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Stinging Nettles: A Wild Super Food Exploration

By ACHS Herbal Medicine program chair Dr. Glen Nagel

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Presenter Bio

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Presenter Bio:

Glen Nagel

Glen Nagel is a practicing herbalist, licensed Naturopathic physician, and all around herbal wise guy. Glen is excited to be back in herbal education as the Herbal Medicine Program Chair at American College of Healthcare Sciences. Glen's training as an herbalist began in the early 1980's as one of the first herbal apprentices with "Herbal Ed" Smith and Sara Katz, Herb Pharm co-founders. Glen also studied with seaweed expert Ryan Drum, Ph. D and Portland's wise woman Cascade Anderson Geller.

Glen has worked in the herbal industry as a product formulator and as an herbal educator, offering classes and courses in herbal medicine to naturopathic profession and the general public. Glen has work for many of the top herbal companies in the country including Wise Woman Herbals, Herb Pharm, and Eclectic Institute. Glen is a graduate of National University of Natural Medicine and is a former associate professor in botanical medicine at National University of Natural Medicine in Portland, Oregon, and a former assistant professor of botanical medicine at Bastyr University in Kenmore, Washington.

Glen has a lifelong interest in plants and nature and believe in teaching with humor and hands-on experience. Glens passion is to have students learning directly from the plants. Glen lives in Portland Oregon with his wife and 2 daughters and a garden of wild weeds. Glen plays a mean harmonica and picks a mandolin for fun herbal songs. Glen is also an amazing herbal mixologist who loves herbal bitters and cordials and all things botanical.

Contact Information:

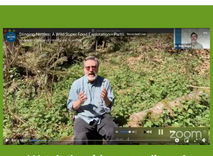
Do you have questions or comments for Glen? Below is his contact information and he'd love to hear from you!

Email: glennagel@achs.edu

Nettle Recipes & Webinar Recording

Stinging Nettles: A Wild Super Food Exploration

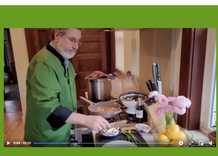
Join herbalist, naturopathic physician, and program chair of herbal medicine at ACHS, Glen Nagel, on an exploration of the most fantastic superfood and herb stinging nettles (Urtica dioica L.) Come away with some herbal skills and recipes for using nature's most nutritious wild green: Stinging Nettles.



Watch the video recording of Stinging Nettles: A Wild Super Food Exploration *Part 1*

Finding and safely harvesting stinging nettles, common uses, and cautions, how to treat nettle sting.

Watch Here



Watch the video recording of Stinging Nettles: A Wild Super Food Exploration *Part 2*

Hands-on demo of processing harvested nettles and making spring nettle into delicious food, including: Nettle / Clam broth, Nettle Pesto.

Watch Here

Introduction

Stinging nettles (Urtica dioica L.) is one of the most nutritional superfoods found in the wild. I combine nettles with clams to make the most beautiful plant/sea "bone-free" bone broth recipe. This broth is one the best spring tonics, a warming savory broth full of minerals and nutrition. Use it like miso soup or bone broth as a simple warming start to your day, or add other ingredients to make it a hardier filling meal. Nettles are one of the highest plant sources of protein; dry nettle is 25% protein as well as beta-carotene, chlorophyll, and minerals. Nettle broth has a savory mineral taste, reminding me of the sea, which gave me the idea of combining it with clam broth. The two similar flavors give it a wonderful harmony of earthy, oceanic taste.

Now, if you are one of those that don't like the chewy, rubbery clams, relax. You don't have to eat them. In fact, it's the clamshells that are the star. Boiling the shells releases minerals and flavors that make it outstanding. You can discard the clam bodies or leave them in. This is one of my favorite ways to uses the wonderful spring nettles! Plus, you can use the nettles collected to make another recipe, twisting the classic Pesto recipe. Using blanched nettles instead of basil. For one batch of wild-collected nettles, you can make two delicious recipes.

