



# *GUIDE TO LAVENDER*



A basic guide to choosing, growing, and using lavender, and the varieties Ambergardens grows.

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# HISTORY OF LAVENDER

The word Lavender comes from the Latin *lavandus* “to be washed,” or *lavare*, “to wash.” This remarkable herb has been cherished for its unmistakable perfume as well as its medicinal properties since ancient times.

Native to the Mediterranean area Greece, France, Spain and the North African coast, it is believed that the Romans may have taken it north to England, where it is now an essential part of every English garden. In addition to valuing lavender for their baths, the Romans also took lavender into battle to dress their war wounds.

Lavender has been an essential herb in the medicinal garden dating as far back as 77 AD. It has been believed to cure everything from menstrual problems, upset stomachs, kidney disorders, jaundice and dropsy. Lavender is still used today for a number of therapeutic purposes including stress relief, soothing insect stings and curing headaches.

A common ingredient in the kitchens of Europe for centuries, lavender is now gaining popularity as a culinary herb in the United States. A member of the mint family, lavender can be used in savory dishes as a substitute for the popular herb rosemary. It works well with sweet and citrus dishes. A staple of southern French cooking, Herbs de Provence is savory herbs blend with lavender as one of its main ingredients. Using Herbs de Provence is a great way to begin cooking with the sweet herb of lavender.

## THE LAVENDER FLOWER



The lavender flower is made up of two parts, the corolla and the calyx, each with a different color. The tubular corollas, what we usually think of as the petals, are most often violet colored, though some are white or light pink. The calyx colors range from a very deep purple to a light violet/green. When lavender flowers dry, the corollas fall out or shrivel up and only the calyx color remains. So when you choose a cultivar for dried flowers it is only the calyx color that matters.



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# GROWING LAVENDER

## Plant Selection

Select a variety that is hardy for your area; Angustifolias (the English types) being the hardiest (early bloom, greatest flower color selection, sweet fragrance, shorter stems, smaller plants). The lavandins are hardy also (later bloom, bigger plants and longer flower stems). The stoechas (Spanish types) are usually hardy for our NW winters (longest bloom time, "pine cone" flowers with "rabbit ear tops"). There are many other varieties and crosses, some hardy here, some not.

## Planting in the Garden

Plant your new lavenders giving them plenty of room to spread out 2-3ft for English and 4-7' more for the larger Lavandins. They love sun and need good drainage. Heavy clay soils will kill them. They need good air circulation.

Mix chicken manure and bone meal (about ½ cup of ea.) well into your soil before planting. If your soil is hard clay, mixing some sand in will help to loosen the clay and raise your planting up a foot or so if possible. If the plant is root bound, loosen the roots before planting. If the plant is tall or spindly, cut back to encourage more lateral vegetative growth.

Using sand for mulch around the plant keeps the plant clean and reflects light back up into the plant, thus creating more heat. More heat creates more fragrant blooms.

You'll need to water them the first couple of summers but after that, rarely, if at all.

## Pruning

**New plants** - Prune recently planted lavenders in flower to direct energy into foliar and root growth rather than into seed production.

**2-7 Year old plants** - Prune your plant after bloom or in the early fall to half or 2/3 of its size, leaving a couple of inches of green above the woody stems. This may seem severe, but they will respond very well to this "hair cut". For quick growing plants like the lavandins, prune again in spring by 1/3 before flower stems appear.

**Rehabilitating an older woody plant** - To save and reshape a leggy woody plant, prune it back in stages. Pruning a lavender to the point where it has no foliage will most likely kill it. In spring, cut the foliage back by one third to stimulate new growth. Then, after the new foliage has grown in, cut that back by one third to stimulate new growth at the base of the plant. If new growth does break at the base of the plant, prune the plant back to just above the new growth. I never prune out old wood unless it is completely dead.



## Harvesting

When your lavender has blossomed, the flowers can be picked for many uses. If you desire a fresh bouquet, pick the blossoms when ¼ to 1/2 of the flowers are open. If picking for sachet bud, pick when 75% to 100% of the stalk is flowered out.

