

LEMON BALM *(Melissa officinalis)*

SEASON: *Spring to Fall*

GROWING TIPS

- » Easy to grow.
- » Prefers part-sun or shade.
- » Not really picky about soil.
- » Consider growing in a pot, spreads enthusiastically.
- » Cut plant back once or twice per year before flowering for more harvests.



HARVESTING & PRESERVING

- » Harvest leaves before flowering.
- » **Air Dry** - in single layers over paper towels or screen for several days
- » **Store** - dried, in brown paper bags or glass jars out of sunlight for 9-12 months.
- » **Freeze** - lemon balm tea in ice trays, use within 6+ months

BENEFITS

External

- for cold sores, bug bites

Internal

- antiviral; fights cold sores, chicken pox, shingles; calms, soothes anxiety; used for hyperthyroidism.

(*not usually recommended if you are hypothyroid)



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USES FOR LEAVES

- » **Lemon Balm Tea:** Fill a jar with fresh leaves, pour simmering water on top, cover with a saucer until cool enough to drink. Sweeten to taste. Lemon balm tea can also be used to make soap, or poured into a bath for itchy skin.
- » **Sleepy Time Syrup:** 3/4 cup fresh lemon balm leaves in small pot + just enough water to cover leaves. Simmer until water reduced in half. Strain. Combine 1/2 cup concentrated tea + 1/4 cup honey. Store in fridge about 3 days. Dose by spoonful as needed. Not for kids under age 1.
- » **Bug Bite Remedy:** Lemon balm tea + pinch of kaolin or other clay. Mix well, apply to bug bites and let air dry.
- » **Tincture:** Fill jar 3/4 way with fresh leaves (or 1/3 with dried). Pour in 80 proof or higher vodka until jar is filled. Cover with lid and infuse 4 to 6 weeks. Strain. Dose a few drops to 1 dropper (1/4 tsp) at a time. Mix with equal part honey for better taste. Shelf life 1+ year.
- » **Glycerite:** Fill jar with fresh lemon balm leaves, cover with 3 parts glycerin + 1 part water. Cap & infuse in dark place for 3 to 4 weeks. Strain. Take 1/2 to 1 tsp at a time to relax calm. Store in fridge several months.
- » **Infused Oil:** Fill half-pint jar about 1/4 to 1/3 with dried leaves, cover with oil. Infuse 4 weeks, strain. Shelf life is about 1 year. Use to make a lip balm for cold sores. (Search for "Super Healing Cold Sore Lip Balm" for the original Nerdy Farm Wife recipe.)