

A detailed guide to growing lavender



When talking about lavender, most of us picture in our minds those endless field views (as seen on social media and stock images) they say grow in France. What if I could tell you it's possible for you to have your own mini field of lavender? Keep reading and you'll find out how.

It all goes down to you getting the correct type of seed or plant that'll grow perfectly in your area, nurturing them until they grow into beautiful and magnificent plants, and the rest becomes history! I have put together these 4 steps to help you grow lavender. Read on.

Step 1 – Selecting the type of lavender based on characteristics

Before deciding to grow lavender, one must decide the [type of lavender](#) seeds/plants they'll get, and then figure out if the place they are trying to grow it in is favorable to that specific type of lavender. Fortunately for you, I've done the research and found out.

Even though there are many varieties (colors, sizes, scents) of lavender, they could be all grouped into two categories: the English (*Lavandula angustifolia*) lavender and the Spanish (*Lavandula stoechas*) lavender.

The English lavender and its characteristics

Lavandula angustifolia gets its name English lavender from its ability to grow in England's weather conditions while being native to the Mediterranean. The plant known for its uses in aromatherapy,

natural beauty recipes, culinary recipes, and even perfumes thrives in mild winters, hot/warm and sunny dry conditions.

The identifiables of English lavender plants are gray-green leaves, long slim purple flower spikes, and awesome fragrance. The plant comes in different shades of purple, white and pink.

Some popular varieties and their growing conditions:

Hidcote

Lavender Hidcote



Lavender Hidcote

Most popular in home gardens, hardest to cultivate in the English **lavender family, the Hidcote is known for its color and long-lasting scent and is cultivated for its oil** and dry purple-blue flowers. The plants are **toxic to dogs, cats, and horses**; and only grow 20 inches (50 cm) tall.

Munstead



Lavender Munstead

Munstead is one of the most fragrant lavender varieties, with a very rounded, bushy habit and lots of flowers. It is prized for edible flowers and its high oil content that is [good for essential oils and commonly used for perfumes](#). Munstead is smaller than most lavender varieties and blooms earlier than many. It is reputed to do better in warmer, drier climates as well. It's called the "[queen of herbs for herb gardens](#)" that grows 2-3 ft. (60-90 cm) tall.

Thumbelina



Thumbelina

Thumbelina is one of the members of the English lavender family also called true lavender or common lavender [associated](#) with the famous lavender fields of Provence that small space gardeners [love](#) because they bloom three times in a season. They grow up to 2-3 ft tall (60-90 cm), are one of the most [compact cultivars in cultivation](#) and can be [toxic](#) to cats, dogs, and horses.

Phenomenal



Phenomenal

Phenomenal is another type of English lavender plant with spikes of purple-blue flowers and silver leaves, edible, and fast-growing. They **grow** 24-32 inches (61-81 cm) tall, and bloom mid-summer to early fall.

Pastor's pride



Pastor's pride

Pastor's pride is another drought-resistant variety of English lavender that's known for its **blue fragrant flowers** and silver-green foliage. The plants bloom twice the growing season from early summer to fall. They grow 18-24 inches (46-61 cm) tall.

The Spanish lavender and its characteristics

Different from English lavender, they have slender leaves and plump, pineapple-shaped flower tops **pinkish-purple in color**. And even if English lavender is more common, Spanish lavender has **unique characteristics** and more fragrant flowers.

Some popular varieties and their growing conditions:

Butterfly Lavender



Butterfly lavender

Also called *Lavandula stoechas With Love*, butterfly lavender is a Spanish lavender variety with **cerise-crimson** flowers with pale pink flags, and grey-green foliage that grows 14-18 inches (30-35 cm) tall. They have a **longer bloom season** and are resistant to diseases.

Anouk

Anouk is a variety of the Spanish lavender family that's divided into other subgroups

Anouk:



Anouk

Also called French lavender, Anouk is a Spanish lavender variety covered with purple flower spikes with deep pink-purple petals. They have hot pink overtones that rise above their grey-green foliage from early to late summer. They usually **grow** 10-14 inches (25-36 cm) tall.

Double Anouk:



Double Anouk

Also called French lavender, this plant is the [first commercially grown](#) Spanish lavender from seed. They grow 14-18 inches (35-45 cm) tall, have [several blooming times](#) (bloom continuously) and purple large flower heads.

