

Spanish Lavender - *Lavandula stoechas* 'Otto Quast'

This aromatic, silvery-gray herb is an outstanding perennial in the xeriscape. Spanish lavender is sometimes referred to as 'rabbit ears'. The colorful "ears" are actually sterile bracts. The Spanish lavender is the best variety that thrives in our hot Texas summers. English lavenders, *Lavandula angustifolia* wilt as the heat of the summer approaches. This is one of the most reliable bloomers in the *Lavandula* family, the rosy plum-purple blooms appearing in mid spring and bloom through early summer. However, prune back when it finishes. The result will be an attractive, fragrant shrub throughout the rest of the year. Plant this lavender in full sun to part shade with a well-drained, sandy loam mix. Spanish lavender forms a compact, dense shrub to about 2ft x 3ft with grayish-green 1in long leaves. This lavender is hardy to about 15°F. The fragrance of this species is kind of between a true lavender scent and a pungent rosemary fragrance. It's also a good substitute for rosemary-which may be over used in some cases.



The antiseptic, piney fragrance of Spanish Lavender makes it an exceptionally fragrant landscape plant but not the first choice for use in cooking. English Lavenders, both *Lavandula angustifolia* and *Lavandula latifolia*, are preferred in the kitchen. French Lavender, *Lavandula dentata* is not culinary lavender but used as sachet fragrance. Spanish Lavender is often referred to in older publications as French lavender.



Spanish Lavenders rangy shape and thicker flower heads make a bolder statement than its less-rugged relatives. A great filler for shrub beds, as edging or in a clump of three to five. Cluster next to landscape boulders to make them appear more natural or near columns and fence posts to soften the transition. Spanish lavender can withstand reflected light. Follow a regular watering schedule during the first growing season to establish a deep, extensive root system. Feed with a general purpose fertilizer before new growth begins in spring. For a formal appearance, it can be sheared after flowering.

Companion plants can include pink skullcap, rudbeckia 'Goldsturm', salvia farinacea 'Victoria', or damianita. Spanish Lavender is also loved by bees and butterflies. For added enjoyment, place this lavender next to walkways so people can smell the clean aroma. Excellent in rock gardens and on slopes.

Propagation:

Lavender may be propagated by cuttings or seed. Softwood cuttings can be taken in the spring.

Interesting tidbits:

- From this lavender is extracted French Oil which is used for air fresheners, deodorants, disinfectants, and insecticides.
- A facial wash from lavender flowers stimulates cell growth and helps against acne.
- Native to the Mediterranean region and North Africa, Spanish Lavender is probably what the ancient Greeks and Romans used to scent their bath water. Hence, the word Lavender is from Latin lavare (to wash).