

MINTING NEW YARN

That patch of mint in your backyard? It's not just forage for summer beverages. It can also be yarn. Last year, **Bellatrista**, which creates nonwool luxury yarns, debuted Menta, a DK-weight viscose made from 100 percent peppermint. Available in six colors, the shiny 6-ply yarn behaves like bamboo on the needles, takes dye well and feels cool and soft in the hands.

"Everything we do has an environmental story," explains Bellatrista's founder, Dale Washburn. "Mint is almost organic by default. It's renewable, it's a fast-growing plant and the processing—the same lyocell process as for bamboo—is basically benign. It's closed-loop, so none of the solvents are discharged."

Targeting customers who are sensitive to traditional animal fibers or looking for alternatives to cotton or acrylic, Bellatrista currently sells Menta alongside soy yarn, a milk yarn available in three weights, and a bamboo/milk blend also offered in three weights. Bellatrista yarns are currently available in 100 yarn shops across the U.S.

"You can make yarn from just about anything that's cellulose or protein," Washburn explains. "We are looking into different cellulose products [to develop into new yarns] that are easy to grow." Watch Bellatrista for coming announcements about yarns made from popular beverages. For information, visit bellatrista.com.



WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS...

Need a knit- or crochet-along to go with those bags of yellow yarn you bought on a whim? The **Craft Yarn Council's** Stitch Away Stress campaign has just the project. Launched in April as part of National Stress Awareness Month and sponsored by the Health Resource Network, Stitch Away Stress capitalizes on the relaxation benefits of stitching as a gateway into needlework.

In March, CYC conducted an online survey of knitters and cro-

cheters, asking about their stitching lives. A whopping 94 percent say the crafts help them relax; 80 percent report that stitching helps reduce stress. In addition to releasing an infographic of the survey

results, the council also introduced a squeezable lemon pillow pattern in keeping with the "when life gives you lemons" maxim. The idea is to have a huggable stress reliever when the citrus hits the fan. (It also makes a cute meditation cushion.)

The crochet pattern was created by Twinkie Chan, who three years ago designed the lemon stress ball as part of a similar campaign. The knitted lemon pillow pattern was designed by Lori Steinberg. The campaign took place throughout the month of April and featured posts on social media channels, a website with facts, figures and videos of interviews with stitching wellness pioneers including Betsan Corkhill, Carol Caparosa and Perri Klass, and links to articles. To start making some lemonade in your LYS, visit craftyarncouncil.com/stitch-away-stress.

