

# Lemon Myrtle

## Backhousia Citriodora



### **Lemon Myrtle as a herbal supplement**

*A wonderful thing about the citrus-scented lemon myrtle is that, in addition to being flavorful and refreshing, it has a number of health benefits. It is a powerful antioxidant that can ward off illnesses, and it can be used as an antiseptic. It comes in many forms and can be taken in a variety of different ways so you are not limited to a boring routine. It can be used in cooking to spice up a recipe, taken as a tea or applied topically in the form of essential oils. Its rich lemon aroma is both pleasant and soothing. Lemon myrtle is used to treat a diversity of ailments from throat disorders to gastric problems, and it is sold in many health and supplement stores.*

#### **What is Lemon Myrtle?**

The lemon myrtle is a tree that grows naturally in the Australian coastal regions like Queensland and New South Wales. The tree can reach heights of 60 feet or more, though its average height is approximately half of that. The tree is now grown in other parts of the world, including in South Africa and the southern sections of the United States and Europe. While the tree's flowers and fruits can both be eaten, it is the leaves that have gained a reputation for having the most uses and health benefits.

Among scientists, lemon myrtle is known by its Latin name, *Backhousia citriodora*. Although it is most commonly known as lemon myrtle, it is also recognized by other names, including lemon ironwood and tree verbena. Despite its citrus scent and flavor, lemon myrtle is not acidic, giving it a wide range of options when used to enhance or complement a meal. It is sold in the form of herbal tea, essential oil, powder or spice. The leaves can be ground or sold individually.

#### **What are the ingredients?**

The leaves of lemon myrtle are rich in essential oil, most of which is made up terpenoid aldehydes such as citral. Citral can be used medicinally in a number of ways. It is this ingredient that gives lemon myrtle many of its health benefits.

#### **What are the health benefits?**

Lemon myrtle has a reputation as a powerful antiseptic and anti-virus agent that can destroy disease-carrying microorganisms. It has been used to treat allergies, colds, sore throats, gastric disturbances and infections. Murray, Michael T. *Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*. January 7, 1999. It has further been used to alleviate headaches, fevers and muscle cramps and spasms. Shneider, Rob. *Why Drink Lemon Myrtle Tea?* October 18, 2011. According to Go Wild Harvest LLC at [http://www.gowildaustralia.com/uploads/LemonMyrtlepresentation\\_1.pdf](http://www.gowildaustralia.com/uploads/LemonMyrtlepresentation_1.pdf), lemon myrtle promotes a healthy immune system and can be applied topically to treat problems like warts, cold sores and acne. It is a highly potent antioxidant that can help fight diseases such as cancer. It is high in minerals like calcium, zinc and magnesium, and it has a healthy helping of vitamins A and E.

The anti-viral properties of lemon myrtle have been confirmed in a 2004 experiment involving children with molluscum contagiosum, a viral skin disease that typically appears during childhood. It manifests in the form of lesions on the skin. In the study, children with the disease were treated daily with a 10 percent lemon myrtle essential oil solution. After three weeks, 9 out of 16 children showed over a 90 percent decrease in the number of skin lesions. Burke, Briant E., Baillie, Jon-Eric and Olson, Richard D. *Essential oil of Australian lemon myrtle (Backhousia citriodora) in the treatment of molluscum contagiosum in children*. *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy*, Vol. 58, Issue 4, May 2004, pages 245-247.

### **How is it used?**

Lemon myrtle has a ton of different uses, among which include the following:

#### ***Food recipes***

In addition to enhancing the flavor of beef, chicken, fish and rice dishes, lemon myrtle can be used in recipes for making breads, sauces, dips and pancakes. It can also be used in desserts like cakes and muffins to satisfy a sweet tooth. The lemon myrtle should not cook for more than 15 minutes, however. It can develop an unpleasant bitterness if it is exposed to high temperatures for too long. <http://theepicentre.com/spice/lemon-myrtle/>.

#### ***Beauty products***

Lemon myrtle essential oil can be found in many personal care products like body lotions, lip balms, soaps, shampoos and conditioners.

[http://www.gowildaaustralia.com/uploads/LemonMyrtlepresentation\\_1.pdf](http://www.gowildaaustralia.com/uploads/LemonMyrtlepresentation_1.pdf). Its scent has a soothing effect that helps promote relaxation and better sleep. It is also thought to repel fleas, making it an ingredient in some pet shampoos, as well.

<http://theepicentre.com/spice/lemon-myrtle/>.

#### ***Beverages***

Of course, as discussed, lemon myrtle makes a great antioxidant herbal tea, which can be served hot or cold. In fact, this is one of lemon myrtle's most popular uses.

In sum, lemon myrtle is a fragrant antioxidant herbal supplement that can be used in different ways every day to intensify food flavors, enhance your personal care routine and promote better overall health.