

5 Plants That Repel Biting Bugs

Lemon balm isn't the only herb on the block that keeps bugs at bay. Here are 5 more herbs that work as bug repellents. Like lemon balm, you can plant them in areas you want to keep bugs away from, or crush the leaves and rub them into your skin. If your pets suffer from fleas, you can also use these herbs for them.

1. Citronella

Sort of "the original" for bug repelling, with a powerful lemony scent. It's used in many commercial bug repellents and candles. I'm a little hesitant to plant it though, as I understand it can be a skin irritant. It's also not quite as portable as lemon balm or the others listed below. It's a grass-like plant that grows up to 6 feet tall! If you're looking for citronella, make sure you get the varieties *Cymbopogon nardus* or *Citronella winterianus*, as some other citronella varieties won't have the same effect—some aren't even true citronellas, they're just citronella-scented.

2. Catnip

Studies suggest that catnip may be even **more effective** at repelling mosquitoes than DEET (the ingredient used in most commercial bug repellents, which is highly toxic). It also repels cockroaches, an attribute that many of us living in urban areas can certainly appreciate. It can be used similarly to lemon balm; crushed and rubbed onto the skin. A word of caution to cat owners: watch where you plant your catnip! Your cat may want to roll around on it and play with it. Plant catnip apart from the rest of your garden so your cat doesn't accidentally damage any other plants nearby.

3. Marigolds

In addition to mosquitoes, marigolds repel garden pests, too! We have lots of marigolds growing in the Gerson Institute's garden to keep the bugs away from our veggies. The flowers are edible as well, and add color and flavor to salads or can be a gorgeous garnish when you want to dress up a dish.

4. Lavender

Grow it around the house and garden to keep bugs away. It'll grow inside too, if you keep it next to a sunny window. Has a lovely scent, pretty purple flowers and calming properties as well, so it's a charming addition to your garden or home for several reasons!

5. Peppermint

Biting bugs don't like the scent of peppermint, so you can crush up the leaves and rub it on your skin to ward them off. As an added bonus, peppermint also can also do double-duty as itch relief if you do get bitten!