

Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis · Lamiaceae

DIFFICULTY Easy (self-seeds readily)

TYPE Herbaceous perennial

MATURITY Usable from 6–8 weeks



SUN
Full sun to part shade



WATER
Moderate, regular



SOIL PH
6.0–7.5



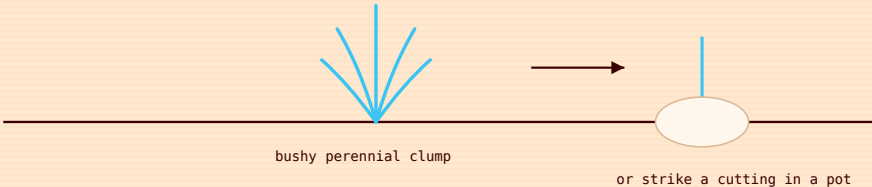
SPACING
30–45cm



DEPTH
as per pot

01 Self-seeds, doesn't run

Unlike its mint-family relatives, Lemon Balm doesn't spread by runners — but it self-seeds freely, and a few unpicked flower heads can turn into a patch. The lemon-scented leaves are traditionally dried for tea.



02 Planting

METHOD	Plant a nursery seedling, or strike a cutting in water — roots easily.
SOIL	Average, well-drained soil; not fussy.
TIMING	Plant any time in mild weather; establishes quickly.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

03 Growing care

- Water moderately; tolerates a bit of dryness once established.
- Cut back hard periodically to keep growth fresh and bushy.
- Deadhead spent flowers before they set seed, to limit self-sowing.
- Divide congested clumps every couple of years to keep them vigorous.

04 Problems

- **Rust** — orange spotting on leaves; remove affected stems, improve airflow.
- **Self-seeding beyond the bed** — the main risk; deadhead before seed sets.
- **Powdery mildew** — humid, crowded conditions; thin out growth.
- **Aphids** — occasional cluster on tips; hose off.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Usable once the plant is established, virtually year-round in mild climates.
METHOD	Snip stems as needed; regular picking keeps it bushy.
CURING	Air-dry hanging in small bunches, or freeze in ice cube trays with water.
STORAGE	Fresh in the fridge about a week; dried, airtight for months.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Brassicas Tomato	Few restrictions	Not applicable — long-lived perennial clump.