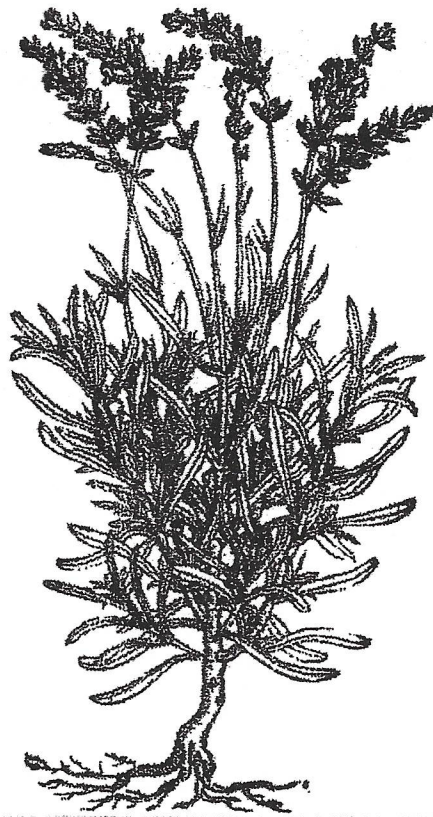


LAVENDER 101

BY ELLEN SCANNELL



TEACHERS GUIDE AND MEMBERS HANDOUT

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE WRITER OF THE
LESSON LAVENDER 101
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Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia* et. al.)

“Here’s your sweet lavender, sixteen sprigs a penny
That you’ll find my ladies, will smell as sweet as any.”

Lavender Sellers Cry

London, ca. 1900

Lavender is a bushy perennial shrub that often becomes twisted and woody with age. It is native to the Mediterranean area but it is widely cultivated throughout the world in Zones 5 to 8. This member of the Lamiaceae (formerly Labiatae) family wants full sun and a light well drained soil with a pH range of 6.4 to 8.3. Lavender grows to a height of three feet or more and often reaches about the same measure in girth but there are also dwarf varieties, notably *L. angustifolia* ‘Nana.’ The two-inch leaves are opposite and somewhat velvety and silvery gray with the exception of *L. viridis* which has green leaves. The leaves are smooth edged except for *L. dentata* which has fringed leaves. The small flowers are various shades of purple although there are both rose and white varieties. The flowers, which are in whorls of about 10 at the ends of stalks, appear mostly in June through August but, for the best fragrance and oil, the flowers should be harvested just as they start opening. The fruits are shiny dark brown nutlets. Perhaps at this time I should attempt to explain some of the “exceptions” regarding lavender. The lavenders we grow are mostly hybrids and accurate identification is tricky. The taxonomy is very confused and some experts (Dr. Arthur Tucker for one) have been attempting to unsnarl the tangle. Dr. Tucker says the lavenders can be best distinguished by the bracts. In The Genus *Lavandula* by Upson and Andrews, the authors claim there are 39 species. *Lavandula officinalis*, *L. vera*, *L. delphinensis* and *L. spica* are sometimes labeled English lavender but that term should be reserved for *L. angustifolia*. English lavender usually produces a relatively small quantity of lavender oil but it is of superb quality. Another important species of lavender, *L. latifolia* (a.k.a. spike) produces a greater quantity of lesser quality oil which is often used as an adulterant to the *L. angustifolia* oil. Cross breeding of *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia* has produced many cultivars; the most common of these, *L. x intermedia* or Lavandin and its cultivars are much used in the perfume industry. If you’re not totally confused by now, and I haven’t even attempted to straighten out the tangled *L. stoechas* nomenclature, then I’ve failed miserably!

