



Bee Balm

Monarda fistulosa, Monarda didyma

FAMILY: Lamiaceae

PARTS USED: leaves + flowers

HERBAL QUALITIES: Alterative, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antispasmodic, carminative, diaphoretic, diffusive, digestive tonic, diuretic, emmenagogue, nervine, vulnerary

ENERGETICS: Warming + drying, though some herbalists argue it's more cooling because of its cooling effect for fevers and inflammation

TASTE: hot, minty, pungent, sweet

HARVESTING: Harvest flowers and leaves at the height of flowering, leaving about six inches of the stem. Do not harvest parts that have been affected by white powdery mildew.

PREPARATIONS: culinary, infusion (steeped for 5 minutes), infused honey, infused oil, vinegar/oxymel, poultice, salve, balm, steam, syrup, tincture, wash

DOSING: infusion (1 tsp dried herb in 1 cup boiling water, 3x/day); tincture (2-4 mL fresh herb 1:2, 50% or dried herb 1:5 40% 3x/day)

USES: In addition to being a lovely addition to a flower garden, bee balm is a versatile herbal ally and has so many gifts to offer. It works from the inside out, helping to stimulate circulation, enhance immunity, and move stagnation. It is strongly antimicrobial, making it wonderful to have on hand for the winter season. It's also an awesome all-around digestive support herb. It's safe to use with babies and can even be used as a [cooled infusion](#) in a bottle to help soothe colic or as an [herbal wash](#) or cooled [compress](#) to support cradle cap. A bee balm [infused oil](#) has been traditionally used to soothe ear infections, tinnitus, and vertigo by applying topically to the outside of the ear and head/neck area. Anecdotally, an [infused oil](#) has also helped to relieve nerve pain and numbness. Bee balm's diffusive property likewise lends itself well to supporting cold hands and feet by stimulating circulation.

Digestion/Detoxification - When it comes to gut support, bee balm is a standout herb. It is not only supportive to repair leaky gut and restore dysbiosis, it also promotes healthy digestion and eases digestive upsets, flatulence, indigestion, bloating, diarrhea, constipation, and cramping. It's basically *the* go-to herb for all things digestion. Bee balm also supports movement in gallbladder congestion and the liver's detoxification processes - an [infusion](#) is even helpful to ease hangovers! Historically, bee balm has been used in cases of cholera and some research suggests it can support symptoms of SIBO.

Support Infections - Bee balm's high thymol content makes it a strong broad spectrum antimicrobial (antiviral, anti-fungal, antibacterial) and is extremely supportive with persistent, frequent usage for a variety of acute infections. A [tincture](#) or an [infusion](#) are particularly recommended. Anecdotally, it has been used to support all





kinds of bacteria, viral, and fungal infections (like truly - *all kinds*), but there are a few situations for which it is particularly recommended:

- **Fungal/Yeast:** Although bee balm is a powerful general antimicrobial, one of its greatest properties is it's strong anti-fungal quality. It's helpful for topical and internal fungal concerns, including an imbalanced gut microbiome. A bee balm [infusion](#) can be supportive for yeast infections or chronic candidiasis, a douche made from a [cooled infusion](#) is helpful for a vaginal yeast infection, and an [herbal wash](#) made from an infusion is supportive for topical infections and cradle cap.
- **Cold + Flu:** The antimicrobial quality of bee balm is a powerful support for cold + flu season. As a diffusive herb, bee balm helps to move heat out of the body and promotes movement of stagnation, making it a nice ally for cold + flu symptoms. A [warm infusion](#) is especially useful to support fever that presents with clammy cold skin, general symptoms of coldness, and lung infection. Bee balm also makes an excellent [herbal syrup](#) or [herbal honey](#) for cough and sore throat. Likewise, an [oxymel](#) or aromatic [herbal steam](#) can help to relieve chest congestion.
- **Urinary Tract:** As a strong antimicrobial, bee balm is a perfect herb to consider for an inflamed urinary tract. Paired with [marshmallow root](#) and cranberry, bee balm makes a lovely [infusion](#) to support urinary tract infections and other urinary tract irritations.
- **Mouth:** Due to bee balm's high thymol content, swishing a mouthwash made from a cooled [infusion](#) (or a [tincture](#) diluted with water) can be a great way to support mouth and gum irritations, toothaches, thrush, and oral infections. Research also suggests that bee balm may inhibit oral cancer in vitro.
- **Skin** - Bee balm can be used topically for burns, rashes, stings, sunburns, and skin irritations. An [herbal wash](#), [poultice](#), [balm](#), or [salve](#) are great options to support skin concerns and wound healing.
- **Calming/Relaxing** - As a nervine, bee balm is helpful to support anxiety, depression, and even sleep concerns. It makes a terrific nighttime tea combined with [chamomile](#).
- **Menstrual Support** - A cold bee balm [infusion](#) can be taken to stimulate menstruation and relieve the pain of menstrual cramps.

CAUTIONS: Generally considered safe for all, including babies. Use culinary doses only for pregnancy, due to the emmenagogue and menstruation-stimulating properties. Bee balm can induce vomiting when combined with valerian.

MORE INFO + REFERENCES: <https://naturallywholistic.com/2026/10/bee-balm-for-all-the-things.html>