

LEMON BALM



Melissa officinalis

[mel-ISS-uh oh-fiss-ih-NAH-liss]

Family: Labiatae

Names: Common balm, lemon balsam, sweet Melissa, tourengane, oghoul, melissa, sweet balm; bee balm; heart's delight; honey plant; Zitronenmelisse, Melisse, Herztrost (German); citronelle, baume, mélisse, Herbe citron (French); melissa (Italian); Sidrunmeliss (Estonian); Badrangbuye, Farandj moschk (Farsi); Sitruunamelissa (Finnish); Mézfű, Orvosi citromfű, Macskaméz, Anyaméhfű (Hungarian); Sítrónmelissa, Hjartafró (Icelandic); Sitronmelisse (Norwegian); Melisa lekarska, rojownik, rojownik lekarski, matecznik (Polish); Melissa limonnaya, Limonnik (Russian); Balsamita maior, Toronjil (Spanish); Citronmeliss, Hjärtansfröjd (Swedish); Melisa, Ogul out (Turkish)

Description: Bushy, rounded herbs. Height 3 feet; width 2 feet; flowers: small, white, tube-shaped, 1/3 inch long; leaves: oval, coming to a point, serrated around the edges and strongly lemon-scented, 1 to 3 inches long. Blooms May to August.

Cultivation: Perennial Zone 3. Performs best in a fertile soil with a pH of 5 to 7. Seeds may be sown in the garden, either broadcast in one spot or in rows, as soon as the ground can be worked in the spring. It will germinate rapidly (7-14 days) in light in a flat at temperature of 70°F in the medium. Seedlings should be transplanted, when they have 4 true leaves, to a deeper flat or small pots and hardened off before setting out. Lemon balm will grow well in partial shade or full sun. It probably exhausts the soil after two or three years because it makes such a large clump so it must be fertilized annually especially with nitrogen. The old plants may die off in a wet winter, especially where they do not have adequate drainage, but seedlings volunteer from any plant that is not cut down completely at the time of flowering. The roots do not seem to put out runners as do mints, but they increase into a hard-to-divide clump. There is a variegated form, called "golden Lemon Balm". Full sun or partial shade for lush plants. If you wish to confine its growth, don't hesitate to cut into the plant to within a 6 inch diameter in late fall of the second year and every two years thereafter. Flower spikes form in midsummer, which stops leaf production. Cut off these flowering stems 6 inches from the crown. The first cutting from a new plant can usually begin 10 weeks after transplanting. Do not cut more than half the plant at a time. Harvested stems can be hung in bundles in a dark, dry, well-ventilated room for 4 to 7 days and is approximately 80% water, then stripped and stored in an opaque container for later use. Yields of dry herb are 1,500 to 2,500 pounds per acre.

Constituents: essential oil includes citronellal and geraniol with neral; citral, citronellol, eugenol, geraniol, polyphenols, flavonoids,

triterpenoids; caryophyllene, caryophyllene oxide, linalol, limonene.

Energetics: cold, dry, sour, slightly bitter

Actions: sedative, anti-depressant, digestive stimulant, promotes sweating, relaxing restorative for nervous system, antiviral (possibly due to polyphenols and tannins); antibacterial, carminative, antispasmodic

Language of Flowers: Social intercourse; pleasant company of friends; memories; a cure; "Don't misuse me."

History: The botanical name, *melissa*, is Greek for "bee". Lemon balm has been cultivated in the Mediterranean region for about 2000 years. The Muslim herbalist Avicenna recommended lemon balm "to make the heart merry." Paracelsus claimed this herb could completely revitalize the body and called it the "elixir of life", and 14th century French King Charles V drank its tea every day to keep his health. The famous Carmelite Water, first made by 17th century Carmelite nuns to treat nervous headache and neuralgia, combined lemon balm with lemon-peel, nutmeg, coriander and angelica root. Sacred to the temple of Diana, lemon balm was called "heart's delight" in southern Europe. Its virtue of dispelling melancholy has been praised by herbal writers for centuries, and it is still used today in aromatherapy to counter depression.

Aromatherapy Uses:

EXTRACTION: essential oil by steam distillation from the leaves and flowering tops

CHARACTERISTICS: a pale yellow liquid with a light, fresh lemony fragrance.