Nettle Clam Broth: An oceanic herbal spring broth

Ingredients:

- 300-400g (8 cups) fresh nettle, blanched in boiling water for 90 seconds (this removes the "sting").
- 4.5 liters of water (a little more than a gallon)
- 4 liters of ice water
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 lb. (1362 gm) fresh manila clams or littleneck clams
- 5 green onions
- lemon juice 1 lemon
- 1 TB sea salt Yields: 4 liters
- 2 pieces of Kombu (Laminaria spp.)
- 10 shitake mushrooms washed and sliced
- Optional: Add 10 chopped stalks of fresh thyme and a pinch of real Saffron into the hot broth for 1 hour, or use for garnish in serving. Yields: 4 liters

Equipment needed:

- 2 large kettles for nettles.
- Large wire strainer
- Slotted spoon
- Tongs
- Cheesecloth, muslin cloth or nut milk bag
- Ice 3 trays

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, place the fresh nettles and wash with cold water to remove dust and potential contaminants. While the nettles are soaking, bring the 4.5 liters of water to a boil and prepare your ice water bath by placing 2-3 trays of ice into 4 liters of water. Once the water is boiling, use the tongs or thick gloves to lift up about 1/3 of the nettles. Place the nettles in the boiling water and stir. Time it for 90 seconds, stirring continuously. Lift up the nettles with a slotted spoon or tongs and place them in the ice water. Wait till the water is boiling again and blanch the other 2 batches of nettles. You will see that after each set, the blanching water is getting darker. This water will become our nettle broth. Now with your gloves, lift out about 1/3 of the ice-cold nettles, form a football shape, and wring as hard as you can to get the nettles dry, similar to wringing out a mop! You want the blanched nettles to be as dry as possible for making pesto. Cover the nettles in a container and place them in the refrigerator for making the pesto. The nettles store well in this form and even can be frozen for later use.

2. Now back to making the nettle clam broth. Bring the nettle broth back to a boil, and if you collected more nettles, you can cut them into tiny pieces ½ with scissors and place them back into the boiling water. You can also add dry nettles if you have them, especially last year's dry nettles to use up. Keep this on simmer while you make the clam broth.

In a deep-sided skillet, add some olive oil and place it on medium heat. Wash the clams well, making sure to scrub the edges with a brush if you would like to get most of the sand of them. Drain the clams. Add the crushed garlic to the oil and sauté for 3 minutes, then add 1 cup of your nettle broth for the boiling pot. Cover this and wait for boiling. Once boiling, add the clams and lemon juice and cover for 5 minutes till clams have opened up.

Turn off the heat, strain the liquid (blackish clam broth) off the clams, and set it aside. This is the more fragrant and tasted clam broth which we will add back to the nettle broth later. Open the clams pot to let the clams cool for 15 or 20 minutes.

3. Separate out the clam bodies from the shells and set aside the clam bodies for later. Now add the clamshells back into the nettle broth pot and then add kombu, green onions, and shitake mushrooms. Bring this to a boil and then simmer for 20 minutes to 1 hour. The minerals from the clamshells are extracted by boiling water with the nutrients and flavor from nettles and mushrooms. While this is simmering, it's an excellent time to clean up and get ready for the next part.

Let the boiling pot rest to cool for 30 minutes to 1 hour if you can. Now, set up a large strainer over another large pot and strain out the ingredients. Pick out the cooked shitake mushrooms as we can eat those and use them as a garnish for the broth. Now add the first clam broth that you set aside together in the big pot and stir well. You may want to filter it again using a cheesecloth or a nut milk bag to get out fine pieces of garlic, nettles, and the occasional bit of sand if you like it very clean. Now, let the broth cool and add it to a large gallon canning jar, and it can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Serving Suggestions:

I like to use the broth as a simple warming drink or thin soup, just warm and add to a mug. The broth can be made fancy by adding a few easy ingredients. Take a nice shallow white soup bowl, drizzle a tsp of olive oil or toasted sesame oil, and add 1 tsp of balsamic vinegar. Add two cups of hot nettle clam broth, then add slices of the cooked shitake mushrooms and thin ribbons of the kombu cut up and a few chopped green onions. Add a couple of sprigs of fresh thyme(a nice aromatic match) and a pinch of dried real saffron, and a leaf or two of nettles. For the seafood lover, you can add back the clam bodies also. Enjoy with your favorite crusty bread or crackers. For a hardier version, steam some white or red potatoes and cut them into cubes. Add the potatoes to the bowl and cover with broth.

