

Hoosier Botanicals™

LAVENDER (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

In the Kitchen...

Lavender's fragrant leaves and flowers are used in lemonade, ice tea, jellies, flavored vinegars, and sparingly in salads. Flowers can also be added to fruit compotes or sauces for meats. When making apple jelly or raspberry jam, try adding a sprig of lavender to each jar. Makes an attractive garnish with white or yellow cake.

Lavender with its lovely purple-blue flowers is the quintessential English garden herb. The name of this herb is derived from the Latin verb "to wash" and its "classic" clean fragrance triggers memories of times past and far-away places. It has also been used for making soap more aromatic, for freshening closed rooms, for its soothing effects on troubled emotions, and even as a substitute for mothballs.

Lavender Tuna Preheat grill or broiler. Mix 1 tbsp each of finely chopped lavender flowers and fennel florets with 1 tsp of freshly ground black pepper in a small bowl. Rub 4 tuna steaks with the flower mixture, lightly coating all sides. Grill to desired doneness. Serves 4.

Chef Tip Add a sprig of lavender to each jar when making apple jelly or raspberry jam.



Part used: Flower

Condition: Fresh or dried

Ethnic span: French, English

Methods: Snip sprigs of leaves or flowers

Storage: Dried

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In the Garden...

Because of its long germination time, lavender is seldom started from seed. Take 2–3" long cuttings in the summer from the side shoots. Grasp a healthy shoot to take a cutting and pull it downward so that a piece of the older wood comes along with it. Space cuttings 3–4" apart in shady sandy soil. Transplant one year old plants 4–6' apart in dry, light, stony or gravelly soil that is not subject to frost. (Lavender is an ideal plant for a large rock garden.) Allow the top 1" of soil to dry between waterings. During the first year prune to prevent flowering and encourage branching. Plants can grow to 5' in width. To encourage spreading, see that it has enough lime. Protect from summer and winter winds. Pick fully in the second through fifth years. If not using the blossoms, cut the spent flowers to keep your plant flourishing. Protect in winter where temperatures are low. Watch for fungus and caterpillars but care should be minimal.

Harvest flowers for drying either when they first open or when they are full. Place on screens in the shade in airy places with high temperatures or hang in bunches suspended from the rafters in your attic or shed.

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Mint family—

Labiatae;

Mediterranean origin

Perennial

Full sun

Light well-drained soil with pH 7.1

Space 3–4", move 2nd yr. to 4–6' apart

Grows to 5' in width

Flowers in midsummer

Lavender to purple blossoms

Propagate by cuttings