

# Growing Lavender Basics

- Choose plants that grow in your USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map
- Plant in full sun (NO shade)
- Make sure Lavender is adequately watered. Even though Lavender is extremely drought tolerant, it still needs water. First year plants are extremely susceptible to withering and drying out, especially in a windy area. Adequate watering is necessary and may mean watering once a week or even daily depending on your weather, check your soil regularly to see if it is drying out. After the first year the plants will only need watering when very dry (not very frequently in our Northeast Climate, especially if you have landscape fabric down), but still need to be checked regularly.
- Weed your Lavender, especially the young plants. Mature plants can compete with the weeds better and you can let them go a bit.
- Soil should have adequate drainage and be a more porous soil rather than a highly compacted soil like clay or hardpan. Lavender plants do not thrive if the roots are constantly wet. Four resolutions to wet soil are: (1) do not plant in a wet area (standing water), (2) add small sized gravel/stone to the bottom of the hole for better drainage (3) mound the hole so the water runs off, (4) plant on a gentle hillside or slope to allow for run-off. I have plantings on very gentle slopes and this seems to work well. From my experience, if we get a lot of rain at once, the Lavender will be ok as long as the ground has a chance to drain the water and dry out. I have not had a problem if the roots are damp, but the plants do not do well if the roots are sitting in water for a long period of time. One thing I do add to the hole are a few handfuls of perlite in order to keep the soil loose so the roots can expand and grow.
- Soil pH should be between 6.0 – 8.0. Various ranges exist in literature. An alkaline soil is preferable but a less than perfect pH can still successfully produce Lavender plants. Besides, you can easily amend the soil with dolomite lime or a calcium spread as needed.
- Plants do not need to be overly fertilized and prefer an average (not rich in nutrients) soil. If you fertilize, fertilize for a specific reason like root growth or increased foliage growth in new plants. However, over fertilization should be avoided. For example, over fertilization with Nitrogen may create plants with lots of greenery and few flowers (ok for newly planted lavender but not mature plants if you want flower production). A light application of 8-2-4 in the spring may be helpful if needed.

