



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
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Cooperative Extension Service

Growing Lavender In Kentucky

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Lavender

A close-up photograph of a lavender flower spike, showing the intricate details of the small, purple blossoms and the fuzzy, silvery-green bracts. The background is softly blurred, showing more lavender flowers and green foliage.


Lavandula (Common Name Lavender)

- Lavender is a genus of 47 known species of flowering plants in the mint family, lamiacea
- Native to Cape Verde and Canary Islands, Across Europe, Northern and Eastern Africa, the Mediterranean, southwest Asia to southeast India
- Many members of the genus are cultivated for culinary use, essential oils, traditional medicine, and cosmetics.
- Disclaimer: there is no high quality clinical evidence that lavender has any effects on diseases or improves health.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavandula>

Description

A close-up photograph of a lavender flower spike, showing several buds and open flowers in shades of purple and blue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

- Genus includes annual and short-lived herbaceous perennial plants, short shrub-like perennials, and subshrubs or shrubs.
 - Leaf shape is variable across the genus including simple, pinnately toothed, or pinnate, and sometimes multiple pinnate and dissected.
 - Most species leaves have tiny hairs that contain essential oils.
 - Flowers are borne on whorls held above the foliage ranging in colors including lavender (hence the name), blue, violet, lilac, blackish purple, and even yellowish.
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- A close-up photograph of a lavender flower spike, showing several buds and open flowers in shades of purple and blue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.



Types

- Two types of lavenders grow well in Kentucky. The first is *Lavandula angustifolia* or English lavender.
- It is hardy to Zone 5 and often blooms twice in one season.
- There are hundreds of varieties of English lavender available depending on the color and size of plant desired.

Varieties of English Lavender



'Vera' - an heirloom variety that is also extremely cold hardy (to -20° F, zone 5a)



'Buena Vista' - a fragrant twice bloomer with nice bi-colored flower spikes.



'Munstead' has fragrant, cool lavender-blue spikes and gray-green, mounded foliage there is also a violet variety.



'Hidcote' is a free flowering variety that is prized for its long lasting flowers and scent.



Types

- The second lavender grown in Kentucky is a hybrid of *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia*. It is commonly referred to as a lavandin. Lavandins are generally larger plants that bloom only once later in the summer and produce sterile seed. Also known as French hybrids.
- (*Lavandula x intermedia*)
- The Lavandins produce larger quantities of essential oil but not as high quality as the English lavenders. Both types of lavenders have a place in landscapes and as a cash crop.

Lavandin Varieties



Grosso (*Lavandula x intermedia*) has amazing violet flowers with a strong scent in summer.



Phenomenal is a large lavender great for potpourris. Extremely fragrant!



Provence is one of the best lavenders for humid summers. It has a strong fragrance and large flower spikes.



Impress Purple is a great choice for fresh bouquets. It has a strong scent and long sturdy flower spikes.

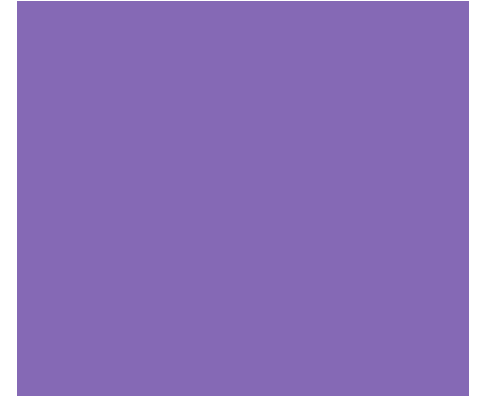
Types



- Spanish lavenders are not cold hardy in Kentucky but can be used as annuals in containers and outdoor beds.

Planting

- Lavender can be planted from spring through fall in Kentucky. Research conducted by New Mexico State University Sustainable Agriculture Science Center in Alcalde, NM has shown that fall-planted lavender survives better, establishes more quickly, and produces more flowers the following season.
- Choosing the size of plant depends on when planting will occur. Fall planted lavenders should be in 4 inches or larger sized pots with an established root system to ensure survival over the winter. Spring-planted lavender plants can be smaller as they will have a long season in which to establish the root system.





Planting

- Lavenders prefer full sun and an alkaline soil with very little organic matter. Heavy soils may need to be amended prior to planting to insure good drainage. The smaller size (one-quarter inch) bark mulch performs well as a soil amendment. Apply 1 inch of this mulch and uniformly till it in to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. The use of sand or gravel as a soil amendment in clay soils may create an even greater drainage problem.

Spacing

- When planting lavender as a crop, spacing depends on the size of the cultivars and ranges from 2 to 3 feet within the row and 3 to 6 feet between the rows.
- Lavender is not competitive and does not respond well to weed pressure. If growing lavender in a field, landscape fabric is highly recommended as a weed barrier.
- Even though lavender is drought tolerant, adequate supplemental irrigation is required for optimum establishment, satisfactory landscape quality and maximum production.





Watering

- In general, water once or twice a week immediately after planting, until plants are established.
- Water mature plants every two to three weeks until bud formation, then once or twice weekly until harvest depending on weather. The use of landscape fabric will also cut down water requirements significantly.
- Apply rock or bark mulch over the landscape fabric but away from the crown of the lavender plant. Fabric row covers can be used during the winter to protect the new plants from wind and cold temperatures.



Propagation

- The best time to take cuttings from lavender plants is right after they have bloomed.
- Take cuttings from stems with no flower buds on them.
- Remove leaves from the bottom half of the cutting and insert it into well-draining sterile potting soil or horticultural vermiculite.
- Rooting hormones are not necessary. Be sure the cuttings are labeled as to cultivar name and date the cutting was collected.
- Water well and mist regularly, cover with a plastic bag loosely and keep out of direct sunlight. They should root in about three weeks.
- Transplant rooted cuttings into pots 2 to 4 inches in diameter. Once the plants have developed a vigorous root system they can be planted in the garden.



