

MEDICINAL HERBS FOR RABBITS

BIRCH - Chewing, pain relief, anti-inflammatory, diuretic.



BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEEDS - Coat Condition



BLACKBERRY - Used for pregnant does, summer cooling, stimulate appetite, diarrhea and safe introductory green for young kits use leaves and fruit, this is a very soothing to rabbits and can help cool rabbits in the summer heat by increasing circulation, awesome addition for pregnant does in the hot summer.



BLUE COHOSH- Works in the same ways as Shepard's Purse. It can be used if doe has a hard time birthing or kit gets stuck. It will dilate the birth canal. Do not give while pregnant, wait until doe is due. It will induce labor. Also it will help in healing once kits are born.



BORAGE - Laxative, Increases milk flow of nursing does, helps with fevers, reduces stress, A great treat after a doe gives birth, plus you can check her litter while she is busy eating her treat.



CHAMOMILE - Pain relief, calm nervous rabbit, one of the best eye wash for weepy eye Chamomile tea and honey!!!! Just make a cup of tea, a little stronger than you would drink it and add a teaspoon of honey. I use an old syringe w/o the needle to squirt into the eye. You can also use as a compress and as a wipe for the eye. It will work wonders. Both chamomile and honey are anti-everything microbial, fungal, and with antibiotic properties. Let the rabbit eat some before you treat for eye problems because of its pain relief and calming effects will make the rabbit easier to handle.



CHICKWEED - Anti-inflammatory, good for healing of cuts and molt.



CLEAVERS - Healing of cuts and a laxative.



COLTSFOOT - Respiratory expectorant



COMFREY - Healing, bone formation, ill rabbits, stressed and weak rabbits, if you have a rabbit off feed try a few leaves of comfrey this is one of my favorite herb tonic for rabbits! You can cut it down and dry it like hay to store for winter use (can be cut down up to three times here in Maine). they also love the freshly harvested leaves (I have never wilted it). The plant has a calming effect on rabbits Comfrey is a good source of vitamin A and good for pregnant and nursing does. It is a digestive aid, helps with wool block and is used for many other things. It supports the immune system, good for the stomach, feed as a general tonic. In extreme doses, comfrey can cause diarrhea. This is its effects working too hard and if left unnoticed, the rabbit may dehydrate. When used with common sense, Comfrey is one of the best herbs for rabbits.



DANDELION - Blood purifying, respiratory ailments, anti-inflammatory, bladder infections, diarrhea, milk flow of nursing does, good treat for does after having a litter. Some rabbit respiratory problems, such as pasteurellosis, can eventually cause serious problems including head tilt, loss of balance and death. There have been tests on rabbits that were treated with dandelion's showing that it is effective against pneumonia, bronchitis and upper respiratory infections. Use fresh leaves, flowers and dig up root, the root can be dried to make a weak tea to add to the rabbits' water. Well known for its curative powers. The bitter milky sap stimulates the working of all glands, including the milk glands of lactating does. The plant has both laxative and astringent qualities and regulates constipation and diarrhea.



ECHINACEA - Immune system stimulant and broad spectrum antibiotic. In the lower doses it's the stimulant and in higher doses acts as an antibiotic. Anti-inflammatory with antiviral properties. It can be grown in nearly every backyard and easily available at most health food stores. Echinacea is a great preventive herb to use for your rabbits. I feed a few leaves every now and then to my rabbits daily greens mix to boost the immune system and fight infection. Research has shown that Echinacea increases production of interferon in the body. It is antiseptic and antimicrobial, with properties that act to increase the number of white blood cells available to destroy bacteria and slow the spread of infection. It is also a great herb to dry and add to your winter hay blend! You can also get the capsules at health food stores add 4 capsules of the Echinacea to one gallon of water and boil and cool store in fridge and add 1/4 herb water to 3/4 water and fill water bottles, crocks, etc.



All information is from the article "Medicinal herbs for rabbits" on the Rise and Shine Rabbitry website

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ELDER FLOWER - Good as a Respiratory expectorant and fevers.



FENNEL - Use for Bloating, gas, and milk flow of nursing does.



EUCALYPTUS - When Dried, powdered, and sprinkled it repels fleas.



GARLIC - Immunize against disease. It is an antiseptic and antibiotic. Use to fight bloating and gas, as a wormer and a respiratory expectorant. This stuff works it is just hard to get a rabbit to eat it!



EYEBRIGHT - Use for Weepy eye wash.



GINGER - Use for Infertility in bucks.



GOATS RUE - Helps with Milk flow in nursing does.



GOLDEN ROD - Anti-inflammatory!



GRAPEFRUIT SEED EXTRACT- Used for worming rabbits, grapefruit seed extract does the job well and is all natural. 10 drops in a gallon of water for 2 weeks. Or longer if there is a known bad problem. This also helps to worm them and

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along with raw pumpkin seeds this mix should clean out your rabbits. I regularly run grapefruit seed extract through their water at least 2 times a year with a few raw pumpkin seeds on top of their food and have never had a problem with coccidiosis. I also use it when I bring in new stock this has many uses as a bactericide, fungicide, anti-viral, anti-parasitic treatment.

