

The Rosemarys

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

The herb of 'Remembrance' and fidelity in marriage.

The Latin name means 'sea dew' or sea spray, referring to where it grows natively, on the rocky sea cliffs of the Mediterranean. There are many cultivars of the rosemary family, all of which have the appearance of a needled evergreen. Some are upright in habit, some prostrate (creeping), with flowers ranging from white to pink to the deepest blue. All have a similar distinct fragrance and taste, and can be used interchangeably.

How to choose? By the flower color, leave size or habit that you prefer.

Some popular cultivars are:

- 'Arp', 'Hill Hardy' and 'Salem' – **sometimes** hardy to southern New England
- 'Foresteri' – very large leaves.
- 'Golden Rain' – deep green leaves with yellow variegation.
- 'Ingram' – robin's egg blue flowers, nearly prostrate
- 'Tuscan Blue' – deep blue flowers, trains well into standard topiary
- Alba – white flowers, the most resistant to powdery mildew
- Prostrate – the creeping form of rosemary, excellent to train into wreath forms

Tender perennial, full sun, watch the watering! Best grown as a hardy annual.

Rosemary is a perennial, but not hardy to New England, although some customers have had the hardy varieties last through the winter. Some try to winter over their rosemary plants indoors, which is difficult for most. Rosemary requires a longer day of light than the northeast has to offer during our winter months, and is prone to the disease powdery mildew. So for most people, growing rosemary as an annual each year is the better way to go. Rosemary prefers a moist soil, but the roots will rot if kept too wet. Never allow rosemary to dry out completely. A dry rosemary is a dead rosemary. It may not **look** dead yet, because the leaves are still green, but chances are within a few weeks, leaves will start to drop and the entire plant will turn brown.

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