Pruning and Harvesting

- Lavender responds well to pruning. It flowers on new growth so plants should be pruned every year after it's established.
- Pruning should take place when green leaves start to emerge from the base of the plant in the spring. Remove approximately one third of the top.
- Pruning keeps the plant from splitting open and becoming too woody.

Tools



Prune back all shoots
by at least 1/3

Prune again after flowering or
during flowering depending on
harvesting goals.

* Pruning heavily each
year will slow down the
formation of wood and
prolong the lifetime of plant

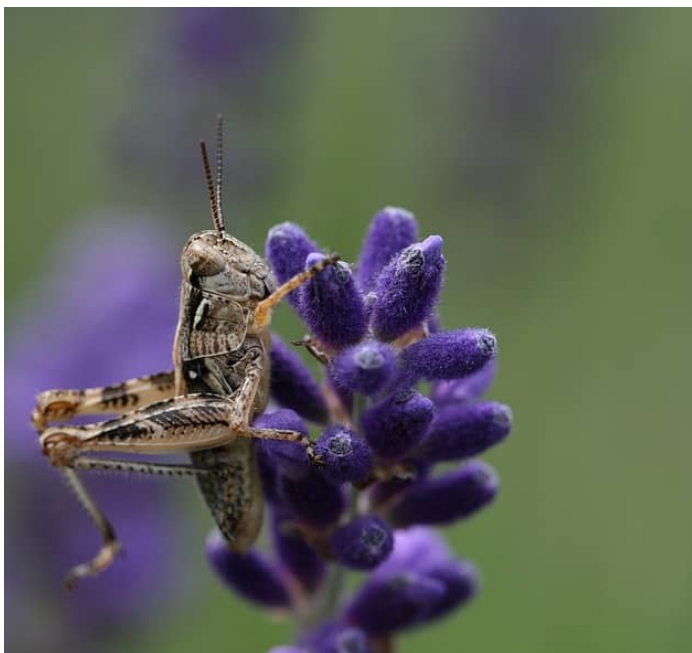
Do not cut down to
wood base

Pruning Lavender from  the spruce

Pruning and Harvesting



- Harvest the lavender stems in the morning hours when the oils are the most concentrated and when approximately 50 percent of the flower buds have opened.
- Use a sickle or pruning shears to cut stems as long as possible. Form bundles of 50 to 100 stems and secure them with rubber bands. Rubber bands will contract when the stems dry out. Dry the harvested lavender in a cool, dark place where there is good air circulation.



Pest and Disease Problems

- Lavender has very few pest or disease problems, but it is susceptible to root rots such as phytophthora. Do not over-water or allow water to stand around plants.
- Heavy infestations of grasshoppers can reduce yields but will probably not kill plants outright. In some areas, deer may damage plants by browsing or trampling.



Uses-Lavender Oil

- Commercially, the plant is grown mainly for the production essential oil. English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) yields an oil with sweet overtones, and can be used in balms, salves, perfumes, cosmetics, and topical applications.
- *Lavandula × intermedia*, also known as lavandin or Dutch lavender, yields a similar essential oil, but with higher levels of terpenes including camphor, which add a sharper overtone to the fragrance.
- The lavandins *Lavandula × intermedia* are a class of hybrids of *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia*. The lavandins are widely cultivated for commercial use, since their flowers tend to be bigger than those of English lavender and the plants tend to be easier to harvest, but lavandin oil is regarded by some to be of a lower quality than that of English lavender, with a perfume less sweet.

Uses - Phytochemicals



- Some 100 individual phytochemicals have been extracted from lavender oil
- The extracts and *Lavandula angustifolia* essential oil have various pharmacological uses such as for epilepsy, anxiety, dementia, and they are also antimicrobial, and antifungal.



Uses - Culinary

- Culinary lavender is usually English lavender, the most commonly used species in cooking.
(*L.angustifolia* 'Munstead').
- As an aromatic, it has a sweet fragrance with lemon or citrus notes. It is used as a spice or condiment in pastas, salads and dressings, and desserts.
- Their buds and greens are used in teas, and honeybees make monofloral honey known as lavender honey.



Use – Buds and Flowers

- For most cooking applications the dried buds, which are also referred to as flowers, are used. Lavender greens have a more subtle flavor when compared to rosemary.
- The potency of the lavender flowers increases with drying which necessitates more sparing use to avoid a heavy, soapy aftertaste. Chefs note to reduce by two-thirds the dry amount in recipes which call for fresh lavender buds.
- Lavender buds can amplify both sweet and savory flavors in dishes, and are sometimes paired with sheep's-milk and goat's-milk cheeses

Uses – Buds and Flowers

- Lavender flowers are occasionally blended with black, green, or herbal teas. Lavender flavors baked goods and desserts, pairing especially well with chocolate.
- In the United States, both lavender syrup and dried lavender buds are used to make lavender scones and marshmallows.
- Lavender buds are put into sugar for two weeks to allow the essential oils and fragrance to transfer; then the sugar itself is used in baking.
- Lavender can be used in breads where recipes call for rosemary.
- It can be used decoratively in dishes or spirits, or as a decorative and aromatic in a glass of champagne.
- Add to savory dishes, it gives stews and reduced sauces aromatic flair.
- It is also used to scent flans, custards, and sorbets



Uses - Greens

- The greens are used similarly to rosemary or combined with rosemary to flavor meat and vegetables in savory dishes. They can also be used to make a tea that is milder than teas made with the flowers.



Questions?