BLENDS WITH: lavender, geranium, floral and citrus oils

USES:

Skin care: allergies, insect bites, insect repellent

Respiratory: asthma, bronchitis, chronic coughs; useful for colds and influenza

Digestive: colic, indigestion, nausea; good for vomiting and indigestion of a nervous origin, relieving spasms and flatulence

Circulatory: a tonic for the heart, slowing its action, relieving palpitations and lowering blood pressure

Genito-urinary: menstrual problems especially painful periods

Nervous: anxiety, depression, hypertension, insomnia, migraine, nervous tension, shock and vertigo

Emotion: melissa is vivacious and provocative, revitalizing the inner self and calming the senses. Makes the heart merry and joyful. Also helpful in dispelling a sense of dejection in times of grief or bereavement. Melissa calms raging emotions, engendering a state of quiet peace.

Other: used extensively as a fragrance component in toiletries, cosmetics and perfumes. Employed in most major food categories including alcoholic and soft drinks.

BLENDS:

Digestive: 5 drops melissa, 3 drops peppermint, 3 drops cardamom

Circulatory: 4 drops melissa, 4 drops ylang-ylang, 2 drops clary sage

Nervous: 4 drops melissa, 3 drops vetivert, 2 drops Roman chamomile

Emotion: 4 drops melissa, 4 drops orange, 3 drops frankincense

Energetics: sour, spicy cool

Meridians/Organs affected: lungs, liver

Medicinal Uses: Lemon balm's main action is as a tranquilizer. It calms a nervous stomach, colic, or heart spasms. The leaves are reputed to also lower blood pressure. It is very gentle, although effective, so is often suggested for children and babies. The hot tea brings on a sweat that is good for relieving colds, flus and fevers and an antiviral agent has been found that combats mumps, cold sores and other viruses.

The tea has also been shown to inhibit the division of tumor cells. Studies indicate that the herb slightly inhibits the thyroid-

stimulating hormone and restricts Grave's disease, a hyperthyroid condition. Lemon balm's antihistamine action is useful to treat eczema and headaches and accounts for the centuries-old tradition of placing the fresh leaf on insect bites and wounds.

Lemon balm has antipyretic, refreshing, cholagogic and stimulating properties. Use a pad soaked in the infusion to relieve painful swellings such as gout. Use as ointment for sores, insect bites, or to repel insects. Use hot infused oil as ointment or gentle massage oil for depression, tension, asthma and bronchitis.

A clinical multicentric study in Germany offers evidence of the antiviral activity of a specially prepared dried extract of lemon balm against herpes simplex infections. The extract was a concentrated (70:1) dry extract of lemon balm which was included at a level of 1% in a cream base. Patients applied the cream 2-4 times daily for 5-10 days. In the group receiving the active Melissa cream, there was a significant improvement in symptoms on day two compared to the placebo group and on day five over 50% more patients were symptom-free than in the placebo group. To be effective, the treatment must be started in the very early stages of the infection.

Research has clearly demonstrated the plant's ability to impact the limbic system of the brain and "protect" the brain from the powerful stimuli of the body and should be part of any ADHD formula.

Combinations:

Digestive troubles: hops, chamomile or meadowsweet

Stress and tension: lavender and linden blossoms

Formula for ADHD: 70 ml Bacopa monneira; 50 ml Ginkgo biloba; 30 ml Valerian; 30 ml Panax ginseng; 30 ml Melissa officinalis. Dose is 5 ml t.i.d.

Heartburn Formula: 1 tsp each chamomile flowers, lemon balm leaves and licorice root
½ tsp slippery elm bark
¼ tsp each fennel seeds and catnip leaves
1½ cups very hot water

1½ cups carrot or apple juice (optional)

Combine herbs and pour very hot water over them. Steep for at least 15 minutes, then strain out herbs and add juice. Drink 1 cup after each meal. Stored in the refrigerator, this formula will keep for a few days.

Stomachache Tea

2 cups boiling water

1 tsp each chamomile flowers and lemon balm leaves

½ tsp each catnip leaves and fennel or dill seeds

Pour boiling water over herbs and steep for 10 minutes. Strain out herbs and allow to cool.

