

LEMON BALM

COMMON NAME: LEMON BALM, BALM, COMMON BALM

LATIN NAME: *Melissa officinalis*

FAMILY: *Labiatae (mint family)*

HISTORY: This plant has been cultivated for over 2000 years-originally as a bee plant,hence the name *melissa* which is greek for “honey bee”. It’s theraputic uses were promoted by Arab physicians in the 10th and 11th centuries for use in anxiety and depression.

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION: Lemon scented perennial with a square stem and ovate, toothed leaves, 3-7 cm long. Insignificant yellow flowers are produced in summer.

TYPE: PERENNIAL **HEIGHT:** 30-80 CM **SPREAD:** 20-45 CM **HARDINESS ZONES:** 4 - 9

HABITAT: - Native to Southern Europe, Mediterranean and Central Europe. Introduced all over temperate northern climates. Prefers moist soil in sun or partial shade.

PROPOGATION: By seed sown in autumn or spring, or by division or stem cuttings in autumn or spring.

PARTS USED: aerial parts

HARVEST: Cut off young shoots approx. 30 cm long and use fresh or dry below 35c in a shaded location. Plants can be harvested 2 to 3 times per year between June and September. Dried herb should be used within six months as most benefits are lost on storage.

CONSTITUENTS:
volatile oils: citral, citronella, geraniol, linalol
flavonoids: low concentration
polyphenolics: protocatechnic acid,caffeic acid, rosmarinic acid,tannins
triterpenic acids: ursolic,pomolic acids

PROPERTIES: carminative, anti-spasmodic, anti-depressive, diaphoretic, hypotensive, anti-viral.

INDICATIONS: spasm in digestive tract
flatulent dyspepsia
tension, stress
depression- especially when feelings of diminished self-worth are associated (teenagers)
influenza
herpes-in a cream
hyperthroidism-inhibits the binding of tsh to plasma membranes and binding of immunoglobulin in Graves disease.
shown to prevent cancer cells from dividing

****THIS HERB IS SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES****

DOSAGE: INFUSION: 2-3tsp. dried or 8-10 fresh leaves/ cup boiling water and allow to steep covered for 15-20 minutes. drink as required.

TINCTURE: 2-6 ml (1 tsp) three times / day

CREAMS: replace water in formula with equivalent amount of a strong, strained infusion (only use enough water to cover herbs)

OTHER USES: CULINARY-fresh leaves give lemon flavour to salads,soups, sauces, vinegars, game and fish. Also used in flavouring liquers and wines.

AROMATIC: great addition to pot pourris and herb pillows and makes a good bath blend with lavender and oatmeal.

COMBINATIONS: for stress and tension- lavender(*Lavandula officinalis*) lime blossom (*Tilia sp.*)
for digestive problems-hops (*Humulus lupulus*) chamomile (*Matricaria rectita*) or
meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*)
for hyperthyroidism-bugleweed (*Lycopus virginicus*),motherwort(*Leonurus cardica*)
for depression- st. johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*), caraway(*Carum carvi*)

CONTRAINDICATIONS/WARNINGS: *None known*

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