

Homeopathy & Herbs in Working Dogs ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE

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HOMEOPATHY & HERBS IN WORKING DOGS

(Adapted from an article by Christopher Day)

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A great many breeds are commonly used in some form of work or sport. Examples are shepherding, shooting, agility, explosives detection and security. Most activities involve a risk of strain to one or more parts of the musculo-skeletal system. At the very least, the locomotor apparatus of the dog is worked to its limits.

Apart from sound nutrition, involving the sort of [dietary advice](#) to be found elsewhere in this site (e.g. raw bones, raw meat, fresh and varied food), good working practices should be observed at all times.

The dog should be fit, both muscularly and with regard to lungs and heart. Exertion on a really hot day should be avoided. Allow drinks when needed. Kennelling or sleeping quarters should be free from damp and draughts, yet be well-ventilated (this apparently paradoxical concept is a combination which is often found difficult, but must be mastered for a healthy environment). Dogs should not be left to sleep while still wet or they will develop stiffness and aches and pains, which could develop into arthritis. Dogs should not be asked to jump in and out of high vehicles, especially when tired. The worst form of this is seen when a dog has to jump over a half-door at the back of a utility vehicle, then be expected to land safely at ground level. This puts an intolerable strain on the shoulders and neck and will lead to joint damage and arthritis.

Young dogs should not be fed in such a way that they grow too quickly, thus outstripping their development potential. Many skeletal problems (some of which are often assumed to be hereditary) can arise from this.

Homeopathic Remedies which are indispensable:

Aconitum: This remedy treats shock, both mental and physical and will also assist in the treatment of acute febrile conditions, such as viral or bacterial diseases. It is invaluable in cases of exposure to extremes of temperature and climate.

Apis: Urticarial swellings, oedema and fluid in joints will often respond to this remedy, apart from its benefits for insect bites and stings.

Arnica: Arnica is homeopathy's great injury remedy. Its use will minimise bruising and speed healing. It also helps in cases of overexertion or overtiredness.

Bryonia: Arthritis, rheumatism, pneumonia or mastitis, when the animal refuses to move, are the main areas of use of Bryonia.

Calendula: Used as a lotion, this remedy speeds healing of cuts, grazes or open wounds, in addition to helping the animal to fight septic infection of such injuries.

Carbo veg.: This is called the 'corpse reviver', on account of its ability to help patients in collapse, when all hope seems to be lost.

Euphrasia: Named 'eyebright', this remedy helps many eye conditions, including conjunctivitis from cold winds. A dog who puts his head out of the window of a fast-moving car may need this remedy. It also helps in cases of sneezing and nasal allergy.

Hamamelis: Bleeding from wounds and orifices would indicate Hamamelis, in many cases.

Hepar sulph.: This is nick-named the 'homeopathic antibiotic', so effective it is in helping patients to fight septic, purulent infections.

Hypericum: Use this remedy whenever there is a painful graze or damage to tissues rich in nerve endings (e.g. toes and tail).

Ledum: Use this whenever puncture wounds occur, from whatever injury. There are reputed anti-tetanus properties in addition to its ability to help such wounds heal correctly, from the depths outwards.

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Nux vomica: It is found to be helpful in all cases of overeating or of accidental poisoning.

Silica: This remedy helps the body to eliminate foreign bodies, such as grass seeds, without recourse to surgery.

Herbal Remedies which are valuable:

Chlorophyll: Aids the masking of scent signals, which a bitch on heat will emit.

Devil's Claw: This is anti-inflammatory in nature and can help aches and pains, pending proper [homeopathic](#), [chiropractic](#) or [acupuncture](#) help.

Fenugreek: A useful supportive therapy, in joint and limb problems.

Garlic: An excellent worm and flea deterrent, in addition to its formidable anti-infective and disinfection properties.

Kelp: A valuable food supplement, to assist nutrition and to provide essential minerals. Also aids thyroid function, especially in overweight dogs.

Marsh Mallow: Useful in cases of diarrhoea, helping to soothe the irritated bowel.

Nettles: A valuable source of iron and other minerals, with properties that are helpful for arthritis.

Olive Oil: An excellent and simple ear treatment.

Slippery Elm: Useful in cases of diarrhoea, helping to soothe the irritated bowel.

Willow Bark Powder: As in the case of Devil's Claw, this will help aches and pains, on account of its aspirin-like content.

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