As you might suspect from the previous paragraph, planting hybrid seed is not a good method of propagation. Better methods are root division, layering or cuttings. Take 2 or 3 inch “cuttings” in early fall by pulling downward on a one season sprig so that some old wood comes with it. Place in moist sandy soil with some shade protection for one year until planting in a permanent location. The transplants should be protected from excessive wind and any flowers removed in order to strengthen the plant. Lavender can be used as an edging shrub, in an everlasting garden, as a container or bonsai plant, as a necessary plant in an English or Victorian herb garden, for knot and bee gardens and wherever a tapestry effect is desired. In 17th century Ireland it was even used as a lawn plant. Lavender is relatively pest free except for fungal diseases which can often be controlled with better air circulation. Spittle bugs can be blasted off with a hose.

In the Middle Ages lavender was thought to be the herb of love which, however, worked

both ways. It was considered to be an aphrodisiac but a sprinkle of lavender water on the head was supposed to keep one chaste (possibly an early example of homeopathic medicine.) The name is thought to derive from the Latin lavare which means to wash (the color, apparently, was named after the plant rather than the reverse.) St. Hildegard of Bingen recommended it as a disinfectant and it was used to wash wounds until W.W. I.) The ancient Greeks called it Nardus after an area of cultivation and in very old texts it is often called Spikenard. The oil has been used in embalming and it is reputed to rid animals of lice as well as to have a calming effect on lions and tigers (and bears; oh my!)

Lavender was used medicinally for most ailments, among others: hysteria, palsy, colic, apoplexy, bruises, headaches, acne and halitosis. A 1710 herbal claims "it is good also against the bitings of serpents, mad-dogs and other venomous creatures, being given inwardly and applied poultice-wise to the parts wounded. The spirituous tincture of the dried leaves or seeds, if prudently given, cures hysterick fits though vehement and of long standing." In China this herb is used in a general medicinal called White Flower Oil. Until the 1940s a lavender tincture called "Palsy Drops" had been officially recognized by the British Pharmacopoeia for more than 200 years.

Although the uses of lavender are mostly associated with its fragrance and include strewing, potpourris, soaps, colognes, sachets and crafts, it has some culinary uses. It is an ingredient of herbes de Provence and it is found in Asian cuisines. It is also used to flavor jellies or desserts and the flowers can be candied. In the Middle Ages lavender was an ingredient, along with rosemary sage and thyme, in "Four Thieves Vinegar" which was used as a protection against plague. Even to this day this concoction is used by witches, wiccans and in voodoo rites to break magic spells.

Folklore, perhaps self serving, tells us that the asp nested in lavender thus making it dangerous to harvest and, hence, more expensive. Additional chicanery was noted by Sir James Smith when he described an alcoholic tincture made "for those who wished to indulge in a dram under the appearance of elegant medicine."

Ellen Scannell

LAVENDER HIGHLIGHTS

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) first mentioned lavender in her *Physica*

Lavender—any of the genus *Lavandula* of fragrant European plants of the mint family having spikes of pale purplish flowers and yielding an aromatic oil

Shakespeare from *The Winter's Tale*:

“There's flowers for you; Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed wi' the sun,
And with him rises weeping; these are flowers
Of middle summer, and I think they are given
To men of middle age.”

39 species and 400 cultivars

Foliage

- green
- silver
- fringed
- lacy
- fernlike
- leaves
 - long or short
 - smooth or slightly fuzzy

Size

- dwarf—Alpine alba is 5 to 6 inches tall
- people size

Flowers

- white
- blue
- pink
- lavender
- dark violet
- yellow
- greenish
- parts

- corolla—petals—sweet tasting
- calyx—base—harsher tasting—portion that dries for crafts
- bracts—upright wings, rabbits, flags—tasteless

Botany

genus *lavandula* (to wash) or from Latin word for “livid” or “bluish”

species

1. angustifolia (narrow leaf)—English lavender—small quantity of excellent oil—temperature limit is minus 25 degrees
2. latifolia (broad leaf)—large amount of oil but quality not so good—flowers branched like candelabra—spike lavender—tolerates more acidic soil—once called spikenard
3. intermedia or lavandin (cross of previous ones)—usually mule hybrid (seeds are sterile)—large amount of oil better than latifolia—resists fungal diseases—cold hardy

