

Lemon Balm Cordial



Ingredients:

Water

Granulated sugar

Lemon balm leaves, freshly picked

Method:

In a pan put a roughly equal amount of water and sugar together with the same amount of lemon balm leaves. Bring to a simmer and stir carefully until the sugar dissolves in the water and the mixture thickens to a syrup. This should take a few minutes. Allow the lemon balm leaves to sit in the syrup for 3-4 hours.

Afterwards, carefully remove the lemon balm with a slotted spoon and transfer the mixture to a clean and sterilised bottle. Store in a cool, dark place. The cordial should last up to a month but always check before consuming. Serve diluted with sparkling water and garnished with cucumber and lemon for a cooling and refreshing summer drink.



Physician Nicholas Culpeper in 1653 noted in his book *The English Physician* that lemon balm 'strengthens the heart, breast, and stomach, it resists melancholy' and 'revives the spirits.' It was good for digestion which, in the 16th and 17th century was linked to good sleep. Culpeper advised that a 'syrup made with the juice of it and sugar be kept in every gentlewoman's house.' Today lemon balm is known to help with sleep, calm anxiety, help digestion, and help with bites and sores.