



Topic: Stinging Nettle Hurts

Question: Recently, while at the home of a friend I took on the small task of weeding around an outdoor potted plant. On grasping one, a small weed, (photo attached) I drew my hand back in sudden pain. This little critter, I saw, had on its stem thousands of very small, fine needles. The pain was severe and it lingered for several hours and even increased after I washed my hand. First, can you identify it? Next, what's the danger of its spreading throughout an area?

- P.S., North Fort Myers

Answer: The plant is a species of stinging nettle. The plant has many hollow stinging hairs called trichomes on its leaves and stems, which act like hypodermic needles that inject histamine and other chemicals that produce a stinging sensation when contacted by humans and animals. The plant is universal to our area and there is no getting rid of it.



Useful Links

[Stephen's Webpage](#)

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by sending an email to brownsh@leegov.com.

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