You can dry the lavender from your plants by cutting bundles of 100-150 stems per bundle. Wrap a rubber band around the bottom of your bundle and make an s-hook out of a paper clip and hang upside down in a warm, dry, dark place. Drying will take a couple of weeks depending on the weather.

## LAVENDER USES

This incredible herb is one of nature's most versatile gifts. Commonly used in aromatherapy for its pleasant fragrance and soothing quality, it can be found in a wide range of bath, body and personal comfort products.

Here are a few ideas for you to try at home:

### ***Simple Potpourri***

Put dried lavender buds in decorative bowls throughout your house. When you walk by the bowl, give the lavender a stir with your hand to release the essential oils. Put a bowl in the bathroom, and let the steam from the bath and shower release its fresh fragrance. You can also mix lavender with other herbs and botanicals. It's great with rose buds and chamomile flowers, but have fun and experiment.

### ***Dried Flowers***

Lavender makes beautiful dried bouquets that will last for years. The lavender will hold its color best if dried by hanging upside down in a warm, dark place and kept out of direct sunlight when dried. Give the bouquet a soft pat and you'll smell its sweet fragrance. Lavender can be displayed alone or mixed with other dried flowers.

### ***Insect Repellent***

Lavender is a natural repellent for moths and fleas. Put sachets of lavender in your drawers and closets to keep moths away from your favorite clothes. Sprinkle dried lavender on your carpets and vacuum to keep fleas away. You'll also get the added benefit of lavender's fragrance throughout your house.



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Lavender clippings can be used a mulch, repelling insects in the garden and keeping mildew at bay, especially under roses.

### **Lavender Sachets**

You can put lavender in almost anything and get the benefit of its wonderful fragrance. For simple sachets, that are strictly functional, you can use the feet portion of old panty hose. Tie up the ends and tuck them into your clothes drawers. For more decorative sachets, sew or buy drawstring bags out of pretty fabric, tie up lavender in fancy handkerchiefs, or make pillow shaped sachets out of lace and ribbon. The possibilities are limitless. Lavender sachets make wonderful gifts for friends and family.

#### **- Making a Sachet -**

To create your own sachet, rub the bundle between your hands over a wire mesh screen with a fan blowing beside the bundle. The "fines" will fall through the screen and the fan will blow the chaff away. This will leave you to pick some of the leaves and stems out of the lavender buds. What you have then is clean lavender for your sachet use, culinary use, pillows, etc.

### **Other Uses**

There are many medicinal and household uses for lavender. It is a natural antiseptic and cleaner. It is great for use in skin care products and on burns and insect bites, among other uses.

Ideal for physical and emotional support. Lavender as a whole is an 'adaptagenic' essence with a relationship to all Body Systems. It is nicknamed the ultimate 'first aid in a bottle' oil. Lavender produces an Anti-Allergic Essential oil, with an inherent antibiotic action. It is also an astringent as well as moisturizing to skin. It alleviates aches, pains, and swelling from arthritis to injury to headache. Lavender also alleviates motion sickness.

Emotionally, lavender helps support a calm composure and self-expression. It reduces irritability, insomnia, nightmares, apprehension, panic attacks combined with uncontrollable shaking, stress, nervous tension, hysteria and is generally balancing to the psyche, as well as the body.

### **Internal Possibilities**

Research is proving that lavender is beneficial with regard to support for hyperglycemia, hypertension, indigestion, arteriosclerosis, digestive complaints, kidney stones, fragile capillaries, anemia, and heartburn. It is non-toxic, non-irritant, non-sensitizing.

### **Contraindications and Safety**

Some say lavender should be avoided in the first trimester of pregnancy. It should not to be used with preparations containing iron and/or iodine.



