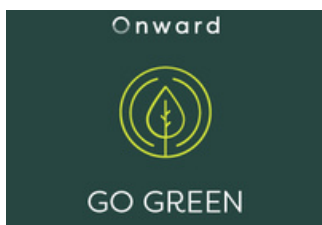


THE ROSEMARY GUIDE



Onward **GROUNDWORK**
GREATER MANCHESTER

Maintaining Rosemary

Maintaining Rosemary

Rosemary requires little maintenance during the year except cutting back after flowering to prevent plants becoming straggly and woody. Save the trimmings to propagate new plants or dry them for cooking.

Harvesting Rosemary

Harvest rosemary by gently pulling small sprigs away from the main stem. You can also use secateurs to remove large branches of rosemary, for roasting. You can harvest rosemary anytime by cutting 4- to 6-inch lengths off the branches.

To use the leaves, simply pull them off the cut stems. Unlike other mint plants, large harvests will stress rosemary plants. To avoid this, prune no more than one-third of your plant at a time. In addition, you'll get the most flavour, aroma, and benefit from your rosemary if you harvest it just before the plant flowers.



Maintaining Rosemary

STORING AND PRESERVING ROSEMARY

As rosemary is an evergreen, it's available fresh all year. This herb is delicious when used right away, but you can preserve it in other ways to use all year long. If you want to dry your leaves, bunch your stems and tie them together.

Hang them upside down for 1-2 weeks. Then, once the leaves have dried, remove them from the stems and use them in your recipes or store them in a container in a cool, dry cupboard until you're ready to use them. It dries well on a baking tray in the airing cupboard.

You can also freeze sprigs of rosemary in an airtight, freezer-safe bag and pull them out of the freezer to use as needed. Alternatively, you could remove the fresh leaves from the sprigs and put a few into ice cube tray compartments, then fill the compartments with water and freeze. To use the frozen cubes, simply throw them into your recipes as you cook! Another way you can preserve fresh rosemary is to add it to flavour vinegar, butter, or oil.



Maintaining Rosemary

HOW TO PROPAGATE ROSEMARY PLANTS

Rosemary seeds can be challenging to germinate, so most gardeners have more success growing rosemary from cuttings. Also, given that rosemary doesn't grow especially fast, growing from a cutting is much faster! Here's how to propagate rosemary:

- Trim off a 6-inch cutting of new growth from an established plant.
- To reduce moisture loss, remove most of the lower leaves so you have a clean length of stem. Remove the leaves on the bottom 2-3 inches. Use a sharp knife to cut off the base of the stem just below a leaf node – the point from which the leaves grow.
- Dip the cut tip into rooting powder (to speed up the rooting process) and then place it into well-draining seed starting soil mix. Fill small terracotta pots with a gritty compost mix. Insert several rosemary cuttings around the edge, or plant individually in seed tray modules.
- Water in cuttings from above to settle compost around their stems.
- Put your planted cutting in a warm spot with direct light. This can be a cold frame in a sheltered, shaded area, indoors in a propagator or simply cover with a plastic bag to retain the moisture.
- Mist the plant daily and water as needed to ensure that the soil does not dry out.
- After about 2-3 weeks, very gently test for new root growth by turning or tugging at the cutting. Be careful and do this gently, so you don't pull it out of the dirt and ruin the process.
- Once roots are established, transplant your cutting (if needed) into a pot 3-4 inches in diameter or the garden outside.
- Cutting compost contains few nutrients, so feed the rosemary plants with a dilute solution of fertiliser as soon as roots have formed. Encourage branching by pinching off the top of your young plant.



Maintaining Rosemary

REPOTTING ROSEMARY PLANTS

If you grow rosemary in containers, over time, the soil will degenerate and lose nutrients. To combat that, re-pot your plant at least once a year, preferably in the spring.

If you are growing rosemary indoors, there may come a time when you can't seem to keep it watered. This is another indication that it needs to be repotted.

If you want to keep your plant small rather than repotting it, you can prune a couple of inches off all sides of the root ball. When you do that, also prune the top off the plant to lessen the plant's stress.



Planting a Rosemary Hedge

Planting a Rosemary Hedge

Most upright rosemaries make a very fine hedge. The hedge can be informal if the plants are left to grow naturally or for a more formal hedge the rosemaries can be clipped. When clipping rosemary do not cut back into old wood. It is recommended to trim after flowering and in late summer. Do not prune or trim in autumn or winter.

Replacing a box hedge?

If you are replacing a box hedge you should try and remove as many of the old box roots as possible and replace the soil with fresh topsoil mixed with coarse limestone grit (6:1).

To ridge or not to ridge?

