

Living Herbs

Description

Rosemary Spreading
Rosmarinus Prostata
Family: Lamiaceae

Rosemary Spreading is a perennial shrub with woody stems that bear narrow leathery leaves up to 2cm long which are similar to pine-needles with a strong pine-like aroma. They have a shiny, dark green surface and white, felt coated underside with a marked mid vein, in frequent irregular order. A group of small blue or pink lip-shaped flowers forms at its tip and it grows up to 30cm tall and spreads over 60cm in diameter.

Growing Tips

It is very hardy and drought resistant and likes well-drained soil in a sunny position. This variety is spreading so can be put in a hanging basket or on the edge of a plant box or rock wall but also grows well in a pot although avoid hot window positions in summer. Leaves or small twigs can be picked all year round but do not harvest more than 20% of the plant volume. For best results space 60cm apart.

Parts Used

Leaves

Uses

Though this variety is mostly used for its ornamental effect in the garden, Rosemary Spreading can also be used for culinary and household purposes.

Origin & History

Rosemary originates in the Mediterranean region, Southern France, Sicily, Corsica, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey, and symbolizes fidelity and remembrance. The Latin name means 'sea-dew' which refers to either the fact that it grows along the shore of the Mediterranean and can exist on the sea breeze alone, or to its appearance when in flower, a green shrub covered in blue dew.

Legend tells that the flower used to be white until the Virgin Mary used one of the shrubs to hide behind from her pursuers, and in doing so threw her blue cloak over the plant and when she removed the cloak the flowers had turned blue in her honour. It also says that the plant grows for 33 years, the lifespan of Christ, then dies, and never rises over 1.8m tall, so as to not be taller than Jesus.

New Zealand and Australian soldiers pin it on their shirts on ANZAC day.

A medieval tradition is to give a sprig of Rosemary to Wedding guests, as well as worn on the bride and groom to promote love and loyalty.

Its cleansing powers were used during the plague where people would wear pouches filled with Rosemary leaves through which to breathe so as to avoid contamination.



Rosemary, Spreading