

Why Rosemary?

Rosemary is a native of the south of Europe and an evergreen shrub (*Rosmarinus Officinalis*), of the family 'Labiatae', its name meaning 'Dew of the Sea'.

As a member of the mint family it has long been used medicinally, the oil from its crushed leaves and stems, for many disorders and a tea made from the leaves was used to quieten nerves and strengthen memory. The leaves are also used in perfumery and cooking.



As early as 1584, rosemary has been used for remembrance and an emblem for particular occasions such as funerals and weddings or as a decoration for brides dating from 1601.

Shakespeare makes reference to rosemary in Hamlet (Act IV Scene 5) where Ophelia, decked with flowers, says to Laertes:

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance".

For most Australians, the significance of rosemary came to Australia with the first influx of people to this continent. It is therefore reasonable to assume that a combination of old traditions and customs together with the occurrence of the landing at Gallipoli in the area where rosemary grows wild and abundantly, gives rise to the use of this little shrub as a token of remembrance in recalling the memory of the fallen and the reasons for their deaths.