

Cultural Details: **Lavender**

A popular ornamental subject, which can be sold as a herb, a low flowering hedge plant, a border perennial and even a container plant.

Germination can be a little erratic, but apart from that, Lavenders are straightforward to raise.

**Variety Selection**

‘Lavender Lady’ is a hardy perennial which may be flowered in the first year from a sowing in January. ‘Hidcote’ and ‘Munstead’ are two very popular varieties for sale as perennials, in flower and as a green plant, with a compact habit, Hidcote being most compact, with darker foliage and deeper blue flowers.

Lavender Stoechas (French Lavender) is a shrubby type producing purple flowers with longer-lasting purple bracts. It is sometimes slightly less hardy than the other types.

Two further species, Spica and Vera, have looser habit and paler flowers and foliage – these are generally grown as part of a herb production programme, and are listed in the Moles Seeds Catalogue in the herb section.

**Programming the Crop**

Sow May to July for sale of green plants the following Spring, and flowering plants during the Summer.

Sow Lavender Lady can also be sown in January-early February for flowering June-July of the same year.

**Propagation and Growing-on**

Sow the seeds (1,000 per gram) onto the surface of a free-draining, open, seed sowing compost, which should be thoroughly wetted with a suitable fungicide prior to sowing (to prevent damping-off diseases), and the trays allowed to drain. Sow into plug trays to prevent root disturbance, at 2 seeds per cell. Cover the seeds with a layer of vermiculite, and cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 14 days at 18-20°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times.

As soon as large enough to handle, move the young plants into large-celled plug trays as an interim stage, or if sown into large plug cells, pot into 9-10cm pots. Grow on at around 15°C, until ready for sale.

To keep plants through the Winter in pots, keep them under cover unheated, in a well-ventilated poly tunnel or glasshouse, on the dry side.

### **Pest and Disease**

Lavender has few pest and disease problems. Maintain good air movement through the crop, and water in the morning rather than the evening to keep the foliage dry and lessen attack by Botrytis. Pay attention to glasshouse hygiene, using only fresh trays, pots, compost, water and clean bench tops to avoid encouraging damping-off diseases.

*Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.*