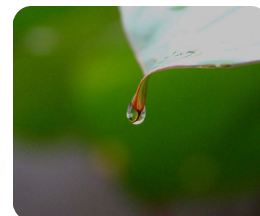


# Essential Oils Then & Now Newsletter

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## MELISSA - oil of strength and serenity

In the colder Germanic countryside in the old abbeys and monasteries nuns and monks carefully copied the ancient texts of literary and herbal knowledge. These were the healers of the time. Aromatic herb gardens were cultivated near their infirmaries and hospices so that, weather permitting, the windows could be opened allowing the fragrance of the herbs to be diffused through the sick rooms. In warmer weather the ill were brought outside to soak in the warm sunshine and the healing vibrations of the plants. Aided to their healing art were the herbs, spices and aromatic oils of the Far East.

Melissa, also called “balm” and “Lemon Balm,” has been used as a medicinal herb for thousands of years, first by the Greeks, then the Romans and Arabs, and later by Christian monks and throughout Europe. It was a main ingredient in the healing “Carmelite Water” distilled in France since 1611 by the Carmelite monks. Distillation produces only a small quantity of oil making Melissa one of the most expensive oils to produce. Avicenna, the famous 11<sup>th</sup> century Arabian physician in his *Canon of Medicine* described Melissa as “the balm that makes the heart merry and joyful and strengthenth the vital spirits,” In the 1500s the Swiss physician and alchemist Paracelsus called Melissa “the elixir of life,” since it was widely considered to promote longevity. Primarily Melissa was used for nervous disorders, the heart and the emotions.

Gentle, sweet, perennial, “honeybee” Melissa soothes both mind and body. Calms and regulates the menstrual cycle, eases the pain, and encourages fertility by promoting a natural cycle of ovulation. Relieves migraines, lowers high blood pressure, alleviates skin and respiratory allergies, nervous asthma, coughs and bronchitis. Melissa reduces epigastric spasms, nervous indigestion, nausea and flatulence and is beneficial for restlessness, insomnia, and nervous agitation. Dr. Dietrich Wabner, professor at the Technical University of Munich, reported that a onetime dose of true Melissa oil lead to a complete remission of herpes simplex lesions.

A Swiss manuscript by an unknown author says Melissa “chases away black thoughts,” and therefore is useful for those bereaved and shocked people who have suddenly and unexpectedly lost someone close to them. Melissa harmonizes the spirit and soul making it important for depression and anxiety particularly in the emotionally sensitive who do not respond well to pressure or are easily traumatized by confrontation. Melissa can reach down to the deepest layers of our psyche and release the old painful, fearful, negative buried emotions that stifle our creativity, joy and productive flow of life, replacing them with a gentle balance of emotions and an uplifted positive outlook on life. It can help restore clarity and security to the confused, calm the overwhelmed, and replace distrust with innocence and simplicity of heart. Robert Tisserand of the British persuasion of aromatherapy stated, “Melissa is the nearest one can find to a rejuvenator ...helps to cushion the effect of our mind and the world outside, on the body.” Consider Melissa like a friend in time of need.

Joanna