



THE AROMATIC MEDICINE GARDEN

Cultivating Connection to Aromatic Plants

Rosemary Transcript

Hello everyone and welcome back to the Aromatic Medicine Garden. I'm Erika Galentin with the Northwest School of Aromatic Medicine and I am very, very pleased to be able to introduce you or maybe even reintroduce you to one of my best friends and biggest plant allies, Rosemary.

I have so much to share with you about this plant. We're going to talk about folklore and cultivation and habitat and harvesting and how to make cool things, but I wanted to start my chat with you today about Rosemary using a bit of a story. And this story takes me back to my fourth year at University when I was studying herbal medicine.

I think that this story is a really great starting place because it provides sort of a context to the amazing prowess that is this plant and gives it some good, I don't know... guides I suppose, as to how it can be incorporated into our lives.

So, the story goes: I was in my fourth year of University studying herbal medicine and like all fourth-year students was charged with having to write a dissertation. Over the four-year period of my degree program and sitting in on the training clinic, the student training clinic, I started to become really fascinated by how emotions were showing up in the clinic room as part of the story of a person's physical health.

So client after client, I would be sitting in and observing and really listening to the stories that they brought about their lives and about their bodies and there were often times a lot of emotions that came with those stories, as a part of those stories, a part of those health experiences.

In general, what I noticed, was there was a lot of grief in these stories, and also shame, but definitely a grieving process at play, and in many of the stories I was hearing. I became very fascinated with the grieving process and its impacts, or let's just say, its influence over physical health. I knew that part of what I was interested in was studying that particular subject and really diving into the research as to what science was telling us about grief and physical health.

At that time, I had started studying, reading, and studying, the work of Carl Jung and others from the Depth Psychology tradition, and one of the pieces that was really sticking with me was this idea of how important myth and story and folklore and symbols are to the human psyche and how they bring healing and evolution to the human psyche, right?

So I was looking at this idea of the grieving process and physical health and I was also looking at how we could engage with the plant kingdom symbolically to help support the process of grief going on in the human body and going on in the human emotional realm. At that point, I wasn't exactly sure what herbs I was going to be focusing on, but one day I came across a story, and this story, which I'm going to tell you, made it very clear to me that it was Rosemary that was going to be the main star of the show in my dissertation.

Interestingly enough, what I discovered with my dissertation and going through the research is that there were three major areas of physical health that the grieving process seemed to influence in one way or another, and that was emotional well-being, especially in regard to clinical depression, which makes tons of sense with grief. The second area was cardiovascular health and a correlation with prolonged grief or unintegrated grief and cardiovascular disease. I even discovered that there is such a thing as broken heart syndrome. So things along those lines.

The last piece was looking at the influence of grief and the grieving process over our immune system and really there was a lot of research implicating grief and prolonged grief and unintegrated grief in immune system difficulties, including cancer. And so that was a really fascinating dive into this realm of how our emotional lives influence and interact with our physical lives.

So the other piece of this was then, of course, really diving into Rosemary in particular, and I was wanting to focus on the idea of bringing Rosemary in as a talisman or a symbol for healing and as a way to honor the grieving process in people's lives. It was less about focusing so much on, you know, it's not about using Rosemary for grief. That wasn't what this was about. It was about engaging with this plant as part of the grieving process in a variety of forms, including a form of a symbol or a talisman.

One of the stories I want to start with, it's really quite fascinating when it comes to thinking about Rosemary in the grieving process. But before I get there, I think what I'll say is that, when I'm looking at the folklore of this plant, and I was doing my dissertation work, I was looking at the folklore of the plant, I was looking at its traditional medicinal uses, how its been used medicinally over time.

I was also looking at its pharmacology or its chemistry, and what the science as a pharmacology could tell us about its medicinal virtues from a sort of scientific perspective. So I was looking at all of these areas of Rosemary: folklore, traditional use, and science.

What was really interesting and beautiful about all of this, in a very big, broad stroke, was that when I was looking and comparing the impacts of grief and the grieving process over physical health, we talked about clinical depression, cardiovascular health, and immune system health. These three areas are also indicated for Rosemary in its folklore, in its traditional use, and even in its modern pharmacology. It was like they were a perfect match: grief and the grieving process, and Rosemary and the medicine of Rosemary seem to be a perfect match. So I'm looking forward to exploring all of these different pieces and aspects with you.

But one of the very first stories and the story that really caught my attention and made me realize that this was the plant that I was going to write about in my dissertation, is a story that comes to us from Greek mythology and Greek literature, "The Iliad" written by Homer. There's a story in "The Iliad" where the daughter of the King of Sparta, her name was Lebanitis. She was the daughter of the King of Sparta and she had fallen in love with the God of the Sun and the God of the Sun had fallen in love with her.

And when the King of Sparta found out about this love affair, he was infuriated and he was so infuriated that he decided, I suppose as they did back then, to bury his daughter alive. And so he did. And the God of the Sun, when he found out that his dear love had been buried alive, he was struck with grief and searched high and low to find where she was buried.

He begged and pleaded over her grave, "Come back to me, come back to life," and to no avail. At some point in this process, he began to weep, and weeped over her grave. And from his tears, out sprung the Rosemary bush. I just think of that story, especially in relationship to the heart, and I'm going to talk about the Sun as well, in just a minute. I think about how the plant is growing, so even just this lovely specimen here that I can't keep my eyes off of, with its beautiful blue, tear-dropped, colored flowers. And this thought about the grieving process and this beauty that can come from it.

