

Perennial Herbs & Medicinals in Franklin Garden

A Few to View

1. Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

Family: Lamiaceae

Used in both medicinal and culinary applications, lemon balm's light lemony aroma and sedative effects make it a favorite of those practicing aromatherapy. It is also used to treat digestive problems, such as vomiting, bloating and cramping. In addition to this, lemon balm can be used to treat menstrual cramps and alleviate anxiety. Because of its antiviral properties, it is also often used to treat cold sores.



Identification: square stem, fuzzy, toothed leaves, opposite leaf arrangements, lemony scent

2. Chive

Allium schoenoprasum

Family: Amaryllidaceae

Most commonly known for its culinary uses, chives are also a potent medicinal herb (although not quite as potent as their cousin garlic). Like most alliums, chives are great for improving circulation, soothing an upset stomach, stopping a runny nose, or preventing bad breath. A mild antibacterial, this vitamin B, A, and C rich herb is also used to treat and prevent colds.



Identification: hollow, round stalk, oniony scent, purple flower, grows in clusters

3. Cleavers

Galium aparine

Family: Rubiaceae

A relative of bedstraw, cleavers have a long history of medicinal use, both internally and externally (for eczema, psoriasis, and dermatitis). A useful diuretic and mild laxative, cleavers are good for treating ulcers, fever, and general detoxification. In addition to this, cleavers follow the doctrine of signatures. Their whorled leaf arrangement is similar to that of the human lymphatic system, which cleavers are known to stimulate. Cleaver tincture is great at the onset of a cold!



Identification: whorled leaves in groups of 6-8, white star-like flowers, hooked bristles on leaves and stems.

4. Short Toothed Mountain Mint

Pycnanthemum muticum

Family: Lamiaceae

This potent source of menthol is great for salves or muscle rubs. A wonderful pollinator, the flowers of short toothed mountain mint can ironically be used as a pesky insect repellent. Traditionally used for the treatment of infected wounds, mountain mint can also be used for menstrual issues and mouth sores. As a carminative, analgesic, antiseptic, and diaphoretic, mountain mint presents a wide variety of treatment for the everyday herbalist.



Identification: broad, lance shaped leaves, 3 - 5 ft at full growth, light green, whitish leaf color, whitish purple flowers in tight clusters

5. Sweet Fern

Comptonia peregrina

Family: Myricaceae

Not actually a fern at all, sweet fern is a member of the bayberry family. Sweet fern is a strong astringent traditionally used to stop bleeding and diarrhea. It is also commonly used in a powerful decoction to soothe poison ivy. People indigenous to the Americas use sweet fern for smudging. Additionally, sweet fern makes a lovely tea with head clearing and headache relieving properties.



Identification: deciduous shrub with waxy, fern like leaves and small, cone-shaped fruits; strong, sweet scent of vanilla and pine