



IDEAS for using Stinging Nettle ALL year long

~ for optimum health and benefit

<http://www.studiobotanica.com>

Stay tuned for lots more herb-infused ideas

Carol

I love Nettle. Yes, I do. The abundance of this powerful plant, thought to be a useless weed by many, is one of the earth's gifts to us, and never more important than "now".

So many of us are rushing about with long "to do" lists, filling up on coffee to help us get going every morning and then more coffee or 'Cola' for ongoing caffeine support.

Stinging nettles are probably the most nutritionally-dense plant on Mother Earth. Rich in protein, trace minerals and vitamins, it has the ability to restore energy, working deep within the body on our 'zapped' adrenal glands. Miss nettle has several 'mechanisms of action' and can move her deep healing powers to all of the cells in our body.

That is, if we can ingest enough! I am fond of saying that herbs can indeed change our lives if we take the correct herb, the best version of that herb, enough of that herb and take it longer than we think is necessary. In this case, the 'trick' is to ensure that we have nettle often. It becomes a habit, to find ways to incorporate nourishing herbs like 'Stinging Nettle' into our daily lives. Sometimes, that's a challenge. I thought I'd share some ideas with you ~ to help you to make this delightful 'green lady' be an integral part of your life.

Each season offers a different idea.



I have a series of nettle 'concoctions', which allow me to add nettle's gifts to my day. As I mentioned, each season has a nettles project! I hope that you will enjoy this mini-collection of my own personal 'likes' throughout the seasons

Remember: Pick the fresh nettles with care. That formic acid does sting!

In the spring, I collect fresh nettles, and enjoy them steamed, with a little butter added and a dash of sea salt and fresh ground black pepper. Any way that you would prepare spinach or collards or Swiss chard, you can substitute with nettles. I make a delicious stir-fried dandelion greens dish, and, when possible, I add nettles to the dandelions. I also make pesto with nettles! Just use your imagination and enjoy.

Here's ONE of many Pesto ideas:

- 1 large bunch of fresh Dandelion leaves
- 2 large handfuls of nettle leaves
- 2 oz almonds (or nut of your choice)
- 4 oz parmesan cheese, grated
- 4 oz Olive oil (best you can find!)

Directions:

Place the greens into a pot of boiling water for a minute or so. Strain into a colander in the sink and douse with cold water. Put the greens into your food processor (or blender) Add the nuts and the cheese. Add enough olive oil to allow the machine to do it's work. When the mixture forms a paste-like consistency, add the remaining olive oil. Pour the mixture into a large jar or container with lid.

I tend to use canning jars with good lids. Store in the fridge.



NOTE: I also have made this sort of pesto without the cheese. Then I pour into ice cube trays and freeze overnight. I call this "herb paste".

After frozen, the cubes go into a zip lock 'labeled' bag in my freezer. I add the cheese when using later (or not!) These herb paste cubes are ready to add to any soups, stews, sauces or stir-fries. They offer the additional nourishment of nettle in an easy-to-use power-packed 'cube'



Herbalists love to infuse herbs!

In spring and summertime every year, I infuse fresh herbs in vinegar to add herbal goodness to my meals. I use herbal vinegars in salads of course, but also find that they are delicious when added to soups, stews, and sauces and as a marinade ingredient for vegetable or meat dishes.

We can choose to infuse fresh (or dried) nettles in vinegar. Use fresh if nettles are green and growing. I make time each year to make this with fresh plant material, as it is preferable. Use dried if fresh unavailable. I tend to use good quality apple cider vinegar (ACV) but you may choose whichever vinegar you prefer. This is SO easy.

Try this recipe with fresh nettles this SPRING and Summer!
SO.. You can use this wonderful stinging nettle vinegar as a vinaigrette ingredient, or add to steamed veggies to increase nutrient absorption. I have posts coming up on [Studio Botanica](#) with some other ideas. Stay Tuned. **Also..** You can use this special vinegar in the 'boudoir' as a hair rinse to stimulate your scalp and promote hair growth!

I would suggest using gloves to protect your hands.

Nettles in Vinegar

Harvest the nettles. (I harvest the top 1/3 of the plant)
Use the stems and leaves.

