

Did You Know?



Lavender, *Lavandula angustifolia*

- *Lavandula angustifolia* is known as English lavender, true lavender, fine lavender and common lavender. It is generally hardy between zones 5 to 9.
- Lavandin, *L. x intermedia* is a cross between common lavender and spike lavender *L. latifolia*. 'Grosso' is a variety which, among others, produces much of the world's lavender essential oil. This oil is used in products such as soaps and lotions. 'Provence' is another variety of *L. x intermedia* that can be used for cooking as well as soaps and lotions. These varieties are not generally used in aromatherapy or the perfume industry.
- Lavender prefers to grow in full sun of 6 or more hours per day and benefits from afternoon shade in hot climates. It will tolerate partial shade but it will produce fewer flowers and leggy growth.
- Grow lavender in well-drained soil which can be amended with gravel or sand, and be kept on the dry side once established. It will grow well in the ground, raised beds and in containers with minimal fertilizer. Ideal growing conditions include low humidity and good air circulation.
- *L. angustifolia* flowers are quite often the preferred lavender for use in teas, cookies and other confections as well as savory dishes. Lavender is a component of "Herbes de Provence" and Lady Grey Tea.
- Some varieties of lavender used for culinary purposes include: 'Provence' (*L. x intermedia*) for meats and savory dishes, and 'Royal Velvet,' 'Betty's Blue' and 'Melissa' which are all *L. angustifolia*. Taste a lavender bud for flavor to determine suitability for culinary uses.
- According to The Lavender Association, there are over 45 species of lavender, with more yet to be classified, and more than 450 varieties.
- Since Roman times, lavender has been used for healing, washing, repelling insects and for its antiseptic qualities.
- Lavender was considered effective against infection in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the plague and cholera ran rampant.
- Roman soldiers took lavender with them to address war wounds as well as the other healing properties known at the time. These included treating upset stomachs, kidney disorders, dropsy, jaundice and easing insect bites.
- Lavender was used to treat head lice in the twelfth century and up to 1874 in France.
- During World War I, lavender oil and sphagnum moss were used together to dress war wounds since antiseptics were in short supply at the time.
- Historically lavender has been used to treat depression, insomnia, anxiety and fatigue. Current research supports the calming, soothing and sedative effects of lavender when inhaled.
- While both the foliage and flowers are fragrant, typically flower buds are harvested and dried to scent potpourri, sleep pillows and other projects.
- For more information on lavender, see HSA's Quick Fact Sheets: [HSA Publications](#)

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