

## Essential Chinese Herbs for Canine Anxiety

**Learn which Chinese herbs are essential to ease your dog's anxiety.**

*By Jean Scherwenka*

What do you do when thunderstorms or fireworks keep your dog trembling in the back of your closet? Or when your absence throws him into a self-destructive frenzy?

Have you ever considered Chinese herbs to calm your dog's anxiety?

Tranquilizers will resolve his symptoms in these situations, but Chinese medicine will consider your whole dog in order to treat his whole problem. In other words, Chinese herbal formulas will treat the cause of his symptoms to provide a lasting resolution and build health for his future.

According to holistic vet Chris Bessent, DVM, an entire region of the world has thrived on Chinese herbs for thousands of years and documented their results. Master herbalists studied and combined their herbs to work in synergy with each other. Where Western herbs are usually used singly, echinacea to boost immunity, for example, Chinese herbs combined in specific formulas can offer multiple benefits with minimal side effects. "In other words, the sum of the parts is greater than each individual part," Bessent says.

Pioneer holistic vet Cheryl Schwartz, DVM, in her book "Four Paws Five Directions: A Guide to Chinese Medicine for Cats and Dogs" (Ten Speed Press, 1996), sees four distinct advantages of Chinese herbs: Herbal formulas can be tailored to the individual. They prevent further disease. The formulas can be used as an adjunct to Western medicine. Drug-sensitive dogs often tolerate Chinese herbs.

In Chinese tradition, the root of your dog's anxiety actually resides in his heart and kidney. As an example, Bessent's Calm Anxiety formula combines six herbs working in synergy to resolve his anxiety: Raw rehmannia root: Nourishes the kidney's yin (fluid) and clears heat. Asparagus tuber: Tonifies and nourishes the kidney and generates fluid. Angelica tang kuei: Tonifies, invigorates, and harmonizes the blood. Zizyphus: Nourishes heart yin (fluid) and quiets the spirit (anti-anxiety). Schisandra fruit: Quiets the spirit and calms the heart. Polygala: Tonifies the spirit and quiets the heart.

When buying herbal formulas for canine companions, choose those made specifically for dogs. Human formulas will work, but canine formulas work even better.

Jean Scherwenka loves dogs, writing, and the opportunity to incorporate the two in her articles.

To learn more about Chinese herbs, check out Natural Dog in DOG FANCY's February 2009 issue.