**Herbal Dog**

Florida Herb Conference, 2015

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**Reading list:**

**The Complete Herbal Book for the Dog; a Handbook of Natural Care and Rearing**. Juliette de Bairacli Levy. 1971 Arco Publishing.

Juliette is a legendary herbalist and has written about all things herbal related to the farm. Her work has an old-school flavor and tone as she relies on herbs that she can easily get and not on imported herbs whatsoever. She discusses food for dogs as well as the entire process of raising healthy dogs.

**All you Ever Wanted to Know About Herbs for Pets**. Mary L. Wulff-Tilford and Gregory L. Tilford. 1999, Bowtie Press.

I put off buying this book for much too long. This is a large and somewhat glossy book but don’t be put off by this – it is practical, specific and concrete in its information. It’s not encyclopedic in scope but is so very useful and grounded in herbal support for each system of the body. This book discusses cats as well as dogs. It is generally built around western and easily-located herbs, not exotic and imported herbs. The photographs are excellent as well.

**Four Paws Five Directions**; A Guide to Chinese Medicine for Cats and Dogs. Cheryl Schwartz, DVM. Celestial Arts Publishing, Berkeley CA, USA. 1996.

This book is useful and, even for the non-TCM herbal practitioner or student, a valuable investment at a low cost. You will learn more about Chinese herbal medicine and about dog and cat health from the TCM perspective. While a lot of the herbs are Chinese, there are also lists of supplements, western herbs and dietary support for each condition discussed.

**Homeopathic Care for Cats and Dogs:** Small Doses for Small Animals; Don Hamilton, DVM, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley CA. 1999

Homeopathy can be useful as a first aid tool and for chronic conditions. The strength of this book is that it explains health conditions of dogs and cats in clear and concise language. Each system of the body and how it works is explained with specific examples, general care suggestions, assessment keys to look for and danger signs. Very useful and practical book for the general public as well as a practicing herbalist.

**Manual of Natural Veterinary Medicine; Science and Tradition**. Susan Wynn RH(AHG), DVM, Steve Marsden, DVM, Naturopath. 2003, Mosby Press, St Louis MO.

This book is heavily weighted toward TCM. It has good explanations of afflictions of both dogs and cats and does, in places, list western herbs, supplements and homeopathic options. In both assessment and in central herbal protocols, though, it tends to be built around Chinese herbs. It is useful for the non-TCM herbalist but, if you’re on a budget, not essential for a working library.

**Veterinary Secrets: Natural Health for Dogs and Cats;** How Conventional Veterinary Medicine may be Harming Your Pets, and What You Can do About It. Andrew Jones, DVM

Dr. Jones is a Canadian veterinarian who, according to him, lost his license to practice due to his relentless insistence on natural remedies. He has a lot of useful YouTube videos online but this book goes deeper into food and vaccinations. This book is worth a read though it would not be my only book. He is not an herbalist, but has real life experience with dogs and cats and is a good teacher.

**Online Resources:**

**Hill’s Atlas of Veterinary Clinical Anatomy**

[www.hillsvet.com/en/us/practice-management/atlas-of-veterinary-clinical-anatomy](http://www.hillsvet.com/en/us/practice-management/atlas-of-veterinary-clinical-anatomy)

You can upload and print the entire book; or can buy the book, which is quite worth having. Sometimes it is available on Ebay or, if you know a sales rep from Hill’s, you might find a way to get a copy. Hill’s also has free courses in dog/cat nutrition.

**Whole Dog Journal –** [www.whole-dog-journal.com](http://www.whole-dog-journal.com/)

Free online newsletter available by subscription.

**Herbal Formulas:**

Remember that you can substitute herbs and do not have to stick totally to these combinations. This is to get you on the right track, but use care and always start any herbal protocol with small amounts to be sure there is no allergic or other adverse reaction. Responsible herbal substitution is always appropriate.

**General Tonic to add to food** – use up to 1 teaspoon per pound of food fed daily.

Combine equal parts spirulina, nettle herb, dandelion leaf, alfalfa, and flaxseed powder. Grind it all up and add the powder to food. Or make a cold infusion of the nettles, dandelion leaf and alfalfa herb, then add the spirulina and flax powder. If the dandelion leaf causes too-frequent urination then back off or remove it. (note: horsetail will often cause this as well.)

This tonic supplies protein, vitamin C, B complex (including B12), A, E, K, iron, potassium, calcium, phosphorus and omega-3 fatty acids.

**Inflammatory bowel diseases –** essential to reduce inflammation with demulcent herbs.

Use up to 1 mil low-alcohol tincture, or 1 Tablespoon strong tea per day.

 2 parts: slippery elm, or plantain, or kudzu root, or okra pods

 1 part: marshmallow root, or kudzu root, or plantain, or okra pods

 1 part: licorice root

 1 part: fennel seed

**Tonic for chronic constipation** – supplement diet with high fiber; e.g., psyllium husk, flaxseed, canned pumpkin, sweet potato. Fresh chickweed is excellent and soothing.

