

Lavandula angustifolia

Lavandula angustifolia, formerly *L. officinalis*, is a flowering plant in the family Lamiaceae, native to the Mediterranean (Spain, France, Italy, Croatia etc.). Its common names include lavender, true lavender and English lavender[2] (though not native to England); also garden lavender,[3] common lavender and narrow-leaved lavender.

It is a strongly aromatic shrub growing as high as 1 to 2 metres (3+1/2 to 6+1/2 ft) tall. The leaves are evergreen, 2–6 centimetres (1–2+1/2 inches) long, and 4–6 millimetres (3/16–1/4 in) broad. The flowers are pinkish-purple (lavender-coloured), produced on spikes 2–8 cm (1–3 in) long at the top of slender, leafless stems 10–30 cm (4–12 in) long.

Stems and flowers

Flower spike before the petals emerge

Calyx (purple) and flower bracts (light brown)

Calyx and corolla

Corolla (petals)

Calyx and corolla (side view)

The species name *angustifolia* is Latin for "narrow leaf". Previously, it was known as *Lavandula officinalis*, referring to its medicinal properties.

English lavender is commonly grown as an ornamental plant. It is popular for its colourful flowers, its fragrance, and its ability to survive with low water consumption. It does not grow well in continuously damp soil and may benefit from increased drainage provided by inorganic mulches such as gravel. It does best in Mediterranean climates similar to its native habitat, characterised by wet winters and dry summers. It is fairly tolerant of low temperatures and is generally considered hardy to Royal Horticultural Society zone H6, or USDA zone 5.[4] It tolerates acid soils but favours neutral to alkaline soils, and in some conditions it may be short-lived.[5]

The following cultivars of *L. angustifolia* and its hybrids have gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit:-[6]

Compacta, Folgate, Dwarf Blue, Dwarf White, Hidcote Pink, Hidcote Superior, Munstead, Nana Atropurpurea, Nana Rosea, Sarah, Summerland Supreme, Lady Lavender

Bowles Early, Hidcote Variety, Loddon Blue, Martha Roderick, Jean Davis, Twickle Purple, Pink Perfume

Alba, Backhouse Purple, Biostos, Bridestowe, Graves, Gray Lady, Gwendolyn Anley, Hidcote Giant, Irene Doyle, Mailette, Middachten

The flowers and leaves are used as a herbal medicine,[21] either in the form of lavender oil or

as a herbal tea, to alleviate symptoms such as anxiety,[22] and difficulty falling asleep.

The flowers are also used as a culinary herb, most often as part of the North American version of the French herb blend called herbes de Provence.

Lavender essential oil, when diluted with a carrier oil, is commonly used as a relaxant with massage therapy. Products for home use, such as lotions, eye pillows (including lavender flowers or the essential oil itself) and bath oils, etc., are also used. Both the petals and the oil are the most popular ingredients in handmade soap.

Dried lavender flowers and lavender essential oil are also used as a prevention against clothing moths, which do not like their scent.[citation needed]

Lavandula angustifolia is included in the Tasmanian Fire Service's list of low flammability plants, indicating that it is suitable for growing within a building protection zone.[23]

Lavandula hybrids are referred to as lavandins. Hybrids between *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia* (spike lavender) are called *Lavandula* × *intermedia*. They bloom later than the ordinary English lavenders.