Cosmetic Uses: To make a lemon-scented bath, tie ¼ cup crushed balm leaves into a handkerchief or washcloth. Let the water run through the bag until the tub is filled. Infuse as a facial steam and as a rinse for greasy hair.

Recipes:

Minty Astringent

1 Tbsp fresh lemon balm (or peppermint or spearmint)

1 cup witch hazel

Combine the ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Allow herb to steep for 1 week. Strain. Use 1 teaspoon per application. Refrigeration not required.

Lemon Balm Honey Bee Mouthwash

25 fresh lemon balm leaves

2 oz chartreuse liqueur

8 oz glass jar with screw-top

5 inch square cheese cloth

6 oz distilled water

1 tsp honey

8 oz amber glass bottle with screw top

Coarsely chop lemon balm. In the glass jar, combine the lemon balm and the liqueur. Set aside in a cool, dark place for two weeks to extract the healing essences from the lemon balm leaves. Shake the bottle once a day. Place the cheese cloth in a fine-gauge sieve and strain the tincture into a glass bowl. Discard the herb. Add the distilled water and honey. Whisk to

dissolve the honey. Transfer to the amber bottle. Rinse or gargle twice a day with a half oz of the mouthwash. (The Healing Kitchen)

Ritual Uses: Gender: Feminine. Planet: Moon. Element: Water. Powers: love, success, healing. Lemon Balm is primarily used in the pursuit of romance. It is an herb which attracts, and is sometimes made into a charm and worn to bring a lover into one's life. It may also be used as a bathing herb, some of the delightfully scented leaves scattered over the water, or an infusion poured to mix with the bath. This is also said to attract romance. For magickal purposes, balm is ideally suited for healing those who suffer from mental or nervous disorders. It is also very useful for those of sound mind who need to keep their mental processes in superior condition. A tea made of the leaves brings calm, which is appropriate for magickal students while preparing for ritual work.

Considered sacred to Diana, it is believed that it was once used in her temples. Balm may also be used as a bathing herb toward a variety of goals. It may be used as part of the ritual process of invoking the Goddess; it may be used when sharing a ritual bath with one's partner; or it may be used to find the fulfillment of one's personal desires. This usage of lemon balm opens one to the divine love of the Goddess, but is also believed to add energy to one's being which makes you more appealing in the world of love and romance. From Arabic herb magic: soak the herb in wine for several hours, strain and share with a friend.

It is also used in magical healing and Pliny said that its powers were so great that if it was attached to a sword that had made a wound the blood would immediately be staunch.

It can also be used in spells to ensure success, and if you keep bees, rub this herb on the hives. It will attract new bees and keep the old ones there.

Spiritual Properties: Lemon balm has long been known as an herb that balances the feelings and the emotions. It helps resolve moodiness and melancholia. It was sacred to

alchemists, and the plant-based philosopher's stone is made from an alchemical preparation of this plant. In a metaphorical sense, Melissa guides us as we traverse the misty emotional state of the Moon and enables us to view our emotions and feelings without getting lost in them. This is an excellent herb for children, who function on Moon energy for the first years of their lives.

OTHER USES: Used in potpourris. In the 16th century, it was rubbed on beehives to encourage the bees to create honey. Because it contains citronella oil it is used in insect repellants.

TOXICITY: Prolonged contact with balm plants or leaves may cause contact dermatitis (itching, sting, burning, reddened or blistered skin) or it may sensitize you to other allergens.

Culinary Uses: Fresh lemon balm imparts a subtle lemon flavor and fresh lemon fragrance, making it especially nice for fruit dishes, custards, and tea. Early fresh leaves can be chopped and added to salads; just cut down somewhat on the vinegar or lemon juice.

Cut the leaves into slivers and sprinkle over fish or add to poached fruit where a lemony flavor is desired. Lemon balm can be used in stuffings, sauces, or any dish in which you would use lemon thyme. It enhances the flavor of vegetables, light grains, roast chicken, steamed vegetables and fruit salads. Lay fish or chicken over a bed of lemon balm leaves before baking: you won't need any other seasonings. Stir the minced leaves into cooked rice or into clarified butter for dipping artichoke leaves. Try stuffing a handful of the leaves and some minced green onions under the skin of chicken breasts, then sprinkle with lemon pepper before baking or grilling.

