

Stinging Nettle Safety

Stinging nettle has fine hairs on the leaves and stems that contain irritating chemicals, which are released when the plant comes in contact with the skin. The hairs, or spines, of the stinging nettle are normally very painful to the touch.

Precaution: Avoid this plant to avoid getting stung!

Reaction/Response:

- Reddening and intense itching of short duration
- Sensitive individuals may experience swelling and burning
- Wash affected area or immediately apply a baking soda paste to soothe stinging sensation
- A prolonged tingling sensation may persist on the affected skin for more than 12 hours, even after visible symptoms have faded.

Leaves:

- Fine toothed, tapered, ~3-15 cm heart-shaped leaves
- Thin catkins of tiny green flowers grow from the leaf stems

Height: Generally 1 metre but can grow up to 2 metres depending on location and soil condition.

Habitat:

- Generally in the same locations every year.
- Thrive in rich soil, moist woodlands, thickets, disturbed areas, along partially shaded trails and riversides
- Blooms between June and September.

Control:

- Remove plants by hand -- wear gloves to protect skin from the stinging hairs
- Ensure the underground portion (rhizomes) are removed or the plants will regrow
- Close mowing can prevent the development of fruit
- Be aware cultivating the soil may spread the rhizomes, thus increasing the size of the population
- Repeated cultivation works best as a control for this weed



Fact sheet distributed by Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW). 1-877-817-0336 www.ohcow.on.ca

Sources: Stinging nettle | University of Maryland Medical Center <http://umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/herb/stinging-nettle#ixzz3Uwiz4rys>. University of Maryland Medical Center <http://www.ediblewildfood.com/stinging-nettle.aspx>

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Burning & Stinging Nettles Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program-University of California Agriculture Natural Resources.