

ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Environmental Horticulture #EH445



LAVENDER PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

Thomas M. Blessington, David L. Clement, and Kevin G. Williams
Central Maryland Research and Education Center
University of Maryland

INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Lavender
- Scientific name: *Lavandula sp.*
- Native to the western Mediterranean
- Part of the *Lamiaceae* (mint) family
- Shrub-like growth habit
- Grows 12-24'' high by 12-18'' wide
- Slow to moderate growth rate
- Grey-green foliage is aromatic and semi-evergreen in warm climates
- Flowers form on purple, pink, or white spikes in early to mid summer
- Hardy in zones 4-10, depending on variety
- Easy to grow and care for with few pests or diseases

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Substrate should be well-drained, loose, and gritty
- Grows best in full sun but tolerates some shade
- Survives drought and dry conditions
- Light feeders, a 200 ppm N fertilizer with a ratio of 20-10-20 can be used every few waterings
- Prune plants in early spring to maintain the plant's shape and stimulate branching and flower spikes
- On mature plants, cut back spent flower stalks
- High relative humidity reduces plant health
- Plants in containers can easily become root bound; re-pot every few years

PROPAGATION

- Can be propagated from seed or by taking cuttings
- Pre-chill seeds for 2 weeks before sowing at 40°F
- Sow seeds on surface of media, barely covering
- Seed germinates in 10-14 days at 65°F
- Fast growing cultivars (like *L. augustifolia* 'Lady') will bloom after one season from seed
- Take tip cuttings early in the season before blooming, removing 3" from the tip of the most vigorous growth
- Root cuttings in moist sand and damp peat moss; avoid too much mist on leaves
- When cuttings are ready, plant in a warm garden, spacing plants 12-24" apart

DISORDERS

- Leaf spot (*Septoria lavandula*)
 - Pick off and destroy infected leaves
- Root rot (*Armillaria mellea*)
 - Soil borne fungal disease
 - Can be controlled by removing or disinfecting substrate
- Caterpillars
 - Orange tortrix and yellow woollybear chew leaves
 - Handpick and remove

CONSUMER CARE

- Harvest flowers when they just begin to open
- Cut flowers in midday
- If making dried flowers, keep bunches away from light in a dry place or freeze in an airtight container

- Grows well as a border or hedge with little attention
- Can be moved inside for winter protection, but plants will survive if they have an established root system
- Should be pruned every spring and late summer to encourage new growth
- Avoid mulching winter hardy species to reduce occurrence of rot

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *Lavandula augustifolia* (English Lavender)
 - 'Alba'
 - 'Lady'
- *L. intermedia* (Dutch Lavender)
- *L. dentata* (Spanish Lavender)
- *L. heterophylla* (Sweet Lavender)
- *L. lanata* (Woolly Lavender)
- *L. latifolia* (Spike Lavender)
- *L. multifida* (Fernleaf Lavender)
- *L. stoechas* (French Lavender)

Mention of trade names does not constitute an endorsement by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland, College Park, or University of Maryland, Eastern Shore.