

# White Flower Farm

PLANTSMEN SINCE 1950

*Which Lavender  
is right for you?*

## Which Lavender Is Right for You?

With more than 39 species in the *Lavandula* genus, selecting a type of Lavender can be confusing and overwhelming. Fortunately, White Flower Farm carries nearly every type of Lavender you'd ever want to grow.

Your choices include types of Lavender that are suitable for drying and using in crafts, or as fresh cut flower bouquets with wonderful fragrance and color. There are varieties that can be grown indoors or in containers on the patio, and ones that are perfect for short hedges and borders. For thousands of years, this Mediterranean native's essential oils have scented perfumes, cosmetics, linens, and herbal teas, and there's a perfect selection ready to brighten your landscape with brilliant color and fresh scent.



[English Lavender \(\*Lavandula angustifolia\*\)](#)

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### English Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Despite its common name, English Lavender is not native to England, but comes from western sections of the Mediterranean region. It grows well in the English climate, which is reportedly how the name came about. English Lavender is used in recipes for cooking and incorporated in potpourris and sachets. Generally more cold tolerant, plants are hardy in USDA zones 5–7S/10W ([learn about Hardiness Zones here](#)). Some varieties can grow up to 3' tall and over 2' wide.



***L. angustifolia*** is the true English Lavender from which the essential oils are extracted for making perfumes. It bears aromatic, silver-gray foliage and 8" spikes of fragrant, dark blue-violet flowers in summer. Plants mound up to 3' high and slightly wider.



***L. a. 'Royal Velvet'*** produces velvety deep violet blooms for showstopping flower displays. Mature plants grow 24-30" tall and 18-24" wide.



***L. a. 'Violet Intrigue'*** blooms profusely on nicely mounding plants that are very impressive in the garden. Mature plants grow 28" tall and 24" wide, and have a dense, upright growing habit.



***L. a. Big Time Blue*** is an early bloomer, sending up exceptionally large flower spikes that appear in June and last into August. Mature plants grow about 24" tall and 16" wide



***L. a. 'Hidcote'*** is a compact plant with deep purple-blue flowers that hold their color well when dried. Mature plants grow up to 20" tall and wide, and make excellent small hedges.



***L. a. 'Rosea'*** bears soft pink flowers in a delicate shade that works well with the gray-green foliage. Compact plants grow up to 15" tall and wide, and are stunning when planted with blue-flowering Lavenders.



***L. a. 'Munstead'*** is a low-growing variety with a mature height of 12" and width of 15-18". This older selection grows quite dense, and makes a wonderful edging plant.



***L. a. 'Silver Mist'*** pairs silvery gray foliage with deep purple flower spikes. Maturing to 16-20" tall and wide, it's ideal for small hedges.

## Lavandin Lavender (*Lavandula x intermedia*)

These are hybrids between English Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and *Lavandula latifolia*. They are commercially important as sources of oil used in soap and perfume industries. Lavandin plants have a vigorous growth habit, producing bunches of fragrant flower spikes and foliage. Plants are generally hardy in zones 5–7S/10W, and thrive in full sun.



***L. x i.* 'Grosso'** is an exceptional, multibranched plant that grows into 2' mounds with densely packed, deep violet flower spikes. 'Grosso' is known as the variety that was most widely cultivated in Provence, where its oils were used in making some of the best naturally derived French perfumes.



***L. x i.* 'Provence'** is a robust grower that forms large mounds up to 3' tall. It was named for the province in southern France where Lavender plants served as the source of bulk oil to supply the perfume industry. It is one of the tallest varieties, with a display that continues into fall if deadheaded.



***L. x i.* Phenomenal™** has received rave reviews for its winter hardiness as well as heat and humidity tolerance. It's a vigorous grower that withstands rough winters and summer's heat and humidity. Grows 24–32" tall and 24" wide.

## Spanish Lavender (Lavandula stoechas)

Spanish Lavender tolerates heat and humidity a bit better than English types but isn't as cold tolerant. The showy blooms resemble a pineapple or rabbit ears, and are what distinguish Spanish Lavender from other types of Lavender. The evergreen plants are fragrant, and were used by the ancient Romans to scent bath water.



***L. stoechas pedunculata*** is a tough plant that can take unrelenting heat and sun. They also have a higher tolerance for humidity. Plants are covered with plump, dense purple flower bracts topped by 1", elongated flowery antlers in June and July. In zones 6–7S/10W, they overwinter nicely. In cold-winter areas, plants are stunning in containers, and can be brought indoors and placed in a sunny, south window for the winter. Plants grow up to 24" tall and 20" wide.

## Most Fragrant Lavenders

Some varieties are more fragrant than others. The Lavenders listed below are well suited for use in crafts, such as wreaths, dried flower arrangements, sachets, and potpourris.