If your soil is on the heavy side it is beneficial to plant the rosemaries in a prepared low ridge about 10cm high and 15cm wide. For the ridge you will need a mixture of 4 parts of your soil, 2 parts of John Innes No 2 or 3 (or an equivalent peat-free potting compost) and 1 part of coarse limestone grit.

For light free draining soils the slight mound is not necessary. However, the addition of a good potting compost at planting will help moisture retention during dry spells and help the young plants establish their roots.



Planting a Rosemary Hedge

Planting your hedge

Before planting each plant should be well moistened (but not waterlogged). Lay out your plants along the length of the hedge and ensure that the spacing is even.

There are two methods of laying out your hedge:

1. Straight row - simply lay the plants out in a line
2. Staggered row - lay the plants out in two slightly offset.

This results in a denser hedge, especially if the spacing between plants is reduced. Although we always try to supply plants of uniform sizes some variation in size is inevitable, when laying out your hedge ensure plants of mixed sizes are randomly distributed. They will soon grow and even out. Dig a hole a few cm wider and deeper than the root ball. Fill the hole with water and leave until all the water has drained away. Add your planting mix to the bottom of the hole to ensure the plant is just proud of the soil surface, fill in around the plant with the planting mix, firm down so the plant is now level with the soil surface.

Aftercare

In dry conditions water the soil around the plant, but do not over water. You can always add more water. In the first few weeks after planting take particular care with the watering especially if the weather is dry. When the rosemaries are showing good growth, typically after three weeks, trim them back lightly to encourage bushy growth.



Things you can do with Rosemary

Rosemary Salt.

Pull the rosemary leaves from the stem to make 1 cup. Add it to 3 cups of salt. Stir it all together and let it sit for approximately two weeks, covered. This creates an infused rosemary salt that can be used on any number of dishes.



Rosemary Infused Olive Oil.

Pour 2 cups of olive oil into a small pot. Bring to a slight simmer. Turn it off and remove it from the heat. Wash and completely dry 3 or 4 rosemary sprigs and place into a clean jar. Pour the oil into the jar with the rosemary sprigs. The longer you let it sit the stronger the infusion is.



Things you can do with Rosemary

Freeze the herbs for later use.

Wash and dry the rosemary leaves (after removing them from the stems). Chop into small pieces. Using an ice tray, fill each tray with rosemary leaves. Fill the tray with water and freeze. When frozen, pop out the rosemary ice cubes and store in a zipper bag in the freezer. Remove one or two cubes when ready to use them (add them to soups and stews, or thaw and use in marinades).



Rosemary Butter.

Soften a stick of real butter (do not melt). Meanwhile, wash and dry rosemary, removing the leaves from the stems. Dice into small pieces and blend with the butter until well combined. Use on breads or meats or slathered on crackers.



Things you can do with Rosemary

Rosemary Pesto.

You'll need the following ingredients: 1 cup fresh rosemary, stems removed; 2 garlic cloves, diced; 2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts (toasted pecans or walnuts can be substituted); 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated; 1/4 cup olive oil; 1/2 teaspoon salt; and freshly ground black pepper, about 5 turns of the pepper mill. Directions: process rosemary, nuts, parmesan cheese, and garlic pulsing until everything is finely chopped and blended together. While the processor is running, stream in olive oil. Remove to a small bowl and stir in salt and fresh ground pepper. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to four days. Stir well before using.



Rosemary sachets.

Sew simple bags to hold a bundle of dry rosemary leaves. Or, skip the sewing step and simply cut fabric into large squares with pinking shears. Lay the rosemary bundle in the middle. Bring the sides together and secure with a ribbon. Place the sachets in drawers, wardrobes or around the house.



Things you can do with Rosemary

Gifts.

Dry the rosemary (takes several weeks). Separate the dry leaves from the stems, divide into pretty jars (or re-use old spice jars), make labels, and give as gifts.



Use Dried Rosemary for Dryer Sheets.

Take a small drawstring bag and fill with dried rosemary sprigs. Throw this in the dryer with freshly washed clothes for a great way to naturally scent your laundry. You could even add dried lavender to this sachet.



Things you can do with Rosemary

Rosemary Honey.

Add 5 rosemary sprigs (each about 3 inches long) to 1 cup of honey in a small pot. Bring to a simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let steep for about 45 minutes. Remove the rosemary sprigs and pour the honey into a small container. Use on toast, drizzle over goat cheese or brie, or use as a sweetener in tea.



Rosemary and Lemon Bath Salts.

Combine 2 cups Epsom salt; 1/2 cup baking soda; 2-3 tablespoons of fresh rosemary, finely chopped; 6-8 drops lemon essential oil; and 2-3 tablespoons of lemon zest (optional). In a bowl combine Epsom salt and baking soda. Add in half of the essential oil drops, mix, then add in the remaining drops. Mix in the chopped rosemary and lemon zest. Store in an airtight container.

