

KEEP CALM WITH LEMON BALM

Lemon balm (also known as sweet balm) is a member of the mint family and is identified by its square stems (twirl them around in your fingers to feel this), oppositely paired leaves, and flowers that hug the stem.



How to Grow Lemon Balm:

There are three main things to keep in mind if you want to grow this herb:

1. It spreads like nobody's business.
2. It prefers shade.
3. It loves cool soil.

Lemon balm propagates very easily from cuttings. To take a cutting, cut a 4-6-inch-long stem, then strip the lower leaves off the bottom two inches.

Fill a pot with moist, soilless potting mix, then bury the stem in the soil with just the leaves showing above the surface. Water around the cutting, but don't water directly on top. Keep your plant in a warm spot with plenty of sun in about two weeks.

Once you have new roots, if it's in a small container, transplant your lemon balm into a larger pot.

Although lemon balm is not susceptible to many pests, it can sometimes be attacked by aphids or spider mites. These insects are usually brought in from other plants nearby, so the best way to repel them is by keeping your lemon balm healthy and well-watered.

Lemon Balm Popsicles

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup fresh lemon balm
- 2 tbsp dried 1-inch ginger, finely sliced (optional)
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1/3 cup lemon juice (optional)
- 1/3 cup raw honey (or substitute with 1/2 cup apple juice but use 2 cups of water for brewing and 1 tbsp lemon juice)

Instructions

1. Place the lemon balm, ginger, and water in a small saucepan and let simmer. Turn the heat off and set it aside until completely cool.
2. Drain, then stir in the lemon juice and raw honey.
3. Pour into popsicle molds and set in the freezer overnight.

Servings: 6-8 popsicles

Lemon Balm Lemonades

Ingredients

- 1 cup demerara sugar
- 1 cup agave syrup
- 3 cups lemon balm leaves (fresh, slightly compacted in the measuring cup)
- 3 cups lemon juice (freshly squeezed, strained)
- Thinly sliced lemons
- Fresh lemon balm leaves
- Plenty of ice

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients (except the ice) in one large pitcher. Stir until completely mixed.
2. Add ice and serve as a garnish with the sliced lemon and whole lemon balm leaf.
3. Add honey if desired.

Lemon Balm Cold Infusion

Instructions

1. Gently rinse your herbs.
2. Slap the herbs against a palm or on the countertop to release their aromatics.
3. Place in a 32-ounce jar or container with a lid.
4. Pour four cups of natural spring water and close the container.
5. Place in the fridge and infuse for at least four hours or overnight. Some people like to do a solar infusion throughout the day and then place their infusion in the refrigerator to steep overnight instead.
6. Strain before enjoying or leave the leaves in if you like. If desired, top with a fresh lemon balm sprig before serving.



Lemon Balm Tincture

A tincture of fresh lemon balm is a carminative and relieves spasms in the digestive tract and is an excellent general sedative for:

- Nervousness
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Hyperthyroidism