- ❖ *L. x intermedia* 'Grosso'
- ❖ *L. x i.* 'Provence'
- ❖ *L. angustifolia* 'Folgate'
- ❖ *L. a.* 'Royal Velvet'
- ❖ *L.* 'Goodwin Creek Grey'



## Planting and Growing Lavender

**Light and Watering Needs:** Lavender needs to grow in a site situated in full sun. It doesn't tolerate partial or full shade, although some afternoon shade is appreciated in hot climates. Plants are drought tolerant once established, but flower best if the soil isn't allowed to dry out completely.

**Soil Requirements:** Lavender prefers soils that are light and well drained, and won't tolerate wet heavy soils such as clay. If your soil retains too much water, add organic matter such as compost as well as gravel or sand to keep the soil draining freely. Or consider growing Lavender in a raised bed with well-drained soil.

Plants prefer alkaline soils with a pH that is close to or just above neutral. If your soil tends to be acidic and has a pH below 7.0, incorporate lime into the soil before planting.

**Planting:** Read the label that comes with your Lavender plant to find out how wide it will be at maturity. You want to give it enough space to allow good air circulation around your plant in order to prevent fungal problems.

Dig a hole that's slightly larger than the nursery container holding the Lavender. Gently pull the plant out of its container and check the root system for matting. If the roots are matted around each other, tease them apart gently with your fingers. This allows the roots to spread through the soil properly so the plant will grow well.



Place the Lavender in the planting hole and cover with soil, firming it up around the plant. You can also create a slight mound and place the Lavender in it, allowing water to run off the soil away from the base of the plant. Water thoroughly after planting, and keep a close eye on your plant over the next few days. If you see it wilt on a hot, sunny day, check the soil about 1" below the surface. If the soil is moist, don't water. After the first week, give your plant a good watering each week during the summer unless rainfall is plentiful.

**Mulching:** Use a gravel mulch to help keep moisture away from the crowns of the plants. In areas of the country where winters are severe, cover plants lightly with a layer of evergreen boughs in fall to help prevent damage from winter winds.

**Fertilizer Requirements:** Lavender plants do not require supplemental feedings of fertilizer as long as they are grown in favorable conditions. You can side dress plants with compost if desired.

**Pruning:** Plants may be cut back and shaped after flowering. Be careful not to prune into the older woody sections of the plant. If you need to do any shaping of the plant in spring, wait until the new growth appears.

If the Lavender becomes overgrown and straggly, prune it down by approximately a third every 2–3 years. It's best to use clean pruning tools so you don't transfer diseases to the plants.

**Pests and Diseases:** One of the great benefits of growing Lavender is that its heavy scent makes it unappealing to pests such as deer, rabbits, and insects.

Wet conditions due to heavy soils, poor air circulation, and humidity can create fungal problems and root rot. These can be avoided by growing plants in a sunny location with excellent drainage and good air circulation.

**Dividing and Transplanting:** In spring, prepare the new planting site so the Lavender can be transplanted quickly and easily. Younger plants divide and transplant better than older woody specimens.

Allow the soil to remain in place around the roots as you place the plant in the hole. Make sure the Lavender is growing at the same soil level. Firm the dirt around the plant and water well. Treat the transplant as you would a new planting.

## Harvesting Lavender

If you plan to use your Lavender for cooking or making crafts, harvest the flower spikes when the buds are just starting to open. Wait to cut the long stems until after the morning dew has dried from the foliage. Use clean pruning tools and cut the entire flower stalk, but don't cut into the woody portion of the plant at the base of the stem. Gather the stems to dry out of the sun.

**Drying the Lavender:** There are two methods you can use to dry Lavender, and both work equally well.

- ❖ Method 1: Arrange the freshly cut Lavender into small bunches and secure the stems using rubber bands. Hang them upside down in a cool, dark, dry place. The Lavender will be ready to use within a week.
- ❖ Method 2: Spread the freshly cut Lavender onto a screen or sheet in a single layer, allowing the air to circulate easily. Place the screen or sheet in a cool, dark, dry location. The flowers should be dry within a week.



## Landscape Uses

Lavender fills a variety of needs in the landscape, including mass plantings, borders, short hedges, or in containers to brighten up a porch or entryway. If you have a deer problem in your neighborhood, it's a good idea to plant plenty of these fragrant plants since deer generally avoid Lavender. It also makes a great addition to pollinator, herb, and fragrance gardens.

