

## Bee Balm, Monarda, Oswego Tea, Bergamot

Family	Lamiaceae
Botanical	Monarda didyma
Parts Used	Flower heads and leaves
USDA Hardiness	4A - 9B
Light	Full Sun
Soil	Well drained loam
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	Soil pH requirements: 6.1 (mildly acidic) to 7.8 (mildly alkaline). Divide the rootball or sow from seed. Slender rhizomes allow the plant to spread like crazy.
Water	As needed, do not overwater
Growing	Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. With its spidery white, pink or red flowers borne in late summer, it is one of the showiest of the herbs. For prolific blooms, plant in full sun; in the South and Southwest a little afternoon shade helps flowers last longer. Picking the flowers encourages a second round of blooms. Space plants 18 to 24 inches apart in rich, well-drained soil. Amend the soil with compost or add a slow-release fertilizer to the soil before planting. Or, apply a liquid fertilizer at planting and every couple of weeks thereafter. Although it will tolerate drought, bee balm will do much better if it gets adequate moisture; however, protect it from poor drainage, especially in winter. Water when leaves wilt in dry weather. Mulch in the spring. In the late fall, cut plants back to within several inches of the ground. For a bushier shrub, pinch the tips of the stems when new growth appears each spring. Bee balm spreads but not as aggressively as other members of the mint family. Every 3 or 4 years, dig up and divide the plants. Discard the old center section and replant the outer roots and shoots.

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Medicinal Uses	Antiseptic, carminative, diaphoretic, diuretic and stimulant.
Benefits	An infusion is medicinal used internally in the treatment of colds, catarrh, headaches, and gastric disorders, to reduce low fevers and soothe sore throat, to relieve flatulence, nausea, menstrual pain, and insomnia. Steam inhalation of the plant can be used for sore throats, and bronchial catarrh (inflammation of the mucus membrane, causing an increased flow of mucus). Externally, it is a medicinal application for skin eruptions and infections.
Preparation	Herbal Tea Recipe To 1 tsp. dried herb, add 1 cup boiling water, steep 10 min. sweeten to taste, take at bedtime.

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# Fines Herbes

**Culinary Uses** This herb was used by the American Indians and early colonists as a tea. The young leaves may be used in salads or as a soothing tea; they can also be used as a stuffing for roast meat.

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## Flowering Bee Balm Tea

### Ingredients:

1 fresh bee balm blossom

### Directions:

Pour 1 cup hot water into a heatproof mug. Put blossom on top and steep about 2 minutes (blossom will wilt as it stands).



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**Historical Facts** The red variety is commonly known as Oswego Tea. It was used by colonists in place of English Tea after the Boston Tea Party, when they threw the English tea in the harbor to protest the high taxes imposed on it by the British. The name Oswego tea came from the town, Oswego, New York. The town and the tea acquired the name Oswego from the Native Americans inhabiting the area, who had it first. The Native Americans passed their knowledge of the plant to the colonists, and one, a John Bartram of Philadelphia, reportedly sent seeds to England in the mid-1700s.

**Additional Tips** The name bergamot was bestowed upon this plant because its scent faintly resembles that of a Berga

**Nutrition Facts** N/A