

# Did You Know?

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## Lemon Verbena *Aloysia citriodora*

- Native to Western South America, lemon verbena is hardy in zone 8-11. It can grow up to 6' tall in warm climates.
- It is widely known as lemon verbena, but common names also include vervain and lemon bee brush.
- The genus *Aloysia* was given to this plant in 1819 to honor of Mareia Luisa, Princess of Parma.
- In the Victorian language of flowers, lemon verbena symbolizes sensitivity.
- It was popular with the Victorian era ladies who sewed leaves into the darts of their dresses, tucked them into hankies and nosegays, and floated them in finger bowls of water.
- Mentioned in *Gone with the Wind*, lemon verbena is the favorite plant of Scarlet O'Hara's mother.
- The Spanish brought the lemon verbena plant to Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, it has been cultivated for its oil. Today France, Algeria and Morocco grow it for its essential oil.
- Often thought to be the best lemon fragrance of the lemon-scented herbs, the intense lemon fragrance has sweet and savory culinary uses such as teas, baked goods, salad dressings, marinades and herb blends for meat and fish, compound butter, pudding, sorbet, ice cream, cocktails and mocktails.
- It has been valued for medicinal uses for centuries for its anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and antioxidant benefits. Treatments have included sleep disorders, digestive ailments, asthma, arthritis, skin problems, varicose veins, tension and to sharpen concentration.
- The fresh scent is popular in-home products like air fresheners, soaps, potpourri and cleaning products.
- Thrives in full sun with rich and well-drained soil.
- Grow in the ground or in containers near touchpoints along a path or near seating areas where gently bumping into or rubbing the leaves will release the lemon fragrance.
- Pinch new growth or prune often to encourage a bushy habit.
- Propagates easily from cuttings of new growth.