Blooming time

stoechas (Spanish)—Greeks and Romans grew for medicinal purposes—flowers look like little pine cones or pineapples with “rabbit ears”
angustifolia
intermedia or lavandin

Growing Conditions

native to Mediterranean area
full sun
Zones 5 to 8
pH 6.4 to 8.3 (likes lime)
excellent drainage
dry conditions once established
irrigation
 drip
 overhead early in day
low nitrogen
low humidity
prune in spring and after flowering
deer resistant

Propagation

not seeds
root division
cuttings
layering

Diseases and pests

self-reliant herb
fungus—better air circulation
 no organic mulch
mildew—too much water or high humidity
rust
root rot—better drainage
spittle bugs

shab—European problem that resembles root rot (yellowing, wilting and then brown)
weeds

Attracting good life

bees
butterflies
praying mantis
spiders
lizards

Garden uses

everlasting
bee
knot
lawn plant in 17th century Ireland
topiary—*L. dentata* (French)—tender—blooms most of year in greenhouse

Harvesting

lower 1/3 of flowers are open/opening
clear dry day before noon
bunches not over 100 fastened with rubber band
dark dry place with good air circulation

Medicinal

hysteria
palsy
colic
apoplexy
bruises
headaches
acne
halitosis

1710 herbal: "it is good also against the bitings of serpents, mad-dogs and other venomous creatures, being given inwardly and applied poultice-wise to the parts wounded. The spirituous tincture of the dried leaves or seeds, if prudently given, cures hysterick fits though vehement and of long standing."

Folklore

Asp
Tuscany—protects small children from the evil eye
North Africa—lavender used by women to prevent abuse by husbands
asp

Other uses

early

oil for embalming corpses
Egyptian mummies
strewing
Medieval and Renaissance women were known as "lavenders"
aromatherapy
allergies
potpourri
soap
cologne
sachet
crafts—wands and bottles
cigarette tobacco
calming effect on lions and tigers
culinary
herbes de Provence
jelly
bakery items
desserts
crystallized flowers
stems for grilling
The Lavender Cookbook
foliage—use ½ to 1/3 amount of flowers

Miscellaneous

Grosso and fat spike are same
L. heterophylla is dentata x latifolia
L. multifida (fernleaf)—flowers have no scent—foliage stinks—very tender
L. viridis—lemon smell—can be grown from seed—try with grilling—drought tolerant
'Irene Doyle'—two blooming periods—excellent oil—also called Two Seasons
sand mulch increases oil content of foliage from 28 to 771%
distillation—225 pounds of angustifolia flowers for 1 pint essential oil (2 gallons per acre) while intermedia or lavandin produces 4 times as much
steam
cold press (like olive oil)
over 180 constituents in oil
lavender water—heads in brandy or vodka (no water used)
Chicago research project on males—most arousing fragrances—lavender and pumpkin

Ellen Scannell

CULINARY LAVENDER HIGHLIGHTS

History

Romans probably took it to England

Pilgrims brought it to this country

Queen Elizabeth I fond of lavender tea

Lavender flower wine used as liver remedy

Acquired taste

Use very light hand

Dried is sweeter than fresh because some of camphor and menthol evaporates

Shameless seducer after you get past thinking of perfumes and potpourri

Cooking

Angustifolia (English)—sweet

Intermedia—Provence and Grosso—stronger taste

Viridis—grilling and hearty dishes

Stems and leaves can be used but flowers are best

Munstead foliage very strong tasting

Goes especially well with lamb, potatoes, spearmint and desserts

Essential oil—food grade (Thyme Garden)

Use by drops

Equivalents

1 t dried = 2 t fresh

2 C milk or cream or 1 C sugar and 1 C water for simple syrup use 1 to 1
½ dried lavender or 6 to 8 flower fresh flower clusters and simmer

