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Episode 188 - The Magic of Nettle Tea

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Jonathan Hunsaker:

Welcome everyone to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm your host, Jonathan Hunsaker, joined by my cohost TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Hey everyone.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Coming to you straight from TeriAnn's kitchen. We are actually able to film a podcast together again. Now that they've lifted some of the restrictions here in Texas, so we figured we'd get together and do a really cool podcast where we're talking about something many of you may not have even heard of. And we're talking about the shrub called nettle, and it has a lot of healing benefits that I think will be very interesting for you.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Are you going to tackle the scientific name today?

Jonathan Hunsaker:

No.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

That's his specialty when we film a podcast. Did the scientific name of it. But, stinging nettle is a shrub that comes from Northern Europe and Asia. If you've been out walking through a meadow or a trail in the woods, you found yourself with a little rash on exposed parts of your body, you may have brushed up against some stinging nettle. So in its natural form, you don't necessarily want to use it. It doesn't leave a nice sensation on your skin and you get that little rash, but there are pieces and portions of the nettle that you can use from a nutritional perspective or a medicinal perspective that are really beneficial to your health. So it's funny how some things can seem like such a bad thing for you, but then on the opposite side of it and the way you use it, it can actually really benefit you. And nettle is one of those things. Have you ever been stung by stinging nettle?

Jonathan Hunsaker:

I don't know if I have or not or what the plants were. I mean, we used to have these fire plants in Maryland where if you got close to it, it would shoot out and get you, and that was pretty bad. So I don't think that I've actually been stung by nettle itself, but I know it's, I mean, I know how beneficial it is because you can make teas out of it, tinctures, creams, all kinds of stuff with nettles. Just clearly not in the raw form.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah. The plant has many hollow stinging hairs called trichomes on its leaves and stems which act like little needles that inject histamine, formic acid, and other chemicals that produce that stinging sensation and response. So if you're out hiking, you want to be careful not to brush up against these things. However, it's very high nutritional content has made it a popular food source. Steamed and eaten like spinach. It does lose that sting when cooked. Taken as a tea made from the dried leaves to assist in the nutrition of expected or nursing mothers, or for general tonic properties for good health. So this thing that stings you and leaves a rash can also on the other side really have a lot of benefits for you.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

The leaves, stem, or root from the nettle plant can be crushed and made into powders, tinctures, creams, teas, and more. While people have used it for centuries as an herbal medicine, modern research also supports many of the potential health benefits of nettle and nettle tea which we're going to talk a little bit about today. Do you want to talk a little bit about what's in the nettle's leaves and roots for that nutritional value that it provides?

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Yes, absolutely. It's filled with vitamins, minerals, fats, amino acids, polyphenols, and pigments.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah, and this comes from the leaves and the root that provides all of these nutritional and medicinal benefits. So we have things like vitamins A, C, and K, as well as several B vitamins. We have calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and sodium. It's starting to sound like a multivitamin to me really. If you think about it, all these things that it has. Linoleic acid. It has stearic acid, oleic acid, it has all of the essential amino acids, which is a major bonus. And then we have the polyphenols and the pigments. We're not going to jump too far into those things today. We're really just trying to talk about the benefits of nettle here, but those are just some of the amazing things that are in there that can really benefit you from a nutritional and medicinal perspective. What's more on top of everything we've already talked about is that many of these nutrients act as antioxidants.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

So we hear that word all the time. I'm trying to educate people more on what exactly is an antioxidant. We're talking about all these foods you need to get into your nutrition that have antioxidants. Well, what antioxidants do is they go into your body and they really attack and get rid of all these toxins that go into our body. We're exposed to so many toxins every day in our lives through our skincare regimens, our makeup, what we're using in the shower. If we're not using all natural products and ingredients, then there's things like fillers, there's things like poisonous ingredients that are going into the products we're using. There's things in the air. There's things in our food that we just can't avoid. There's herbicides and pesticides on everything. We're just getting bombarded by toxins and we just can't avoid it.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

What we can do to help our body combat those toxins is take something into account for our nutrition like an antioxidant. A nettle, for example. That's why antioxidants are such a big buzzword and why they're such a big buzz in the health industry. Antioxidants get into our body and they do a variety of things for our body. The number one thing is all those toxic things running around in our body, wreaking havoc. They go after them. And that's why antioxidants are so important when it comes to nutrition. So not only does nettle have all these things that make it sound just like a multivitamin, but it's antioxidant as well. And that's really important.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

So let's talk about the five benefits of nettles that we wanted to share with you today that can benefit you and your health. The first one being your urinary tract health. Now, sometimes we hear about this like you can get a UTI, and we hear this and we think women. Only women are dealing with this issue. The reality is that both men and women can have severe issues and face really big problems when it comes to your urinary tract health. Nettle may help flush harmful bacteria from the urinary tract. This can benefit people who have urinary conditions, such as benign prostatic hyperplasia that can cause an enlarged prostate gland in men. So again, we hear urinary tract we think, "Oh, women. It's only a woman issue. Men don't deal with this." Yeah, they do. Your urinary tract impacts you in significant ways for both men and women. And nettle is something that can support healthy urinary tract function for both men and women.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