Anouk Supreme:

Another subgroup of the Anouk family, and a variety of Spanish lavender that blooms continually from mid-late spring to late summer. They [grow](#) 14-18 inches (36-46 cm) tall, and have [butterfly-like petals](#) and are toxic to dogs, cats, and horses. This variety is also [disease resistant](#).



Anouk Supreme

Anouk Deep Rose:



Anouk Deep Rose

A Spanish lavender variety and a subcategory of the Anouk group. Like the other Anouk, the Anouk Deep Rose **grow** 14-18 inches (36-46 cm) tall. With grey-green foliage and **deep pink colored flowers**, they **have high resistance** to foliar disease.

Silver Anouk:



Silver Anouk

Silver Anouk is yet another subcategory of the Anouk group of lavender, and a member of the Spanish lavender with **fragrant silver-grey leaves** and **two-toned flowers** that grow 10-14 inches (25-36 cm) tall. The beautiful **disease-resistant plants** are toxic to dogs, cats, and horses though.

Ruffles

Ruffles are another variety of Spanish lavender divided into other subgroups:

Strawberry Ruffles:

Strawberry Ruffles are a subgroup of the Ruffles family and a variety of Spanish lavender with deep/light pink flowers and **light green foliage** that grow about 20-23 inches (50-60 cm) tall. The plants **got this name** after their 'ruffled' edges of their flower wings.



Strawberry Ruffles

Boysenberry Ruffles:



Boysenberry Ruffles

This subgroup of the Ruffle family is also a Spanish lavender variety with **pink** fragrant ruffled bloom flowers. The Boysenberry Ruffles are a selection that's heat, humidity, and **drought tolerant** that grows up to 24-30 inches (445-60 cm) **tall** and bloom all year-round.

Blueberry Ruffles:



Blueberry Ruffles

This category of Ruffles is **called this way** because of its blueberry colored spikes petals with gray-green foliage. These drought-tolerant plants grow 20-23 inches (50-60 cm) tall and bloom from late summer through early fall.

Otto Quast



Otto Quast

A variety of Spanish lavender with purple spike of flowers with mauve petals from the top. The plant is drought tolerant once established and grows 18-24 inches (46-61 cm) tall.

Bandera

Bandera is just another type of Spanish lavender with unique characteristics:

Bandera Pink:



Bandera Pink

This subgroup has deep rose flowers with silver-green foliage with beautiful top pink flags (bracts). They grow 8-10 inches (20-25 cm) tall and are drought tolerant once established. Flowers from these plants are abundant.

Bandera Purple:



Bandera Purple

This selection of Bandera is part of the Spanish lavender family, that produces abundant eye-catching blooms. The plants have grey-green colored foliage and the flower spikes contain **dark purple-violet flowers** with beautiful purple flags on top. They grow 7-9 inches (18-23 cm) tall and bloom from **spring through summer**.

Choosing the best lavender for your garden

Knowing the different types of lavender certainly won't be enough for you to know which one will be best for your backyard. That's why in this next section of the selection process, we look into which one will perform better for the weather in your region or your garden. So, which of the abovementioned grows well where?

Munstead and the *Bandera* group (the purple and the pink) grow best in hot and dry weather, while the *Anouk* family (Anouk, Double Anouk, Anouk supreme, Anouk deep rose, Silver Anouk) and *Butterfly lavender* standing up to heat and drought are more tolerant to steamy weathers (hot and humid). The *Ruffles* group (Strawberry, Boysenberry, Blueberry) and *Thumbelina* grow well in cool and wet weather. *Hidcote*, *Otto Quast*, *Pastor's pride* and *Phenomenal* are cold-hardy instead and will thrive in cold weathers.

Step 2 – Prepare yourself and the seeds or plants

Now that you know what type of lavender choose, the next step is to prepare. And this means, getting the plants or seeds, preparing the soil, getting all materials ready.

Seeds or plants?

Preparing involves deciding to go either for the type of lavender in seed or plant form.

Seeds

If you are on a budget or if you're just up for a challenge, then go for seeds. Only, you'll need to get them early to prep them. When it comes to seeds, purchasing the right seed is less important than deciding who to purchase them from. This is because with lavender seeds you don't have to worry about GMOs, or it being organic.

Plants

By far the most popular option. The majority of people will buy pre-grown lavender plants

Gardening materials

Pots

Get enough pots, especially if growing lavender from seed. Because you can't control nature, pots are safest to use to grow lavender seeds. Start with 3 inch pots and then go for much larger pots.