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# LAVENDER DIFFERENCES IN A “NUTSHELL”

	<b>Lavandin – intermedia</b>	<b>English – angustifolia</b>	<b>Spanish – stoechas</b>	<b>Woolly - lanata</b>
<b>Bloom time</b>	Blooms last – july - august	Blooms second – june-july	Blooms first – may - september	Varies - june - august -
<b>Plant Size &amp; Spacing</b>	2' – 4' space > 4-6'	1' – 2.5' space >1.5--3'	2' - 3' Space > 3-4'	1' - 3' Space > 2.5-4'
<b>Fragrance</b>	More perfume, resin like camphor, less sweet	Sweetest	Camphor (like pine or rosemary)	Depends on the cross, usually sweet.
<b>Blooms</b>	Longer stems 2 - 3' narrow pointed flower heads with buds spread out along the stem.	Shorter stems, 8" - 1' buds close together on the stem for a shorter, fatter flower than Lavandin.	Medium stems 1 - 1.5' fat pinecone shape flower with “rabbit ears” or “top knot” of the same or different color.	Medium stems 1 - 2' , wooly fat flowers with a “down” giving a silvery cast.
<b>Flower colors</b>	Pastels: White to pale blue, lavender	Widest range & darkest flowers: White to pale blue, lavender to deepest purple, pink	Various Purples but Newer cultivars may be white, blue, yellow, pink, raspberry.	Usually have a blue or lavender flower.
<b>Uses</b>	Highest oil yields for aromatherapy & perfume, soaps & detergents. Good for sachets & fresh or dried flowers. Good shrubs & hedges.	Superb oil for aromatherapy & perfume. Good for sachets & fresh or dried flowers, cooking, crafting, cosmetics. Good landscape plant for front or mid border.	Ornamental evergreen shrub with long repeating bloom if deadheaded.	Landscape ornamental. Flowers & foliage are very beautiful. Good fresh cut flower.
<b>Propagation</b>  (in spring or early fall)	Usually sterile, must propagate from cuttings	Will produce viable seed & self sow but not invasive. May cross pollinate. Best to propagate from cuttings.	May produce viable seed & self sow, but can cross pollinate. Newer hybrids are usually sterile. Best to propagate from cuttings.	Propagate from cuttings only.



# Ambergardens Lavender Plants

Some plants are in very low supply. All plants are limited to availability on hand. Most plants are in 3.5" pots, a good size for transplanting into a larger pot or directly into the ground.

## ***Lavandula x intermedia - Lavandins***

Commonly known as lavandin and sometimes called "French" Lavender, (there is a true "French" lavender "lavandula dentata" with ferny looking leaves that's not hardy here). Lavandin is the name for a variety of lavender that comes from a cross of English and spike lavender. Many of these varieties are highly recommended for producing commercial oil and dried bundles. It is also a very popular garden plant because of the high oil content and long flower stems. The yields from these varieties are up to 10 times more than other varieties but is of lesser quality than Angustifolias due to the presence of high camphor, a white transparent waxy crystalline solid with a pungent odor (like Rosemary). Lavandins are very hardy with a flowering period from early July to late August.



### Alba

24" x 24" wide. This lavandin cultivar has large spikes of pure white flowers. Stunning as a fresh cut flower. The flowers dry to a greenish white color and are very nice too. The calyx color is green; the corolla is white.



### Cascade Velvet

36" tall and wide. Dark blue flowers, long stems, good winter foliage; a very velvety look to it. A really nice landscape plant and cut flower.



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## Edelweiss



3' x 3' wide. Also known as Caty Blanc, Edelweiss is a white-blooming lavender that is a member of the Grosso family. The buds are light pink, opening to pure white on long stems. Perfect for bouquets and wands, Edelweiss holds its white color even when dried. They make an excellent contrast plant. 'Edelweiss' foliage is tight in growth and silvery green in color with a fragrance that is sweet and subtle. It blooms from July to early September.



## Grosso

2.5' x 3' wide. Grosso is a commercial, all-purpose plant that is very hardy. Its long stems are excellent for dried bouquets and potpourris. Because Grosso is such a high-yielding plant, it has become the most widely used lavender variety for oil production in the world. This cultivar has one of the darkest violet colors among the lavandins and is an excellent fresh or dried flower. Its neat growth habit and second bloom in autumn make it a great all-around plant and very popular lavender. Flowers bloom out to the sides and top, in a half circle, so give it room to bloom. The calyx color is dark violet green; the corolla is violet.