Interestingly enough, I also think it's fascinating that in that story, it is the God of the Sun. The reason why I think that's fascinating is that when we look at the medical traditions from Greece and from Rome and how those evolved over time especially into the herbalism traditions in Europe and moving into the British Isles and the whole tradition of medical astrology, which also comes to us from Arabic medicine.

In that system of medicine, medical astrology in particular, Rosemary has always been considered governed by the Sun. The Sun is representative of many, many things, in the human body and also in plants, and we'll probably dive into some of these topics at some point here in the Aromatic Medicine Garden.

But what is particularly wonderful for me about this idea of the Sun and Rosemary and this story of Lebanitis and this God of the Sun weeping over her grave and out sprouting the Rosemary is that the Sun is thought to govern over the heart. Not just the physical heart and the circulatory system, but the emotional heart, and especially the aspects of our emotional heart that are aligned with this idea of courage.

It's interesting to me that we have a story of loss and grief in this folklore tale that is accompanied by the presence of the Rosemary plant and this symbol of the heart and the courage that it takes to travel the road of grief.

So that was the story that captured me in my dissertation and through that, through time, moved into other amazing folkloric traditions of this plant that had some similarities with this idea of grief and the grieving process. And one of those was looking at some of the folk people traditions of England and Wales where it became a tradition to wear a sprig of Rosemary on your lapel at funerals. And this became a symbol of honor and memory for the person who had passed.

I also would say that it showed up specifically at times of loss and death. And so, to have Rosemary there, not only as a symbol of remembrance and honoring those who have passed but also as this amazing aromatic that was put right on the chest, right over the heart, that a person would be smelling and no doubt interacting with as they sat through the process of a funeral experience. So I thought that was really fascinating and of course, I just ended up diving deeper, and deeper, and deeper.

And so, what I came to terms with the story of the dissertation and what we'll dive into more specifically with Rosemary is that this is a plant that has a long history in folklore and traditional use and now even in kind of modern pharmacology, for supporting the human emotional well-being and physical well-being, especially in regards to the heart and circulation and our immune system.

Botany

So we'll dive into all of those details in particular but I think before we do, one of the things that I want to share with you really is more about who this plant is. So Rosemary is known by its botanical name, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, up until recently anyway. Traditionally, it has been known as *Rosmarinus officinalis*, however, modern botany and DNA analysis has placed Rosemary into the genus of the Sages. And so, it is now often written about or you'll see it named as *Salvia rosmarinus*. So no longer *Rosmarinus officinalis*, but *Salvia rosmarinus*.

So this plant is in the Mint family, if you can believe it – Lamiaceae. It's wonderful because we're going to be talking about lots of different plants in the Mint family, it is probably one of the most aromatic plant families that we know of. And so, we'll be returning to the Mints many, many times.

This is considered a Mint, it's in the Mint family. It's different than what we're used to in regards to Mints, because this isn't in its native habitat, which I'll talk about in a minute. This is a woody shrub, right? We definitely tend to think of Mints as these kind of herbaceous, tender plants that kind of come and go with the seasons, but Rosemary is a shrub and it is meant to be evergreen and live all season long.

Cultivation

Its native habitat is the Mediterranean and Coastal Mediterranean. It is used to growing in areas where there isn't a lot of great soil, it's very easily drained soil, kind of rocky landscapes; you can think about this robust Rosemary hanging on to a cliff edge with the Mediterranean sea breeze blowing against it. It's used to these kind of more harsh territories without a lot of nutrients in the soil, very easy draining soil. It doesn't like its feet wet, and full sun.

It also really appreciates air flow, so this is another feature of Rosemary that I think is really important. And when we are looking at this idea of growing Rosemary, I think a lot

of folks wish that they could. I know that I do. Here in Southeast Ohio where I live and the Appalachian part of the state it is way too cold and way too wet over the winter time for Rosemary to survive in the ground. I have tried and tried and tried and it just, to no avail; people just can't really grow Rosemary around here. It doesn't like it. And so, I have to grow Rosemary in pots and overwinter them in pots or indoors.

But you know, places like the Pacific Northwest, when I've been out that way, man, I have run into Rosemarys that were just huge. I mean, I have some Rosemary envy when it comes to the Pacific Northwest, they can really grow some Rosemary out there. And you see it as this fantastic shrub. Some of them are massive shrubs, and they can take up quite a lot of space when they're happy.

So growing this plant and overwintering it, it doesn't like to freeze, so its roots need to not be frozen, and it doesn't like too much water. It likes dry feet, not wet feet. So if you can't create that environment for them outdoors, this is a plant that you can grow in a pot and you can overwinter inside. But there's a trick to it, I will say that, and it's not always successful, but you can give it a shot and see what you think.

Basically what I do and what I was taught to do is that you leave the Rosemary in the pot -- regular potting soil, nothing fancy -- you leave it in the pot outdoors until you get the first really hard frost of the year. And what that does is that signals the plant into dormancy because Rosemary, as a shrub, needs to have a period of time where it's sort of sleeping. It is an evergreen.

So it's not deciduous, it's not meant to lose all of its foliage. That's often a symptom of its demise. But as an evergreen, it does go through a period of, "I'm sleeping. I'm not going to grow very much. I'm going to hang out here for a little while and rest before sprouting out again in the new season." So we have to simulate that for the plant if we are bringing it indoors.