 2 parts: dandelion root (roasted)

 2 parts: mallow root

 1 part: Mahonia or barberry root

 1 part: yellow dock root

 1 part fennel seed

**Chronic arthritis formula**

Dry herb – 1 Tablespoon per 30# dog’s weight, mixed in food.

Low-alcohol tincture – 2-4 mil per 30# weight. Can add ½ part yarrow if they will eat it.

 2 parts: alfalfa

 1 part dandelion root

 1 part: parsley root

 1 part: cleavers or calendula herb (if using dry herb use calendula, not cleavers.)

**Arthritis Compress**

 3 parts willow bark

 3 parts comfrey leaf (large older ones are lower in PA’s)

 3 parts yarrow (dried)

 1 part (or less) cayenne

Cook the willow bark on low heat 20 minutes, then add other herbs. Add enough hot water to make thick paste. Check skin often to be sure there is no irritation from the cayenne. Can use as a rinse, or wrap with a towel and let sit. Can also add clay and make a wonderful mud. When using mud packs, you can add alcohol tinctures to good effect.

**Herbs to AVOID for dogs:**

* Coffee
* Comfrey root (leaves are sometimes used in moderation, but use care, especially if there may be liver concerns or weakness or if the dog has been on many medications already or has Lyme)
* Garlic (in excess – in small amounts can be acceptable – over time can contribute to anemia)
* Hops (in excess)
* Ephedra, Ma huang
* Pennyroyal – especially the essential oil
* Tea tree oil – and any other essential oils unless strongly diluted. Use extreme care with any scented products on dog’s skin (even “natural” ones). Dogs have very sensitive skin.
* Wormwood
* Yucca (in excess – often used in combination formulas with good result)

**The following foods are unsafe for your dog:**

**Avocado**

Avocado leaves, fruit, seeds and bark may contain a toxin known as persin. The Guatemalan variety, a common one found in stores, appears to be the most problematic. Other varieties of avocado can have different degrees of toxic potential.

Avocado is sometimes included in pet foods for nutritional benefit. We would generally not expect avocado meal or oil present in commercial pet foods to pose a hazard to dogs and cats.

**Bread Dough**

**Chocolate**

**Ethanol (Also Known as Ethyl Alcohol, Grain Alcohol or Drinking Alcohol)**

Dogs can consume herbal tinctures in alcohol, although it is often better to use a glycerite or tea if available and realistic. Consumed with food is better than on an empty stomach.

**Fish – raw salmon or trout**

**Grapes and Raisins**

Kidney failure – even dogs who can eat grapes and be fine one day can have severe problems the next day. Not worth it.

**Hops**

Cultivated hops have been associated with potentially life-threatening signs in dogs. Both fresh and spent (cooked) hops have been implicated in poisoning dogs. Affected dogs develop an uncontrollably high body temperature (often greater than 108 degrees Fahrenheit), which results in damage to and failure of multiple organ systems. Dogs poisoned by hops become restless, pant excessively, and may have muscle tremors and seizures. Prompt veterinary intervention is necessary to prevent death in these dogs.

**Macadamia Nuts**

**Moldy Foods**

A wide variety of molds grow on food. Some produce toxins called tremorgenic mycotoxins, which can cause serious or even life-threatening problems. Avoid feeding dogs moldy food. In other words, if you wouldn’t eat it, neither should your dog

**Onions and Garlic**

All close members of the onion family (shallots, onions, garlic, scallions, etc.) contain compounds that can damage dogs’ red blood cells if ingested in sufficient quantities. A rule of thumb is “the stronger it is, the more toxic it is.” Garlic tends to be more toxic than onions, on an ounce-for-ounce basis. While it’s uncommon for dogs to eat enough raw onions and garlic to cause serious problems, exposure to concentrated forms of onion or garlic, such as dehydrated onions, onion soup mix or garlic powder, may put dogs at risk of toxicosis. The damage to the red blood cells caused by onions and garlic generally doesn’t become apparent until three to five days after being ingested. Affected dogs may seem weak or reluctant to move, or they may appear to tire easily after mild exercise. Their urine may be orange-tinged to dark red in color. A veterinarian should examine dogs having these symptoms immediately. In severe cases, blood transfusions may be needed.

**Xylitol**

Xylitol is a non-caloric sweetener that is widely used in sugar-free gum, as well as in sugar-free baked products. In humans, xylitol does not affect blood sugar levels but, in dogs, ingestion of xylitol can lead to a rapid and severe drop in blood sugar levels. Dogs may develop disorientation and seizures within 30 minutes of ingesting xylitol-containing products, or signs may be delayed for several hours. Some dogs who ingest large amounts of xylitol develop liver failure, which can be fatal. A veterinarian should examine all dogs ingesting xylitol-containing products immediately.