Lavender honey

Natural best

2 C clover or light honey, 1 T dried flowers—heat to 150—steep for 24 hours and strain

The Lavender Cookbook

Basics—salt, wet rub, syrup, butter and preserved lemons

Divided by seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter

Appetizers

Breads

Beverages

Soups

Salads

Entrees

Side dishes

Desserts

Very lavender apricot cake with mascarpone lavender frosting

Lavender breast of chicken stuffed with apples and fennel in parchment

Veal scaloppine and artichoke hearts with pomegranate lavender sauce

The Thyme Garden Cookbook—lavender lemonade

Nichols—Basic Herb Cookery

Ellen Scannell 2006

When you add just enough lavender to a plain buttery cake or cookie, it acts in the way vanilla does, as a background flavor that adds depth and fullness to the flavor but doesn't announce itself too boldly. Pound cake is particularly heavenly with lavender, and this one has such a fine, dense, and springy texture you could curl up on it. Like traditional pound cake, it has no baking powder and is leavened solely by the air beaten into the batter, so it's vital to cream the butter and sugar thoroughly. That makes it an easy cake to prepare if you have a stand mixer, but best to pass if you don't.

LAVENDER POUND CAKE

Makes one 10-inch cake; 16 to 20 slices

Softened butter and flour for preparing the pan
2 tablespoons lavender buds, fresh or dried
2 ½ cups sugar, preferably fine (baker's sugar)
3 sticks (12 ounces) unsalted butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon fine salt
5 large eggs, at room temperature
3 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
¾ cup sour cream

Preheat the oven to 325 F. Heavily butter a 10-inch tube pan, coat it with flour, and knock out the excess. Whirl the lavender and ¼ cup of the sugar in a spice grinder (rotary coffee mill), mini food processor, or blender until very finely ground.

Put the butter, the remaining 2 ¼ cups sugar, the lavender sugar, vanilla, and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle. Turn to medium high, set a timer for 4 minutes, and let the mixer do its work until the timer goes off. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula and beat another minute. It will be very fluffy and nearly white. Add the eggs, one at a time beating the batter well before adding another (crack the eggs into a cup first, for insurance against adding eggshells). Alternately add the flour and sour cream (1/3 of the flour, ½ the sour cream, another 1/3 of the flour, the rest of the sour cream, and finally the remaining flour), beating each addition into the batter completely before you add the next. Scrape down the sides of the bowl a couple of times during the whole process.

Scoop the batter into the prepared pan as evenly as you can and gently whack the pan on the counter a couple of times to expel air pockets. Bake the cake for 1 hour and 20 minutes to 1 hour 35 minutes, or until it is golden brown and springs back when pressed and a wooden skewer emerges dry after being inserted into the center. Let the cake cool in the pan on a rack for about 15 minutes, then turn it out onto the rack. Once it's completely cool, wrap it tightly in plastic wrap. It will be best the second day and still moist after about 4 days.

Recipe was taken from The Herbal Kitchen by Jerry Traunfeld

Lavender Lemonade **By Ellen Scannell**

One Day Ahead

Steep 3 or 4 tablespoons dried culinary lavender blossoms in 2 cups of cold water in the refrigerator. Use English lavender flowers (*Lavandula angustifolia*) or 'Provence' or 'Grosso' (*Lavandula intermedia*).

Use your favorite 2-quart lemonade recipe except omit 2 cups of the water. Strain the lavender flowers from the steeped liquid. Discard the flowers and slowly add the liquid to the lemonade, stirring and tasting along the way until the desired flavor is reached. The lemonade may be garnished with fresh sprigs of the aforementioned lavenders. If using fresh culinary lavender flowers increase the amount of flowers by about one third.

Enjoy

Try Lavender Lemonade

As summer winds down, give yourself a lift with lavender lemonade. First make a lavender syrup by adding 1 cup of sugar to 1 cup of water and boiling until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and add 2 tablespoons lavender flowers and a small piece of lemon rind, all white removed. Let it steep for 20 minutes. Strain and refrigerate.

For each glass of lemonade, squeeze half a lemon into a glass and drop in the rind. Add 2 tablespoons of syrup and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Stir and fill glass with crushed ice. Add more syrup if you like a stronger taste.