Stir chopped fresh lemon balm into plain yogurt and sprinkle with any kind of fresh berries. The minced leaves can be added to a cooked soft custard to pour over fresh fruit. Add the leaves to iced tea or place sprigs of fresh lemon balm in a tall chilled wine glass

with white wine; add a splash of sparkling water for a summer spritzer.

Spread cream cheese blended with a small amount of mayonnaise on slices of whole-grain bread, then add lots of lemon balm leaves and generous slices of juicy nectarines, strawberries, or peaches. Or try some of the leaves in an omelet with fresh strawberries and creme fraiche.

For a late-night soothing tea, steep lemon balm leaves in a cup of boiling water. Stir in honey and lemon juice, to taste.

Dried lemon balm is mainly used for tea. For other uses, it's better to freeze the leaves for later use, packed into plastic bags. They'll keep well for up to 2 months.

Chopping with a knife usually bruises the leaves, causing them to discolor so tear the leaves into small pieces instead.

Known as a traditional wine herb, lemon balm is used to flavor many liqueurs. Use ½ oz of the fresh leaves late in the boil in a home brewed beer to add a strong lemon scent and flavor.

Recipes:

Blueberry Lemon Balm Muffins

12 lemon balm leaves
1 cup superfine sugar
6 Tbsp fresh lemon balm, minced
1 ½ cup fresh blueberries
1 cup chopped walnuts
2 cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ cup milk
1/3 cup safflower oil
1 egg

Bury the 12 lemon balm leaves in the superfine sugar in a tightly closed container. Let stand overnight. Combine minced lemon balm, blueberries, and walnuts in one bowl. Mix together flour, baking powder, and granulated sugar in another bowl. Whisk together milk, oil, and egg in a mixing bowl. Add flour mixture and stir until just blended. Fold in blueberry mixture. Divide batter into greased muffin tins. Sprinkle each muffin with a little of the lemon-scented superfine sugar.

Bake in a preheated 400F oven for 20-25 minutes or until golden. Remove muffins and cool on rack. Sprinkle lightly with additional lemon-scented superfine sugar before serving. (An Herbal Collection)

Melissa Liqueur

2 ½ tsp dried lemon balm
sliced and scraped peel of ¼ lemon
a pinch of coriander
a pinch of cinnamon
2 peppermint leaves
1 cup vodka
½ cup sugar syrup

Place all the ingredients in a bottle and steep 3 weeks. Shake the jar daily during the steeping period. Strain and filter into a dark bottle, adding more sugar to taste. Mature for 2 months.

Sugar Syrup

1 cup white granulated sugar and ½ cup water
Bring to a boil, and stir until all the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is clear. Always cool before adding to alcohol mixture. (Homemade Liqueurs)

Valentino

2 oz unsalted butter, softened
8 oz cream cheese, softened
2 generous Tbsp strawberry preserves or orange marmalade
1 tsp orange zest
1 Tbsp Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur or fresh orange juice
3 Tbsp chopped fresh lemon balm
Fresh strawberries for optional garnish
Fresh lemon balm sprigs for optional garnish

Blend the butter and cream cheese with a fork. Mix in the other ingredients. Best made a day in advance for flavors to mingle; chill overnight and serve at room temperature. Keeps for a week. Use as a dip or serve as a spread. (The Herb Garden Cookbook)

Chicken Stew with Blackberries and Lemon Balm

4 chicken breasts, partly boned
salt and pepper
scant 2 Tbsp butter

1 Tbsp sunflower oil
 4 Tbsp flour
 2/3 cup red wine
 2/3 cup chicken stock
 grated rind of half an orange plus 1 Tbsp juice
 3 sprigs lemon balm, finely chopped plus 1 sprig to garnish
 2/3 cup heavy cream
 1 egg yolk
 2/3 cup fresh blackberries plus 1/3 cup to garnish

Remove any skin from the chicken, and season the meat. Heat the butter and oil in a pan, fry the chicken to seal it, then transfer to a casserole dish. Stir the flour into the pan, then add wine and stock and bring to a boil. Add the orange rind and juice, and also the chopped lemon balm. Pour over the chicken. Preheat the oven to 350F. Cover the casserole and cook in the oven for about 40 minutes. Blend the cream with the egg yolk, add some of the liquid from the casserole and stir back into the dish with the blackberries (reserving those for the garnish). Cover and cook for another 10-15 minutes. Serve garnished with the rest of the blackberries and lemon balm. (The Encyclopedia of Herbs and Spices)

