
LAVENDER

Favored for their clouds of purple blooms and sweet fragrance, hardy lavenders are always popular. Native to the Mediterranean region (not England or France!), they are drought tolerant and are found in colors from white to pink to lavenders, blues and purples. Foliage is green, silver, gray or variegated, and the hardier lavenders are evergreen. Our favorite grower produces beautiful plants and we keep a large selection in 4 inch and gallon pots in stock March thru mid-summer.

GROWING TIPS

Lavenders prefer well drained soil, and deep but infrequent water. Organic matter mixed with our heavy clay soil helps with drainage, as will a raised bed or mound. Lavenders require little to no fertilizer. They like a lime based soil, so it is recommended to add a little lime in autumn or when preparing soil for planting – blood or bone meal make good nitrogen sources. Avoid chemical fertilizers as well as chicken and pig manures. A little compost spread over roots in spring is also beneficial. Once established, avoid overhead water which can cause the plant to split open and also makes the plant susceptible to diseases. Prune by cutting back from $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of foliage after each year's bloom period.

HARVESTING

Harvest just as first two flowers open on spike, after the morning's dew has dried. Hang in small bunches in dark and well ventilated area for quick drying.

SPECIES COMMONLY CARRIED

***Lavendula angustifolia* (English Lavender)** The hardiest of all lavenders, early summer bloom, mounding with short flower spikes. Used in cooking, best for crafts, soaps, candles, perfumes, sachets. This is the classic lavender scent, and you will find many, many varieties available.

***Lavendula x intermedia* (Lavandin)** A cross between *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia*, this grouping is slightly less hardy than English lavender but they are typically taller and produce more flower spikes. Strong scent, but not sweet like the English lavenders and oil quality is not as high as it is in English varieties. Bloom period is little later than other *lavendula*, producing blooms in July or August and lasting till late summer. Can be used in fragrances, oils, potpourri, and wands.

***Lavendula stoechas* (Spanish Lavender)** An absolute favorite for showy blooms – there are large, showy bracts at the tip of each flower spike which look a little like butterflies or rabbit ears. Spanish lavenders are also the earliest blooming, and although with a reputation for unhardiness, we've seen them easily go five years with no problem. They tend to grow from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3' tall and really benefit from annual pruning/shaping.