

LAVENDER

Culture and Varieties

Lavenders are evergreen shrubs native to the western Mediterranean, prized for their fragrance, medicinal uses and ornamental qualities.

Basic requirements for successful lavender growing are full sun and good drainage. The best soil is a well-drained, gritty or sandy loam. In wet or clay-b soils lavender can be grown successfully on mounds. Lavender will not tolerate wet feet or poor drainage.

Lavandula angustifolia (English Lavender) and *L. x intermedia* (Spike Lavender) cultivars are reasonably tolerant of cold temperatures, winds, rain and snow if they have good drainage.

L. stoechas (Spanish Lavender) cultivars will withstand similar conditions with frosts to -5° F. Snow should be removed from the plants asap.

L. dentata var. dentata (French Lavender) is less tolerant of frost and not cold hardy in winters. They are best grown in pots that experience only mild frosts.

Lavenders are very low water use. However, young lavenders should be watered regularly the first year until established. Good irrigation or adequate rainfall is important in the spring for new plantings. When transplanting, consistent watering is vital until plants are established. At that time, ground watering is best to prevent splitting for the weight of the water. Overwatering can stress plants causing the foliage to split open and sprawl, or make them susceptible to diseases.

PRUNING

Pruning is required to maintain fullness. Avoid severe pruning into old wood.

Plants should be pruned by one third in spring and again 1"-2" inches into foliage beneath flowering stems after bloom in summer.

Older leggy, woody plants should be removed. Pruning will not rejuvenate them.

Note that *L. stoechas* cultivars can be pruned to one half the size and this is best done in mid-summer, well before a chance of frost.

HARVESTING

Harvesting lavender should occur when just the first few flowers have opened.

Cut early in the morning after the dew has dried. Cuttings should be hung in small bunches and dried in a dark, dust-free place with good ventilation.

Once dried store in dry cardboard boxes.

ENGLISH LAVENDER, *Lavandula angustifolia*

Bushy, dense, non-evergreen habit. leaves more Plants are generally smaller than Spike Lavender with more compact shorter stems and smaller, stouter flowers.

- 'HIDCOTE' Medium bushy plant with gray-green foliage. Vibrant violet flowers that hold their color when dried.
- 'HIDCOTE PINK' Medium bush plant so spherical habit with a mixture of mauve pink and lavender pink blossoms.
- 'JEAN DAVIS' Upright habit, foliage is thin with flowers of lavender pink to shades of mauve-pink.
- 'MELISSA' Medium bushy habit with pink flowers that fade nicely to white.
- 'MUNSTEAD' Bushy medium with dense mid-green foliage. Semi-upright foliage with dark lavender-violet blossoms. Buds are dark violet.
- 'TWICKEL PURPLE' A beautifully shaped lavender in flower, foliage is are broad, long mid green. Bright violet-blue fading to a dark lavender-violet.

SPIKE LAVENDER, *Lavandula x intermedia*

Sterile hybrids between *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia*. Plants are evergreen. Long foliage is usually arranged singly, terminating with large, well-formed spikes. These can be used for fragrances, teas, oils, potpourri and wands.

- 'ALBA' Medium plant of bushy habit with semi-open dense, mid-green foliage, white flowers.
- 'FRED BOUTIN' Large lavender of bushy habit with dense gray foliage that can be long and upright. Beautiful gray foliage with dark violet-blue flowers.
- 'GROSSO' Foliage is mid-green turning gray towards the end of the season, very dense, semi-tall. Flowers long and narrow and violet-blue with much darker violet shades.
- 'SUPER' Bushy habit and moderately dense, gray-green foliage, very long with dark violet flowering and buds are slightly lighter in color.
- 'PROVENCE' Foliage is mid-green to gray. Flowers are long and narrow, medium lavender, a slight shade lighter than 'Grosso'.

SPANISH LAVENDER, *Lavandula stoechas*

Colorful flowering bracts and are long blooming, often spring thru summer. They have little to no scent. Some plants will become three feet tall and require pruning to maintain bushiness.

- 'HELMSDALE' Bushy, semi-tall plant with dense mid green foliage. Rich purple flowers and burgundy bracts.
- 'OTTO QUAST' Bushy plant with dense mid-green to gray-green foliage. Blossoms are dark blue with purple bracts.
- 'WINGS OF NIGHT' Bushy with dense mid-green to gray foliage. Blossoms are very dark purple with light purple bracts.