

HOW TO GROW LAVENDER

Lavender is an aromatic perennial evergreen shrub with upright flower spikes usually bluish-purple in color abundantly found in countries along Mediterranean coast. A popular outdoor perennial flower that is often planted alongside roses, echinacea, jasmine, yarrow and sedum. It thrives in full sun and warm, well-draining soil, so make some room for them as it will yield a bumper crop in no time. More importantly, it is widely cultivated for their essential oils commercially used for variety of products; thus, making it a popular choice for wide cultivation all over the world.

Planting Procedure:

Step 1: Preparing to Plant

A. Select a suitable planting location. Lavenders thrive in hot and sunny locations, so make sure to find a spot that can receive at least 8 hours of sunlight a day.

B. Adequate drainage is required. Add in some silica sand to the soil mix to improve drainage.

C. Check soil pH level which should be between 6.7 to 7.3 using a commercial test probe. Lavenders prefer slightly alkaline soil conditions. To increase soil alkalinity, you may add some lime into it.

D. Visit your local garden centre to purchase your lavender. You can ask the staff to recommend which variety would grow best in your area.



Step 2: Planting your Lavender

A. Water lavender in its original pot at least an hour before planting to make it hydrated but not damp before repotting.

B. Use a trowel to dig a big hole. Make sure to spread its roots before putting it in. Keep in mind that root system for lavender is much larger than the actual plant.

C. Prepare the soil to optimize the lavender's growth. Mix round stones, lime, manure compost and bone meal into the hole. After mixing them all in, cover with a light layer of soil. Stones are there for drainage purposes, lime to add some alkaline into the soil while bone meal and fertilizer provide nutrients to the plant.

D. Lightly prune the lavender before planting to achieve the ideal plant shape and ensure good air circulation through the stems and encourage new growth. Good airflow is required if the local area has high humidity level.

E. Remove the lavender plant from its original pot and remove excess soil from its roots. Bare roots make it easier for the plant to adapt to new growing environment.

F. Place the lavender in the prepared spot above the stone blend making sure the the roots do not come in contact with the blend. If there is extra space around and above the lavender's roots with soil, lightly pat it into place around the base of the stems.



Step 3: Maintaining Lavender

A. Lavender does not require much fertilizer and only needs once a year fertilization. Around spring season, when the soil is dry, you may add mixed compost and bone meal around the plant.

B. Once the lavender is planted, water it every 7-10 days. However, over watering new lavender plants is the main cause of growth problems. Make sure that the soil dries between each watering as excessive dampness in roots can kill the plant.

C. An effective way to prevent weeds from sprouting around the base of the plant is to add mulch over the soil. It is best to use light-colored mulch such as coarse sand, gravel or oyster shells which also helps to protect it from winter frosts.

D. Once a year, you should prune about 1/3 of the lavender plant specifically in spring. To achieve a beautiful, rounded shape, use pruning shears or hedge trimmer.

E. Beware of pests such as aphids, whiteflies and spittle bugs that may affect the lavender's growth. You can either remove them by hand or with flowing water. Make sure to always disinfect all gardening tools to prevent spreading virus.



F. Time to harvest the flowers when the bottom of each stem are about to open. Cut the flowers at the base of the stems and prune the plant for new leaves to grow.

G. One effective way to preserve the lavenders is to dry them. Bundle about a 100 flowers together in a rubber band. Suspend them upside down for around 14 days in a warm, dark and dry location.

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