

Growing Lavender

Lavender is a well know herb grown for its aromatic foliage and flowers. Its essential oil is used in the cosmetic industry, in aromatherapy products and for its medicinal qualities. Lavender makes a beautiful garden plant with most varieties blooming in spring and early summer.

Although challenging to grow the effort is worth it for the beauty and fragrance of the plants. Many Lavenders are native to the Mediterranean region or other areas where the annual rainfall can be as little as 20 inches per year. In East Texas, we average 46-48 inches per year. Summer and winter highs and lows are not as extreme as ours in most of those regions. Provide your plants with the driest conditions possible in the garden or plant in containers.

All types of lavender grow in sunny, well-drained soils. They are drought tolerant, deer resistant and are magnets for bees and butterflies. The addition of gravel in the soil often benefits plants placed in heavier soils. Lavender prefers soils that tend to be in the neutral to alkaline range (7.0-8.0). Many East Texas soils tend to be more acidic. The addition of lime to the soil can sweeten it.

Deciphering the Many Types of Lavender

English Lavender- (*Lavandula angustifolia*) also referred to as true lavender was widely grown in England for use in the perfume industry.

Ellegance Purple- Large dense flower spikes with dark blue flowers. Compact to 12 inches.

Super Blue- Grows to 18 inches with lavender-blue flowers.

Munstead Lavender- Dwarf variety to 18 inches with an abundance of lavender-blue blooms.

Lavandin (*Lavandula x intermedia*) were bred to hold up in humid climates better than English Lavender with equally lovely scents.

Dutch Lavender- Dense habit with very long flower spikes.

Provence Lavender- Lovely strong fragrance with vigorous growth habit to 3 feet tall. Blooms spring and fall.

Grosso Lavender- Dark blue flowers top 30 inches tall plants.

Phenomanal- Very cold hardy and resistant to heat and humidity. High yield of purple-blue flower spikes.

Spanish Lavender- (*Lavandula stoechys*) also referred to as French lavender is really the best type of lavender to grow for our area. It adapts to a wider range of soil conditions. Honey bees are especially attracted to this plant. Used commercially in air fresheners and as an insect repellent. The flower spikes also have medicinal and aromatherapy uses.

Bandera Purple- Very compact to 10 inches tall with gorgeous dark purple flowers.