

Lavandula angustifolia Lavender, English Lavender¹

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Introduction

Lavender produces gray foliage and purple flowers, although cultivars with pink, blue, lavender or white flowers also exist. Most plants are 2 to 3 feet tall but some cultivars are shorter and more compact. Soft leaves are borne on erect, square, tomentose stems. The plant is a perennial in the northern part of its range but may decline in zone 8 due to the summer heat.

General Information

Scientific name: *Lavandula angustifolia*

Pronunciation: luh-VAN-dyoo-luh
an-gus-tif-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): lavender, English lavender

Family: *Labiatae*

Plant type: herbaceous; perennial

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: cut flowers; ground cover; mass planting; attracts butterflies

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled

Leaf type: simple

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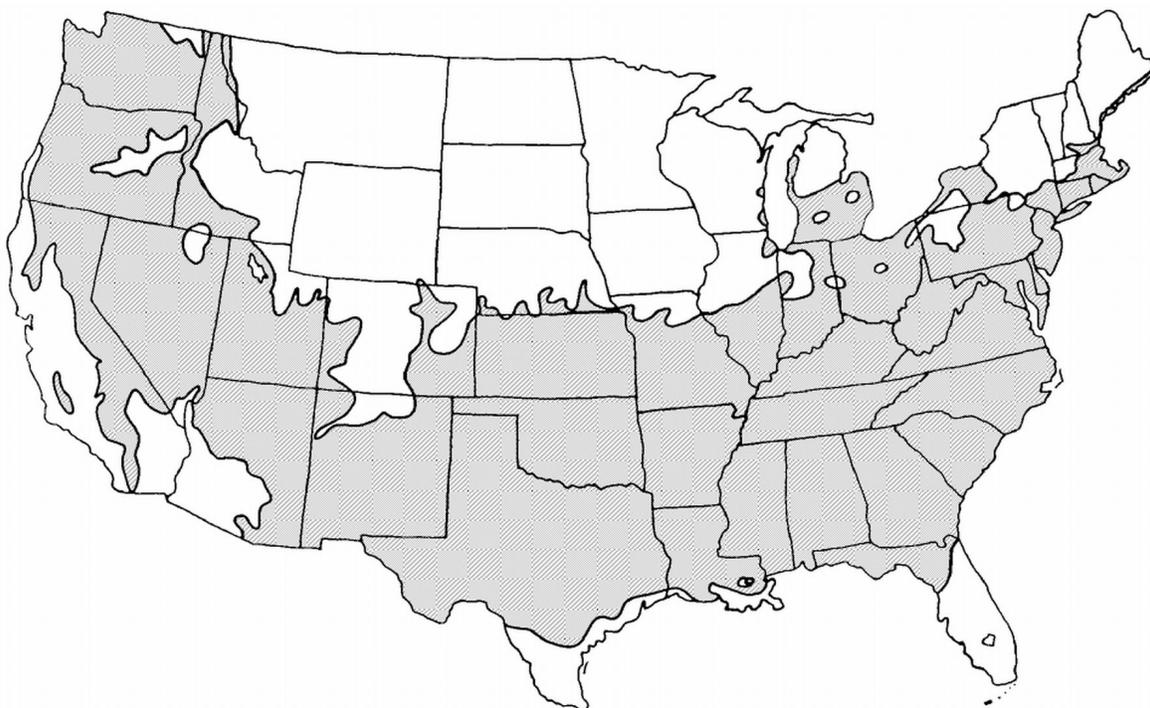


Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: oblong

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance:

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Pests and Diseases

Leaves infected with leaf spot can be picked off.

Use and Management

The plants grow best in a sunny location in a dry, somewhat infertile soil. Protect the crowns with several inches of mulch during the winter. Plants are more susceptible to winter injury when grown in wet, heavy soil.

Lavenders are widely grown as ornamentals; they are tidy, low-maintenance plants that serve well as borders, knots, in rock gardens, and with roses. They are very sensitive to pH, which should be kept above 6. They can be pruned in early spring.

The oil of lavender is a mainstay in perfumery, and the fragrance is widely used in soaps and cosmetics. Flowers for drying must be harvested before opening. They can then be bound together into aromatic and decorative wands, or incorporated in potpourris or sachets.

Cultivars include: 'Backhouse Purple', 'Bowles Early', 'Folgate', 'Gwendolyn Anley', 'Hidcote', 'Irene Doyle', 'Lodden Blue', 'Mitcham Grey', 'Munstead', 'Rosea', 'Summerland Supreme', 'Twickel Purple'. The cultivar names more or less describe the flower color. Cultivars include: 'Backhouse Purple', 'Bowles Early', 'Folgate', 'Gwendolyn Anley', 'Hidcote', 'Irene Doyle', 'Lodden Blue', 'Mitcham Grey', 'Munstead', 'Rosea', 'Summerland Supreme', 'Twickel Purple'. The cultivar names more or less describe the flower color.