

# A Summer Herb Garden for Your Dog

By Deva Khalsa



It's easy to plant a healing garden that will provide you with fragrant herbs throughout the growing season. What could be more fun on a balmy summer day than working in a garden with your dogs playing nearby?

**T**he common garden herbs mentioned in this article can be incorporated into your pet's diet, or used externally to support health and wellness, helping your dogs to stay at their peak of vitality. Routine use of herbs in the diet will help to detoxify your dog's body and keep the immune system in its healthiest state.

These herbs have been used for centuries as natural remedies and to maintain good health. They are safe, easy to use, and have been included in a dog's diet to add spice. They aid in the healing process as well as enhancing the taste of food. Fresh herbs are always the best, but use sparingly as they impart a strong presence.

Many of these herbs return year after year. In the very cold climates, a covering of hay or burlap may protect the more fragile ones.



## Fennel

Fennel is a wonderful digestive aid and was used for this purpose in Australia, India, and Spain for hundreds of years. Fennel seeds, when taken after a meal, assist in digestion. The tea helps rid the body of toxins and cleanse the cells and tissues of the body.



# Chamomile

Chamomile is a very gentle herb with a mild flavor. This herb may be helpful to add to your dog's diet when he is in a nervous adolescent stage as Chamomile has a sedating and calming effect. It also helps the pain of teething. German and French varieties are often available at garden stores.

Chamomile supports digestive function, liver function, and helps with flatulence. It may also be helpful to dogs with irritable bowel problems, and can be taken to boost the appetite and settle the stomach.

It can also be of assistance to allergic, itchy dogs. In this case, it can be added to the diet and also used externally on the skin. A strong tea can help to heal skin rashes and soothe irritated skin. Chamomile can also be helpful in promoting sleep to elderly animals who pace around at night. An older animal should take it just before bedtime.

## Fresh chamomile is an excellent insect repellent.

Chopped bits of chamomile may be added to home-cooked meals. One to three teaspoons is plenty. The flowers and leaves are the best parts of the plants to use. You can also make a tea for digestive problems and give one teaspoon for small dogs to one tablespoon for large dogs before or after meals.



## Making a tea from Herbs

To make a tea, pour 2 cups of boiling water over 2 tablespoons of the herb. Let steep for 15 to 30 minutes. Refrigerate the leftover tea for future use.



### Tip:

When making your own calendula tea it is best to use the petals alone, for this makes a better product.

# Calendula

The vivid colors of its flowers are reason enough to plant calendula. This herb is a favorite among herbalists, and for good reason. It has an almost magical effect in healing wounds. Calendula has a more powerful ability to hinder bacteria than many antibiotics, but it also has the benefit of having an anti-inflammatory effect while it promotes new healthy cell growth. It is ideal for first aid treatment and works almost miraculously to slow and stop bleeding.

I have to admit that Calendula is my favorite, for it can do so much. Calendula acts as an antifungal and antibacterial agent. It is excellent to place on the skin of itching dogs and can sometimes stop a hot spot in a jiff. For hot spots, use a strong tea made from the leaves, and apply this frequently to the area. Calendula is widely available in salve and ointment form in health food stores.





## Parsley

This herb is rich in minerals and is an aid to digestion. Its use in meals helps to maintain a good pH level that your dog needs for disease prevention. It also freshens the breath, and we all know one or two dogs who could really use that!

Parsley is also excellent for the urinary system: the kidneys and bladder. It works as a diuretic to remove water retention in the body and is a good addition to each meal for dogs with heart conditions and fluid retention. Parsley is easy to add routinely to each meal. A teaspoon or more can be finely chopped and added to home-cooked food.

*Parsley works to detoxify the body and a teaspoon or more in every meal adds chlorophyll that is so healthy.*

## Rosemary

Rosemary originated in France and the United States. A small amount of fresh Rosemary can go a long way. This herb has an absolutely beautiful aroma and it is lovely to sit near in the summer months.

Rosemary, used topically, has an antifungal, antibacterial, and antiseptic effect. Inhaling the steam from a tea of rosemary is good for sinus infections. Adding  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of Rosemary to 2 cups of home-cooked food is adequate for flavoring.



### Fact:

This herb also helps digestion.



## Sage

Sage is another herb that has a wonderful, healing fragrance. It can be used as an addition to the everyday diet by adding  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of chopped fresh sage to a stew or casserole. It can also be used as a tea to rinse the mouth because of its healing effect on gingivitis. You can even add some of the tea to your dog's water bowl and simply allow him to drink it. (Of course, make sure he likes the water with the sage tea addition. Start out with small amounts in the water, and if he likes it, gradually increase the amount of tea.) *This herb works to strengthen the body in general and has the effect of balancing estrogen levels.* It would be good to add this to the food of a spayed female who is experiencing urinary leakage when sleeping.





### Soothing Bath

Add ½ cup of chopped lavender to 4 cups of boiling water to make a rinse. Let this steep for 30 minutes, then strain and place in a clean jar or spray bottle. Refrigerate any that you will not use within 5 days. Rinse your dog after his bath, and use the spray bottle to keep him fresh in between.

## Lavender

### Tip:

Planted around the home, lavender works to repel flies and mosquitoes.

This plant is known for its relaxing and soothing effect on the spirit. An important benefit for dogs is that Lavender reduces the buildup of excess sebum (skin oils) on the dog. It works like a charm for some of those lovable, yet greasy and smelly dogs. Bacterial growth in the greasy coat is responsible for that musty, smelly, old shoe odor that some dogs seem to have.

A lavender rinse after a bath, or placing some of the tea in a spray bottle works to decrease both the sebum and bacteria, keeping odor at bay. Lavender also works as an antibacterial to keep the bacteria down. As an added benefit, it is an anti-inflammatory and analgesic. It is beneficial for bathing skin irritations or wounds because it promotes tissue regeneration and speeds wound healing. 🐾

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