

CONTROL:

- For *Fusarium* and leaf spot, remove diseased plants and reduce soil moisture.
- For root, stem, and leaf rot, remove diseased foliage and reduce soil moisture.

**Acknowledgement**

We thank the members of SAEOPA and KARWIL consultancy for information provided.



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PRETORIA

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# Lavender

*Lavandula angustifolia*  
Family: Lamiaceae



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## Background

Essential oil crops are crops that have volatile, aromatic oils in certain parts of the plant. Essential oils are natural plant products which accumulate in specialised structures such as oil cells, glandular trichomes, and oil or resin vessels. The oil is extracted from the plant through steam distillation, chemical extraction or CO<sub>2</sub> extraction.

*Lavandula angustifolia* is a perennial, bushy shrub growing 0,3 to 1,2 m high. True lavender has a compact and rounded growth form.

## Origin and distribution

Most lavender species originate in the Mediterranean basin, in rocky, calcareous areas. Lavender occurs over North Africa, Mediterranean Europe and Western India.

Lavender is cultivated in the Western and Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu-Natal, Free State, Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces.

## Climatic and soil requirements

Lavender produces well with an annual rainfall range from 300 to 1 400 mm per year. It requires well-drained light, sandy, or sandy loam, or gravelly soils in full sun. Soil pH should be between 5,8 and 8,3.

## Uses

Lavender is used in soap making, high-quality perfumes such as 'Eau de Cologne,' candles, incense sachets, potpourri, wands, pillows, flower bundles, dried arrangements, wall hangings, wreaths and many other applications.

## Irrigation

Irrigation is needed for the first 2 years until the crop has become established. Drip irrigation is recommended as it will also assist in controlling weeds.

## Weed control

Hand-hoeing and mechanical weeding with a tractor-drawn cultivator is recommended for the control of weeds. Generally, two to three weeding sessions are necessary during the year.

Distillation waste from this crop applied as organic mulch is found to be effective in controlling weeds.

## Pest and disease control

Very few pests occur on lavender in South Africa as the plant is a natural pest repellent. The soil nematode *Meloidogyne hapla* has been reported as a potential threat to lavender production. Root diseases that may occur are *Fusarium* spp. and *Armillaria* spp. Leaf spot, root, stem, and leaf rot may occur.



## Cultural practices

### Planting

Lavender is normally planted in a row width of 1,2 to 2,0 m apart. Spacing between plants is 30 to 60 cm, which gives a plant density of 8 000 to 28 000 plants per hectare.

### Propagation

Lavender is mainly propagated by seed, cuttings, layering, tissue culture and division of roots. To ensure genetic uniformity propagation by seed should not be used.

### Fertilisation

Lavender produces well on soils that are nutrient deficient for most other crops. Excessive applications of nitrogen can decrease oil quality, result in unhealthy plants and will increase weed competition.