You can use the NC broth in smoothies especially with vegetables for a salty umami flavor or in any type of sauce similar to the use of fish sauce or soy sauce but use a bit more as it is less salty or fishy the others.

Stinging Nettle Pesto: A surprising combination that doesn't bite back

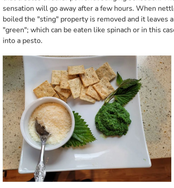
Ingredients:

- 6 cups (300g) fresh Blanched nettles, about 30 stalks of 6-inch plants blanched in boiling water for a minute (this removes the "sting"), drained and roughly chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 cup (50g) Raw cashews
- 16 oz (500ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 2.5 tsp Kosher salt
- 1/2 cup (60g) grated parmesan optional

Equipment needed:

- Food processor
- rubber spatula
- storage container or Ziplock bags

Nettles, native to Europe and Asia is a plant with tiny little hairs that when touched inject a small amount of formic acid that creates a rather powerful stinging sensation. The sensation will go away after a few hours. When nettles are boiled the "sting" property is removed and it leaves a healthy "green"; which can be eaten like spinach or in this case made into a pesto.



Instructions:

Place the blanched nettle, pine nuts, parmesan, and a little salt and pepper, in a food processor. Blend the mixture until the mixture is smooth, scraping down the side occasionally. While the motor is running gradually pour in the olive oil until well distributed.

Place the Pesto in a sterilized jar and pour a little extra olive oil over the top and seal well with a lid. Refrigerate until ready to use. Pesto will keep for up to a month in a well-sealed jar in the refrigerator. It can also be filled into meal size amounts and placed in zip lock bags and frozen until needed.

Resources

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Where tradition meets science.

About ACHS

American College of Healthcare Sciences is a world-renowned accredited online college. Our mission is driven by the principles and vision of our president, Dorene Petersen, who founded the college in 1978 as a pioneer in holistic health education.

We award degrees, diplomas, certificates and microcredentials in Integrative Health, Aromatherapy, Holistic Nutrition, Herbal Medicine, and an MBA with Specializations in Integrative Health & Wellness and Sustainable Business.

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CALM IS CONTAGIOUS BLEND

- **Lavender** *Lavandula angustifolia* oil: 20 drops
- **Ylang ylang** *Cananga odorata* var. genuina essential oil: 15 drops
- **Marjoram** *Origanum majorana* essential oil: 10 drops
- **Neroli** *Citrus aurantium* var. amara essential oil: 2 drops

- You will need a separate empty bottle to blend the oils together in. Blend all the oils and shake well.
- Please note, the marjoram essential oil in this formula can be substituted with Roman chamomile or clary sage essential oil.

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CLEAR MIND ROLL ON

- **Peppermint** *Mentha ×piperita* (L.) oil: 5 drops
- **Lavender** *Lavandula officinalis* oil: 5 drops
- **Eucalyptus** *Eucalyptus globulus* oil: 5 drops
- **Lemon** *Citrus limonum* oil: 5 drops
- **Carrier oil** or blend of oils of your choice: 1 Tablespoon (4 % dilution ratio)

- Blend the essential oils and carrier oil in a glass beaker or another glass container that is easy to pour from.
- Fill a 1 or 10ml roll-on bottle and roll on to any tight areas on your shoulders, neck, and temples. Do not get it near your eyes. If there is any blend left over, store it in a glass bottle or jar with a lid.

https://www.apothecary-shoppe.com/

If you are excited to try out these DIY blends, head over to the Apothecary Shoppe where we specialize in certified organic and pesticide-free essential oils and wellness supplies!

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