

CREATING A ROSEMARY TOPIARY



SOURCE: Beautiful Heart of Rosemary

CONSIDERATIONS: See checklists located toward the end of this lesson plan.

OBJECTIVES:

EDUCATIONAL: Participants will learn the history of topiaries, and the care and uses of rosemary.

ACTIVITY: Participants will create a heart-shaped topiary (or other shape of your choosing).

TAKE AWAY: Participants will take their topiaries back to their rooms with them, along with a handout, "Caring for Your Rosemary Topiary."

SPECIFIC MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS PROJECT:

(Plan materials for 12 projects: 10 for patients, 1 for an example, and 1 for your demo.)

- 2 rooted rosemary cuttings per project (Plan for 24 rooted cuttings)
- Half-and-half mixture of peat and perlite for rooting rosemary cuttings (optional, depending upon your rooting method choice of using water or planting cuttings)
- 1 (6") pot with drain holes per project (12 total) or basket with liner
- 12 plastic drain trays for pots
- 12 coffee filters (may be some in BRI cabinet)
- Gravel or pebbles for a thin layer on bottom of pots for drainage.
- Potting soil (may be some in BRI cabinet)
- 12 Wire coat hangers
- Floral wire
- *Embellishments, Optional (dried flowers, bows, decorative pot wrappers, etc.)*

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BUYING HINTS: Dollar Tree frequently has a package of 3 plastic drain-trays for a dollar. Potting containers can be frequently found at Dollar Tree as well, but you will usually need to make drain holes. If you approach country clubs or high-end hotels after a major holiday, such as Christmas, you may also be able to get containers from poinsettias, Easter Lilies, etc. that they’re throwing away for free.

You can also get a good-sized bag of river-rock pebbles from Home Depot very inexpensively.

ACTIVITIES TO DO BEFORE CLASS:

1. **Take rosemary cuttings:** Allow two months or more to take 30 rosemary cuttings and root them (Allow for some cuttings that may not make it). Rosemary roots easily. Unlike many other plants, rosemary cuttings can be taken any time except when the plant is blooming. While rosemary cuttings root well just in water, their survival rate for the participants may be better if you root the cuttings by planting them in a mixture of half peat and half perlite.
2. **Make drainage holes in pots, if necessary.**
2. **Make a completed project example:** Used for display during your presentation.
3. **Shape coat hangers into heart shapes:** (Or a circle or whatever shape you plan to use). Use pliers to shape each coat hanger into appropriate shape. Bend the last 3” of wire at each end into a 90-degree angle. (Patients will be sticking these ends into the potted soil.)

ACTIVITIES TO DO DURING CLASS:

1. Leader introduces self and master gardeners present.
2. Leader gives a short presentation and demonstration on how to do the project.
3. Participants prepare the pot and plant rosemary.
 - a) Place a coffee filter on the bottom of the container.
 - b) Add a thin layer of gravel or pebbles for better drainage.
 - c) Add potting soil.
 - d) Place heart-shaped wire in center of pot.
- 3) Plant a rosemary on each side of heart.
4. Twist rosemary stems around with heart. Use floral wire to secure them.
5. Participants put pot on plastic liners and lightly water plants.
5. Add embellishments (*optional*).
6. Leader tells participants how to care for topiary.

A topiary is a plant that has been pruned into a shape. Romans and Egyptians were the first to create topiaries. The word “topiary” comes from “topia,” which originated in ancient Rome. Roman ornamental gardens, known as Topiari, were tended by slaves.

Rosemary’s genus name, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, means “dew of the sea,” which comes from its native habitat is on seaside cliffs in the Mediterranean. Although it prefers warm and dry climates, it is forgiving, and can be grown in zones 8-10. It also likes light, alkaline soils that drain well, and prefers full sun. In colder climates, it can be grown as an annual, indoors, or in a greenhouse.

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Rosemary has 1/2 to 1-inch sized flowers in late winter to early spring. The flowers come in a variety of colors, such as white, purple, pink or blue, but the pale lavender-bluish color is the most popular. The blossoms attract butterflies, birds, and bees.



SOURCE: In Full Flower

There are multiple uses for rosemary. In the garden, it makes an especially beautiful edging or it can be very adept in a rock garden. It's also a great addition to herb gardens or kitchen gardens. Trailing rosemary works well in containers, slopes or hanging over walls. Topiaries can be created indoors or out.