What I do is after that first hard freeze that signals the plant into dormancy, I bring the pot inside. I put it in a sunny window and I stop watering it. One of the easiest ways to kill Rosemary in a pot is by overwatering it. Like I said, remember, it likes hanging on to those rocky cliffs that don't have any soil. So keeping it in a wet soil, it's just not its happy place. If your Rosemary is floppy and just leggy and just looks like it's kind of drooping all the time, then it might be because there's too much water involved in its life.

I'll leave it in a sunny window, totally unwatered. I might go through and splash it a couple times, like once a month or something like that, until right before the last frost of the winter season, going into the spring, and then I will take it back outside, and I have to be careful. It's a gray area there because again, you don't want the roots to freeze.

So as long as it's not cold enough for sustained hours to cause freezing in the pot, you can take it outside and let it live outside again for the season. And that's when you might find that it begins to flower, like this has, and I can't wait to talk to you about the flowers. They are very special medicine.

I guess the last piece I'll say with Rosemary is just looking at the harvesting. I mean, if you're living, for example, in a place where you can grow a big shrub, you have at it. I'm sure that the pruning techniques that you would use for taking care of any large shrub would apply.

Because it is a woody plant, you'll see there's areas of a mature Rosemary that actually have a woody stem with a bark and then in juxtaposition, some of these like much younger shoots that are a little bit more juicy and fresh looking and bendy, they don't have any bark. Those are the fresh sprouts. And so when I'm harvesting this plant for use, those are the pieces that I tend to focus on the most, the fresh new vital growth that's coming out of the shrub.

And you know, just making sure not to decimate the shrub, but it will, if you leave enough of these sprouts, if you leave enough of these branches, it will sprout out again because that's what the Mint family does. So it takes really well to pruning and it's a really easy plant to manage, especially if you have a really big one. If you have to grow them small, like I do, you might need several before you can actually harvest a substantial quantity.

One of the next things that I wanted to just focus on is the parts that are used. I think it's pretty obvious for most of us who have come across Rosemary, at least for culinary purposes, that generally speaking, it's the leaves that are used – the leaves and the tender stems. You can even actually use the woody stems, if you really wanted to. People sometimes use them in gourmet cooking for skewers. So if you're doing some sort of fancy grilling shish kebab sort of deal, you can use the woody stems for that and it does impart some flavor. I've never done that myself, but it is possible.

Generally speaking, the leaves and the tender shoots are used, but the flowers can also be used and they can be used together. So harvested together, which is beautiful, or the flowers can be used on their own, and I can't wait to share more about that. So I think that's pretty much all I wanted to say about its harvesting in the parts that are used.

Traditional Medicinal Uses

I would like to preface diving into Rosemary's medicinal and aromatic prowess by kind of doing a broad sweep over its kind of affiliations or expressions. Generally speaking, when we're looking at Rosemary, Rosemary is considered a warming, stimulating, aromatic plant.

And when I say stimulating, I'm not really referring to you know, like the pokiness of caffeine sort of stimulating, but more this idea of warmth and movement and motivation, right? It is thought to have an affiliation for the cardiovascular system. So the heart and also the circulation.

It is thought to have an affiliation for our emotional well-being, especially in regards to being quite uplifting, and part of this has to do with the idea that Rosemary helps to

stimulate movement of the blood up into the mind. It is what we call a cephalic remedy, so clearing and supportive to circulation to the mind.

It also has a long time affiliation for the skin and supporting the complexion. So we'll talk a bit about that. And it also has a component of being incredibly supportive to digestion in very specific ways. And so I thought that I would go through each of these areas and then we can dive into how we can use it and how we can make medicine from this plant.

So in regards to our heart and circulation, Rosemary has thought to be moving to the blood and stimulating to the circulation, especially to the peripheries, right? So where we have all these tiny little blood vessels.

And you know, it has this warmth and this ability to motivate blood out into the extremities of the body. This is an action of vitality and building of the vital force. So we can see this carry over into not only cardiovascular health and well-being, but also looking at the immune system and stimulating to our vital force is another way of saying that it's also very supportive to our immunity and our ability to fight off pathogens and to stay well in the face of all the outward evils.

So its got this affiliation for the heart and circulation and it's through these mechanisms that we also see this sort of motivating to the spirit, motivating to the mood, uplifting, again, this is an active herb. This is active movement; warmth and stimulation is an activity. It's moving to stagnation. So supporting a person out of stagnation. And this could be physical, this could be emotional, also.

When it comes to the external use of Rosemary to support the skin, there is a long tradition of use for it being something to help stimulate healing in the skin, to stimulate circulation to the skin, stimulate a kind of cleansing of the complexion. It has some antioxidant properties to it. These properties are, for example, in rosmarinic acid, we find this in cosmetic products. We also find rosmarinic acid in food as a food preservative. So this is a compound in Rosemary that's thought to be very antioxidant, so it provides protection against oxidative stress.

And because of its aromatics, it is also quite stimulating to the skin and activity of the skin and activity to the scalp also, and so, we see this herb used a lot not only kind of cleanse and clarify the complexion, but also to help promote and stimulate hair growth.

I should talk you through a few of options that we have there as well and I'll do that in a moment. I've touched on the circulation a little bit and its support for the cardiovascular system. I have also touched on its traditional use for kind of cleansing and clarifying the complexion and stimulating hair growth.

There's also this beautiful component of Rosemary that is often overlooked. And that is its ability to support the digestive process, right? So this is an herb that we refer to in herbalism as a warming aromatic bitter. Now bitters are a very specific class of herbs that all have in common the ability to stimulate digestive secretions, right? So this may

be stomach acid. This may be pancreatic enzymes that are responsible for breaking down sugars and things like that. It also helps stimulate bile flow and the digestion of fats.

