

Nepeta cataria
Family: Labiatae - mint
Parts: leaves and flowers

Catnip is one of the best children's herbs as it is gentle and safe, yet powerful for upset stomach, colic, and digestive problems. It also helps calm children and babies and aids in a restful sleep. It is great herb choice for pregnancy, nursing, and babies.

Properties

Antispasmodic, analgesic, astringent, anodyne, anti-inflammatory, cholagogue, nervine, emmenagogue, antacid, sedative, anesthetic, carminative, diaphoretic, bug repellent.

Energetics: cooling, drying
Systems Affected: digestive, nervous, respiratory

Uses

- Baby support; colic, fussy baby, jaundice, helps induce sleep, teething pain reliever (popsicles work great for this purpose).
- Alleviates many symptoms of childhood disease and illness
- Nourishes and soothes muscles and nerves
- Colds, flu, and fever
- Respiratory; coughs, sore throat, chest congestion, croup, bronchitis, etc.
- Digestive complaints; gas, bloating, indigestion, diarrhea, constipation, tummy aches, etc.
- Nausea, morning sickness, upset stomach, "butterflies" – nervousness
- Anxiety, nerves, stress
- Muscle cramping, even those associated with pregnancy and menstruation
- Appendicitis (enema)
- Toothache (chew on the leaves)
- Headache
- Aids a restful sleep
- Cataracts, eye health
- Woman issues, before, during and after birth
- Menstrual discomfort, painful cramps, afterbirth cramping, etc.
- Relaxes the uterus, preventing contractions, helpful to prevent miscarriage
- Makes a great insect repellent, plant by doors or infuse into witch hazel, water, or oil for a bug spray. Can also rub the plant directly on skin.

Herb Preparations

- Fresh Leaf; can rub directly onto body for insect repelling properties. Chew on leaves or add to foods (has a musky type of flavor).
- Tea (blends well with mint and chamomile, both great for children)
- Baths, soaks, steams
- Tincture
- Syrup
- Poultice, compress
- Powdered, capsules, sprinkle
- Salve, ointment, cream
- Herbal honey
- Liniment
- Herbal pillow
- Enema
- Hydrosol
- Essential oil

Forage/Care/Harvesting

- Can be foraged in disturbed areas, roadsides, streams, ponds, and waste ground.
- Sow seed directly in the garden in mid spring or start from seed indoors 4-6 weeks before last frost. Roots can be propagated or purchase from a nursery as a transplant.
- Transplant in full sun or partial shade, 12" apart after last frost.
- Grows well in any soil, give low to moderate amounts of water, catnip likes it dry more than wet.
- May want to put a cage around the plant to protect from cats.
- Can be harvested anytime during the season but catnip is at its most potent when flowering. Cut back to 3-4" and it will continue to grow, giving you several cuttings throughout the season.