It may also help support any medications you may be taking for infections or conditions related to the urinary tract. So if you have a UTI or you're a man that's experiencing something with your enlarged prostate gland, you can use nettle as a supplement that can help benefit anything you are doing right now to combat those issues.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Absolutely. The second one is arthritis and pain. And this is what really interests me most about nettle. Arthritis runs deep in my family, and I'm not sure... I haven't been tested yet if I'm starting to get into my knuckles. I definitely start to get soreness and pain there. That

just has me pay a lot more attention to it. Nettle has historically been used to treat pain and sore muscles, especially related to arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation suggests that nettle tea may also reduce inflammation and pain associated with osteoarthritis.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah, and isn't that interesting how one simple thing we've been talking about more of these plants and herbs that are available to us in nature as we've been doing the podcast, people want to learn more about specific ingredients that not only we use in our supplements and products, but people can use on their own too? I mean, this is just to educate people. Isn't it fascinating how something like nettle can benefit you when it comes to your urinary tract and then all the way on the opposite side of the spectrum, we're talking about arthritis and pain? I mean, nature is just the medicine cabinet that we need and you hear that all the time, but it truly is.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

The third thing is blood sugar management. Nettle has shown some promising effects on blood sugar levels and may also help the pancreas make or release more insulin, the hormone that lowers blood sugar. So here we have urinary tract health, we have arthritis and pain, and then if you're having issues with blood sugar and you need to manage that better, you can utilize nettle as a supplementation and part of your nutrition routine that can help benefit you in regulating that blood sugar if you're having issues with that.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Absolutely. Number four, the power of polyphenols. Nettle is high in plant chemicals called polyphenols. A review of the research on polyphenols suggests that these powerful compounds may play a role in the prevention and management of chronic diseases related to inflammation, such as diabetes, cancer, obesity, and heart disease. In particular, polyphenols from nettle extract has shown some exciting potential for treating breast cancer and prostate cancer. Plants like nettle also contain potent antioxidants, which is what we were talking about earlier. And again, antioxidants are substances that protect the body against aging and cell damage.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah. And again, just really quick on the antioxidants, those free radicals in your body, those toxins in your body, we talk about those getting in and invading your body. Well, they're doing a lot of research around now and for many years now is how those can impact us with longterm chronic health issues or something like cancer. And so we really want to be conscious of are we getting antioxidants into our diet, into our supplementation. Super, super important when it comes to overall health.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Number five, and I find this one interesting because for a plant that irritates your skin, it also may treat hay fever. Hay fever is an allergy that involves inflammation in the lining of

your nose. Stinging nettle is viewed as a promising natural treatment for hay fever. I just find this so funny. First, it impacts your skin on the outside, but then from an internal perspective, it can help combat some allergy issues. And if you have allergy issues related to hay fever... I have allergies so bad certain times of the year, and I just wish it wasn't a thing. And so I feel your pain if this is something you deal with.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Consider that nettle is something you may be able to incorporate in to your life that can help you when it comes to allergies associated with hay fever. This includes blocking histamine receptors and stopping immune cells from releasing chemicals that trigger allergy symptoms. However, human studies note that stinging nettle is equal to or only slightly better at treating hay fever than a placebo. So there are some mixed results there, but it may be something you should consider trying if you really are having an issue with allergies. I know how bad that is. I would try anything to get rid of it. So it may just be something that you want to try on the natural side that may be very helpful for you. And I think it never hurts to try it when you're dealing with something like that.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Absolutely. So let's just talk really quickly. How do we easily make some nettle tea? You can buy it loose. You can buy in tea bags, you can grow it yourself and harvest it yourself. And you'll probably want to play around a little bit with the ratio that you use, but more or less two cups of water for one cup of fresh leaves to make your tea. So add water to leaves, bring the water just to a boil, turn off the stove and let it sit for five minutes. Pour the mixture through a small strainer, and add a bit of honey, cinnamon, stevia, if you like, erythritol, something. If you want to sweeten it or I-

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Lots and lots of maca root for me. I like sweet tea, so that would be me if I made it.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Just start out by only having a cup of nettle tea at first. Don't go make a massive batch. Start with a cup, have a little bit, see how your body reacts to it. As with everything, try it out a little bit. See if it helps in any of the symptoms that you're looking for, and make sure you're not having any kind of reaction to it as well.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah, you definitely should not go hiking, pick them up, and eat it. That's not the way to eat it, but you can put it in a tea because tea is the right way to cook that down, get it in a form where it's really going to benefit your body. And I still want to hear back from anyone that they ate some nettle, and then we get some comments back from people. Don't eat the nettle. Cook it, or make a tincture. Dry it out. Also, a lot of times with something like this where you can have different aspects of a plant like the nettle where it can irritate your skin, on the opposite side of that, if you dry it, ground it up, use it in

different things. Of course, I would do your research on that and really know how you're using it, but you can use that in a variety of ways where it's no longer going to have that impact it has if you're just out walking in nature and it rubs against your skin.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Absolutely. So that wraps it up for today's show. We just wanted to talk to you all about nettle. Tell you how to make a nettle tea. Definitely go to empoweringyouorganically.com. You can check out all of our show notes. We have all of the resources there as well, so you can see all of the research where we got all of our information to share that with you. You can also download or watch this episode again by going to Empowering You Organically. Also go to iTunes and subscribe if you don't want to miss any of our shows. Give us a rating, some feedback, definitely let us know how we're doing. That's pretty much it. Thank you guys so much for tuning in. I hope you learned a lot from this episode and we will see you on the next show.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Thanks everyone.

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