Thyme Garden's Famous Lavender Lemonade

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

1 cup sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh lavender blooms (or 1 heaping tablespoon of dried)

Homemade or canned lemonade

Prepare a lavender syrup by combining the water and sugar in a medium-size pot. Bring slowly to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the lavender blooms and remove from heat; cover and let steep for at least 20 minutes. Strain the mixture.

To prepare the lemonade, add ice to a clear glass pitcher, then add lemonade, leaving at least 1 inch head space. At the table, just before pouring the lemonade, add about 1 inch of the lavender syrup – the color will change before everyone's eyes, so get ready for the compliments. Garnish individual glasses with a lavender stem.

Plum and Lavender Chutney

Makes 4 half pints

The winning combination of lavender and plums makes a lovely, piquant chutney. Try it layered on a turkey sandwich or spread on crackers with Stilton cheese.

2 ½ pounds almost-ripe red or purple plums, such as Santa Rosa or Friar

1 medium onion, finely chopped (about 8 ounces)

Finely chopped peel (removed with a zester; colored part only) and juice (3 tablespoons) of 1 lemon

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh ginger

1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

6 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

¾ teaspoon salt

1 ½ tablespoons chopped fresh lavender buds or 2 teaspoons dried

Cut the plums in half, remove the pits, and cut them into ½ inch wedges. Put them in a large (4 quart) heavy-bottomed saucepan and stir in the onion, lemon peel and juice, ginger, mustard, red pepper flakes, vinegar, brown sugar and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring often, until it has a jamlike consistency, 35 to 45 minutes.

Stir in the lavender. Taste and season with additional salt or red pepper flakes if desired.

Meanwhile, wash 4 half-pint jars and fill with hot water until needed. Prepare lids as manufacturer directs.

Ladle hot jam into 1 hot jar at a time, leaving ¼ inch head space. Wipe jar rim with a clean, damp cloth. Attach lid. Fill and close remaining jars. Process in a boiling-water canner for 15 minutes (20 minutes at 1,000 to 6,000 feet; 20 minutes above 6,000 feet).

If the jars are properly sealed, the center of the lid will not yield when you press on it. If any jars did not seal, keep them refrigerated. For best eating quality, use within 6 months. You can also freeze the jars without processing them.

Adapted from "The Herbfarm Cookbook" by Jerry Traunfeld

Per Serving:

Calories: 49 per 2 tablespoons (3% from protein, 91% from carbohydrate, 5% from fat)

Protein: 0.4 gram

Cholesterol: 0

Fiber: 0.6 gram

Exchanges: ½ fruit, ½ starch

Total fat: 0.3 gram

Sodium: 57 mg

Saturated fat: 0

Carbohydrate: 12.1 grams

Potatoes With Lavender and Rosemary

Makes 4 to 6 servings

“Many people are skeptical when I suggest how good lavender can be in savory foods but this dish can change their minds,” says Herbfarm chef Jerry Traunfeld. “When lavender is cooked with simple boiled potatoes, its sweet and floral flavor turns earthy and mysterious, especially when its savoriness is amplified with fresh rosemary.”

2 lbs. small potatoes, such as Yellow Finn, Yukon Gold, fingerling, or new red or white potatoes
6 fresh lavender sprigs, or 1 teaspoon dried lavender buds
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 teaspoons finely chopped fresh lavender buds, or 2 teaspoons dried
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
½ teaspoon salt, or to taste
Freshly ground pepper

Wash the potatoes and cut them in halves or quarters. If using fingerlings, slice them crosswise ¾ inch thick. Put them in a saucepan with the lavender sprigs and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat and continue to boil until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a fork but still hold their shape, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain. Some of the lavender buds will cling to the potatoes. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the potatoes, chopped lavender, rosemary, salt, and freshly ground pepper to taste; cook, turning occasionally, until the potatoes are nicely browned all over and creamy in the center, about 15 minutes

