

Melissa officianalis
Family: *Lamiaceae* - mint
Parts Used: leaves

Even before my herbalist days I loved growing lemon balm in my yard because of its strong aromatic lemon scent and beautiful leaves. I love running my hands over the top of the soft leaves and then inhaling the calming aroma. Not only do humans love this plant but bees go crazy over it, in fact the scientific name of Melissa, means bee.

Properties

Antiseptic, antibacterial, anti-viral, antispasmodic, antioxidant, diaphoretic, carminative, nervine, anti-depressive, hypotensive, anti-microbial, hepatic, sedative, calming.

Energetics: cooling, drying
Systems Affected: nervous, digestive

Uses

- Strong antiviral; use for any type of viral illness
- Cold sores and mouth sores
- Cough, cold, flu, allergies
- Fever; induce sweating for a good skin cleanse
- Strep throat
- Herpes, shingles, chicken pox
- Nervous system support
- Digestive system support
- Strengthens the heart
- Women's health; cramps, PMS, menopausal symptoms, and issues.
- Hormone regulator
- Tension headaches and migraines.
- Protects brain from powerful stimuli making it useful for those with high energy.
- Aids those suffering with ADD and ADHD, calming and soothing for restless children.
- Depression, heartache, melancholy, hysteria, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), anxiety, etc.
- Relax the body and mind, uplift the spirits, balance mood swings.
- Insomnia, sleep aid and nightmares
- Fatigue
- Thyroid support; overactive thyroid, hyperthyroidism, Grave's disease, etc.
- Bug bites and stings.

- Wounds, bruises, and cuts.
- Use in potpourri or as an herbal pillow to freshen drawers, closets and furniture.
- Use as a moth repellent in cupboards and linen closets.
- Bug repellent
- Concentrated tea may darken hair and cover gray when used regularly.

Herb Preparations

- Food; add leaves to salads, and culinary dishes for subtle lemon flavor.
- Tea, makes delicious drinks
- Poultice (can chew and apply immediately), compress
- Herbal oil (culinary and body)
- Extract, liniment
- Salve, balm, ointment
- Bath, foot soak
- Honey, syrup
- Herbal popsicles (great for strep throat, mouth sores, cough, cold, etc.)

Care/Harvesting

Lemon Balm is a cultivated plant grown in gardens; it is not found in the wild. It will grow readily, self-seeds and is frost hardy, coming back year after year.

- Transplant or sprinkle seeds in rich, moist soil in part shade.
- Keep the soil moist, watering daily if needed.
- Feed compost tea monthly for added growth and vigor.
- Harvest frequently by cutting leaves as needed and/or cutting back entire plant to 4" several times during the season.
- Most potent and aromatic before the plant blooms but can gather leaves all season long.
- Can be dried and stored, but most potent used fresh.
- Stir up the soil around the plant in the fall, cut down to 4" and cover with mulch for winter protection.
- Plants can also be grown indoors during the winter months.