



Rosemary Speaks:

Learning the Doctrine of Signatures from the Evergreen Herb

Have you ever stood out in the meadows of the Pacific Northwest in mid-February? Listen closely; you might hear the faint buzzing of the ever-industrious bee, diligently pollinating the dainty flowers of the hardy rosemary bush.

Even long before dormant seeds germinate under the frosty Earth, the rosemary bush remains in flower, supporting the vitality of nearby beehives. Winter can be such a silent and still time, keeping the world in a deep slumber. And yet, life abounds with the help of this sunny, aromatic herb. But why exactly is rosemary associated with the sun? Read on to uncover the wisdom of rosemary.

Solar Affinity

Rosemary contains a multitude of volatile compounds, otherwise known as essential oils. When we look at the actions of these constituents, we find that they are both warming and drying, reminiscent of the sun. This activates the Agni, which is our digestive fire through an Ayurvedic lens. In turn, we see a warming and a stimulation of the *solar* plexus.

The sun rules over both the heart and the circulatory system. In rosemary medicine, we see the ability to circulate blood more efficiently and effectively. When treating cardiovascular insufficiencies or poor circulation, we are leaning on the warmth of rosemary to not only generate more internal heat, but to spread it to the extremities of the body - much like the broad reach of the sun's rays.

Elemental Influences

Notice the morphology, or the structure, of the rosemary plant itself. The branches shoot strongly in an upright direction, and its leaves are slender and thin; both are indicative of an association with the element of air. This classical element of air also happens to correspond to the humor of blood in ancient Greek medicine, reinforcing rosemary's medicinal actions.

Another signature in rosemary's architecture can be found in its purple flowers. Purple is aligned with the third eye and the crown center. Of course, these chakras are closely connected with the mind, the nervous system, and the brain.

Sun and Air as One Signature

Rosemary's warmth has the ability to increase blood circulation, specifically to the brain. This increases mental function, associated with air, highlighting the oldest traditional uses of this wonderful herb: boosting short-term memory, clearing brain fog, and supporting focus where there is difficulty in concentration.

This plant's morphology once again speaks for itself. Air keeps a flame (sun) alive, and

the well-established rosemary bush presents as a bonfire shape in its own right. This type of plant language is referred to as the doctrine of signatures. It's a way for plants to tell us what their medicine is, and sometimes even how to use it. Other places to look for signatures are a plant's habitat, its season, preferred growing condition/temperature/watering needs, its color, and many other clues if we only remember what to notice. The wisdom to be gained from plants goes much deeper than understanding them as "good for digestion" or "anti-inflammatory".

Alchemical Indications, Spagyrics, and the Astral Body

In the three-principle model of alchemy, substances embody either mercury, salt, or sulfur. Rosemary embodies the principle of sulfur, given its high concentration of volatile compounds, or essential oils.

While extremely potent, essential oils alone can't give us the complete picture when it comes to plant medicine. These powerful compounds are merely one set of components that a whole plant has to offer us medicinally. There are also the alcohol and water-soluble constituents, as well as the mineral salts, all contained within the plant.

Medicines that contain all three alchemical principles, the sulfur, mercury, and the salt, are known as spagyric medicines. Paracelsus was a formidable alchemist who first introduced this practice of combining the *whole* plant as a *whole* medicine. In this way, spagyrics can treat the *whole* person more effectively than an isolated compound. The three principles act on the physiological, mental, and spiritual health of a person.

A rosemary spagyric will align with the solar placement of our birth chart, activating that part of our astral body. This catalyzes and facilitates one's healing as well as their spiritual evolution through a deeper process of transformation. Isn't that magical?

When we acknowledge a plant's relationship to the stars, the elements, and the foundational principles of life, we understand that we can work with them to not only heal our physical bodies, but what Paracelsus called our "inner starry sky", or our astral bodies.