALLERGIES

People frequently ask us for information on food sensitivity testing and food allergy testing. Although certain foods can play a role in many symptoms and conditions the tests available are not 100% accurate and are often very expensive.

If you feel some foods seem to cause you health issues, whether they are digestive complaints, skin conditions (such as eczema¹), headaches or any other symptoms, then it can be useful to investigate your foods, be it through a food diary, exclusion diet or testing.

When someone has a **food allergy**, their immune system reacts to a particular food as if it isn't safe. If someone has a severe food allergy, this can cause a life-threatening reaction. Food allergies are caused by antibodies classed as "Ig-E" and reactions are normally within a few minutes. An allergy will be lifelong.

Food intolerance is generally not life-threatening, but if someone eats a food they are intolerant to, this could make them feel ill or affect their long-term health. Intolerances may take a few days to appear. Food intolerances are thought to involve an antibody classed as "Ig-G". Food intolerances are unlikely to be lifelong.

Food Tests

Skin Prick Tests involve placing a tiny amount of food extract into contact with the patient's skin using a pinprick. A welt should form if the food is an allergen.

Blood Tests can identify antibodies that the body has created for some foods. It can be used for both allergies and intolerances, however tests may not identify all intolerances.

Food Sensitivity Tests are the type of test you often see in Health Food Stores. These non-invasive tests can be based on different principles. Recent testing by the BBC suggests that intolerance tests do not give reliable repeatable results, although many people feel they have benefited from the results (possibly by improving their diets).

The Best Test of All?

Food Diary and/or Exclusion Diet

Keeping a food diary may help identify which foods you are sensitive to. For one month record what you eat throughout the day and also keep a note of your symptoms; how bad they are and if they change at all (perhaps on a 1 to 10 scale). After a month review the diary and look for any patterns between foods consumed prior to symptoms worsening. If you are able to identify any potential 'trigger' foods then the next step is to eliminate them whilst continuing to gauge your symptoms. If you see an improvement in your symptoms when the offending food is removed from your diet, then reintroducing it in small amounts will help confirm if it is the culprit.

This method of testing requires dedication and motivation but is the most effective way of establishing which foods should be avoided, particularly for food intolerances.

An honest and well kept food diary should highlight any patterns between diet and symptoms, but remember that more than one food may be causing problems, so be prepared to persist and experiment with eliminating potential culprits one at a time.

Reintroduction of allergen foods after a period of abstinence will establish if the sensitivity is still present or if it has been 'outgrown'. some authors suggest after 1 year

Cautions & contraindications: Extreme diet changes can affect many aspects of health. If there is an ongoing medical condition seek advice from a medical professional before making any major change in diet.

Note 1: In many cases of eczema and other skin complaints there is a food aggravating the condition. In a recent study of eczema sufferers it was suggested that around 80% of cases could be accounted for by sensitivity to milk, eggs or peanuts, however virtually any food can be a cause.

References

Murray M, Pizzorno J. Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine. 2nd Edition, Time Warner Books UK, London.

www.food.gov.uk (Food Standard Agency)

www.bbc.co.uk (BBC website Watchdog)

CLASSES & COURSES

Treating Childhood Eczema

Thursday 2nd August 7pm. Price £6

Medical herbalist Bill Cleeve MNIMH will discuss ways to help this problematic condition. From the right foods and the wrong foods, natural creams, bathtime tips and how to reduce itching.

Improving Fertility

Thursday 6th September 7pm. Price £6

Infertility is an issue for many couples. During this evening seminar herbalist Anna Hill and Acupuncturist Francesca Howell will cover many of the options available to increase fertility from conception to birth.

Make Your Own Natural Cosmetics

We are currently taking details of anyone who would like to attend a fun day making skin creams, lip balms, hair conditioners, face masks and other natural cosmetics. Although the date is to be confirmed it will be on a Sunday in the Autumn from 10am to 4pm.

Please note: Spaces on all courses are limited therefore bookings will be taken in advance.

PRODUCT NEWS

There are an increasing number of natural products available offering natural ways to address long term problems including high Cholesterol levels and poor blood sugar control (e.g. Diabetes).

Momordica – High Blood Sugar

Momordica (Bitter Melon) has a long history of use in the East to help maintain healthy blood sugar levels. Trials of Momordica have shown that it can help with blood sugar control as it contains a constituent which is similar to insulin with regards to its composition of amino acids. Momordica may be suitable for those people with high blood sugar levels and may help reduce some of the long term effects of poor blood sugar control.

