

Safe Garlic Supplements for Dogs

Learn how this natural supplement can cure your dog's ailments.

Brought to you by Herbs for Pets

Appearance: Need we describe garlic? It's what makes Italian dishes worthwhile. It is the aromatic bulb that repels vampires yet attracts hungry people with its nose-tantalizing, mouth-watering scent. While most of us can readily identify a head of garlic in the supermarket, relatively few of us are familiar with the living green plant. Garlic is a member of the Allium genus, a branch of the lily family that also includes hundreds of varieties of onions, leeks, chives, and shallots. In terms of appearance, the numerous varieties of garlic are differentiated from what we know as onions by the nature of their bulbs (commonly known as heads) and their leaves. Commercial varieties of garlic produce heads that are divided into segments (cloves), whereas onion bulbs are comprised of singular, multilayered globes.

Garlic leaves are characteristically flat and almost grasslike, whereas most onions leaves tend to be hollow and erect. Shallot leaves fall somewhere in between. For the purposes of holistic healing, its important to know that all of the Allium species come from the same sourcenance. All of the various colors and shapes of onions, garlic, and their relatives have originated from wild Allium species that range throughout the world. On the slopes surrounding our Montana home, several species of wild Allium are among the first greens to emerge from the receding snows of early spring. With their emergence come winter-weary bears, grouse, deer, elk, and moose, all of whom wish to indulge, if only briefly, in a snack of garliclike wild onions. As one watches these animals while they browse, it soon becomes apparent that they eat wild onions and garlic to fill some instinctive need other than hungerthey pick and choose only a few select plants, then move on to others.

Could it be they know something we don't? Certainly! It is obvious that nature put the Allium genus here for reasons far deeper than epicurean delight. Fortunately for those who cannot forage the wilds of North America on behalf of their pets, the supermarket varieties of garlic are of optimum medicinal potency.

Habitat and Range: It has been theorized that garlics wild ancestors originated from west-central Asia. Garlics use as a medicine dates back at least five thousand years, and since then hundreds of cultivars have been propagated worldwide. In North America, dozens of varieties can be found in open forest clearings and grasslands at foothill to subalpine elevations. Most are montane residents.

Cycle and Bloom Season: Although commercial varieties are typically harvested during their first year of growth when the bulbs are prime, most Allium species are self-seeding perennials that bloom in midsummer.

Parts Used: Bulb (the segments of which are called cloves)

Primary Medicinal Activities: Antibacterial, stimulates the immune system, anticancer, nutritive, antioxidant, expectorant, lowers blood pressure, antitumor, antiviral, antifungal, tonic

Strongest Affinities: Liver, blood, cardiovascular system, immune system

Preparation: Fresh, dried, tincture, or oil infusion

Common Uses: Garlic contains considerable amounts of protein, fiber, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, sodium, vitamin A, thiamine, niacin, taurine, zinc, riboflavin, and dozens of other nutritive compounds. A single clove of fresh garlic may contain as much as one hundred sulfur compounds, all of which have been shown to possess medicinal qualities.