Sprayer

This is necessary when growing seeds, to avoid flooding them.

Soil

You'll need the appropriate soil (a mixture of soil and sand) that contains the right mixture of nutrients for your seeds or plants to grow healthy. Neutral to slightly alkaline soils are good enough. If you're planting plants directly to your garden, make sure the soil is well-drained.

Compost/fertilizer

When it comes to growing lavender, the plants don't need to be fed fertilizers. So, less fertilizer is more.

Garden tools

Before getting yourself into growing lavender or any gardening activity of the matter, you need good garden tools. From gloves to shovel, make sure you have all the necessary tools you need.

Step 3 – Planting lavender

Once you're done prepping, the next step in line is planting per se. Depending on whether you are planning to grow seeds or plants, you want to make sure you are taking the appropriate steps.

Planting seeds

- the first step begins with adding the soil into the pots at 80% full, then moisten the soil (spray water). Make sure the soil is moist and not damp – because we don't want unwanted fungus.
- next, sprinkle the seeds on the soil, and gently brush the soil over them.
- spray the soil again with water
- expose the pots to sunlight, and make sure the pots are kept in an area with a temperature of about 70 degrees

Note that the [process](#) above (initial planting) needs to be done 12 weeks prior to you moving the young plants into larger pots or into your garden. Then the soil will need to be sprayed once-twice a day.



Once you notice your seeds have germinated (remember that not all will) and sprouted out the soil, keep spraying them daily until they are 3 inches tall; then, transplant the plants into your larger pots:

- fill the pots at 80% with mixed moist soil
- make a hole in the soil (about the size of your plants)
- transfer both the plants and the soil surrounding its roots into the holes you made
- add more soil to fill the pot
- spray water to moisten the soil
- slowly introduce the plants to the sun, and keep spraying them

... and later on to your garden (once they reach the appropriate size):

- well before transplanting, dig holes about 8 inches deep and fill them with compost
- make sure holes are 1-3 ft. apart
- make sure the area gets 8 hours of sunlight a day
- re-dig the holes and transfer the plants from the pots to the garden
- water the soil and mulch each plant with chopped leaves, or leftover compost

Remember to water the plants once a week, but even if you don't, lavender plants are drought resistant, so it's no big deal.

For those that opted for pre-grown plants to plant, skip the seed germination/sprouting process and only perform the transplanting outside steps.

Step 4 – Caring for lavender

The hardest part is now done, but you still need maintenance and care to grow the plant into a full bushy shrub.

Understanding

Understanding your lavender plants and what you'll use them for will make it easier for you to better care for them.

Healthy soil

Inspect your soil for fungus, harmful worms, and weeds.

Watering

Water young plants daily, and adult/major plants once in a week.

Mulching

Use straw, compost, dead leaves to mulch to conserve the soil's moisture. Lavender plants don't need much of this because they are drought resistant.

Trimming and pruning

During summer, harvest flower stalks – they'll be useful to you fresh or dried. Even if you don't use the flowers, still cut the flower heads (after flowers have faded) to stimulate the second flowering.

Lavender produces its best foliage from young stems. So [pruning](#) during Spring (cut off one-third of the stems) will stimulate new growth, better foliage, and flowering.

Pest and diseases

Because they are very fragrant, most insects/pests will avoid lavender plants. However, some might still disturb, and in that case, you might want to get a bug killer. To avoid diseases (fungus), make sure your plants are spaced further apart and have good air circulation.

Propagate

Lavender self-sow, so unless you want a lot of baby lavenders in your garden, cut the heads vigilantly. You could also propagate lavender by cutting one healthy branch, planting it, watering it until it establishes a root system.

Step 5 – Bonus step: Harvesting lavender

Here comes most people's favorite part after growing lavender: harvesting. To do so, remember:

- harvest when half of the flower buds are open
- harvest in the morning
- when harvesting, cut right above the ground
- leave out some stalks for next season
- store them in a cool dry place. Read more [here](#)

At the end of the day, you may ask yourself: what's the point of all this? Why grow lavender?

Our answer is, lavender has many uses – from [beauty](#) and [health](#) to food or just [scent](#), growing lavender is a decision you won't regret taking.

What's your favorite type of lavender to grow? Did we miss any step for learning how to grow lavender? Tell us in the comments below