Bitters are often employed in herbalism to help stimulate digestion or stoke the capacity for the digestive process to break food down chemically. And mechanically, bitters also get peristalsis going. So that's this rhythmic movement in the digestive tract, which is responsible for propelling food along the tube.

Bitters are also called upon to help stimulate the cilia, which are these hair-like projections on the surface of the mucosa that are part of the absorptive surface of the digestive mucosa and how we get our nutrients pulled into the blood. So bitters are very activating to the digestive process. They really "prime the pump," so to speak, for that.

And Rosemary is considered a bitter and it also, in addition, has this very wonderful aromatic side to it. Right? So it has, because of that, sort of an anti-spasmodic effect. So looking at areas where there might be tension in the digestion, lack of appetite, things are tight and tense. Maybe there's a history of cramping and things like that where there's tension in the digestive process itself and an herb like Rosemary can really help a lot of those smooth muscles just relax and be less spasmodic and a little bit more calm and collected and working together.

So it's interesting because most of us I think have met Rosemary, we've met Rosemary as a culinary herb and it tends to be used specifically dry with meat. So this is an herb that has been traditionally associated with helping support the digestion of heavier compounds and heavier meals, like meat and often also very fatty dishes where there's a lot of protein that needs to be broken down and a lot of fat that needs to be broken down and Rosemary is kind of called into those recipes I think for that, and also because it just tastes amazing, in my personal opinion.

And so, for the culinary use, the fresh plant and the dried plant can be used and I'll say that if we're trying to support the digestion, sometimes integrating herbs into our food is the best way to do that. We don't necessarily need to take something as an extract or something more potent. Sometimes just bringing it into our cooking can be enough to be supportive.

It's usually the dried leaves that are used, but I will say there's nothing quite like using fresh Rosemary. In fact, I really prefer it. I think that you get a lot more of the aroma and a lot more of the flavor that way.

So I've covered the affiliation for the cardiovascular system, the heart, our circulation. This is a warming and motivating to the blood. It really helps move blood out to the surface. It's very good to uplift a stagnant mood. There's an upliftment that happens and part of that might be gut brain connection part of that also might be the cephalic action, right? So this plant really stimulating circulation to the mind.

We also have tradition of use for the skin and cleansing the complexion, brightening the complexion, assisting with the healing process, that antioxidant sort of nature, which can

help mitigate the effects of oxidative stress. And of course, it has a long tradition of use for stimulating the scalp and stimulating hair growth as a result.

I also mentioned that it kind of in tandem with its circulatory support, we also see Rosemary, due to this idea of being motivating and warming to the blood, that this is an enlivening action, and then that enlivening action, we're also going to experience support in our immune system, because the immune system, in many ways, in this herbal world view is a reflection of our vital force. And our vital force is dictated by that warmth and that motivation and that blood moving.

When things are stagnant, we're that much more likely to run ill or to be vulnerable to external pathogens and external evils. So quite a few different pieces of that and I mentioned at the beginning of our talk today really matched up very well when we were looking at, when I was sharing with you anyway, about the impacts of grief on physical health and well-being.

Aromatic Preparations

Those are really covering sort of the traditional use, I think I'll probably now dive into some of the specific preparations that we can work with and I think what I'll do is I'll start with the external preparations or preparations of Rosemary that we use in the external world. Then from there, I will move into some of the preparations that we can use in the internal world including one of my favorites which includes the flowers.

When it comes to aromatic medicine, Rosemary is probably most well-known as an essential oil. It also makes a fantastic hydrosol or what's also known as hydrolat. So I think what I'll do is I'll take a second to talk to you about those and then we can talk about other ways that we can use Rosemary externally.

For those of you who aren't familiar, this is a hydrosol and this is the essential oil of Rosemary. These two preparations are actually created using the same process of steam distillation in something similar to what's behind me here, like a copper alembic still. This is actually a hydrosol that I distilled myself from Rosemary from my garden and it's absolutely lovely and it's probably one of my favorite ways to use Rosemary externally in the external realm. And so I think I'll start with this one if that's all right with you all.

A hydrosol is also known as a hydrolat. Some folks prefer to use the word hydrosol. Some folks prefer to use the word hydrolat, but they are, for all intents and purposes, interchangeable when it comes to talking about what this is. This is the water portion of the steam distillation process where the steam passes through the plant material. It captures the essential oil. It is then condensed back down into a liquid form and the essential oil, being lipid-based, floats on the surface, and below it, you have the hydrosol or the water.

And these are also known as floral waters, and were really, really important, especially when we're looking back at kind of early European, Greco-Roman, Arabic medicine.

Floral waters were a very very important part of the materia medica, and they definitely fell out of use for a very long time but we have recently started seeing, thanks to the work of a lot of really brilliant and talented distillers, we're starting to see hydrosols coming back in their full glory for how wonderful they are.

What we have here with a hydrosol is we have not only some of the captured aromatics, not all of them because the essential oil often gets siphoned off, but we do have some of these aromatic compounds – when I say aromatic, I'm referring to the fact that we can smell them. They're still in the hydrosol.

But we also have some water-soluble constituents as well, that if they're volatile can come across in those distillations. So in itself, it's a type of extract, if you want to think of it that way, and hydrosols are very gentle. I think this is one of the things that I really love about them the most. In particular, Rosemary hydrosol is a very gentle, very nurturing experience.

