Grass Roots Remedies Grow Guide
Lemon Balm

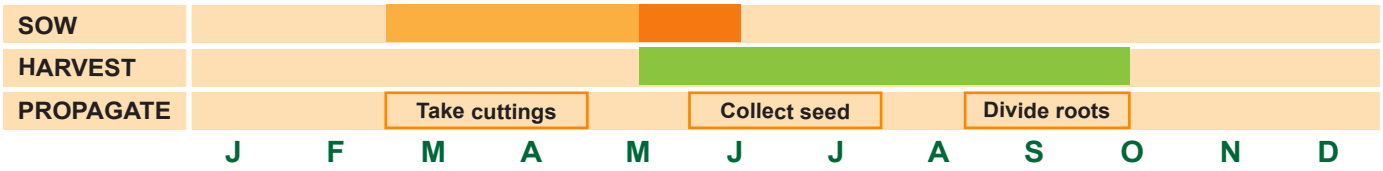
DIFFICULTY EASY

Melissa officinalis
Lamiaceae family

Lemon Balm is a traditional cottage garden herb, grown for seasoning and medicinal use, to help relieve anxiety and improve digestion. The leaves taste and smell refreshingly of lemon. The small, fragrant white flowers attract bees, butterflies and birds. In the 14th Century, Carmelite nuns used Lemon Balm to make the tonic Carmelite Water.

Photo © Clare Holohan, West Highland Herbal

The Lemon Balm growing year



How to grow

Sow under cover mid-February to mid-May or outdoors May to June. Germination takes 12- 21 days. The seeds need light and warmth to germinate. Self seeds freely.

Take cuttings in spring and root in a glass of water.

Divide roots in autumn.

Plant
Plant 35cm apart. Lemon Balm is a good companion plant for tomatoes and beans.

Care
Lemon balm is very easy to grow and needs little special care. Cut back regularly to encourage bushy, leafy growth. Replace older plants after 2-3 years. Look out for leafhoppers.

Harvest
For drying and tincturing, harvest young stems in early summer, just before flowering. Hang in a dark, airy place to dry. Gather fresh leaves and sprigs from May to October.

Save seed
Allow a few plants to flower, and collect seed in early summer. Store in a cool, dark place, labelled with species, location and date.

Full or partial sun

Keep moist

Conditions
Lemon Balm is suitable for any soil type, happy in full sun or partial shade. It needs root room, so does not thrive in containers.

Soil
Any soil type

PH
Acid / Neutral / Alkaline

Where in the wild?
Native to South Central Europe, Iran and Central Asia, and naturalised elsewhere.

Rarity Common

50-100cm
Hardy
Perennial

Uses
Infusions, marinades, oils, tinctures, steams, balms, flavouring, perfume, aromatherapy

Parts used
Leaves, sprigs

By Mary Hutchison at **tangerineblue.com** with **Grass Roots Remedies Co-op, 2019**

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