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Melittis melissophyllum

[Synonyms : *Melittis grandiflora*, *Melittis sylvestris*]

BASTARD BALM is a perennial. Native to southern Europe it has nettle-like, white, pink or purple flowers purple blotched on the lower lip.

It is also known as Balm leaved melittis, Bastard balsam, Baum leaf, Bee balm, *Bienensaug* (German), *Dumbravnic* (Rumanian), *Gwenynog* (Welsh), Honey balm, *Immenblatt* (German), *Medovník meduňkolistý* (Czech), *Medovník velkokvětý* (Czech), and *Medunica medovkolistá* (Slovak).

The dried leaves emit a strong honey-like scent.

The flowers have a honey-like fragrance and are pollinated by bees and moths.

Melissophyllum is made up of the genus name *Melissa* and Greek *phyllo-* (leaf) components meaning ‘with leaves like those of that (lemon balm) genus’.

Alaskan Inuits have eaten the roots.

Bastard balm is cultivated as an ornamental plant.

Medicinally, a leaf decoction has been employed by local herbalists to treat diarrhoea, period problems and fluid retention. It has also been used for blood purification and healing wounds, and as given as a mild sedative as well.