

The Neem Tree

by Patrick J.

(*Azadirachta indica*)

Is This The Alternative Canine Treatment?

Rarely has there been any species of plant studied and used as long as the Neem tree. The Ayurvedic medical practitioners of India have known and used this amazing plant for over 4500 years. In India the Neem tree is known as the village pharmacy. Although people of India use Neem on a daily basis, those of us outside that country are just now starting to discover its amazing properties.

My first introduction to Neem was from a holistic healer approximately two years ago. Since that time I have personally witnessed, read about, and been told a number of amazing stories of the healing powers of Neem.

There are few plants that have as many exploitable by-products as Neem. The tree is very hardy in most tropical climates and, though it does not tolerate cold, it is impervious to insects and parasites. This quality is more than likely the initial reason for much scientific interest. Extracts from its extremely bitter leaves, seeds or fruits may, in fact, make it the ideal anti-parasitic, pesticide and fungicide. Fleas, mange mites, ringworm, flies, fungi and even some viruses leave or die when it is present. The list of treatable diseases and health problems is very extensive and well documented yet it is very friendly to people and animals.

Studies have shown that it is completely biodegradable and does not lose its potency to a build up of genetic resistance in the pests. Indian scientists have been researching Neem since the 1920's. However, their work was of little interest to anyone outside the country until in 1959 when German entomologist Heinrich Schmutterer witnessed a locust plague in the Sudan. He noticed that the only green thing left were the Neem trees. Upon closer investigation he found that, although the locusts landed on the trees, they would not feed on them. This was the actual beginning of intense scientific interest in Neem and by the early 1990's several hundred researchers from a dozen different countries were studying Neem and its properties.

Neem: Its various forms & uses

Neem Oil is definitely the most powerful and concentrated by-product from the Neem tree. Neem Oil is rendered from the kernel of the fruit. These fruits resemble an olive and its pit. The kernel inside is very similar and is cold pressed to render the oil. I have put the pure oil on a dog with a hot spot (moist eczema) and within 8 to 12 hours have seen improvement of the weeping and redness. After 24 hours a rejuvenation of healthy skin could be seen. I do advise caution with this type of application. Oil should be treated with great respect as it is very powerful. If large amounts are left on for over 72 hours a rash from the oil's intensity may occur. It is always advisable to test a small spot on your dog if you feel compelled to use oil in this way. A much safer and more recommended way to use oil is to put 1 oz. of oil to 16 oz. of a mild, chemical free shampoo. The results on skin problems is nothing less than amazing and very safe if applied correctly. If mange or fungus is the problem this should be the first step in the treatment. This will put the Neem where it needs to be and treat the entire dog. Demodectic mange may have to be treated in a more intense manner. Diluting the oil by 50% with a light blending oil such as grape seed oil is also a much safer way to apply neem oil. The smell of the oil is a bit strong but is a very good repellent for pests and I consider this a plus in the treatment. After rinsing you will not notice any odor but the fleas will. With regards to warts

and moles a drop of oil applied daily will soon dissolve any traces. I have personally witnessed moles and warts, some quite large, disappear over a period of 2 to 3 weeks. Neem cream is also very effective and can be applied more liberally if the oil is too strong for comfort.

Neem Extract is almost as strong as the oil and, in some respects, may be stronger. The concentration of the active compounds in the Neem extract are very high. The extract at this time is alcohol based and this should be taken into consideration when treating open wounds like cracked skin. When the extract is applied to mange mites once every other day up to four applications, it will kill all mites that come in contact with it. Neem extract can also be used internally. Putting it on the dogs food can be a very effective replacement if leaf is not available. I have found it is never necessary to overdo it with Neem.

Neem Leaf & Leaf in capsules: Neem leaf is probably the most used part of the Neem tree due to its availability throughout the year. It can be used internally in the form of Neem capsules (this is the easiest way to take it yourself due to the bitter taste) or can be made into a tea. Most of the bitter compounds are soluble in alcohol or water. Tinctures using 50 to 80 percent alcohol capture the majority of the medicinal compounds. Tea can be made using hot, not boiling, water as excessive heat may damage some of the compounds.

