



Stinging Nettle

Urtica dioica

Characteristics

Erect, herbaceous perennial growing 2-4 feet tall in dense clumps. Widely known for its unpleasant stinging hairs on the stems and lower leaf surfaces. Slender four-sided stems with dull, dark green leaves opposite each other on the stem. Leaves purple on plants in full sun. Creeping, stretching roots from which new shoots emerge.

Flowers/Fruit

In summer, tiny greenish or greenish-white flowers hang down in clusters just above where the leaves attach to the stem. Small, dry, oval-shaped, yellow to grayish-tan seeds clustered along drooping spikes emerge in late summer and fall.

Habitat Value

Food plant for several species of butterfly and moths.

Home Garden Applications

Useful plant as a soil builder and plant fertilizer. Should be handled carefully in home and agricultural settings; stinging hairs on stems and leaves come off when touched and cause painful sting or rash.