## Hidcote Giant

2.5' x 3' wide. This is a distinctive lavandin because of its growing habits and the dense unusually shaped fat spikes, which are excellent for dried bundles, potpourris and more. This slow-growing variety is very fragrant and features flower heads that are a rich deep lavender-purple in color.



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## Provence

30-36" with 16-20" stems. This variety is also known as French lavender (because it grows all over Provence, France) and is one of the largest lavandins. Provence features very long, dense and full spikes that are wonderful for fresh bouquets, lavender wands, potpourri, and culinary purposes. The aroma is milder and sweeter than other lavenders. The fragrant blossoms leave the stalk easily, and because of that make great sachet but not a good dried flower.

## ***Lavandula Angustifolia*** – “English”

This lavender species, also known as “True” Lavender, (used to be called “officinalis” too) is the most recommended and valuable of all lavenders because of the high quality oil produced by the plants. The oils can be used in perfume and cosmetics. The species medicinal properties include everything from alleviating stress, headaches and insomnia to reducing fevers. Its flowering period is from mid June to late July. It’s also the hardiest of the lavender types and is most forgiving of pruning mistakes.



## English or Vera

2' x 2-3' At one time **Lavandula Vera** was botanically called *Lavandula officinalis*. The *officinalis* refers to the designation as an official plant used in medicine. This term is no longer used in conjunction with *Lavandula* and has been replaced with the term *angustifolia*. **Vera** is thought to be the original species lavender. However, the seeds that have been spread throughout the world, often have different colored flowers and slightly different chemical constituencies. The flowers tend to be rounder and blunt tipped, and vary from plant to plant from lavender to a darker blue color. Very hardy!

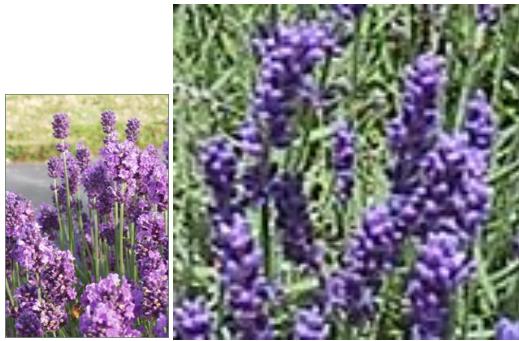


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## Blue Cushion

16" x 16". Spectacular dwarf habit and deep blue flowers on short stems from early to late summer are combined in this superb selection. Of course it also serves the traditional fragrance and herbal uses. Great for small gardens and containers.



## Hidcote

18-20" x 2.5' wide. This lavender is a free flowering dwarf variety that produces deep purple spikes in late spring and summer. Hidcote makes a great dwarf hedge or can be used for edging or for creating borders. A favorite. Very hardy.



## Jean Davis

18-20". A pale pink flowered Lavender with exceptionally fruity taste, good for culinary uses. It's also a good plant for pastel gardens.



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## Lodden Blue

18-24" This compact low bush features spreading growth, grey-green foliage and deep violet-blue flowers. This variety is one of the earliest to bloom and originally hails from England. Lodden Blue can be used as an ornamental plant for hedging or craft work.



## Maillette

12-24" This is a French cultivar that was selected for its especially fine oil content. The foliage is very silvery. The flowers are light purple and not so useful for dried flowers but great for potpourri and oil production. This variety's long, thin flower spikes are very fragrant. The variety was introduced by Pierre Grosso, of Grosso Lavender fame, and raised in France for oil production. This variety was introduced in the U.S. around 1981.



## Munstead

18-24" This is one of the angustifolias that grows well in containers. Munstead is one of the most popular small lavenders to plant in gardens. It is a very fragrant robust lavender that makes a great hedge. It blooms profusely in the spring with dark lavender-blue spikes and is very attractive throughout the year. It is excellent for making potpourris and contains attractive deep blue/purple flowers. A really sweet lavender fragrance.