Adapted from “The Herbfarm Cookbook” by Jerry Traunfeld

Per Serving:

Calories: 184 (6% from protein, 64% from carbohydrate, 30% from fat)

Protein: 3 grams

Cholesterol: 16 grams

Fiber: 2.5 grams

Exchanges: 2 starch, 1 fat

Total fat: 6.3 grams

Sodium: 199 mg

Saturated fat: 3.8 grams

Carbohydrate: 30.1 grams

Brown Sugar Pears Baked With Lavender

Makes 4 servings

A layer of brown sugar and butter makes a sweet syrup for the pears as they bake, and the lavender added toward the end of the cooking brings a haunting tone to the finished dish. This is the kind of dessert you find at home-cooked meals in Provence during fall and winter.

3 firm, ripe pears such as Bosc or Bartlett

¼ cup unsalted butter, cut into small pieces (1/2 stick)

½ cup firmly packed brown sugar

½ teaspoon dried lavender buds

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Peel the pears, then halve lengthwise and remove the core. Set aside.

Scatter the butter pieces over the bottom of a 9 inch square baking dish. Put the dish in the oven for about 5 minutes, or until the butter has melted. Remove and sprinkle the butter with about 2/3 of the brown sugar. Put the pears, flat side down, in the baking dish. Sprinkle them with the lavender, and then with the remaining brown sugar.

Bake until the pears are tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and serve hot or warm.

From "The Mediterranean Herb Cookbook" by Georgeanne Brennan

Per Serving:

Calories: 274 (1% from protein, 60% from carbohydrate, 39% from fat)