And so, how do we use hydrosols? That is the \$64,000 question. There are lots of different ways that I like to use Rosemary hydrosol. You can diffuse it, if you're used to diffusing essential oils, hydrosols are a really nice, gentle way of diffusing. You can use them in creams and lotions as your water-based portion. You can use them as a facial toner.

Again, thinking about Rosemary and its wonderful impacts on the complexion, you know, this is something that you could use as a facial toner, and I personally love to just use it as upliftment during the day, especially when maybe I'm feeling a bit sad, maybe I'm feeling a bit stuck. You know, maybe I'm working on something and I just feel like really crammed in and stuck. I will sometimes just bust open my hydrosol and just... *inhales* Oh, so nice. I'll just spray myself with it. Sometimes right around my head, and I'm breathing it in.

What is lovely about the hydrosols, is that it's light, right? It's not an intense experience and sometimes, you know, less is not less; sometimes less is more. I really love the hydrosol, and the Rosemary hydrosol in particular, it does make a really wonderful facial toner as well for those of you who are interested. I guess one more thing I'll say about hydrosols, this hydrosol in particular, is depending on how they're distilled, you can also use them internally. I won't touch on this too much, but I will say that, adding some Rosemary hydrosol to a cocktail or a mocktail can sometimes be really, really nice.

I want to also talk about the essential oil because I think this is also a very huge ally for me, and something that I really appreciate about Rosemary. Mmm, it's so potent and so powerful. And it's sweet and camphorous and intense. And so clarifying to the mind, I mean, you can feel it; it's almost like it goes straight into the brain tissues.

And that's how I like to use essential oils, by the way. I'm not a huge fan of diffusing them all day every day. I tend to be much more judicious in my use where, for example, if I'm having a long day, I'm doing some writing or I'm working with clients all day and it's requiring quite a lot of brain power. You know, I will stop, I will open up the essential oil,

I'll just gently waft it under my nose, breathe that aromatic into my soul, put the lid back on, and it's enough to kind of clear the pipes, so to speak.

Rosemary essential oil is really, really strong and really potent stuff and we have to be careful how we use it, especially externally but it does really, really well diluted in a carrier oil, so maybe you wanted to make a facial oil or if you wanted to add it into like a scalp massage oil to help stimulate hair growth.

I've also had clients add this to, a few drops here and there in the right proportion, to shampoos and things like that, especially if they're struggling with dandruff, because of that support for circulation to the scalp and skin healing, it can be very, very helpful with cases of dandruff. So that's a really nice way to use Rosemary essential oil. And you can also diffuse it, and diffuse it responsibly, so you're not necessarily inundated because it is intense. It is intense. It's a lot for the senses.

One of the things I wanted to say about the essential oil is that this is not one that you want to put on your skin neat. You definitely want to dilute it. I think I mentioned that. And you certainly never want to use essential oils internally unless you are working with an individual qualified to support you through that.

Rosemary essential oil itself is quite interesting because it's one of those essential oils that you're going to see kind of sold as like different types of itself. And what do I mean by that? Based on where a plant is grown and how it's grown and the elements that it's exposed to over the course of its life, and the soil conditions and the sun conditions, etc, etc. Each Rosemary is going to have slight variations in its essential oil chemistry.

And the essential oil isn't just one thing, right? It's not just one compound. It is a family of compounds and depending on where the plant has grown and its conditions, you're going to have different balances of those compounds within an essential oil.

There are two main regions where Rosemary is grown commercially for the essential oil industry and based on the differences between those two areas of where it's grown, there are two specific -- what they're called chemotypes -- of Rosemary essential oil that you're going to see most commonly referred to.

And so how you know it's a chemo type is that you'll see the name on the essential oil bottle and then after its Latin name, you'll see "ct." with a period - sometimes with a period, sometimes without. "CT," which stands for "chemo type" or "chemical type," and then a funny little word after that which you may or may not be able to pronounce.

With Rosemary, the two main chemotypes are "ct. cineole" and "ct. verbenone." These are two different kind of chemotypes. Now, it's important to remember that it is all Rosemary essential oil. These two different chemotypes are very similar in their properties, for the most part, but the ct. cineole has higher levels of cineole and the ct. verbenone has higher levels of verbenone. From an aromatherapy perspective, that makes those essential oils have slightly different affinities or specialties, if you come to like human health and well-being.

The ct. cineole is thought to have more of a specialty for the respiratory system. It's considered to be more mucolytic or kind of thinning to the mucus and more expectorant, so helpful to stimulate mucus movement out of the lungs. It's much more decongesting, higher levels of cineole are very decongesting. And so, when you experience the chemotype of Rosemary cineole, you are going to experience a much more kind of camphorous sort of vibe. And it's much more cleansing smelling, it almost feels a little bit more sharp, a little bit more penetrating, maybe even a little bit more heating or warming, and there is seemingly slightly more of an affiliation for this respiratory piece.

The ct. verbenone, on the other hand, is in my experience a little bit softer. It's a little bit softer. It's not as pokey. It's not as cutting. It's not as camphorous. It's a little bit rounder and a little bit softer. And the verbenone is the one that tends to be used in aromatherapy from an aromatherapeutic standpoint more for that mood upliftment and for the skin, using it for topical preparations and things. It's a little bit less, how do I say it? It feels a little less harsh than the ct. cineole. It's a little bit softer.

But, I think sometimes it can be like splitting hairs here. So generally speaking, it's important to know that when you are purchasing Rosemary essential oil that there are two major chemotypes available that I know of, one is the "ct. cineole," the other is the "ct. verbenone," and they do have slightly different specialties when it comes to supporting our health and well-being.