Numerous health problems may be dealt with from an internal aspect. While Neem is not effective against tapeworm it is quite effective against many other types of internal parasites. Neem leaf twice a day for one week is the usual method for eliminating most parasites. I have found that dogs eat it readily and the bitter taste does not seem to bother them. All dogs are different and I'm sure there will be reports of some that do not like the taste. It would be extremely hard to overdose on Neem. I have used a dosage of 1000 mg. twice a day for large dogs 40 lbs. To 100 lbs. (approx. 4 caps) and half that dose for smaller dogs 20 lbs. to 40 lbs. and a bit less for the toy breeds. We are still testing its effect as an internal flea repellent and there is some hope that it may even work as a heartworm preventative. I am not suggesting that anyone accept or try this as yet. The tea can be used to soak feet for various foot fungi or used as a rinse after bathing. Tea can also be put in a spray bottle and used to repel insects and treat skin problems. The leaf and its by-products can be used liberally with no worry of a toxic overdose that we know of.

Specialized Neem Products Revue

Omni Spray: Don't let this name deceive you. This product will deal with many of the problems encountered when rearing dogs. Originally developed to be a bug repellent, I, and others, have found it to be an excellent treatment for many skin problems. The combination of Neem, Aloe, coconut oil and twelve other herbal extracts and oils make this a n unbeatable combination. Not only will it keep the bugs away from you and your dog, it heals skin very rapidly. There is no need to use deet or any other form of chemical. I can assure you this will work better with no side affects. Mange is dealt with very quickly and even eczema is no match for this special blend . For those of you who don't want to create your own herbal combinations you must try this product for you and your dog.

Neem Creams & lotions are great combinations when mixing and using Neem oil, aloe vera, vitamin E, jojoba oil and other extracts. People with psoriasis have found mixing neem oil, aloe, etc. into their favorite cream or lotions to be one of the best treatments available. I have found it useful when applied to areas where there is not a lot of fur. Applying cream in a thick coat would be the only reason the human usage out weighs the canine applications. I have used it with great success around the head and especially around the eyes in mange cases. It is easy to control where it goes and has a

soothing and healing effect on skin damaged by mange, psoriasis, eczema and dermatitis. The treating of nail fungus on paws as well as hands is also an important aspect of this blend. I have recommended it to friends who swear by it for treating poison ivy. We have used it on callused elbows and any spot on the animal where rough skin is a problem and softening is needed to restore hair growth. From a human point of view it is a wonderful treatment for sun burn and just plain dry skin.

Soaps: If you want healthy skin and have a personal skin problem we recommend mixing a few drops of neem oil into your liquid soap. For your canines we recommend mixing Neem oil in with your favorite shampoo, hopefully of a natural type.

Closing Comments

I hope that, in this limited amount of space, there has been some light shed on Neem and its uses in the rearing of dogs. I don't know of many products that are so beneficial to both the owner and the pet. I did not intend to leave out the felines, it is only that most of our experience has been with canines. I believe cats will also benefit from Neem. Perhaps someone with cats will start the investigation?

The data on Neem is far too extensive to really do it justice in such a short essay. I have not even touched on Neem's anti-arthritic properties or the other benefits Neem offers. Much will be heard about Neem in the years to come. Of this I'm confident. We have already seen too much evidence of its power for it to be put aside and ignored. There is no magic bullet that is a cure for every thing but I believe Neem will come about as close to this as anything. I hope you will consider Neem in your dogs and your health program. It may be the alternative treatment you've been looking for.

Recommended Reading on Neem

NEEM *A Tree For Solving Global Problems*

139 pages on the uses & history behind Neem.

\$12.95

NEEM *The Ultimate Herb* by John Conrick

63 pages. An in depth study on the medicinal uses of Neem.

\$12.50

SKIN CARE *The Healing Powers of Neem* by John Conrick

Psoriasis, Acne, Dermatitis and other conditions of the skin. 17 pages. A brief discussion on dosages and applications of Neem.

\$2.50

The above books are available from Naturmix USA, Inc. as are some of the products mentioned. All are human grade and some are certified organically grown. They are processed under the highest standards of cleanliness. McDonald