



Animal Aromatics Factsheet 2

Feeding Herbs to Dogs

Dogs like all animals are born with the natural or innate ability to self-select herbs which they require in their diet to rebalance their bodies systems. Self selection, also called self-medication, can be achieved by naturally foraging on wild herbs in the garden and on walks and even eating the faeces of other animals. Favourites include cleavers (sticky willy), cow parsley and various grass species. Herbs can be selected for a wide range of issues including cleansing the digestive system of toxins (purging) for pain management, for cell repair, skin conditions and allergies to name just a few.

Herbs Vs Drugs

Herbs like drugs have active ingredients. Unlike drugs, whole herbs have several active ingredients and can affect different body systems. For example meadowsweet and willow contain a natural source of salicylic acid, the active ingredient in aspirin widely known for its pain killing and anti-inflammatory actions. In their natural herbal form, meadowsweet and willow also contain a mucilage compound which lines and protects the gut wall preventing it from damage and ulcers. This is just one example of the amazing power of herbs, and the benefits of feeding whole herbs rather than extracts. That said, herbs should be used to support and promote health, and should not be used instead of drugs or as a substitute for veterinary advice.

Herb Dosages

Some websites suggest quantities of herbs to feed according to bodyweight, but this is misleading because the precise amount of active ingredients in each batch of herb can vary. Rest assured all our herbs, roots, barks, berries and powders are of the finest human grade and quality tested, so your dog is still receiving the highest quality products, but we do not prescribe or give dosages for this reason.

Self Selection

By far the best way to offer herbs is by self-selection. You may have noticed your dogs will eating, sniffing or rolling on certain plants in your garden, or stop and have a chew or sniff various plants whilst out walking. This is self-selection in action. We can take this a step further and offer a wider range of herbs per session. To do this, offer a small amounts of each herb in separate bowls at the same time. This technique requires some time and patience, and can be a bit messy but is very rewarding. If you choose this method ensure the following:

- Choose a quiet time of the day so you can both focus on the task in hand.
- Ensure fresh water is available at all times.
- Ensure your dog isn't hungry – self selection is out of choice not hunger.
- Choose powdered herbs, they are often easier to ingest.
- Mix powders with a small amount of water.
- Make notes of the herbs selected for future reference.

If you require further information please contact us at enquiries@animalaromatics.co.uk

Herbal Mixes

Self selection may not be practical for a variety of reasons, but don't worry, your dog can still benefit from the power of herbs in a variety of mixes specifically designed for e.g. promoting gut health, improving mobility, supporting the immune system and supporting liver function. In addition to these, bespoke mixes are available on request. Mixes can be added to the usual food rations starting with a small amount, and gradually increasing the amount fed. We can give guidance on dosages, but the amount required by each animal is individual and amounts can vary.

Herb Mats

Herb mats are a great way for our canine friends to self select herbs. Simply place several herbs on a 'mat' or on the floor and let them sniff, roll and chew on the goodies available. Please see Fact Sheet 3 The Herb Mat for further details.



Self-selecting cleavers on a country ramble



Left: A self-selection session

Right: Rolling on rosehip shells

