

Lemon myrtle

Backhousia citriodora



Common name Lemon myrtle

Other names historically used: Lemon Ironwood, Sweet Verbena Tree, Sand Verbena Myrtle, Tree Verbena

Description and Use

The leaves have an exceptionally powerful lemon taste and aroma. Leaves are traded as fresh, dried or dried & ground. Leaves can be used in a range of products such as chicken and fish, pork and seafood dishes, biscuits, muffins, cheese cakes, hot and cold beverages.

Lemon myrtle essential oil is used in cosmetics, soaps, deodorants and room sprays. The essential oil has been shown to be an antimicrobial agent and has powerful antifungal activities.

Quality requirements

- Leaves should be unblemished and green in colour.
- Inadequate drying can lead to mould problems in storage.
- Produce quality deteriorates quickly unless stored in the dark with temperature control.
- Dried and ground product should be green in colour.
- Leaves of some lemon myrtle selections are suitable only for non-food use due to a soapy flavour
- No insect or foreign matter should be present in the packaged product.



Postharvest handling

- Harvesting should not be undertaken while the leaves are wet, whether from dew, irrigation or rainfall.
- Drying: sun-drying is not recommended. Dry with flow of air, of approx. 35° - 40°C, for up to 4 days depending on equipment and volumes.
- Removal of soft, new growth on tips is recommended because they compost quickly in the drying process and will cause browning in other leaves.
- Dried leaves should be stored in sealed containers in the dark, under temperature control at greater than 20°C.
- Dried leaves should be milled to coarse or fine particle size, according to customer requirements.
- After drying, store in the dark, sealed hygienically in polyester or metallized polyester (112 micron) bags.
- Packaged product should preferably be labelled with common and botanical names, date, area of harvest and harvester details.
- Foods Standards Australia New Zealand <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/> has information related to food standards and food safety (see Guide to the new Food Standards Code).
- If microbiological testing of produce is required, contact the local state authority (e.g. Department of Health) for guidance on accessing test laboratories.



Industry participants are thanked for their assistance in the preparation of this information sheet

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