Protein: 0.5 gram

Cholesterol: 33 mg

Fiber: 2.8 grams

Exchanges: 1 fruit, 2 starch, 2 fat

Total Fat: 12.6 grams

Sodium: 13 mg

Saturated fat: 7.6 grams

Carbohydrate: 42.7 grams

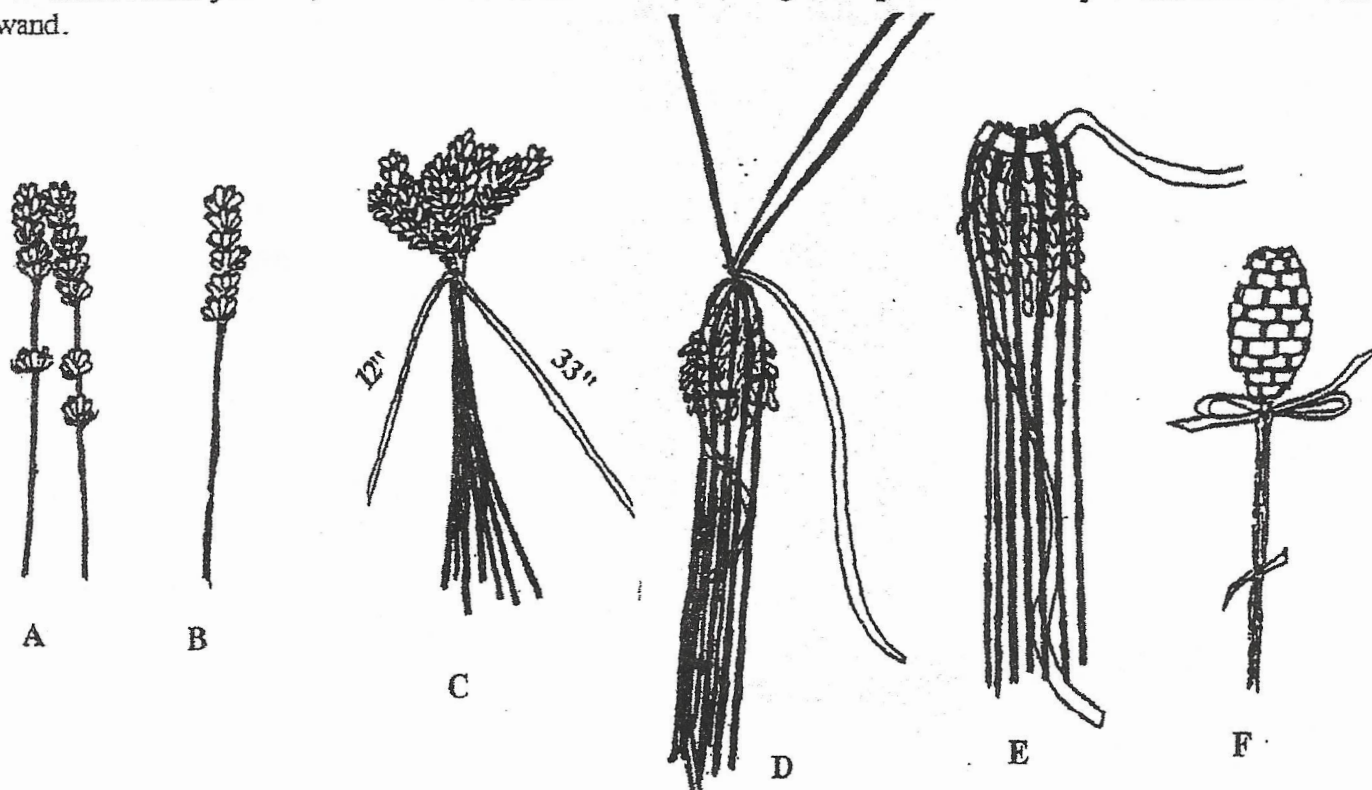
HOW TO MAKE A LAVENDER WAND

Lavender wands, also called lavender dollies, are a traditional English design. They are made by taking a bunch of fresh lavender, bending the stems back over the flowers, and weaving a ribbon around the stems. This holds captive the fragrant flowers, keeping their scent for many years.

The scent can be renewed by gently rolling the wand between your hands. Lavender wands are great both for their wonderful fragrance and appearance.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1. The wand should be made from freshly harvested lavender stems. Our favorite cultivars to use are among the lavandins, including 'Provence', 'Grosso', 'Seal', and 'Super' (see the lavender section of our catalog). Pick the stems after the first few flowers have opened. You'll need an odd number of stems for each wand. Try 13 stems for your first wand.
2. Strip off the lower flowers on each stem (see drawing A), making nice even flower spikes (see drawing B).
3. Cut off about 45 inches of number 1½ ribbon. This ribbon is about ¼ inch wide.
4. Tie the ribbon in a knot around the stems just below the flower spikes, leaving 12 inches of ribbon on the short end (see drawing C).
5. Turn the bundle of stems so that the flower spikes are facing downward. Let the short end of the ribbon hang alongside the flowers.
6. Bend the stems at the knot, one at a time, down over the flower spikes and the short strand of ribbon. (see drawing D).
7. With the long strand of ribbon, weave under and over each stem (see drawing E). Keep going until you have reached the end of the flower spikes. Let the wand dry for two or three days, and then tie the 2 ribbon ends into a tight bow (see drawing F).
8. Once you get the knack of making nice, tight, wands, try using more stems or different sizes of ribbon. The more stems you use, or the narrower the ribbon, the longer the piece of ribbon you will need for each wand.



FRENCH LAVENDER/*Lavandula dentata* • TOPIARY CARE

1. This plant does not tolerate frost
2. Even hardy topiary plants should be kept indoors during the winter, as their long stem makes them vulnerable to wind and cold weather. They can all be kept in a cool, sunny location. At least 5 hours of direct sunlight is recommended. You can place the topiary outside in frostfree months. During hot summer weather, partial or afternoon shade is recommended.
3. Repot your topiary each year with fresh potting soil. You can repot into the same pot, or move it up to a bigger pot.
4. Fertilize during the growing season with a mild liquid fertilizer.
5. Keep the topiary in shape by periodic light trimming. You can let them flower. The thyme and lavender flowers need to be cut off, however, soon after they fade.
6. Keep the soil moist but not wet. If you have a saucer under the pot, make sure you drain out the excess water.