LAMBS QUARTERS- Another good wormer for rabbits I feed lamb's quarters only when it is young rabbits. Older rabbits will reject it. In spring it is very useful because it starts early when greens are a bit limited.



LAVENDER - Circulation problems, nervous stress, exhaustion, induces labor. To bring on labor or expel placental material etc. in problem kindling's. Use with caution and sparingly. In extreme cases only. The flowers are actually a mild tranquilizer, acting upon the heart in easing blood pressure rather than acting upon the brain as an anti-stimulant. Great for stressed out rabbits.



LEMON BALM - Is an anti-bacterial and antiviral, used for bloating and gas, diarrhea and to reduce stress.



LICORICE - Good for gastric inflammation and coughs.



MARJORIM - Used for Coughs, inflammation of mouth, throat. Digestive problems, uterine discomfort, and to calm nerves.



LINSEED - Laxative, helps with molting.



MEADOWSWEET - Used as a Weepy eye wash.



MARIGOLD - Good for bruises, slow healing wounds, ulcers, skin diseases, and digestive problems.

MILK THISTLE - Helps take ammonia from the blood and protects both the liver and the kidneys, increases milk flow in nursing does.

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MINT - Firms loose stools, decreases the milk flow of does during weaning, Good herb for treating mastitis. Safe as food for dry does and bucks DO NOT FEED to lactating does.

Used for colds, eye inflammation, liver stimulant, and used to relax the muscles of the digestive tract and stimulate bile flow so mint is useful for indigestion, gas and colic.

Avoid prolonged use, it can irritate the mucous membranes. Do not give any form of mint to young babies. Should be harvested just before flowering.



MOTHER WART - Another Weepy eye wash.



NASTURTIUM - Strongly antiseptic.



NETTLES - Increases milk flow in nursing does.



OATS - Feed sparingly in summer though. Good for digestive problems, diarrhea, kidney and bladder problems. Small kits may

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not be able to swallow oats and may actually choke on them.



PARSLEY - Enriches the blood, urinary problems. Roots are used for constipation and obstruction of the intestines. Good for the cure of inflammation of bladder & kidneys, digestive disorders, fertility in bucks, productivity in does.



PAPAYA- When I used to raise angoras (Still have some fiber males) I would give them a papaya enzyme tablet every couple of days to help keep them from getting wool block. We always have had healthy rabbits. The enzyme helps to break down the hair in the gut, and keep things moving. I have also given them to the meat rabbits. The rabbits love them, you can get the tablets at most health food stores.



PINEAPPLE- Bromelain, the actual enzyme in the pineapple, is most abundant in the stem of the pineapple, the center part that we throw away. Fresh pineapples are best as the enzyme will be removed once frozen or processed. Bromelain is good for diarrhea. It will reduce intestinal fluid secretion and is suggested that bromelain has mucolytic and digestive properties. So it'll dilate the mucus coating of the GI tract as well as helping to breakdown proteins good for gut mobility and helping with hairballs good to give to rabbits during a molt.



PLANTAIN - Antimicrobial and antispasmodic, good for healing of cuts, is a respiratory expectorant, and good for fevers. Great as a safe introduction of young kits to greens, works great for diarrhea. This is something I feed in my daily green feed mix. Leaves soothe urinary tract infections and irritations. Good for gastric inflammations. Juice pressed from fresh leaves is given orally for inflamed mucous membranes

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in cystitis, diarrhea and lung infections. Use the juice for inflammations, sores, and wounds.

Plantain does not cause digestive problems.

The plant regulates the function of the intestines and is generally good for the mucous membranes. Useful in the diet of weanling's and can be harvested and dried for year round use.



PURSLANE- Purslane contains more Omega-3 fatty acids than any other leafy vegetable plant know of. There was a study where they fed Purslane to rabbits with high cholesterol and it lowered it.



RASPBERRY - Prevention and treatment of kindling problems like retained afterbirth.

Improves condition during pregnancy, ensuring speedy and strong birth. Feed during the last two weeks of pregnancy as a great preventive prenatal supplement. Also wonderful cure for digestive ailments

including diarrhea, infertility in bucks, fevers. And is a safe introductory green for young kits.



RED CLOVER -Another good weepy eye cure.



ROSEMARY - Lowers blood pressure, Ideal for exhaustion, weakness, and depression in rabbits. The stems and leaves invigorate the circulation, stimulate the digestion, and are good for cold conditions. Harvest fresh dry or grow inside for year-round use.

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SAGE - dried and powdered, and sprinkled repel fleas, dry up does whose kits have been weaned. Reduces lactation when weaning, digestive stimulant and a uterine stimulant. This herb should be used with caution and should be avoided during pregnancy.



SASSAFRASS - dried and powdered, and sprinkled repel fleas



SCOTCH PINE - A treatment for bronchitis, sinusitis, neuralgia, rheumatism.



