

Rebecca's Herbal Tips

Rosemary
(Rosmarinus officinalis)

"If rosemary grows vigorously in a family's garden the woman heads the household." Two women were shopping for some herbs here on the farm the other day. One woman spotted a rosemary plant and



**REBECCA'S
HERBAL TIPS**
by Rebecca Britt
Phoenix Contributing Writer

inquired of the other lady, "Is this one good?" the lady said yes. She then began to tell her unlearned friend about the plant. "The plant is said to get six feet tall in thirty-three years" Many claims have been made of the rosemary plant, but I guess the most accepted is that rosemary is for remembrance, although I will not totally throw out the idea of it reaching six feet in thirty-three years. Rosemary was used by Roman students in the classroom. They would make garlands of it and wear around their necks. They thought that the rosemary would help them retain the knowledge of the books.

Rosemary in past times was burned in sick chambers to get rid of germs. And people used to carry it in their neck pouches, when they were traveling through suspicious areas they would sniff the rosemary thru the bag. The branches were once thrown in the courtyards to protect from typhus. During the fourteenth centuries, rosemary branches were burned in homes to supposedly keep away the black death. Yet more recently, in World War II it was burned with juniper berries in hospitals in France to kill germs.

In the medicinal field, the leaf is used to stimulate blood circulation and to ease pain by increasing blood supply where applied. It also aids in digestion. Leaves have been used as a tonic

(anything that invigorates, as a drug or medicine), astringent (draws, contracts body tissue), diaphoretic(increasing the amount of perspiration), stomachic (aiding the stomach and digestion), emmenagogue (an expectorant(a medicine that helps to bring phlegm), and cholagogue. Used in treating depression, headaches, and muscle spasms,

rosemary functions as a 'healer'. An extract of the oil is used in treating skin diseases such as rheumatism, sores, eczema, bruises, and warts. Rosemary's contain a volatile oil,

which is responsible for its healing properties. This oil is used in liniments and in a combination with other drugs as a carminative. It is listed officially in the U.S. Pharmacopeia.

Just where would chicken be without rosemary, or those great lamb chops smothered in a rosemary sauce? Yes, rosemary has culinary properties too! Toss up a great big salad and add rosemary leaves to it. Pound the flowers with sugar, mix with cream, and add it to fruit puree. Add the leaves sparingly to most meat dishes, especially fatty meats like lamb and pork. Still it is also good on poultry, fish, veal, and game. It enhances tomatoes, spinach, peas, mushroom, squash, cheese, egg, and lentils. It works well with herbs such as chives, thyme, chervil, parsley, and bay. Soups like potato and eggplant benefit from rosemary's boisterous flavor, as do marinades, salad dressing, bouquet garnis, and cream sauces. The substitutes for rosemary are ground ginger and sage. Great Cooking Tips: Are you tired of bugs flying around when you are trying to barbecue? All you have to do is throw some rosemary leaves into the fire and it will discourage bugs. When baking add about one tablespoon to each loaf of bread dough. Create your own herbal butter by adding two teaspoons of rosemary to about a half cup of softened butter! If you don't like using sugar in fruit salads you can increase the sweetness by adding rosemary. Substitute rosemary for mint in mint jellies, use it on roasted meats and poultry.

Plant rosemary in well drained soil in full sun. It is good as a garden hedge and it works well standing alone or planted with other plants. One thing to keep in mind is that rosemary attracts bees.

Use rosemary in potpourri and use the boughs to freshen rooms. Also use it to make sachets for your chest of drawers. It can also be used as a dye!

It is likewise used in cosmetics. Add to soaps, creams, lotions, perfumes, and toilet waters. Make a facial mask to liven up your face. If you are a brunette, a rosemary rinse will brighten your hair. Infuse 1 oz. both rosemary and sage in 1 pt. of water for 24 hours. A simple rinse can be created by steeping a sprig of rosemary in 1 cup of boiling water for 5-10 minutes. Work the rinse into your hair after shampooing. There are many, many herb books that can give you lots of cosmetic recipes for

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rosemary and many more herbs; it helps to experiment. You may even come up with your own line of herbal cosmetics! This months thrilling recipe is:

BEETS WITH ROSEMARY
12 small beets, with tops salt
2 rosemary sprigs
3Tbs. unsalted butter
fresh ground black pepper

Place the beets in a saucepan. Add water to cover and salt, then simmer, covered until the beets are tender 30-45 minutes depending on size and age of the vegetable. When cool, peel and slice. Strip the leaves from the rosemary sprigs and chop finely. In a saucepan, toss the sliced beets with the rosemary, butter, salt, and pepper for 2-3 minutes just to blend the flavors; do not let the butter brown. Serve immediately. It will serve four.

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