

# MEMÓRIA DA TERRA

~ Cycles of study with Native Plants and Ancient Wisdom ~

## NETTLE

(*Urtica* spp.)



Family: Urticaceae

Origin: Native from Europe, Asia, North Africa and North America, adapts to temperate climates.

Element and Planet: Fire. Mars.

Actions: Astringent, diuretic, tonic, hemostatic.

Medicinal Properties and Uses: Very high in vitamins (A, B2, B5, C and E) and minerals (iron, calcium, copper and magnesium).

An excellent anti-inflammatory, it's one of the best medicines for allergies and anemia.

Strengthens the tissues of the urinary tract, prostate and bladder.

Because of its diuretic action, stimulating the production of urine and eliminating toxins, it is used in healing arthritis and gout.

Stinging an area directly with the plant is one of the treatments used, as it activates circulation and reestablishes nerve communication.

For eczema and skin inflammation is a great treatment, as well as to strengthen hair and nails.

Nettles are great allies for women's health, reducing menstrual pain, nourishing and balancing the hormonal and reproductive systems and regulating heavy bleeding. They are great medicine for pregnancy and postpartum, improving the quality and quantity of milk and helping to stop uterine bleedings.

Enriches the blood and amplifies the capacity of cells to metabolize nutrients.

Tones the liver and the whole digestive tract, supporting the healing of wounds in the stomach and gut.

#### Identification, Habitat and Ecology:

The leaves are heart shaped, oval, serrated and grow opposite on a square erect stem. Both leaves and stems are very hairy with some non-stinging hairs and many stinging hairs. The roots are creeping and the flowers are green or purple, according to the species, growing in branched clusters. It's easy to find Nettles, as they grow abundant amongst us. They like rich and moist soil, rich in nitrogen.

Most commonly found, the species *Urtica dioica*, is a perennial, sometimes grows 2 meters tall. There are many different species and the one we are having in the tincture and tea, is *Urtica membranacea*, a species native from the mediterranean landscape, which is annual (lives for only one growing season). Male and female flowers grow on different plants or branches.

Nettles attract important pollinators and are a sign of rich soil.

Also, they are used to make a natural fertilizer and insecticide, through the fermentation of Nettles in water.

History and Cultural Uses: The name comes from the latin verb "urere", that means to burn. In Latin America, the native people use the Nettles in purification rituals, beating the skin with the fresh plant, which activates circulation and stimulates the immune system. Also with the same use, the Roman soldiers did this to stay warm when invading the lands of Northern Europe.

All over Europe and some parts of Asia, the fibers are used to make very resistant clothing.

Nettles have been used in the kitchen as a nutritious green vegetable.

Folklore and Mythology: Nettles are present in European folklore as a herb of protection, fertility and healing.

In Norse mythology, the trickster god Loki is believed to have used nettle fibers to create the first fishing net.

Nettle is considered a liminal gate keeper plant, as it works with boundaries.