Crab Soup with Lemon Balm and Coconut Milk

1 large steamed crab, such as Dungeness or blue
 ½ inch piece ginger, peeled
 12 large lemon balm sprigs
 3 shallots, 2 chopped
 2 garlic cloves, chopped
 2 Tbsp Thai or Vietnamese fish sauce
 1 tsp dried shrimp paste or ½ tsp anchovy paste
 1 14-oz can unsweetened coconut milk
 1 green Thai or serrano chili
 1 red Thai or serrano chili
 zest of ½ lime
 juice of 1 lime, or to taste.

Scrub the crab well, then crack the shells and remove the meat, keeping it in large pieces. Set the meat aside. Break the shells into small pieces with a mallet or the blunt side of a chef's knife. Place the broken shells in a food processor with 1 cup water and process

for about 1 minute. Scrape the shells and liquid into a noncorrodible pan and add 4 cups water. If you are using pre-shelled crab meat, place 4 cups chicken stock in a noncorrodible pan. Slice the ginger about 1/8 inch thick and add to the shells and water or to the stock. Bruise six lemon balm sprigs and add them to the pan along with the chopped shallots and garlic. Simmer the broth for 15 minutes, skimming occasionally. Strain the broth into a clean noncorrodible pan. Stir the coconut milk very well and add half of it to the broth. Remove the leaves from the remaining lemon balm and shred them. Cut the remaining shallot in a fine dice. Stem the chilis and slice them in thin diagonal pieces. Remove the seeds if desired. Add the lemon balm, shallot, chilis, and lime zest to the broth and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the crab meat and lime juice and heat through. Serve hot. (Herbs in the Kitchen)

Lemon Balm Chicken

4 boned chicken breasts
 2 Tbsp dry sherry
 ¾ cup shredded cheese (Swiss or another white cheese)
 ½ cup light cream
 4 Tbsp butter
 1 Tbsp chopped lemon balm
 Salt/pepper

Season chicken with salt and pepper. Melt butter and fry chicken 5-7 minutes. Place chicken in glass baking dish. Add sherry and lemon balm and cream into the pan of hot butter. Stir and simmer over low heat. Pour liquid over chicken. Top with cheese and bake for 15-20 minutes in 350° oven in covered dish. Serve with sauce over angel hair pasta. (The Herbal Connection Collection—Volume 1)

Chartreuse

10.5 oz fresh hyssop leaves
 10.5 fresh lemon balm leaves
 5 1/3 oz fresh angelica leaves
 2 1/6 oz cinnamon
 2/3 oz mace
 2/3 oz saffron
 5.5 quarts potable wine alcohol
 2 5/8 cups white sugar

Steep all the ingredients except the sugar in the alcohol for 1 week, then distill. Sweeten the distillation with the sugar before bottling. (Mastering Herbalism)

Lemon Balm-Spearmint Pesto

2 cups fresh lemon balm and spearmint leaves
½ cup olive oil
½ cup garlic cloves

Chop and blend all ingredients together. This blend can be stored frozen for 2-3 months in an airtight container. Ideal to use as a fresh summer sauce on fish. (Herb Mixtures & Spicy Blends)

Watercress, Lemon Balm, Parsley and Chive Sauce

A verdant sauce to serve with cold, poached chicken, fish or seafood. Or spread it over raw fish or chicken before baking.

1 cup loosely packed watercress leaves
1 cup loosely packed fresh parsley leaves
½ cup loosely packed fresh lemon balm
½ cup minced fresh chives
1 cup mayonnaise
2 to 3 drops of hot pepper sauce.

