

# School-to-Nature

## Stinging Nettle



- Stinging Nettle is another plant (like poison ivy) to learn to identify and avoid. Leaves and stems have microscopic “hairs” that easily penetrate and stick into the skin and leave a stinging rash.
- It grows 3-7 ft. tall, in colonies in sunny areas. Flowers are brownish or greenish and form in August when the plant is fully grown. On Conservancy lands watch for Stinging Nettle at Trout Ponds Prairie.
- Stinging Nettle plants serve as food for some moth and butterfly larvae. Humans cook and eat the leaves; they are very nutritious, and the hairs are dissolved in cooking. Stem fibers have been used to make cloth. Tea made with the leaves is said to alleviate joint pain and arthritis.
- Treatments for the rash include calamine lotion and hydrocortisone, BUT there are also folk medicine cures: rub with the juice of dandelions, horsetail, dock, jewelweed, greater plantain, or ferns; also try mud, saliva, baking soda, oil, onions, lemon juice, or topical milk of magnesia.