

Rosmarinus officinalis L.

Standardized Common Name: Rosemary

Family: Lamiaceae (Labiatae)

Parts in Commerce: Leaves

Identification:

- Linear or very narrowly lanceolate and appearing linear due to revolute margins
- At least 15 mm long
- Apex obtuse
- Base attenuate, without petiole
- Margins strongly revolute
- Underside densely white-woolly with branching hairs, also bearing glands
- Midrib prominent beneath
- Upper surface darker, somewhat pubescent when young, glabrous in older leaves
- Odor characteristic, strong, aromatic
- Taste aromatic, pungent, bitter

The flowering tops are sometimes used as well, in which case the floral features enumerated in the description may also be observed.

Adulterants: There is a second species of rosemary of limited distribution; its leaves are much smaller than those of *R. officinalis*. Since rosemary is virtually always cultivated, there is little likelihood of confusion with that or any other species.

Taxonomy: *Rosmarinus* includes two species of shrubs, both native to the Mediterranean.

Description: Perennial shrub 1–2 m high; branches slender, branching often, erect to ascending. Leaves opposite, evergreen, sessile, linear, 1.5–3.5 cm long, 2–4 mm broad, coriaceous; base attenuate; apex obtuse; margins revolute; upper surface dark green, often turning pale when dried, shallowly wrinkled; lower surface white, woolly-pubescent, glandular-dotted, with conspicuous midrib. Inflorescence a short raceme of verticillasters. Flowers pedicellate, bilabiate; pedicels bearing stellate hairs. Calyx campanulate, bilabiate, 5–7 mm long, veined, with few stellate hairs; upper lip entire, lower lip 2-lobed. Corolla bilabiate, 10–12 mm long, pale blue; lower lip 3-lobed, with middle lobe largest. Stamens 2, protruding from corolla. Style gynobasic. Fruit 4 nutlets.

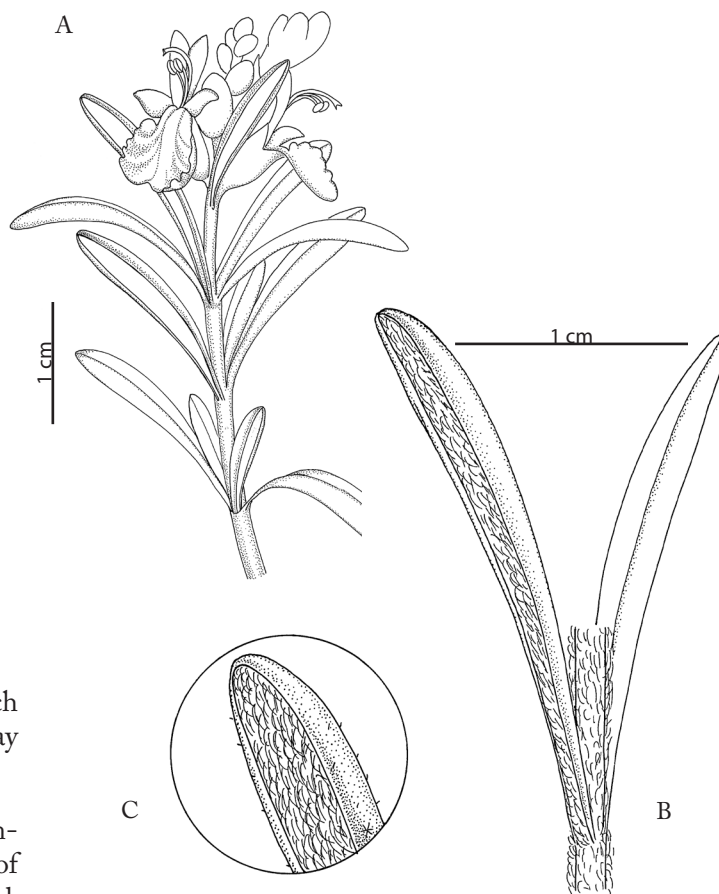


Figure 60: a–c, *Rosmarinus officinalis* flowering branch, leaf, and close-up of lower surface of leaf at apex.

References:

- do Amaral Franco J, da Rocha Afonso ML. *Rosmarinus*. In: Tutin TG, Heywood VH, Burges NA, et al., eds. *Flora Europaea*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1972:187.
- Wichtl M, ed. *Herbal Drugs and Phytopharmaceuticals*, 3rd English ed. Stuttgart: medpharm Scientific Publishers and Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press; 2004:523–528.
- Youngken HW. *Text-Book of Pharmacognosy*, 5th ed. Philadelphia, PA: The Blakiston Company; 1943:727.