Put watercress, parsley, lemon balm and chives into a food processor, and process until fine. Then add mayonnaise and hot pepper sauce, and process until well blended. (The Herb & Spice Cookbook: A Seasoning Celebration)

Berry Balm Crunch

16 oz blackberries, raspberries or blueberries
2 Tbsp lemon juice
4 Tbsp finely chopped fresh lemon balm
2/3 cup packed brown sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour
2/3 cup quick-cooking rolled oats
5 Tbsp butter, softened
1 tsp cinnamon
sprigs of fresh lemon balm for garnish

Combine berries, lemon juice, and lemon balm. Spread in an 8-inch square baking pan. Mix sugar and next 4 ingredients. Sprinkle over berries. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until crisp and brown. Serve warm

with ice cream and garnish. (Today's Herbal Kitchen)

Nana's Chicken Salad

1 (3- to 4 ½ lb) chicken
¼ cup olive oil
1 tsp minced garlic
4 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1 dill pickle, chopped
1 bunch celery hearts, chopped
2 Tbsp sweet relish
2 tsp fresh lemon balm
2 tsp fresh tarragon
2 tsp fresh basil
2 tsp fresh chives
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup mayonnaise
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp tarragon vinegar
fresh parsley and radish flowers for garnish

Boil chicken until tender. Remove from liquid and cool. Cut into small chunks. Combine oil and garlic. Pour over chicken and let stand 30 minutes. Add egg and next 7 ingredients. When ready to serve, combine salt, pepper, and next 3 ingredients. Add to chicken and mix. Garnish. (Today's Herbal Kitchen)

Glazed Raspberry Tarts with Lemon Balm

½ cup all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp sugar
3 Tbsp very cold butter
1 egg yolk
½ tsp cider vinegar
3 oz cream cheese, softened
1 Tbsp confectioners' sugar
2 Tbsp minced lemon balm
fresh raspberries
¼ cup red currant jelly
lemon balm leaves, for garnish

Preheat oven to 300°. Stir together flour and sugar. With a pastry blender, cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse meal. With a fork, stir in egg yolk and vinegar. Work dough with your hands until it forms a smooth, noncrumbly ball. (to make dough in a food processor: in a work bowl fitted with steel blade, combine flour, sugar, and butter with

on/off motion until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add egg yolk and vinegar. Continue processing until dough forms a ball.)

Press a rounded tablespoon of dough into each of 6 tart pans that are 2 to 2½ inches in diameter, forming an even layer on bottom and sides of pans. Prick the pastry with a fork, line with aluminum foil, and fill with dried beans or pie weights. Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden brown. Let cool in pan, invert to remove and set aside. Discard beans.

In a small bowl, cream together cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, and lemon balm. Spread 1 tablespoon cheese-lemon balm mixture on the bottom of each cooled tart shell. Arrange berries in tart shells. In a small saucepan, melt jelly; brush over berries. Refrigerate tarts until ready to serve. (Kitchen Herbs)

Herb and Vegetable Stir-Fry

1 head cauliflower, cut into florettes
5 carrots, peeled and sliced thinly
1 bunch broccoli, cut into florettes
1 tsp ginger powder
¼ tsp garlic granules
1 tsp dillweed, snipped fine
6 fresh lemon balm leaves, cut small
1 Tbsp oil
1 Tbsp vinegar
2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 can condensed tomato soup diluted with ½ can water
1 cup cooked rice

Mix vegetables and herbs and sauté at medium heat in oil. Continue to stir slowly until tender crisp. Add vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and diluted tomato soup. Mix and simmer slowly for a few more minutes and spoon over cooked rice. (An Herbal Feast)

Lemon Balm Cornucopia Cookies with Minted Berries and Lemon Balm Custard

3 cups strawberries cut into fourths
3 Tbsp sugar
1 ½ Tbsp Grand Marnier
1 Tbsp minced fresh mint
¼ cup sugar
2 Tbsp melted unsalted butter

1 tsp grated lemon peel
1 Tbsp minced fresh lemon balm
1 large egg white, at room temperature
¼ cup flour
6 large egg yolks
6 Tbsp sugar
3 Tbsp whipping cream
4 ½ Tbsp fresh lemon juice
6 Tbsp whipping cream
1 Tbsp minced fresh lemon balm