SHEPHERDS PURSE - Uterine disorders, A strong medicine for diarrhea. Use sparingly.



SORREL - Very cooling and soothing, it is a much cherished treat in the summer.



STRAWBERRY - Whole plant is antiseptic and cooling. Leaves are rich in iron and are supposed to prevent miscarriage. Externally used for inflamed areas, rashes and sore eyes.



THYME - Good for diarrhea. The stems and leaves are ideal for a useful as a digestive remedy, warming for stomach ache, chills and associated diarrhea. Expels worms. Harvest before and during flowering in summer discard the woody stems.



WILLOW - Intestinal inflammation. Willow twigs and leaves. Useful winter food, easily gathered and stored. Also a pain-reliever and possible natural coccidiostat.



Other helpful information

If while treating your rabbits or at any other time your rabbits stools are soft and sticky, a temporary change of diet can be beneficial. Remove the pellets and grain, feed grass hay and some of the beneficial plants. These plants will aid in firming the stools but they are also part of a healthy diet and will not cause constipation. You do not want your rabbits to go from one extreme to the other. The four best plants for this are plantain, raspberry leaves, blackberry leaves and strawberry leaves. All these are useful plants for a food source as well as a medicinal. You don't need to worry about feeding too many. These are also good plants to dry and add to your winter hay blend! A combination of any of these and the grass hay will usually solve the problem within a few days.

On the other hand, if a rabbit is exhibiting watery stools rather than merely soft, a stronger medicine may be needed. The dietary restrictions should be the same, but shepherd's purse can be added to the greens listed above. Shepherd's purse is an excellent medicinal plant, but it is very strong and you don't want to feed too much. A small handful of leaves and stems twice a day for three or four days should fix things. As the rabbit is getting better, reduce the amount of shepherds purse and then stop but feed the greens listed above and grass hay

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for another day or two. Reintroduce grains or pellets slowly.

EAR MITES-(EAR CANKER)- Any type of food grade oil may be used- olive oil, corn oil, almond oil, etc. A few drops of tea tree oil mixed in to any of the oils listed will help the healing process the oil serves 3 purposes - soothes the skin, smothers and suffocates the mites, and speeds the healing process. Put 6 or 7 drops in each ear massaging the base of the ear to saturate the inner ear completely. The rabbit will shake out the nasty stuff after a few treatments. Treat for the first 2 days than every other day for 14 days after this, 2 times a week for the next 2 weeks ear mites have a 28 day life cycle so you must treat up to the 28 days to make sure all the mites are killed. I make a mix of mineral oil with a few drops of apple cider vinegar, 5 or 6 drops of camphor oil and rosemary oil in the store bought mineral oil container and use a few drops in each ear as a preventive when I trim the rabbits nails.

EYE INFECTION / WEEPY EYES- Eye problems are not uncommon in rabbits, dirt or other debris can get lodged in a tear duct(happens more often to kits in the nest box) and if not washed out can cause a bacterial infection wash with saline or any human eye wash(remember they have all probably been tested or rabbits at some point)take a few drop of tea tree oil and smeared it around the inflamed area tea tree oil is a natural antiseptic and is very good at curing microbial infections. See CHAMOMILE above for more info

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GI PROBLEMS- Rabbits need a high fiber diet for their best intestinal health. Grass hay is great for the healthy movement in the rabbits' digestive track. If a rabbit is not eating there is a problem! If their poop pellets get small and dry or none at all it is a sign of wool block or GI stasis. You have to get the gastric tract moving again. Get some 100% canned pumpkin NOT the canned pumpkin pie filling (it has spices in it the will hurt your rabbits) Suck some up in a big syringe (remove the needle). Then put the plastic tip of the syringe into the side of the rabbits mouth and very slowly squeeze some out a little at a time give about 2 teaspoons for each dose wait about 3 hours and do it again you can give it 4 to 6 times a day every day until they start eating and pooping. Slippery elm bark in its shredded bark form fed to rabbits should help with GI problems if the rabbits will not eat it grind some up as a powdered form in its water mix 1 teaspoon in the drinking water 3 to 4 time a day. I have always had good luck feeding a few comfrey leaves and in a few days they are back on the regular feed schedule

KIDNEY OR BLADDER PROBLEMS- Any diuretic that will increase urine flow is good for the urinary tract in rabbits. This helps to keep bladder sludge down (caused from high calcium intake). Dandelion root tea in the water with cranberry treats several time a week will help with any problems. The cranberry prevents bacteria from attaching to the wall of the bladder so it get washed out with the urine.

PREGNENCY TONIC- Combine the following- dried, raspberry leaf, nettle, and goats rue (*Galega officinale*) in equal parts, and half part Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*). All organic either grow your own or get it from a health food store

Feed: 1 Tbs. per day at feeding time, to pregnant Does beginning one week before kindling through the first month. These herbs help ease kindling, offer nutrition and support lactation. Just sprinkle 1 Tbs. over their food, once a day.