



ROSEMARY

(*ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS*)

As I write this on ANZAC day it is an appropriate time to review this wonderful, hardy herb in the mint (Lamiaceae) family. Being native to the Mediterranean area, it grows wild on the Gallipoli peninsula. Its Latin name stems from 'ros' = dew, and 'marinus' = sea. Its use on ANZAC day reflects its ability to stimulate memory. The beautiful bank of rosemary together with lavender on 'the berm' is one of the iconic eye catching features of our TLC Garden.

It is a woody shrub that thrives in a sunny, well-drained alkaline soil that can withstand drought and cold. There are many cultivars and variations in both form and flower colour from mauve to pink, white and blue. It is best raised from cuttings taken in the autumn.

Through the ages it has been recognised for its important culinary and medicinal properties. It is high in iron, calcium and Vit B6, rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. There are many studies that show the benefits of rosemary essential oil to:-

- Enhance memory and concentration through improved blood circulation, it has been shown (Kyoto University) to significantly slow down brain ageing.

- It offers neurological protection through its carnosic acid to be able to fight off free radical damage.

Others show that rosemary oil:-

- Boosts the immune system, and as a massage oil it relaxes tense muscles and feelings of stress. It may ease arthritic pain, and can speed bruise healing when used externally.
- It promotes head hair growth and cures dandruff.
- Protection against macular degeneration has been demonstrated due to its carnosic acid component. Other anti-tumour properties are beneficial to leukemia and breast cancer.
- The culinary benefits of adding rosemary to cooking ground- beef mince show that it reduces the cancer-causing agents that develop during cooking. It also aids digestion.
- Adding rosemary to meat, breads and dressings adds a delightful aromatic flavour.
- Rosemary is used in the perfume and cosmetics industry.
- Rosemary is used as an air freshener, or as a deterrent to some pests, add it to a home-made insect repellent.

Rosemary is a remarkably useful and attractive herb which is not generally appreciated. In these notes I have focussed more on the lesser known properties. There is much useful information about rosemary on the web. There are some contra indications for the use of rosemary when pregnant and when on certain medications.

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