

## Herbal Alternatives

Marlenea La Shomb,  
N.D., P.Tr.

Growing up in Arizona, we had the most juicy, delicious, tree-ripened citrus. Lemons are sweet when harvested fully ripe. Here in the mountains of Montana, no such thing exists, and I have looked for tasty lemon substitutes that grow locally, and with drying, are available all year round.

These are a few of my favorite ones: Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), lemon sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), and new for me this year, lemon verbena (*Aloysia citrodora*). All three plants are very hardy perennials that grow in most soil conditions and climates. They all will add a tangy, lemony flavor to any dish or herbal tea. The leaves of all three are full of chlorophyll—so needed in winter.

to make medicine and to flavor foods. It contains chemicals that can have a sedative and calming effect. Lemon balm might also reduce the growth of viruses and bacteria.

People have used lemon balm for cold sores, anxiety, stress, insomnia, indigestion, dementia, and many other conditions. Use it fresh and dehydrate it for winter storage.

vinaigrettes. When dehydrated for winter, it will lose some of the lemon flavor, yet remain excellent for your green drinks.



### 3) Lemon Verbena ▲

This magical, healing plant is a must-have in the garden. It grows bush-like, with woody stems. It's edible and useful for its a lemony flavor. The tasty young leaves are great as an addition to salads. The older leaves are used like bay leaves, as in soups, etc.

And it's medicinal—you can use the leaves and flowers internally in the form of an herbal tea and externally as a poultice, oil or wash. Here are four of lemon verbena's medicinal attributes, which is why this gorgeous, fragrant plant will add much to your garden:

1) **Clears bronchial congestion.** Use as a tea to treat bronchial and nasal congestion.

### 2) Lemon Sorrel ▲

(also known as Garden Sorrel)

This is a fast-growing and vigorous perennial herb dating back to medieval times, but it's seen less often now. If you've never tried sorrel, be prepared to pucker up! The spring green leaves are packed with potent astringency and a lemony, citrus flavor.

Lemon sorrel bumps up the acidic quality of salads (just use less vinegar or lemon juice), and is great eaten raw. It also cooks down quickly in a sauté pan, like spinach, which makes it ideal for blending into sauces and



### 1) Lemon Balm ▲

Lemon balm is an herb from the mint family. The leaves, which have a mild lemon aroma, are used

It loosens phlegm, acts as an expectorant and calms the system. It has a mild sedative effect, so be careful driving.

2) **Relieves arthritis, bursitis and joint pain.** People have had significant relief of joint pain drinking this as a tea. Soothing effects build up over 2–3 months. If taken twice a day, pain can be steadily reduced.

3) **Calms anxiety.** Drinking the tea soothes the nervous system, relieves stress and lifts the mood.

4) **Soothes Digestive Issues.** This tea soothes and relieves indigestion, it calms both the stomach and intestinal spasms to relieve cramping and bloating.

**Harvesting Lemon Verbena.** Collect leaves throughout the year and especially before flowering. Extra leaves can be dried for future use and are equally beneficial in dried form.

**Lemon Verbena Tea.** Use 1/4 cup of lemon verbena leaves, fresh and crushed, with 2 cups of boiling water. Pour boiling water over the herb and steep for 5–8 minutes. Strain and drink one cup now and one cup later.

*Mother Nature loves lemons too and has hidden their flavor and aroma in these valuable and beautiful herbs. ENJOY! ■*

Send inquiries to Dr. Marlenea La Shomb by email to [jumpstart-ourhealth@gmail.com](mailto:jumpstart-ourhealth@gmail.com).

Marlenea passionately works as a health coach and writer for all who are ready to find harmony and balance in body, mind, and soul through natural therapies and education.



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