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## Royal Velvet



18-20" This variety is a small to medium-sized plant. It is one of the best *Lavandula angustifolia*s. Its deep purple flowers and foliage are highly aromatic. It is a great oil producer and excellent for culinary uses. The darkest flower color!



## Sachet

18-24" with 12" stems and sky-blue flowers. Aptly named, Sachet is a great choice for putting in dryer bags, eye pillows and sachets. Often blooms twice and is a great ornamental plant. This cultivar of English lavender was bred specifically for a high quality oil content. Nice as a culinary variety. It has compact growth and purple calyxes/violet corollas. Good also for dried flowers and potpourri.



## Silver Edge

Aka Cultivar name: 'Walvera.'

3' x 2' wide. Silver Edge is a branch sport of *L. angustifolia* 'Vera,' discovered by British plantsmen David Tristram and Tim Crowther. The variegation is very stable and unbelievably colorful: the center of each leaf is a rich blue-green, the middle portion is the familiar green of other *L. angustifolia*, and the margins are a creamy white that mature to silver!

In mid- to late summer, deep violet-blue blooms sway atop the foliage on slender stalks. The habit is quite compact, and the blooms go straight up, not out to the sides at all, a terrific asset when planting in a large container or designing an edging that will not overrun its boundaries.



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## ***Lavandula Stoechas - Spanish***

Known also as topped lavender or Spanish Lavender, *Lavandula stoechas* is widely used commercially in air fresheners, deodorants, disinfectants and insecticides. Containing narrow, linear, stalkless leaves that are untoothed with rolled margins, *stoechas* is covered with a fine grey down that provides an overall grey-green appearance. It contains a fragrance that is between a true lavender scent and a pungent rosemary fragrance. We like it as a landscape plant because it blooms heavily from May until September if kept deadheaded. Some of these will seed themselves around a bit, but they aren't invasive at all. There are a number of new varieties out with all kinds of flower colors – some of them are hardy here and some are not.



### **Madrid Sky Blue**

12" x 24" wide Its pretty sky-blue flowers display contrasting cream flags starting in spring and blooming throughout the summer. Plant it in rock gardens or borders, especially where you will brush it as you walk by, enjoying its fragrance. Grows 12" tall and 24" wide.



### **Otto Quast**

1.5-3' tall. This hardy variety of Spanish lavender is known for its bold, purple-bracketed blooms. Otto Quast blooms from early spring until the first hard freeze. It contains attractive foliage during the winter months than some of the other lavender varieties. It features a softer, yet deeply satisfying fragrance that attracts birds, butterflies and humans.



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## Viridis



**2-3'** wide and high. This lavender has bright green foliage with a pleasant piney fragrance. The compact flower heads are similar to those of the French and Spanish, but the top bracts are greenish yellow and the corollas creamy yellow. Blooms throughout the summer if deadheaded. We find this one is not always hardy in our winters – give it some protection from the cold and wet or put it in a more protected place.

## Other Lavenders

### Goodwin Creek



*Lavandula x heterophylla*

2' x 2'. This cultivar is a hybrid of French lavender discovered by Goodwin Creek Nursery. It blooms throughout the summer and will even bloom in the winter in mild climates. 'Goodwin Creek Grey' and French lavender are the best choices for a winter blooming indoor lavender. They need about 5 hours of sunlight each day for winter bloom; a south facing window, sun room or sun porch should provide enough light. It looks great in the landscape, large containers or trained as topiaries. The silvery toothed foliage is very attractive and the corollas are deep purple. We have found them not to be reliably hardy here in the winter outdoors, probably because of the winter wet. If you plant them in a pot and protect them from hard frost and too much rain, they do fine.



### Silver Frost

*Lavandula angustifolia x Lavandula lanata*

2' x 3' wide. Named for its incredible silvery foliage this variety is a slow grower with stout woody branches. It takes between two and three years to begin blooming heavily, but is well worth the wait. Silver Frost features showy blue flowers that are very fat, with silvery-violet calyces and dark purple corollas. Also nice for fresh or dried flowers. A really beautiful plant.



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