As I say that I might just go ahead and take one more whiff, so I can keep my thoughts rolling about this beautiful plant. Oh, it's just divine. And it's really interesting, I'm just going to mention this, as I'm sitting here with these preparations and the beautiful plant in front of me; they all are very different in their aromatic experience.

When thinking about bringing the aromatics into our olfactory system and the impact that has on our health and wellness in the mind and in the spirit, these three, even though they're all the same plant, all are very different aromatic experiences.

What I smell when I pinch and smell the live plant is very different in its intensity and in its character than what I smell when I open up this essential oil and even when I work with the hydrosol, it's just very interesting. And so, it's not that a Rosemary is a Rosemary is a Rosemary, or that a Rosemary aromatic is a Rosemary aromatic is a Rosemary aromatic, right? They all have different nuances of character, I think, and I find that really, really interesting.

So another way that I like to use Rosemary externally in this external world is actually interesting because it's sort of a crossover between where your food becomes your cosmetics. If you didn't think of that as a thing, it's a thing. So one of the most efficient ways I like to bring Rosemary into both a culinary as well as a cosmetic experience in my home is by using apple cider vinegar and creating an apple cider vinegar extract with the Rosemary.

And you can use fresh Rosemary. You can use dried Rosemary. They impart different qualities and characteristics as far as their flavor, as well as their intensity; always a little bit more intense with the dried because you can use more plant material, make it a little

bit stronger. And I say apple cider vinegar, but you know, you could really use any type of vinegar. I prefer apple cider vinegar just because it's full of its own minerals and enzymes and things like that.

So what I love to do with Rosemary and vinegar is, you shove the fresh Rosemary, in my case, I prefer fresh, shove the fresh into a canning jar. I fill it up and cover the plant material completely with apple cider vinegar. I cover it with a lid, I stick it in a dark place for a couple of weeks, shake it every day. And then, I strain it off and I keep it in the refrigerator and it keeps for about anywhere between one to three months depending on how long you can hold on to it.

For culinary purposes, this is a really wonderful base for marinades and sauces and things like that, salad dressings. But cosmetically, the apple cider vinegar and the Rosemary, it makes a lovely hair rinse. It makes a really lovely facial rinse, so you can add a bit to the basin water to do a rinse with, you can add a little bit to your facial toner.

And that really nice kind of acidity can help with the acid balance of the skin. And apple cider vinegar is thought to be super cleansing. You can also add it to your bath. So that's another way that I really like to use the apple cider vinegar and it's just a fun thing because you can make this really lovely extract. You keep it refrigerated. You can use it for food. You can use it for cosmetics. It's like kind of win-win in both ways. So I thought that I would share a little bit about that because I really love using the Rosemary that way.

Aromatic Medicine

Now that we've covered a lot of the ways that we can engage with this plant in the external realm, I do want to just briefly touch on this idea of the aromatics and our sense of smell being a wonderful vector into our emotional realm.

When I think about Rosemary and the emotional support that Rosemary brings, I highlight that story of the grieving process. I highlight this idea of the heaviness that a person can feel as a result of the grieving process. But there's also heaviness in our emotional realm that can come from other sources other than grief, these ideas of feeling stuck, feeling unmotivated, feeling uninspired.

Rosemary, for me, especially as a talisman of Sun and sunlight can really help support motivation and upliftment and finding ways to unstick oneself if we can. And so there's a lot to be said about, I think, engaging with this plant from that, it's like, I don't know, I feel like a good metaphor would be standing with the sunlight on your face on a really cold day.

You know, when you're feeling really cold and you're outside and maybe you're all bundled up. And you're like man, it's cold and you're tense and you're tight and you're just not feeling so great. And then, you get to a point where all of a sudden the sun is just shining brightly on your skin and it warms you and it warms your spirit and you can lift

your face up to the light and you feel warmed and nourished and just for a moment, you feel lighter in yourself.

I feel like Rosemary very much is like this, and working with it in that emotional realm is very much like this. It cuts through the heaviness. It gives us a moment of upliftment, which may not last very long, but just enough to remind us that it's there.

Now that we've covered some of the external ways that we can engage with Rosemary, I thought that I would take some time to speak to you about how we can engage with Rosemary in the internal realm, and bringing Rosemary into the physical body, outside of the food that we're eating and using it as a culinary herb.

And so, when we think about the vectors of getting a plant medicine into the body, we have to extract it somehow, if we're not just taking the Rosemary and chewing on it, which by the way, is a wonderful idea. It is definitely a wonderful way to experience the medicine of Rosemary internally, but if we're not going to do that, we have to be prepared to extract those medicinal virtues in a variety of ways.

Internal Preparations

I want to take you through some of the ways that I think Rosemary really does well, and this includes, by the way, the apple cider vinegar that I talked about that you could use as a culinary, as also a cosmetic, but you could also use the apple cider vinegar Rosemary extract as a digestive support.

So you would make the same, granted you're already using it for culinary purposes, but you could actually even just work with Rosemary apple cider vinegar on its own as part of, my favorite way of doing it -- let me give you an example -- my favorite way of doing it is, first thing in the morning, I'll drink some water and then I will use something like Rosemary apple cider vinegar extract, just a small amount, like a teaspoon in a cup of water, and I'll just drink that as kind of like a cleansing and a way of like waking up my internal system, especially my digestive system.

