

# Linden, Basswood

(*Tilia americana*)

## Mallow Family – Malvaceae

The smell of spring is in the air. Linden is in bloom. Also known as basswood, linden is a deciduous tree that is native to Virginia and one that I have always associated with as growing in the mountains. The leaves are large, somewhat heart-shaped with lop-sided bases and sharply toothed margins. They were easy to pick out when hiking up the mountain trails. Since I usually did my mountain hiking in the summer, I always missed the flowering season, which is in the spring.

And then, one day, I heard a Norfolk resident casually mention the linden trees blooming on his street. I had to go see for myself. The leaves were smaller than what I had seen in the mountains, but otherwise the shape was the same, and more so, the flowers.

It was my first experience with the flowers and they were heavenly, both in appearance and in smell. I was able to locate them by their smell. A sweet, almost lemon-lime scent filled the air around them. The flowers are small with five yellow petals and many stamens. Most distinctive is the leaf-like bract, attached to the flower stalk, for about half its length. The flowers, with the bracts, make a tasty, refreshing beverage. The flowers produce lots of nectar and is great for attracting bees, giving it the name “The Bee Tree” (Eat the Weeds).

Linden is more than just a tasty beverage. It is also medicinal. Linden is a relaxing nervine that helps to soothe frayed nerves at the end of the day and to relieve muscle tension by loosening tight muscles. It is a great herb to use for stress, tension, and insomnia.

Linden is a cooling herb and is also useful for fevers and colds. It contains natural mucilage and is soothing to the respiratory pathways. Linden is a diaphoretic and diuretic and was traditionally used for feverish colds, flus, and other respiratory infections (Foster and Duke, 2000).

## References

Eat the Weeds. Retrieved from [www.eattheweeds.com/basswood-tree-linden-lime-tree](http://www.eattheweeds.com/basswood-tree-linden-lime-tree).

Foster, S., and Duke, J. A. (2000). Eastern/central medicinal plants and herbs. Houghton Mifflin Company: New York, NY.



### Linden Tea

Linden makes an excellent tea, either as a cold water infusion or as a hot tea. A cold infusion takes longer but has a fresher, more flowery taste. A hot infusion is quicker.

For a cold water infusion, pack a quart jar with linden flowers (approximately one ounce), fresh when available. Cover the flowers with cold water and let it sit overnight. Strain the water from the flowers and place the flowers in a saucepan for a second brewing. Add two cups water, bring to a boil. Remove from heat, cover and let steep for several hours. Strain and drink. Sweeten to taste.

For a hot infusion, pour hot water over 2-3 tablespoons linden flowers. Steep 10 minutes or longer, strain, and drink. Sweeten to taste.

### Cold Care Linden Tea

2 parts linden flowers	1 part lemon balm
1 part pineapple sage	elder flower syrup to taste, or honey

Pour hot water over 2 tablespoons herb mix and steep.