Rosemary has several culinary uses, and is frequently used to flavor stuffing, roast meats, and potatoes. It's also added to stews and soups, used to make *bouquet garni*, and added to oils and vinegars.

The rosemary herb also has been used for many medical uses. It's a good source of vitamins A and C, and vitamin B-6. It's said to improve memory, has antibacterial and anti-fungal properties, and can be used topically to soothe sore and achy muscles and headaches. It also contains carnosol, which studies have found to be a strong anti-cancer compound.

PLANT/PROJECT MAINTENANCE: See handout below, “Caring for Your Rosemary Topiary”

SOURCES:

[Jen]. (2013, October 31). DIY rosemary topiaries - tutorial & tips for growing your own. Retrieved October 3, 2018, from <https://cityfarmhouse.com/2013/10/diy-rosemary-topiaries-tutorial-tips-for-growing-your-own.html>

[Letha G.]. (2016, July 3). Rosemary and its many uses. Retrieved October 3, 2018, from <https://hubpages.com/living/Rosemary-And-Its-Many-Uses>

Malloy, R. (2013, December 18). Rosemary care indoors. Retrieved October 3, 2018, from <https://extension.umd.edu/learn/rosemary-care-indoors>

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SOURCES *cContinued*

Payne, F. (2014, December 16). How to create your own rosemary topiary. Retrieved October 3, 2018, from <https://hubpages.com/living/Rosemary-Topiary>

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CHECKLISTS

(As you develop your lesson plan, consider the following:)

MATERIALS IN BRI SUPPLY CABINET

(Quantities and availability may vary, so check the cabinet as you develop your project.)

- ___ 2 dishpans for dirt
- ___ 2 watering cans
- ___ Name tags for participants
- ___ Potting soil
- ___ Containers
- ___ For PowerPoint presentations - an HDMI cable to connect your laptop to TV monitor

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATION MATERIALS NEEDED

- ___ 1-2 Pens for BRI MGs to sign paperwork
- ___ Markers for nametags for participants
- ___ Example of your completed project
- ___ Completed presentation forms (1 to BRI and 1 mailed to ext. office)
- ___ Your clean receipts for materials purchased (give to BRI therapists)
- ___ Other

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR PROJECT

- ___ Safety, e.g.
 - ...Use of knives
 - ...Use of glue (fumes, super glue sticking to skin, hot glue gun burning skin, hot glue or Elmers' glue dissolving in water, Elmer's glue not drying by end of presentation, etc.)
- ___ Cost of project (*Will it cost \$40 or less?*)
- ___ Is this something most participants can do?
- ___ Size of project (*Can participants fit it on their windows or ledges in their rooms?*)
- ___ Lighting requirements (*Can the participants fulfill plant lighting requirements in their rooms?*)
- ___ Can the participants keep their plants alive in their rooms? e.g.
 -Do the plants need to be watered with a plant mister? Are you giving them one to take back to their rooms? etc.
- ___ After your presentation, ask participants how they like the project.

HANDOUTS

Topic suggestions:

- ___ How should participants take care of their plants in their rooms?
- ___ Recipes (Food recipes - if relevant to your plants, soil recipes)
- ___ Any plant info that could include history, long-term maintenance, facts, etc.
- ___ Other
- ___ If you have handouts available, attach them on a new page after this *CHECKLIST* section.

CARING FOR YOUR ROSEMARY TOPIARY



SOURCE: Beautiful Heart of Rosemary

Location and Watering

To care for your indoor rosemary topiary, place in a sunny location. Water when the soil dries out a bit, but not to the point the plant is wilting. To test, stick your finger into the soil an inch down in the soil. If it's soggy, wait a couple days to water. Lightly sprinkle water into the pot, being careful not to overwater. Overwatering will cause the roots to rot.

Pruning

Prune out any dead or browning stems as soon as you can. Trim new growth to maintain the shape of the topiary.

Problems

Powdery mildew is common on indoor rosemary and when the growth is dense. It looks like a white coating on the leaves. It's not necessary to treat, but usually disappears when plants are moved outside.

Spider mites can also be a problem when there is dense foliage and poor air circulation. You will notice white dots on the leaves and webbing on the plant. Smaller containers can simply be given a shower by placing the entire plant in the bathtub. This can also be done outside on a warm winter day.

SOURCE:

Malloy, R. (2013, December 18). Rosemary care indoors. Retrieved October 3, 2018, from <https://extension.umd.edu/learn/rosemary-care-indoors>