



Lamiaceae is a family of flowering herbs or shrubs commonly known as the mint, deadnettle or sage family. This family is widespread throughout the world and contains several well-known, commercially cultivated plants which are used in cooking and for perfumes. Some examples include:

[Basil](#), [Beebalm](#)s, [Beefsteak plant](#), [Bugleweed](#), [Catnip](#), [Chaste tree](#), [Clerodendrum](#), [Clinopodium](#), [Coleus](#), [Coleus barbatus](#), [Common sage](#), [Dead-nettles](#), [Dracocephalum](#), [Germanders](#), [Giant hyssops](#), [Ground-ivy](#), [Heal-all](#), [Hedgenettles](#), [Henbit deadnettle](#), [Holy Wild mint](#), [Hyssop](#), [Lamb's-ear](#), [Lavender](#), [Lemon balm](#), [Leonurus](#), [Lesser Calamint](#), [Mexican mint](#), [Mint](#), [Marjoram](#), [Nepetoideae](#), [Oregano](#), [Patchouli](#), [Pennyroyal](#), [Peppermint](#), [Phlomis](#), [Pogostemon](#), [Rosemary](#), [Salvia](#), [Savory](#), [Skullcaps](#), [Scutellaria baicalensis](#), [Sideritis](#), [Solenostemon](#), [Spearmint](#), [Spurflowers](#), [Thymes](#), [White horehound](#).

Many members of the family have aromatic foliage due to the presence of volatile oils and it is these oils which give members of the family their characteristic delicious taste and aroma which is so valuable in cooking.

Plants of Lamiaceae have also been used for medicinal uses for centuries - from treating halitosis to warding off evil spirits. Chemicals found in the oils have been proven to carry properties such as Anti-inflammatory, pain relieving, antibacterial, antioxidant, immunostimulatory, antiviral, increase cardiovascular and many more

This large family occurs almost throughout the world, with centres of diversity around the Mediterranean and in Australia, where they occur in open habitats including forests and woodlands, from the coasts to the arid interior, rarely in closed forests.

Therefore many species such as lavender, are sun worshippers, requiring 6-8 hours of rays. As they say, if it's not basking like it is on a Mediterranean beach, it's not living its best life. Too little sun equals a sad, flowerless existence.

Species found growing as understory woodlands need light shading or like *Prostanthera incisa* or native thyme which feels right at home in the dappled light of eucalypts. *Prostanthera*'s aroma becomes really pronounced just after rain.

Worldwide, the family comprises over 200 genus and over 3000 species. There are about 20 Australian genus in the Lamiaceae family. Of the Australian members of the Lamiaceae, only *Westringia* and *Prostanthera* are in widespread cultivation.

Defining features:

- Distinctive four-sided stem
- The leaves are opposite or may be arranged in a whorl
- Flowers are clustered in whorls at the end of the flowering stalks or in the junctions of leaves and stems.
- They have both pollen-bearing and ovule-bearing parts and are zygomorphic (bilaterally symmetrical).
- There are usually 5 sepals and petals, with sepals that are fused together at the base. The petals are also fused together at the base, usually with 2 of the 5 lobes forming an upper lip of the flower, and the other 3 lobes forming a lower lip. There are 2 or 4 stamens and an ovary with 2 carpels. The fruit is a schizocarp, and splits into 4 segments at maturity.

Fun fact

The popular evergreen shrub and herb rosemary recently underwent a name change as genetic science more accurately identifies its relationships. At a meeting in 2019, members of the RHS Nomenclature and Taxonomy Advisory Group accepted the move to absorb *Rosmarinus* into the genus *Salvia*. Meaning *Rosmarinus officinalis* became *Salvia Rosmarinus*.