

Control:

- Catching rosemary leaf beetles and aphids before a total infestation, will make them easier to control.
- Early detection of infestations is necessary, therefore regular scouting should be done.
- Hand picking of the adult rosemary beetles.
- Chemical control—use of registered pesticides.

Harvesting maturity

The plant is ready for harvesting from 2 to 3 years after planting. Cuttings can be taken during or after flowering.

Harvesting methods

For the preservation of natural plant growth, the plants should only be cut every third year, i.e. with a 2-year break between harvests.

Utilisation

Medicine

Wild rosemary has traditionally been used as a medicine for many ailments like colds, flatulence and as a diaphoretic. Rosemary may improve memory, relieve muscle pain and stimulate the nervous system. It is used for digestive problems, circulatory problems, pain, neuralgia, spasms, wounds, eczema, rheumatism and depression. It has been very helpful in treating headaches, migraines caused by stress, depression, nervous exhaustion and apathy. A tea is brewed from the leaves of this plant that is said to relieve chest congestion and coughs. Wild rosemary essential oil is also taken as a diuretic and to encourage sweating. It has also been used as a laxative, astringent and pain reliever. Babies are sometimes given wild rosemary tea to help relieve the symptoms of colic and gas.

Human consumption

Dried or fresh leaves and young tops are finely chopped and used as a condiment/flavour in soups, salads, vegetables, meat and other foods. It can also be used to flavour wines, vinegar, oil and butter.

Cosmetic

Shampoos, hair dyes, and conditioners sometimes include rosemary oil because it is invigorating and thought to encour-

age growth and healthy hair. Highly fragrant wild rosemary is often dried and included in incense, potpourris, and sachets, and the scent is used to ease headaches.

Acknowledgement

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References

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- <http://www.plantzafrica.com>
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Wild rosemary

Scientific name: *Eriocephalus africanus*

Common names: Wild rosemary, marsh rosemary, moorwort, Cape snowbush, kapokbos

Family: Asteraceae

Origin and distribution

Wild rosemary is an evergreen shrub with the name *Eriocephalus africanus* that is indigenous to South Africa. It is very pretty, generally easy to grow and is valued for its flavour and fragrance. Wild rosemary is believed to have originated in South Africa and is cultivated in nearly all countries around the Mediterranean Sea (Spain, Dalmatia, Tunisia, Morocco and Southern France), as well as in England, the US and Mexico. Wild rosemary is of commercial importance in France, Spain, Portugal, Republic of Serbia, North Africa and California. In South Africa the plant is found mostly throughout the Western and Eastern Cape provinces.

Further information can be obtained from:

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Description

Wild rosemary is a very attractive winter flowering plant, a fairly small shrub from the Cape floral kingdom in South Africa. The plant has a thick root system that includes a long taproot which helps the plant to absorb any available water and allows it to grow where many others will not. It often grows on sunny rocky slopes and ledges in the wild. Frequent pruning to remove dead branches will help to keep this plant bushy and healthy.

Mature plant

The plant is a small, multibranched evergreen shrub of up to 1 to 1,2 m in height and 1,0 to 1,5 across.

Leaves

The plant has a thin, grey leaves, which smell like Vicks when crushed. The leaves are small and needle shaped.

Flowers

The plant has white flowers that can appear in winter (May to September), the berries maturing late in autumn.

Stem

The plant is an evergreen shrub, with a trailing, slender, leafy stem, which is woody, and roots at the base.

Roots

Wild rosemary has a taproot that can penetrate the soil to a depth of 6 m, and lateral roots that extend about 2 m around the plant.

Fruit

The fruit is covered in long, white hairs, which resemble cottonwool.

Climatic requirements

Wild rosemary prefers night temperatures of between 10 to 13 °C and day temperatures of between 20 to 22 °C.

Soil requirements

A well-drained soil that is sandy, loamy and quite dry is required. The plant can grow in very acid soil. It is quite hardy,

can tolerate drought and can recover easily from grazing by animals.

Cultural practices

Soil preparation

The soil should be ploughed before planting. Weeds should be removed and the clods broken up to bring the soil to a moderately fine texture. If possible, the soil should be prepared several weeks before planting.

Planting

Planting takes place in spring but in the Western Cape it is planted in the wet winter months before the dry summer. Cultivated plants are established in rows and spaced 1, 2 m x 0, 5 m apart in groups of 3 to 5.

Propagation

Wild rosemary is propagated by seeds and cuttings (layering and division of roots). Propagating the plant is generally easy and can be done by means of cuttings or it can be started from seed. Germination is erratic and slow, so the quickest way to obtain new plants is from cuttings. he cuttings may be dipped into a rooting powder (growth hormone) to encourage rooting. Small, new plants should be kept in their pots in a sheltered location for several months to allow the slow growing plants to form healthy root systems. The seeds can be sown in spring or autumn and the cuttings can be taken in spring or autumn. (15 cm long) and dibbled into a shady border, two-thirds of their length in the ground. They will then ready for transplanting into a permanent location the following autumn.

Irrigation

The plants are drought tolerant owing to their extensive root system and needle-shaped leaves. Irrigation is required in summer and winter only when the soil is dry.

Fertilisation

Organic matter and animal manure can be placed on the soil surface when needed. Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur should be applied annually according to the soil analysis.

Weed control

Broadleaf weeds are easy to control by spot spraying planted areas while the plants are still small. A pre-emergent herbicide can be applied to established planting beds and again in September to prevent weeds for the entire year.

Disease control

The major diseases identified in wild rosemary include box blight, root disease and powdery mildew.

POWDERY MILDEW

Symptoms: Powdery mildew produces a white powdery coating on the surface of plant leaves. Affected plants also often display dark-brown or bright-yellow spots. If it is not treated, the problem can cause plants to die off.

ROOT DISEASE

Symptoms: Root disease is the most common cause of die-off this plant.

Control:

- The infested plants should be pruned out and fallen leaves destroyed.
- The plant should be kept in the sunlight.
- Use registered chemicals.

Pest control

The major insects identified in wild rosemary include aphids, spider mites, gall midges and rosemary leaf beetles.

ROSEMARY LEAF BEETLE

Symptoms: The rosemary leaf beetles feed on the leaves and flowers of a plant. These small beetles feed on the new shoot tips, causing these to die back.

APHIDS

Symptoms: Aphids feed on plant sap and excrete plant sugars as honeydew. Honeydew often covers the leaves of a plant and then becomes infested with black sooty moulds.

SPIDER MITES

Symptoms: Mottled, yellowing leaves with brown speckles are signs that these tiny pests have been feeding on plant leaf cells.