

## Rosemary

*Salvia rosmarinus*



**Height:** Up to 1.5m

**Suitable for:** Sunny spot with well drained soil. Great in containers.

**Summary:** Rosemary is a woody perennial herb with green fragrant needle-like leaves. It flowers from early spring, often before the daffodils, with pale blue/lilac blossoms along the length of the younger stems. This is one of the most popular culinary herbs — every garden should have at least one rosemary plant!

### More information:

Rosemary is an aromatic evergreen, which is native to Mediterranean regions and thus can easily withstand droughts for long periods, helped by the fact that it is deep rooted. Bear this in mind if you plan to grow in a container as a tall deep pot will give the best results.

When planting in your beds and borders choose a sunny spot, sheltered from cold north and east winds. Most importantly rosemary needs a well drained soil, also don't help it with extra compost and fertiliser as it prefers poor conditions.

Rosemary will withstand severe cold as long as it is not in a wet and windy position.

One of the great attractions of rosemary is the fact that it flowers so early in the year, pale blue blossoms start to appear on the younger stems as early as December in some areas, and by daffodil time it is in full bloom — a decorative and early token of Spring.

Rosemary can grow quite large and spread up to 2m across if not pruned. Never prune it back into the old hard woody stems — trim the softer side shoots after flowering to keep it to the size and shape which you prefer.

Remember to use it in the kitchen often as regular pinching of the tips will do wonders to keep it in shape.

Rosemary leaves are traditionally used in Mediterranean cuisine, especially French, Spanish and Italian dishes, and have an astringent taste and aroma which complements roasted meats and stuffings. It is also extensively used in barbecue food where the intense heat brings out the finest flavour. The intense fragrant aroma is also great with fish and bean dishes and it makes a aromatic partner in summer drinks and herb teas.

Green beans are available all the year round and combined with rosemary, bacon and garlic they make a speedy and easy vegetable accompaniment to grilled meat.

Try this with broad beans for a change, and for a vegetarian option replace the bacon with cubes of halloumi cheese.

## Rosemary infused green beans

(Serves 2 – 3)

- 250 g pack of green beans – topped and tailed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small red onion – finely chopped
- 100 g chopped bacon (or cubed halloumi if you prefer)
- 2 cloves of garlic – peeled and finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp mild chilli flakes (optional)
- 3 young sprigs [rosemary leaves](#) – chopped
- 3 large tomatoes – cut into chunky pieces
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- seasoning to taste



First blanch the beans in a pan of boiling salted water for just 3 minutes. Drain and put straight into a bowl of cold water to stop them cooking further and retain their bright green colour. When cool drain well in a sieve.

In a medium sized pan heat the oil and gently fry the bacon and onion until soft. If using halloumi add this when the onion is nearly done.

Add the garlic, chilli flakes and rosemary, stir to mix all the ingredients together then add the drained beans.

Cook stirring gently so that the beans don't break up for 3 minutes, then add the tomato pieces and cook for a further 3 minutes or until the tomatoes start to soften but still retain their shape.

Rosemary oil is used in perfumes and home fragrances. In addition it has numerous health benefits which include memory and mood boost, relief of pain, inflammation and infection, and the improvement of skin condition.

Check out our other rosemary varieties for more info and planting ideas.