

Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis



The lemon balm is a herbaceous perennial plant of the mint, spearmint and boldus family (Lamiaceae).

Its characteristic flavor and fruity aroma of lemon, mainly in the leaves, is provided by its essential oils belonging to the group of terpenes (primarily monoterpenes: carvacrol, p-cymene, citral - geraniol and nerol - camphor, etc.).

With small green leaves with rounded tips, the lemon balm blooms in late summer.

The flowers of small whitish or pinkish color attract bees, therefrom its scientific name, Melissa, who comes from the Greek and means "bee".

In temperate regions, the stems dry out over the winter, rejuvenating in spring.

This plant can reach a height of about 50 cm.

More info:

http://www.amu.bio/_lemon_balm

Cultivation

Being a delicate plant develops best in the shade or planted in the garden, with exposure to east (shade in the afternoon). Enjoys ,moist, fertile and well drained soil.

Propagation may be done by seeding for subsequent transplantation but rarely arise as flowers, the most used method of propagation is by cuttings.

To propagate the lemon balm through cuttings, you should cut the young branches and plant them in collective cultivation in boxes or trays with light substrate like carbonized rice shell , sand or perlite. Even the mixing of common soil with sand, works. The substrate must be kept moist until rooting.

For the transplant (whether in a definitive place or small pots), should be used as substrate a mixture of animal fertilizer with an organic compound, sand and leaves in the ratio of 1: 5: 1. After mixing well the substrate, level, plant, and water right away. It is important to water every day in the first week.

History

The use of lemon balm is very old, and has references in the literature, particularly in the Odyssey of Homer.

The author, Rosy L. Bornhausen lists a large amount of uses for this herb, both domestic and magical as it is involved in many superstitions. This author says that the lemon balm was the favorite plant of Arabs and that they used it as medicine and food. During the colonization of the United States, it was the favorite tea for the wistful English women and a remedy for day-to-day.

Popular culture attaches to this plant the power to strengthen the love and help people find it.

Utilization

It has a long list of beneficial properties for health, but the best known is perhaps the soothing. Citral, a major component of its essential oil, is responsible for its sedative action.

The lemon balm is a moderate hypotensive which may decrease heart palpitations. Its essential oil acts on the part of the brain that controls the autonomic nervous system and protects the brain from receiving excessive external stimuli.

The lemon balm tea, relax and induces sleep, it is indicated for the treatment of anxiety, depression, epilepsy, nervous disorders, insomnia, hysteria, migraine, hypochondriasis, vertigo and other disorders.

The lemon balm tea, while beneficial to the nervous system, also has carminative properties that benefit the digestive system, fighting various intestinal disorders such as bloating and cramping.

In alternative medicine, it is used in compresses applied to swelling, eczema and headaches. It is also used in the form of herb bath, massage oils, face masks, beauty lotions, and perfumes.

In cooking, lemon balm is added to meat, salads, marinades, vegetables, jellies, puddings, trimmings, vinegars and liqueurs (Benedictino and Chartreuse). In this case, unlike teas, it is



preferred to use fresh leaves (considered more tasty).