**Best in Containers:** *L. 'Goodwin Creek Grey,' L. stoechas pedunculata*

**Best for Borders:** *L. angustifolia, L. a. 'Big Time Blue,' L. a. 'Royal Velvet,' L. x intermedia 'Phenomenal,' L. x i. 'Provence'*

**Best for Short Hedges:** *L. a.* 'Hidcote,' *L. a.* 'Munstead,' *L. a.* 'Rosea,' *L. a.* 'Silver Mist,' *L. x i.* 'Grosso'

**Best for Mass Plantings:** *L. a.* 'Big Time Blue,' *L. a.* 'Royal Velvet,' *L. a.* 'Violet Intrigue,' *L. x i.* 'Provence,' *L. x i.* 'Phenomenal'

Lavender's growth habit and mature size help decide on where a variety is best used. If growing Lavender in containers, select a large pot with drainage holes and use a lightweight potting soil mixed with some sand to assure good drainage.

White Flower Farm offers [great advice on how to set up a garden](#) in your own backyard.

## Lavender for Indoors

Garden Lavenders are not happy indoors generally, but a tender hybrid called 'Goodwin Creek Grey' grows well indoors as long as its preferred growing conditions are met.

**Basic Indoor Care:** Choose a container with drainage holes. Use a lightweight potting mix that drains well and doesn't retain too much moisture.

Place the container in a sunny, south window that receives 6–8 hours of daily sunlight. Indoor temperatures should range from 60–75°F. In fall and winter, your Lavender prefers 60°F nighttime temperatures.



With proper care, *Lavandula Goodwin Creek Grey* is suitable for indoor display.

Water your plants when the top 1" of potting mix is dry. Do not overwater. During the growing season of April through September, use a balanced fertilizer (20-20-20) approximately every 6 weeks. Prune with clean scissors once the flowers have faded and selectively pinch new growth to maintain the Lavender's shape.

## Companion Planting

The bright flower spikes and soft, blue-gray foliage of Lavender are great assets in the garden, blending in nicely with shrubs and perennials.

Lavenders make good companions for hardy Geraniums and Roses. All thrive in well-drained soil and sunny locations. Whenever planting different plants in the same garden, make sure they have the same growing requirements. Some Roses, for example, need to be watered more than others. Since Lavenders prefer dryer conditions, these Rose companions can be mulched with



a thick layer of compost to help keep the soil moist, allowing you to water less frequently during warm, dry spells.

Plant Lavender with other drought-tolerant perennials such as Yarrows (*Achillea*), Purple Coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), and Sedums. They complement each other in bloom color and form, and require the same growing conditions.

Mixing foliage, flower colors, and different textures can make the garden more appealing. *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Rosea,' with its soft pink flowers and muted foliage, works well when planted in front of the spiny leaves and bold blue flowers of Sea Holly (*Eryngium*). With their arching leaves and showy flower plumes, Ornamental Grasses make great partners for Lavenders, too.

Here are some other plants that make good companions for Lavender:

- ❖ Baby's Breath (*Gypsophila*)
- ❖ Calamintha nepeta
- ❖ Catmint (*Nepeta*)
- ❖ Clematis
- ❖ Coreopsis
- ❖ Lamb's Ears (*Stachys*)
- ❖ Rosemary
- ❖ Rudbeckia
- ❖ Russian Sage (*Perovskia*)
- ❖ Salvia
- ❖ Shasta Daisies (*Leucanthemum x superba*)
- ❖ Thyme

## Lavender Types & Applications

Species Name	Category	Height	Zone Range	Usage
<i>L. angustifolia</i>	English	36"	5-7S/10W	borders, mass plantings, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Big Time Blue'</i>	English	24"	5-7S/10W	borders, mass plantings, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Hidcote'</i>	English	20"	5-7S/10W	cutting, short hedges, mass plantings, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Munstead'</i>	English	12"	5-7S/10W	borders, walkways, containers, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Rosea'</i>	English	15"	5-7S/10W	short hedges, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Royal Velvet'</i>	English	24-30"	5-7S/10W	borders, mass plantings, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Silver Mist'</i>	English	16-20"	5-7S/10W	borders, edging, containers, cooking
<i>L. a. 'Violet Intrigue'</i>	English	28"	5-7S/10W	borders, cutting, drying, cooking
<i>L. x intermedia 'Grosso'</i>	Lavandin	24"	5-7S/10W	short hedges, fragrance, essential oil, potpourris, sachets
<i>L. x i. 'Phenomenal'</i>	Lavandin	24-32"	5-8S/10W	borders, mass plantings, fragrance, essential oil, potpourris, sachets
<i>L. x i. 'Provence'</i>	Lavandin	36"	5-7S/10W	borders, mass plantings, cutting, fragrance, essential oil, potpourris, sachets
<i>L. stoechas pedunculata</i>	Spanish	24"	6-7S/10W	containers
<i>L. 'Goodwin Creek Grey'</i>	Hybrid	12-18" indoors 24-36" outdoors	7-9S/13W	indoors, containers, fragrance, potpourris, sachets