Sprinkle strawberries with 3 tablespoons sugar, Grand Marnier and mint in large bowl; stir gently. Chill for 2-4 hours. Process ¼ cup sugar, butter, lemon peel and 1 tablespoon lemon balm in food processor until fluffy. Add egg white. Process for 2-4 seconds. Pour mixture into bowl; stir in flour. Spoon 1 tablespoon batter onto buttered baking sheet. Spread into a 5-inch circle. Repeat, having 2 circles on baking sheet at a time. Bake at 325 degrees for 12 minutes or until pale golden color. Loosen each cookie from baking sheet quickly; fold into cornucopia shape. Cool on wire rack. Repeat process until all batter is used. May prepare a day in advance and store in a single layer in an airtight container. Whisk egg yolks, 6 tablespoons sugar, 3 tablespoons whipping cream and lemon juice in double boiler. Cook over simmering water for 5 minutes or until mixture is thickened and no longer separates, stirring constantly. Pour into bowl to cool; press waxed paper on top to prevent skin from forming on custard. Beat 6 tablespoons whipping cream in mixer bowl until soft peaks form. Fold in 1 tablespoon lemon balm. Fold mixture into cooled custard. Fill cornucopia cookies with custard, allowing some custard to spill out onto dessert plate. Drain strawberries; spoon over custard. Garnish with fresh mint leaves. (Along the Garden Path)

Balm Claret Cup

1 bottle light red wine
1 sprig fresh lemon balm
3 or 4 fresh borage leaves
1 orange, sliced
½ cucumber, sliced thickly
1 oz white sugar

1 shot brandy
2 cups soda water

Mix the ingredients together in an earthenware, ceramic or glass jug (traditionally, with a silver spoon). Chill in the refrigerator for a couple of hours, and add 2 cups soda water and ice before serving. (Mastering Herbalism)

Lemon Balm Cheesecake

2 c flour
½ cup sour cream or yogurt
1 c butter or margarine
1 egg yolk

Combine in food processor and process about 1 minute, until well blended. Flatten on waxed paper and refrigerate for about 1 hour.

Filling:

8 oz cream cheese
½ c sugar
3 c lemon balm leaves, loosely packed, large stems removed
2-3 drops lemon extract (optional)
1 egg
1 tsp lemon rind

Cut cream cheese into chunks, put all ingredients into food processor. Pulse a few times, then process for about 2 minutes until smooth and well blended. Remove pastry from refrigerator and roll out on floured waxed paper until about 1/8 inch thick. Cut 4" circles with knife and lift each circle into a muffin tin. Press down lightly to make circle fit tin. Spoon in cheese filling about 2/3 of the way full. Makes about 15 small cheese cakes. Bake at 250 degrees, 20 minutes. Don't over bake. (The Culinary Gardener)

Lemon Balm Cheesecake

Crusts: 6 whole graham crackers
6 gingersnaps
2 Tbsp maple syrup

Preheat oven to 350F. Crumb the cookies and crackers in food processor. Mix in the syrup. Press into bottom of greased springform pan. Bake 10 minutes.

Filling:

14 oz ricotta cheese

8 oz cottage cheese
6 oz light cream cheese
¾ cup minced lemon balm leaves
4 Tbsp butter, soft
4 Tbsp honey
4 eggs
2/3 cup sugar
½ tsp vanilla

Blend all ingredients in food processor; pour into baked crust. Bake for 1 hour at 350F. Bake an extra 20-25 minutes at 300F or until cheesecake is firm. Cool slightly, then chill for several hours. Garnish with lemon balm sprigs. (The Charlotte Herb Guild Cooks)

Balm wine

10 lbs white sugar
4 gallons water
1 ¼ lbs fresh lemon balm tops
2 Tbsp brewer's yeast
sugar lumps

Boil the sugar in the water for 1 ¼ hours, skimming carefully. Bruise the balm tops and place them in a small cask or tub with 2 tablespoons brewer's yeast. When the sugar water has cooled, pour it over the balm, stirring the mixture well. Let stand for 24 hours, stirring every 4 hours or so. Cover the cask lightly until the fermentation ceases—about 9 weeks—and draw off the liquid into bottles, placing a lump of sugar in each bottle. Cork firmly, and store for at least 1 year before using. (Mastering Herbalism)

Lemon Balm Cookies

1 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
1 Tbsp anise seed
3 tbs lemon balm leaves, chopped finely
2 Tbsp water

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs, then rest of ingredients. Mix well. Roll into balls, 1 teaspoon at a time. Press flat on sugared surface with a glass bottom that has been dipped in granulated sugar. Place on greased cookie sheet and bake at 350F for 15-

20 minutes. (Favorite Recipes from Well-Sweep Farm)

Tropical Smoothie with Mint and Lemon Balm

1 medium banana, peeled and sliced
1 medium mango, peeled, seeded, and chopped
1 medium papaya, peeled, seeded, and chopped
3 cups skim milk
¼ cup fresh mint leaves
¼ cup fresh lemon balm leaves
2 Tbsp honey.

