

Help your dog find relief from environmental irritants with pure essential oils.

Dogs encounter a wide variety of irritants as part of their daily lives. Exposure to lawn or pool chemicals, pollens, viruses and bacteria, long-term use of medications, and the cold dry air of winter can wreak havoc with your dog's natural immunity, and cause them to suffer from itching, swelling, and other minor illnesses.



Fortunately, there are a number of essential oils that are safe for canine use, and can help bolster the immune system, support the lungs, liver and skin.

Three essential oils that strike a balance between powerful and gentle are niaouli, ravensare and frankincense.

Niaouli (*Melaleuca viridiflora*) is an Australian tree related to the tea tree, has a more pleasant scent, and is gentler to the skin and mucous membranes. Niaouli has been used in remedies for first aid, and to soothe skin disorders such as herpes, roundworm, sores and abscesses. It is helpful with viral, fungal and bacterial infections, including those that affect the ears and throat. Niaouli can help relieve allergic reactions, especially those affecting the skin and ears.

Ravensare (*Ravensara aromatica*) is a tree native to Madagascar that is related to the bay laurel. It is a gentle yet powerful, and has been used in remedies to relieve flu, sore throat, bronchitis, fibromyalgia, mononucleosis, chronic fatigue and shingles. Canine practitioners sometimes use ravensare to help dogs with compromised immune systems or until the vaccination schedule is complete.



Frankincense (*Boswellia carterii*) has been used in incense, perfumes and embalming agents, and more recently has been studied for its antitumoral activity. Frankincense is nontoxic and nonirritating to tissues, used in preparations for wounds, acne and boils, and to relieve dry, chapped or maturing skin. It can help support the lungs and immune system to relieve colds, flu, bronchitis and asthma. Frankincense has shown an ability to slow and deepen respiration, and so inhaling its scent can bring feelings of calmness, comfort and serenity during unsettling times.

Essential oils are the volatile oils produced within the seed, flower, leaf, bark, root or resin of aromatic plants. Scientific studies in Germany and France regarding the medical effects of essential oils on animals and humans were quite advanced by the mid-1800s. Due to positive clinical results, the practice of veterinary aromatherapy was not uncommon in these countries by the mid-1900s.

Clinical studies over many decades have shown essential oils to have a variety of medicinal properties including analgesic, antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, antispasmodic, antiinflammatory, antiseptic, detoxifying, expectorant, immunostimulant, regenerative, and sedative actions. When used correctly, remedies containing pure essential oils can be a safe and effective natural alternative to conventional remedies.

Because they are highly concentrated, it is advisable to dilute essential oils before use to avoid problems such as skin irritation or overwhelming the sense of smell. This is especially important with remedies for dogs, because they have a much stronger sense of smell than humans. As with any home remedy, it is important to know the use and safety guidelines, and to recognize when it is time for professional help from your veterinarian.