

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program

Lavender Production Basics for Northeastern New York

Before planting lavender for culinary or essential oil production, please consider the following guidelines to ensure that you harvest a high-quality lavender crop. Lavender production remains a very small percentage of farmland in the northeastern US; however there is increasing interest in our region.

1. **Establish a market.** Depending on the variety, lavender can be used as a culinary ingredient or as an essential oil. Build relationships with local consumers and stakeholders to make sure lavender is the right niche for your location. Culinary lavender is a food crop and must be dried in a commercial facility that meets 20C certification standards in New York State.
2. **Take a soil test.** This crop requires very well-draining, gravelly, or sandy soil. Lavender is susceptible to *Phytophthora nicotianae* root rot which has devastated crops planted in heavy soils. Lavender requires little to no fertility and a pH between 6 and 8.
3. **Select varieties for your location and market.** There are hundreds of varieties and hybrids of lavender. It is recommended to start with a few varieties that have a diversity of end uses and are winter hardy to your location (Table 1, Figure 2).
4. **Start small.** Especially if you are a new farmer, make sure you start your lavender production on a manageable scale for your equipment, labor, and market capacity.
5. **Harvest for high quality.** Lavender should be harvested in dry weather to avoid final product molding and when one flower is open for best flavor and oil content (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Lavender is ready to harvest when one or two flowers are open at the top of inflorescences.

Variety Selection

Plants will remain productive from three to fifteen years, so choose wisely! Cultivars that fall under English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) or Lavandin (*Lavendula x intermedia*) are the best cultivar choices for commercial production. Spike lavender, also referred to as Portuguese lavender or Latifolia, are ornamental cultivars. The *Lavendula angustifolia* cultivars are known for their culinary use while hybrid *Lavendula x intermedia* cultivars are known for their essential oil content and have been shown to have northern hardiness. Plant species produce different levels of chemistry in different locations. Therefore, cultivars grown in the Northeast may produce oil content, fragrance, and have harvest dates that vary from that observed in other production regions.

Table 1. List of lavender cultivars in the Lavenlair Farm U-Pick field. The species is listed with each cultivar, on-farm description of plant habit and harvest date, and some origins.

Species	Cultivar	Lavenlair Farm Description	Origin
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	De Lavande	Classic light purple (lavender) flowers ready June 20-July 7, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	France (high attitude)
<i>Lavandula agustifolia</i>	Edgerton Blue	Rich purple flowers ready June 14-July 14, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green, dries blue	Australia
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Myra	White with a blush of lavender flowers ready June 14-July 14, spikes very light green to white and foliage a lively spring green	
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Pacific Blue	Bright purple flowers ready June 14-July 14, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green, dries blue	France
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Miss Philippi	Blushing white, lavender flowers ready June 14-July 14, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Melissa	Light pink nearly white lavender flowers ready June 14-July 1, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	Oregon
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Folgate	Classic purple (lavender) flowers ready June 20-July 14, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green and compact	
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Pacific Pink	Light pink lavender flowers ready June 14-July 1, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	France --> New Zealand
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Brabant	Classic light purple (lavender) flowers ready June 20-July 7, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	French Fields	Classic light purple (lavender) flowers ready June 20-July 14, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	France
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	New Zealand Blue	Classic light purple (lavender) flower spikes ready June 20-July 7, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green, often used for cooking.	New Zealand
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Edelweiss	Light nearly white lavender flowers ready June 28-July 21, spikes and foliage are a gray green	
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	"Fat Spike"/Grosso	Long classic light purple (lavender) flower spikes ready June 25-October 1, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	France
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Impress Purple	Deep purple flowers ready June 28-July 21, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Provence	Long classic light purple (lavender) flower spikes ready June 25-August 20, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	France
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Grosso	Long classic light purple (lavender) flower spikes ready June 25-October 1, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green, strongly scented.	France
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Phenomenal	Long classic light purple (lavender) flower spikes ready June 25-October 1, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green, winter hardy so far.	Pennsylvania
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Super	Long stemmed light purple (lavender) colored flowers ready June 25-July 21, spikes and foliage are a lively spring green	

Table 2. Cornell Cooperative Extension lavender cultivar trial. Four replications of seven plants were donated for this trial from Victor's Lavender in Sequim, WA. Plants were planted on May 20, 2016.

Species	Cultivar
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Royal Velvet
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Violet Intrigue
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Hidcote Blue
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Buena Vista
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Folgate
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Grosso
<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>	Super



Figure 2. Lavender is grown in row fabric to increase spring soil temperature, shed water, and weed suppression. Wire silos are placed over plants for rodent and over wintering protection.

Additional Resources:

[US Lavender Growers Association](#)

[OMAFRA \(Ontario Extension\)](#)

[Victor's Lavender](#)

[North Creek Nurseries](#)

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Albany County

24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186

518-765-3500 • FAX 518-765-2490 • www.ccealbany.com • www.facebook.com/ccealbany

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities. Please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County office if you have any special needs.