It can also be used that way before meals, if you've got sluggish digestion and lack of appetite and like when you get that feeling that food just kind of sits in your digestive system. So after you eat you could use a little bit of Rosemary apple cider vinegar diluted in water and it can kind of help as an apéritif, something that you take after food to help support digestion. So that's a really lovely way, and you're hitting all the bases, honestly, with apple cider vinegar. So I really, really love that for that.

But of course, another way to use Rosemary that I think is really overlooked is as a tea. And so this is a standard infusion, which means that the plant material is placed into a vessel that has a lid, you pour the hot water over, cover it back up, and you let it steep for a good 20 minutes.

And you could do this with the fresh plant material, or you could do it with the dried plant material as well. But of course, if we're using dried plant material, a lot more of that can fit into a teapot. So you might want to cut back on your proportions, but you could play around with it. The more you use, the more bitter it's going to be, so just keep that in mind. But Rosemary, as a tea, as an infusion, we have this opportunity to interact with the plant both with its aromatics and also with its internal prowess.

I always suggest to my clients who are working with herbal infusions that they take time, after they've taken off the lid of the teapot, and they've poured their infusion into their cup, that they just take a moment to just breathe in. Out of the teacup, just to breathe in those aromatics into their being and allow the aromatherapeutic experience of that tea really take hold. And we'll be talking a lot about the different tea rituals that I like to suggest to people in other areas of the Aromatic Medicine Garden, but Rosemary is definitely big on the list.

And so, the tea, generally speaking, you're looking at about one tablespoon per cup, generally speaking. And that could be dried plant material or like I mentioned, you could chop up the fresh plant material really finely and have that be a tablespoon per cup and enjoy that as well. And so, bringing the tea in, I mean my goodness, on a day where you're feeling congested and stagnant or maybe you're feeling congested and stagnant in the digestion. Maybe you're feeling congested and cold and stagnant in your mood, having a warm cup of Rosemary tea can be absolutely motivating and wonderful and just enough to get you going. It's also very clarifying for the mind.

One of the things I didn't mention in my introduction was this long tradition of use of Rosemary for supporting the memory. I did talk about it being a cephalic remedy, meaning that it helps move circulation and blood up through to the mind. Because of this, it is also considered to be a memory tonic. And so, if you're struggling a bit in trying to remember things, if you're studying, if you're struggling with recalling names or dates or maybe you're just feeling very tired in your neural pathways, there's nothing quite like a cup of Rosemary tea to help just clear that out and support the mind and support the memory.

Yes, in fact, I feel like there's this moment I want to share with you, so going back to my dissertation when I was talking about the folklore of Rosemary, another piece that I found, along with wearing the Rosemary and the lapel during funerals for supporting the grieving process and for the symbol of remembrance, it made me think of this scene from William Shakespeare's Hamlet. There's a scene there where Ophelia, Hamlet's wife, she's really losing her mind because Hamlet has pretended to lose his mind.

And of course, she doesn't understand what's happening and her heart is breaking and she's going a bit mad with it. There's this scene where she's got this bundle of flowers and she's going through each of them and saying this is a symbol for this and this is the symbol for that, and she, in this bouquet, has a sprig of Rosemary that's blooming, and she's shaking it at Hamlet and she's weeping and she's scared and she's shaking it at him, and she's saying, "And Rosemary, Rosemary is for remembrance. I pray you, love, remember."

So this affiliation with the mind and the memory goes back very very far, even beyond the depths of Shakespeare and to Greco-Roman medicine and more deeply into the past. I think about folks who are, even in my clinical practice, who are struggling with memory issues and maybe even struggling with a bit of depression, which kind of oftentimes can coincide, Rosemary is usually brought in, in some capacity, just to support that upliftment and support that circulation to the mind and nourishing of the memories and our capacity to remember.

So taking Rosemary in as a tea is a really lovely wonderful thing. And it's an antimicrobial in the sense that you know, it can really help open up the chest, it can help open up the sinuses. If you are trying to support yourself through a chest cold or a head cold or something like that, the Rosemary tea, especially with that hot steam, can just be really cleansing and clarifying and supportive.

And so there's two other ways... Well, there's many ways, but there's two other ways I wanted to focus on as far as making an extract with Rosemary. The two I'm going to talk about, they're different sorts of extracts and they carry with them pros and cons, so to speak. One is making an extract using vegetable glycerine, and the other is making an extract using alcohol.

So the benefits to using vegetable glycerine is that it's alcohol-free and because of that it can be used with people who have a sensitivity to alcohol or with children, or etc. And vegetable glycerine is really good at extracting the essential oils and the aromatics, so what we can smell and what we can taste. It's very good at extracting those elements of a plant, but it's not necessarily very good at extracting some of the other aspects of the plant's medicine that you might want, that you could get if you decided to use alcohol to extract, so that would be as a tincture.

But when we're making an extract like a glycerite or a tincture like an alcoholic tincture, these are very much more concentrated preparations for internal use than say an apple cider vinegar or a cup of tea. And as we're kind of consolidating the medicine into a smaller volume of fluid that we're going to ingest into our bodies, this is where we start really tapping into the therapeutics of the herb in supporting physiology of the body, right? And so, the more concentrated that the preparation is the less of it you need to use. I think that that's an important thing.

I use the vegetable glycerine, not often, but specifically to help support the digestion. And so, I might add it into digestive blends. I might suggest using it on its own. Being that you can use vegetable glycerine internally, you can also use it externally. You can do a vegetable glycerine extract and add that glycerine into some of your cosmetic products as well. So similar to the apple cider vinegar, the glycerite extract of Rosemary can kind of have dual purposes for the internal and external worlds.

