

EO of the Month May 2013



Melissa

(also known as Lemon Balm)

Melissa officinalis

Melissa is a plant in the Mint family from the Mediterranean region. You can always tell if a plant is in the Mint family if its stem is square. It is one of the easiest plants to grow and, like other mints, will take over if not contained, but **it takes three tons of plant material to yield a pound of essential oil**. Therefore, it is one of the most expensive essential oils. If the price seems too good to be true, it's probably not Melissa, but the typical Melissa knockoff of lemongrass and citronella, which will not give you the therapeutic benefits of true Melissa essential oil.

The flowers are very attractive to bees, so it is appropriate that its name is 'Melissa', the Greek word for honeybee. The scent is light, fresh and herbaceous with a green lemony smell. The essential oil (EO) is pale yellow in color.

A warm tea is often made from fresh Melissa leaves, which can help with insomnia, anxiety, tension, heart palpitations, hypertension, fevers, hyperthyroidism, and general aches and pains.

Melissa EO is both calming and uplifting. It is a memory booster and an antidepressant. It is a mild sedative, calms the nerves and is excellent for anxiety. It helps in cases of hysteria and panic, as well as grief, especially the loss of a loved one. It can assist emotionally in cases of fear, anger, shock and trauma.

Physically, Melissa EO helps slow the heartbeat, eases high blood pressure and is a tonic to the heart. It helps to regulate the menstrual cycle and eases period pains especially when blended with Geranium. It is antiviral so can help with the flu, herpes, smallpox and mumps. It can settle the digestive system, helps with nausea, flatulence, vomiting, dyspepsia and dysentery and has a cooling effect on fevers. It can help with headaches and migraines associated with colds.

It blends well with Geranium, Lavender, Chamomile, Frankincense, Neroli, Petitgrain, Rose and all other floral and citrus oils.

CAUTIONS: Melissa essential oil is non-toxic, but is a strong skin irritant. It always needs to be highly diluted with a carrier oil when used on the skin or in the bath: a dilution of about 4 drops per ounce of carrier oil. If not, it could cause a burning sensation and irritate the skin. For this reason it should be avoided during pregnancy and by people with very sensitive skin.