



Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care

By Randy Kidd D.V.M. Ph.D., Randy, DVM Kidd

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Holistic veterinarian and herbalist Randy Kidd explains how cats can be treated for a variety of ailments--including calming nerves or getting rid of parasites--using only herbs.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Finally, a veterinarian's guide to complete herbal health care for your cat!

As a cat lover; you may have considered using herbs as part of your pet's health-care regimen. Perhaps you've wondered:

Are herbs really safe for use on my diabetic cat?

Which plants are best to treat fleas, coughing, or arthritis?

What's the best way to give my cat herbal remedies?

In this comprehensive guide, holistic veterinarian Randy Kidd offers thorough, up-to-date information on preventive care as well as immediate health problems. He also explains how to choose, make, and administer the best herbal preparations, and he provides at-a-glance information on more than 40 versatile herbs that will help you keep your favorite feline healthy and happy through every stage of life.

About the Author

A past president of the American Holistic Veterinary Association, Dr. Randy Kidd has a D.V.M. degree from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in Pathology/Clinical Pathology from Kansas State University. He is the author of Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Dog Care (Storey Books); a practicing holistic veterinarian; a popular speaker on alternative pet care; a columnist for Herbs for Health magazine; and a consultant for pet supplement companies, including Thompson's Nutritional Technologies. His articles have appeared in the Journal of the American Holistic Veterinary Medicine Association and Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Kidd has veterinary practices in San Francisco, California, and McLouth, Kansas.

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Introduction to Herbalism

Herbs have been an integral part of humankind's diet and pharmacy since we began roaming the earth. The ancient Sumerians left written evidence of medicinal uses for plants such as laurel, caraway, and thyme some five thousand years ago. But long before the written word, caveman cultures left evidence of herbal use in their coprolites, or fossilized excrement. Herbalists have practiced their trade since the time of recorded history and in all parts of the world. Many herbs are mentioned in the Bible.

Typically, the plants of yore were used in unity with nature; their medicinal uses were based on humans' intuitive feel for their application along with observed results. Herbal use was often combined with practices such as shamanism, bleeding, fumigation, poulticing, rubbing, and urtication. In addition, most cultures combined a ritualistic approach to planting and harvesting and the collection of wild species.

Today, our culture so relies on Western medicines that we have lost perspective on herbs. But herbs are used

by more people worldwide than any other medicine. You probably don't have to go very far back in your own family history (perhaps to your grandmother or great-aunt) to discover an herbalist, someone who used the local "weeds" to cure all sorts of ailments.

Despite all this herbal history and lore, folks sometimes seem reluctant to use herbal medicines to help their pets. Concerned animal lovers have questions: Are the herbs safe to use? Which ones can I use for my cat? When should I use herbs, and are they ever more appropriate than the drugs of Western medicine? Should I use capsules, teas, tinctures, or topical herbs? How do I dose these treatments? And finally, are herbal medicines effective?

This book is designed to answer those questions. Herbs have been an integral part of my holistic practice for the past 10 years, and they have also been a part of my family's health care for several generations. Herbs are so safe and effective as helpers for other alternative medicines that I give almost every one of my patients an herbal prescription. And after years of use on hundreds of kitty patients - including my own cats - I have found the herbs so safe (when used correctly) that I am extremely comfortable prescribing them for all critters, even the most profoundly sick.

What Is Holistic Medicine?

I am a holistic veterinarian and have been one for about 10 years. I use a variety of "medicines" in my practice: herbs, acupuncture (Traditional Chinese Medicine), homeopathy, spinal and limb adjustments (chiropractic), nutrition and nutritional supplements, flower essences, shamanism, and more. Occasionally, I even resort to the Western or allopathic medicine I learned in veterinary school. I use what I think will be best for the patient at a particular time in his life cycle. And over the years I've found that, more often than not, the alternative medicines I choose do work.

Holistic medicine is much more than the "medicines" used. It is an approach to wellness that looks at the patient as a whole organism, an organism that is intimately connected to its natural environment and whose health is tied to the health and well-being of the other organisms (including humans) around it.

How Does Holistic Medicine Work?

Holistic medicine assumes that a diseased part of the organism is merely an expression of the fact that a lack of balance exists somewhere within the body. When seeking a cure for any disease, a holistic practitioner tries to create a balance among all the body's organ systems.

To effect that cure, a holistic practitioner must be able to look at the patient from many different perspectives. Each of the medicines I use - herbal, homeopathic, Eastern, chiropractic, Western - has its own diagnostic and therapeutic methodology. And each of these methodologies is an independent system of its own, often complex and intricate in its approach and certainly highly refined by years of successful use by countless practitioners and patients.

Taking Responsibility for Health and the Planet

An additional aspect of holistic medicine that I feel is critical to the overall concept of "wholism" is that the medicine must be natural and must not deplete or pollute the environment.

Finally, and perhaps most important, I believe that holistic

medicine - and especially the use of herbal remedies - is a prime way of empowering people to take charge of their pets' health . . . and their own.

