

Anne, my lovely rosemary, bites the dust

by Fran Benton

Oh such a sad death to watch one of your favourite plants slowly turn yellow and pass on to the big nursery in the sky.

But what killed Anne? This is where we all need to be sleuths and track down the culprit(s). Here are the facts. Anne was 12 years old. That's old for rosemary.

Anne was moved two years ago and had a big root pruning. Anne lives in the June beetle larva zone. There is also phytophthora root rot in my yard.

I overwatered Anne because she looked like she was drying out. Rosemary hates warm moist soil. Phytophthora loves it. Now I am getting depressed. So on a higher note I will remember Anne as having flavored so many soups and stews. In her days of leafy abundance she donated her extra sprigs to a local bistro. Anne annoyed the local deer. Deer do not like the pungent flavour of rosemary. That makes her a queen!

I decided to look up a bit more about rosemary. It turns out the name comes from "rosmarine". Ros comes from the word "dew" and marinus refers to the sea. Put together, the word means "dew of the sea". It originated along the Mediterranean coast where it grows wild. Now it grows well here too as long as it gets full sun, perfect drainage, and relatively poor soil. The Ancient Greeks really loved rosemary for its culinary, aromatic, and medicinal uses. Rosemary is often associated with remembrance and as such has been used in funeral bouquets, wreaths, bridal bouquets, and boutonnières. Churches burned it as incense and hospitals burned it to purify the air. Wonder if it works on smelly running shoes?



In conclusion to "what killed Anne?" I would say Anne was an old plant that got chewed on by grubs and had a bad case of phytophthora root rot. Damn... back to the nursery! Although I will not replant the new Anne in the same spot!

You know the routine! Mill Bay Garden Club is back meeting the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:45 pm at the Mill Bay Hall. Bring your show off stuff for the brag table!