

# LAVENDER

## LATIN NAME

*Lavandula officinale*

## SYNONYMS

English lavender  
True lavender

## FAMILY

Mint family  
(*Lamiaceae*)

## SPECIES

*L. angustifolia*,  
*L. spica*, *L. vera*

## MEDICINAL PARTS

Flowers and essential oil extracted from the flowers contain a volatile oil with a sweet scent and a pungent bitter taste.

## WHERE FOUND

In gardens all over the world. Growing wild on hot grassy, dry and sunny slopes especially around the Mediterranean.

Doesn't like shade.

## DOSE

1 teaspoon flowers to 1 cup of boiling water. Infuse for 5 minutes. Drink 3 cups per day, or in the evening. Use the oil externally, massaged into the skin, in the bath or as an inhalation

Lavender flowers can be used raw as a condiment in salads, to give an aromatic flavour to jams, vinegars and ice-creams, and as an insect repellent in the wardrobe, to perfume clothes and linen, as a strewing herb to perfume rooms and repel insects, in pot-pourries and as incense sticks. The essential oil is also used in food flavouring, soaps and perfumes.

## Medicinal use

The flowers and the essential oils are used for their soothing, relaxing effect on the nervous system. The oil is absorbed through the skin and the airways, and can be used to calm nervousness, relieve stress, to clear depression and help insomnia. For tension headaches and migraine, rub a few drops on the temples. It is also used to boost the immune system, and for digestive problems and to relax tension, relieve cramps and soothe the aches and pains of sore muscles and joints.

The oil is also excellent to treat insect bites and burns, to sores, varicose ulcers and bruises. It is a powerful antiseptic and antibacterial against many common bacteria such as streptococcus. It can also be used to repel and kill parasites.

**Side effects:** Overdose can cause dizziness. The taste of the tea is very bitter and is best drunk quite weak.

## Ecology and folklore

Lavender bushes tend to become straggly unless they are trimmed regularly, so they are perfect in low hedges. Trim in early spring only. It is a very friendly plant, making a good companion for most other plants, and bees and butterflies love it. Lavender honey is delicious!



*Lavandula officinalis* Chaix  
Otto Karl Berg and Carl Friedrich Schmidt - 1853