Put the nettles into a glass jar. Pack the plant material into the jar.

Fill the jar with vinegar.

If using a metal lid, use a small square of waxed paper to avoid the vinegar touching the metal lid.

Place in a sunny window or in a warm cupboard. Shake the jar from time to time.
It's ready to use after a month, although some like to let it sit for 6 weeks or more.

Check the jar during this time to ensure that the nettles are fully submerged in the vinegar. Top up with vinegar if needed.



Another easy NETTLE project, and one that gets rave reviews from my friends? Port wine infused with nettle leaves and a few other flavour options. YUM!! You can make adjustments here—but this is what I have made, for almost 20 years.

Nettles in Port

1 litre (or approx 1 quart) of Port
4-6 handfuls of nettle leaves (fresh is best)
8-10 prunes
2 cups raisins
2 cinnamon sticks

Optional: cranberries, dried apricots, dried or apples, dried.
Ensure any/all of these dried fruits are dried without chemicals.

To Make:

You will need 1 large glass jar with lid.
Add all the ingredients above and then add the port.
Allow to steep for 4-6 weeks. Ensure that all plant material is covered with the port.
Strain.

I serve this in small cordial glasses as a mineral-building tasty treat.

Sorry No picture. It never lasts long enough. Promise to write this one up and make as soon as I have some Porto!!

There are lots more ideas for incorporating Nettles into our summer and I promise to write some more as soon as possible over at www.studiobotanica.com

As we move onwards in the year, looking towards fall and winter, I always try to dry some nettle herb (leaves, stems) before the plants get too large. I like to try to harvest as much as possible, when I find in the wild, when it's less than 2 feet tall. Opinions vary, however, and I've seen stands of nettle over 8 feet tall, that are happy, strong and vibrant plants (that was a sight to behold!)



All year long, I use fresh (when possible) and alternatively, dried nettle to make a tea, or as herbalists call it, sometimes, "Nettle Infusion" There are short and long infusions, sun or solar infusions. There's a long list. For the best results with our lovely nettle leaves, we often make what is called, Long Infusion" I remember Susun Weed, 'wise woman herbalist', was the first to teach me this idea. She maintains that when we infuse nettles in just boiled water and let steep, covered for 6-8 hours, or more, we extract all the precious life-enhancing minerals and achieve the best benefits. It's easy to do, I find, especially, using a glass canning jar with a good fitting lid. Just steep overnight, strain the next morning, and enjoy!

I like to infuse nettles alone, especially if fresh plant material is being used. Otherwise, it's fun to change it up and add other supportive herbs to create a nutritious delicious blend. Here's one with nettles, hibiscus, oat tops, and orange peel.



When the seasons change, and fresh nettle is not available, there are also tasty options for well dried nettles. The easiest idea is to simply sprinkle 'crumbles' of dried nettles into food as you might use parsley. Mix dried nettles with other herbs to make your own seasonings! I love to play with herbal combinations to create condiments. Here's an old family favourite for you to try. It's easy to make and very nutritious.

Nettles 'Gomasio'

4 tablespoons nettles, dried, crumbled
4 tablespoons sesame seeds
4 tablespoons dulse seaweed

Directions:

Toast the sesame seeds in a dry frying pan over low to medium heat until slightly golden.

Add the crumbled dulse and nettles and very lightly toast, stirring gently.

You are just warming ~ not cooking!

Remove from the heat.

Allow to cool.

Store the mixture in a glass jar. I tend to use canning jars with tight-fitting lids. Store in a dark cupboard. Take a small amount and fill a shaker container. Keep it handy and use it often. This mixture is delicious, and easy to use in your meals.

Optional add on ideas? What tastes do you like? Sometimes I add some 'red pepper flakes', for example. We are only limited by our imagination!

No matter what the season, consider "miss nettles" ~ a trusted green ally.

Whichever way you take nettles, just remember to enjoy lots. If you can begin to create a series of your own 'nettles concoctions', you may find that you do indeed benefit from this most amazing herb! (I so hope that you do!)

Wishing you ONLY the best health, and lots of great herb-infused meals!

Carol

Stay tuned for lots MORE ideas and delicious herb-infusions!