When using herbal medicines, you are the specialist. As an herbalist you realize that foods (and especially herbs) are medicine; medicine is food. And you give your cat a boost with a daily dose of healthy herbs. Herbs are readily available over the counter for easy access. You don't need someone with a bunch of letters after his name to write a prescription just so you can use herbs; you can use herbs because you know they are safe and effective and because they work in a wide variety of situations, often affecting several organ systems at once. You don't need a zillion bucks' worth of diagnostic and treatment machinery to support your healing methods; the herbs are there for you because healing is their job. And, perhaps best of all, you can grow healthy herbs in your very own backyard.

My Beginnings as a Practicing Herbalist

While my family has made extensive use of herbs seemingly forever, my dog, Rufus, finally convinced me to use them in my practice. (Remember, like that of all my veterinary colleagues, my previous training was exclusively oriented toward Western medicine.)

Rufus: My First Case Study

Just about the time I began studying alternative medicines, Rufus, a totally lovable golden retriever with the usual complement of three brain cells, got a "hot spot" on his forearm. Hot spots are skin irritations of unknown cause that usually begin as small, itchy areas that the animal may lick and bite until the spots are raw and bleeding. In Western medicine hot spots are commonly treated by applying cortisone ointment, an anti-inflammatory.

I gave Rufus the best of Western medicine, slathering on the cortisone ointment. His hot spot went away almost immediately. But it returned in a few months - redder, angrier, and itchier. So I went to the bigger "guns" of Western medicine: oral cortisone pills, given in addition to the topical ointment.

The hot spot disappeared, this time after three or four days . . . only to return again in a few months. The spot was redder yet, much larger, and, according to Rufus, so itchy it was nearly impossible to bear. I gave him another dose of cortisone, this time in ointment, injectable, and follow-up pill form.

The hot spot again disappeared, this time after a week or so. But in a few weeks it came back with a vengeance, and Rufus let us know he was miserable, day and night. Well, you get the picture. Western medicines in general, and cortisone products in particular, typically work by palliating diseases - making patients feel better for short periods of time without really curing them.

Finding Success with Herbs

By now deep into my alternative medicine studies, I decided to apply what I'd learned to Rufus. (Much like the shoemaker's daughter who never has shoes, most veterinarians' pets are the last to get treated.) From the few herbal books I had at the time, I learned that calendula is a good herb for healing reddened, raw skin lesions. Sue, my wife, had some calendula growing in the garden, so we picked it, steeped it into a mild tea, and spritzed it on Rufus's ever-growing hot spot.

"Ahhh." I could almost hear Rufus's sigh of relief as he settled in, quit scratching, and relaxed for the first time in days. In a few hours the itch recurred, so we applied another spritz. Immediate relief. After four or five treatments throughout that first day, Rufus experienced no itching, and he had a good night's sleep for the first time in weeks. Then, amazingly, the very next morning I could see evidence of wound healing around the edges of the hot spot - nice white, clean tissue growth.

Well, after a few days of herbal spritzing, Rufus's hot spot completely disappeared, and it has never returned.

I was really happy for Rufus (and for us, since we could now sleep), but I wondered why I hadn't learned about calendula or any of the other herbs in veterinary school. But that's another story.

After watching Rufus's results, I was hooked. I began using herbs extensively from that day on, recommending them for all my patients.

How to Use This Book

Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care is designed to make it easy for you to begin using herbs on your kitty right away. Please read the first section before you jump into the chapters on organ systems and the herbal repertory.

Chapters 4 and 5 are designed to help you understand the how-tos of herbal use. But there's nothing difficult about it. Herbal medicine is not rocket science. I am a veterinarian and an herbalist who thinks of herbal medicine as the most empowering of the alternative medicines because it is meant to be used by everyone - including your cat. You can choose to create a healthy internal and external environment by growing and feeding herbs to your animals. You can choose to use herbs because they are safe and effective. And, as you use herbs, you can learn about your own environment (and especially your own backyard environment) and the place herbs have in it.

Start using herbs today. Sprinkle a sample of a tonic herb atop Mittens's food. If she doesn't like that tonic, try another. Keep trying until you find the herbs she likes. Make a light herbal tea and pour it over her food, or try adding some to her water.

To keep your cat healthy, use herbs on a daily basis. Should the unfortunate occasion ever occur, you'll have much better luck getting a sick kitty to agree to herbal medicines if she has been acclimated to them over the years.

Then, if your cat ever does come down with the "sicks," all you need is a diagnosis from your "regular" veterinarian that tells you which organ system is affected or which special problem your cat has. With the diagnosis in hand, go to the chapter that lists the herbs for that organ system, and use them as directed. It couldn't be simpler.

Now there is a minor rub to all of this: Whenever you choose to use herbal medicine (or any other alternative medicine, for that matter), you most likely won't get much help (or any help) from your conventional veterinarian. Such vets are simply not trained in holistic health care. But holistic veterinarians are now located in all parts of North America (see Resources), and many of them are available for either office or phone consultations. In any emergency, of course, you should contact your regular vet or local emergency veterinary clinic.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Peter Burnett:

Here thing why this particular Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care are different and reputable to be yours. First of all reading a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content of the usb ports which is the content is as delightful as food or not. Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any guide out there but there is no e-book that similar with Dr. Kidd's Guide to

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Teresa White:

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