

Lemon Balm Herbal Soap by Kelly Cable

Yield: 3 pounds or twelve 4-ounce bars

Lye Discount: 10%

Label: Gentle, Vegan

Start to Finish Time: 2 hours, 24 hours insulation, 4 to 6 weeks to cure

Scent: Lemon

You can substitute other herbs for the lemon balm in this recipe to make any herbal soap. Lemon balm, also called Melissa, can often be found at local nurseries and grows well in most climates. I'm in zone 5 and bring my pot indoors for the winter. You'll make a lemon balm water infusion and oil infusion so that your soap is full of this wonderful healing herb. Many tests have found that it calms nerves, literally, making it just as effective as expensive creams for cold sores. As a soap it is more diluted, but still calming to the skin and nerves after a stressful day. I've added lemon and juniper essential oils for scent, but feel free to try any combination that equals about 1 ounce of essential oil total. Lemon by itself does not last as long in soaps, so try lemon and one of these: cedar, geranium, lavender, tea tree, eucalyptus, rose, or ylang ylang.

Equipment list:

Large stainless steel pot
large spoon
scale
bowls for measuring ingredients
thermometer
stick blender
small zip top bag
glass or plastic bowl for lye water
mold
parchment paper
rubber spatula
measuring spoons
saucepans for hot water and oil infusions

Ingredients:

- 11 ounces olive oil
- 9 ounces coconut oil
- 7 ounces cocoa butter
- 5 ounces shea butter
- 4.3 ounces lye
- 12 ounces water
- 0.5 ounce lemon essential oil
- 0.5 ounce juniper essential oil
- 16 ounces or 2 large handfuls of fresh lemon balm

Safety First!

Remember to wear your safety equipment and mix the lye water outside.

Tell everyone you live with that where you're working is off limits.

Give yourself enough time to complete the recipe.

Prep-Ahead:

1. Create a lemon balm oil infusion in olive oil using the hot **or** cold method.
 - a. For a hot infusion, place 1 handful or about a cup of fresh lemon balm in 11 ounces of oil and heat on low to 250°F for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Turn off and allow to cool to room temperature.
 - b. For a cold infusion, place lemon balm in 11 ounces of olive oil and set on windowsill for 3 weeks, shaking occasionally. Re-measure for recipe to insure you have 11 ounces. Add or remove olive oil as needed.
2. Create a lemon balm water infusion by placing at least 1 cup of fresh lemon balm in a 16 ounce jar and pouring 12 ounces of hot water over it. Seal and shake. Allow to cool to room temperature. Re-measure for recipe to insure you have 12 ounces. Add or remove water as needed.

Instructions:

1. Heat the Fats/Oils: In a large pot over medium-low heat, combine olive oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, shea butter. Heat until they are melted and incorporated. Remove from heat and allow to cool to 100-110F.

2. Mix the Lye-Water: Put on protective gear including a mask, gloves, and long sleeves. Outside, carefully add the lye crystals to the lemon balm infused water and stir until dissolved. Allow to cool to 100-110°F. If oil or lye water cool at different rates, you can use a cold or hot water bath in the sink.

3. Prepare the Mold: While the oils and lye water cool, line the mold with parchment paper.

4. Combine and Bring to Trace: When both oils and lye water are around 100-110°F, pour the lye water into the pot of oils. Use a stick blender or hand mixer to mix for 1 to 2 minutes and then let the mixture rest for 4 to 5 minutes. Repeat mixing and resting until light trace.

5. Mix in Natural Additives: When soap reaches light trace, add essential oil and blend for 30 seconds.

6. Mold the Soap: Pour the soap mixture into the mold. Cover with a lid or parchment paper and insulate with a blanket for 24 hours.

7. Cut and Cure: Remove soap from the mold. If it seems too soft to remove, wait another 12 to 24 hours before removing. Cut the soap into twelve 4-ounce bars. Allow the bars to cure for 4 to 6 weeks.