The alcoholic tincture, the tincture extract, it's really what I tend to use the most of in my clinical work and this is specifically where I am sensing usually stagnation in the digestive and circulatory system. There may also be some stagnation in the mood as well as the expression of the vital force or vitality of a person and their immunity.

And so, when I'm doing a blend of tinctures, it doesn't hold a large place. Usually Rosemary is one of the supporting cast members, if we could think of a blend of tinctures as a play, Rosemary wouldn't be one of the main characters. It would be one of the supporting cast members and it is one of those herbs that as a tincture, especially blended with other herbs, is almost kind of like a vector or carrier of energetics and medicine to a particular place. And so I will sometimes use Rosemary for its directionality into particular organ systems.

But generally speaking, it is thought to be definitely uplifting to the mood, supportive to and nourishing to the memory, stimulating to the immune system, and as a warming digestive bitter aromatic, very, very supportive to the digestive process. So you can bring the tincture in for these purposes for sure.

Another way, and the last menstruum, the last extract or carrier of plant medicine that I'm going to bring forward when it comes to Rosemary is honey. So for those of you who consume honey, it is a wonderful vessel to carry the medicine of Rosemary. And there's a few different ways that you can use honey to do this.

One is called an electuary. So this is where you dry the herb and then you powder the herb and then you add that powdered herb to the honey. And you mix it up and then you end up taking just small amounts at a time. Right? And I'll say something that, you know, Rosemary and sweet go together very well. I will give you that. In fact, it does really well in sweet baking. But as an electuary, as a honey-paste, it is just divine.

And one of the things I like a lot about honey-pastes like electuaries is that you can just take a little bit on a spoon and mix it into some hot water and you have an automatic cup of delicious, sweet, aromatic lovely tea. So that's a really nice way of using honey and Rosemary together.

But the one way that I wanted to talk to you about, and I want to talk to you about the flowers, and I want to talk to you about a very special preparation that I make with the flowers because for me, there's something very special in this medicine, something very potent, and kind and supportive.

And so, I'm fortunate enough to live near and work near a medicinal plant greenhouse that specializes in growing Rosemarys and at a certain time of year, they will all go into bloom at the same time. And so even though I live in Southeast Ohio in the land of no Rosemary, I am fortunate enough to be surrounded by it and in this particular sense. And so, what I will do during the peak bloom of the Rosemarys, is I will go through and I will handpick flowers from all of the plants, which is a labor of love; I'm just going to say that, it's a labor of love.

And what's really interesting is that you can actually just use these flowers directly, if you can get your hands on enough, put them in some salads or something. Mmm, I mean they're just delicious. You have this really active flavor of Rosemary, but it's got this nectar sweetness to it as well. It's very delicate and just really really beautiful.

I will remind you too about the symbology for me personally anyway about the story of Lebanitis and the God of the Sun, and the God of the Sun's tears and these teardrops. When I see a Rosemary in full bloom, I am reminded of this story of grief and the courage to feel grief and the beauty that can come from that process. And the flowers really symbolically representing that for me, just the way that I view the plant.

One of the preparations that I make from Rosemary which uses honey is called a cordial. A cordial is, generally speaking, a combination of alcohol and honey. And these were preparations, especially when we look at like old British medicine, and some of the old British herbalists would talk about cordials. They were really a combination of a particular type of alcohol, brandy, which was thought to be for the heart. And you sweeten it up, they often used sugar, but I'm not a big fan of sugar. So I use honey.

So I will go through and I will harvest each one of these flowers – it takes a long time. By the end of the day, I feel like I'm just in another realm. I will collect them in a jar. I will cover them up with really nice high quality Apple Brandy, one that's distilled here in Ohio. And I let that sit for a couple of weeks, and then I strain off the alcohol and then I blend in the honey.

And so what I get is that combination of the alcohol preservation and the honey, and then of the beautiful, gentle, kind aromatics and the kind experience of the flowers. And this cordial, this Rosemary flower cordial, actually the recipe came to me by way of the old English physician Nicholas Culpeper who talks about it specifically for a broken heart and for a heart that is grieving to instill merriment and to protect the heart as it's going through such a hard process.

I use Rosemary flower cordial in my clinical work and in my personal life when a person or myself or a loved one is walking through the process of grief and the integration of the grieving process and it's just such a beautiful way of capturing the symbology and the folklore, and also then the medicine of this plant.

Safety

I think with that, I'm sure that I could talk for hours and hours and hours about Rosemary. It is definitely one of my most kindred allies in the clinic room and in my personal life. And it's generally safe, I would say, for all folks.

I will mention though that there is one safety precaution; if you are struggling with high blood pressure, some say that Rosemary is contraindicated meaning that if you have high blood pressure that you probably ought not to take Rosemary internally in any kind of consistent medicinal way.

Totally okay for you to have a cup of Rosemary tea and probably okay even for you to use Rosemary in your cooking and totally okay for you to even bring it in as an apple cider vinegar digestive. I honestly, in over 17 years of working with this plant, I have never experienced any type of exacerbation of hypertension or high blood pressure with an

individual. So I'm not too sure how I feel about that safety precaution, but I want to let you know that it's out there.

Conclusion

With that, I think I'm going to bid you all a farewell for today. I just want to take a second to thank this wonderful, beautiful Rosemary plant for being here with me and letting me go googly-eyed over it the whole time and I want to thank you as well for being here with me in the Aromatic Medicine Garden and I very much look forward to seeing you again here soon.

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