Cautions & contraindications: For those people who are suffering from diabetes and are currently on medication, we strongly recommend that Momordica tablets should only be taken under the supervision of a GP. Not

PRODUCTS (CONT)

recommended for children or during pregnancy.

Nutri Nano CoQ10 – Heart Health

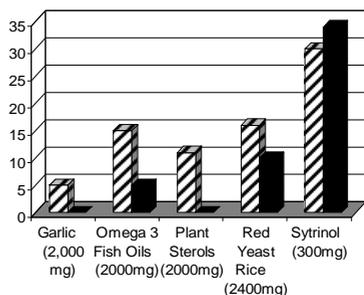
It is not just new herbs and plants which are helping people to improve their health. New ways to ensure that supplements are digested better are allowing improved results often at reduced price compared to older supplements. Solgar's Nutri-nano Coenzyme Q10 offers significant advantages over conventional CoQ10. It may be worth trying in a number of instances related to cardiovascular health. For more information please contact Graham.

Cautions & contraindications: Consult your doctor before taking CoQ10 if you are taking warfarin or on heart medication.

Sytrinol – High Cholesterol

Sytrinol is a new product that has been developed from natural citrus constituents called polymethoxylated flavones (PMFs) which are one of the many bioflavonoids found in foods. In Sytrinol specific PMFs have been found to help lower LDL cholesterol by inhibiting the creation of its building blocks: apolipoprotein B and triglycerides. Triglycerides are also one of the primary risk factors in metabolic syndrome and type II diabetes. The effectiveness of Sytrinol in lowering LDL Cholesterol compared to some other common supplements is shown below.

SYTRINOL v Other Natural Products



▨ Total Cholesterol Reduction ■ Triglycerides reduction

CLINIC

MEDICAL HERBALISM

Herbal medicine is the most popular form of medicine in the world. It is now widely available in shops as an "over the counter" treatment throughout the UK. Books are regularly being published about the uses of herbs and nearly every newspaper has an expert on complementary health recommending herbs in their columns.

With all of this information readily available why should you bother to visit a trained medical herbalist?

There are hundreds of herbs which may be used to treat a wide range of conditions. Each of these herbs may be used on their own, or as a combination of several herbs to treat a condition. The medical herbalist has studied a large number of herbs which they can choose from to write a prescription. They are also trained to know the contraindications for herbs, and any possible interactions between the prescribed herbs, and also between herbs and any other medication.

Medical herbalists also work holistically, this means they don't just treat the disease, or the symptoms of that disease, they treat the person as a whole. They learn how to diagnose a condition, not just giving it a name – such as dermatitis or psoriasis – but also asking questions to find out the cause of the condition and the lifestyle of the patient. This makes the consultation longer than a consultation with the GP, but is all part of finding out about the person, not just the disease. By having a full consultation with a medical herbalist it is more likely to uncover things that may be missed when treating yourself over the counter.

Currently within the UK a "herbalist" may practise with a range of different qualifications. At Woodland Herbs all of our medical herbalists have completed 4 years full time training in medical herbalism, and are members of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH). Proposed legislation means that Medical herbalists will soon be registered, ensuring that all those who practise under the title "herbalist" have the appropriate

qualification. All members of the NIMH will be included in the register.

We are lucky to have three NIMH herbalists practising with us. If you are considering consulting a medical herbalist then any of our practitioners should be suitable but you may have a preference.

What can a herbalist treat?

A herbalist treats the majority of the conditions you would see a GP for. Some of the common conditions treated include:

- Stress
- Digestive complaints
- Skin conditions
- Pain management
- Hormonal problems

Prices: Initial Consultation £35
Return visits £20

Herbal prescriptions are charge separately but typically cost £4 a week. We offer a reduced rate for people on low incomes.

Available: Monday to Saturday (except Thursday). Evening appointments available.

We have a copy of the NIMH register. Contact us if you would like to visit a medical herbalist outside the Glasgow area.

Newsletter Therapy Offer



4 weeks Herbal Medicine prescription Free with initial Herbal consultation

Terms & Conditions: Not valid with any other offer. Offer valid to 31st September 2007.

New Therapist: Mhairi Gammage

We are happy to have recruited an experienced complementary therapist who will allow us to continue to meet the demand for some of our most popular therapies. Mhairi practices:

- Therapeutic massage
- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology

Price: £30 (1 hour)

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