Combine all ingredients in a blender, puree, and serve immediately. Garnish with sprigs of fresh mint or lemon balm, if desired. (The Herbal Palate)

Lemon Balm Summer Cooler

½ quart boiling water
2 blackberry tea bags
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup lemon balm leaves
¼ cup lemon juice, freshly squeezed
3 oz frozen lemonade
1 bottle white wine
optional: extra lemon balm leaves for garnish

Make the tea with boiling water, tea bags, sugar, and bruised lemon balm leaves, stirring often to dissolve the sugar. Steep for 5 minutes. Strain and cool. Mix lemon juice, lemonade, and wine with the blackberry tea. Chill. To serve, pour over ice in tall stemmed goblets and garnish with fresh lemon balm leaves. (The Fearrington House Cookbook)

Lemon Balm Bread

1 cup sugar
1 stick butter
¼ cup chopped lemon balm leaves
1 ½ cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/8 tsp salt
2 large eggs
1/2 cup milk
grated rind of 1 lemon
Glaze:
1/2 cup sugar
2 Tbsp chopped lemon balm leaves
juice from one lemon

Grease and flour 4 small bread pans. Preheat oven to 350. Cream sugar and leaves. Add eggs, beating after each addition. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into pans and Bake 25-30 min or until bread tests done with a toothpick. Pour glaze over top of bread while still hot. When very cool, remove from pans. This bread is even better when allowed to meld in the fridge over night.

Lemon Herb Tea Bread

¾ cup milk
1 Tbsp. lemon thyme, fresh
1 tsp. thyme, dried
1 Tbsp. lemon balm, chopped
½ cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon lemon zest
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt

Glaze frosting:

1 cup powdered sugar
3 tablespoons lemon juice

Combine milk and herbs in small saucepan and bring just to a boil. Remove from heat, cover and let stand. Cream butter. Add sugar. Add eggs 1 at a time. Stir in lemon juice and lemon zest. Separately, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add to butter mixture alternately with milk mixture, beginning and ending with flour. Bake in a greased, floured 9x5x3 loaf pan at 325 for 50 minutes or till done. Mix together powdered sugar and lemon juice to make glaze. May have to add more lemon juice. When bread has cooled a bit, top with glaze.

Variation: Can substitute orange juice and zest for the lemon in recipe to make orange bread. If you do not have the fresh herbs, make the bread with the dried thyme only.

Lemon Tea Bread

¾ c. milk
1 T. lemon balm (finely chopped)

1 T. lemon thyme (finely chopped)
2 C. all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
6 Tbsp. butter (room temperature)
1 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 Tbsp. grated lemon zest

Glaze:

Juice of 2 lemons

Powdered sugar

Butter a 9x5x3 inch pan and preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Heat milk with chopped herbs and let steep until cool. Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together in a bowl. Cream the butter and gradually beat in sugar. Continue beating until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time. Beat in the lemon zest. Add the flour mixture alternatively with the herbed milk. Mix until the batter is just blended. Put the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for about 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out dry. Remove from the pan onto a wire rack that is set over a sheet of waxed paper. Pour lemon glaze over the still hot bread. Decorate with sprigs of lemon thyme. For lemon glaze: put the lemon juice in a bowl add sugar stirring until thick but still pourable.

Honey and Lemon Balm Tea Biscuits

1 cup butter
1 cup honey
3 eggs
3 cup flour
3 tsp. Baking powder
1 tbsp. milk
2 tsp. lemon juice -OR- lemon flavoring
4 sprigs fresh lemon balm, chopped

Thoroughly cream the butter and honey.

Add eggs and beat well. Add the dry ingredients, then the milk, flavoring, and lemon balm. Drop by spoonfuls on an ungreased baking sheet and bake 8 to 10 minutes at 375 F.

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