

Lavandula latifolia

## SPIKE LAVENDER

Also known as Portuguese lavender, spike lavender (*L. latifolia*, or *L. spica*) has a spicier aroma than true lavender and is more of a stimulant than other lavenders.

## ORIGINS

The name *lavender* derives from the Latin *lavera*, which means “to wash,” and no wonder: ancient Romans used to add lavender flowers to their bathwater for the sweet fragrance and for the cleansing properties. It was also a favorite “strewing herb” for people to crush underfoot, releasing its beautiful aroma. It blends well with other floral oils, cedarwood, clary sage, clove, eucalyptus, patchouli, petitgrain, pine, and rosemary.

## BENEFITS

Spike lavender has a minty, medicinal aroma because of its high camphor content. It is therefore a more effective expectorant than other lavender species and is useful for respiratory problems such as coughs and congestion. Spike lavender is also a strong analgesic and antiseptic, which makes it great for wound care. Pregnant women should avoid it, however, because it is mildly neurotoxic and sleep inducing.



Dried spike lavender

## HOW TO DELIVER

Dilute as an ointment for wound care or as a lotion for muscle and joint pains. Drizzle the essential oil on sachets and place among your linens.

## POPULAR USES

Spike lavender is effective for asthma, bronchitis, bruises, burns, cuts, dandruff, halitosis, headaches, insect repellent, and muscle and joint pain.

Spike lavender



Spanish lavender

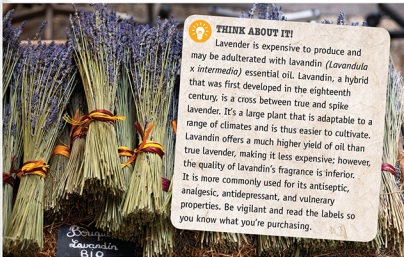
SIMILAR SPECIES  
SPANISH LAVENDER

A hardy evergreen plant, Spanish or French lavender (*L. stoechas*) makes a beautiful flowering hedge. Its aroma is harsher and more medicinal than other lavenders because it contains the most camphor of all lavender species. Spanish lavender also contains less linalool, so its therapeutic properties are quite different. It is a good antimicrobial and antiseptic, but unlike true lavender, it is more of a stimulant than a sedative. Because of its high ketone, oxide, and camphor content, it should be used with caution and with the guidance of a trained practitioner.



## THINK ABOUT IT!

Lavender is expensive to produce and may be adulterated with lavandin (*Lavandula x intermedia*) essential oil. Lavandin, a hybrid that was first developed in the eighteenth century, is a cross between true and spike lavender. It's a large plant that is adaptable to a range of climates and is thus easier to cultivate. Lavandin offers a much higher yield of oil than true lavender, making it less expensive; however, the quality of lavandin's fragrance is inferior. It is more commonly used for its antiseptic, analgesic, antidepressant, and vulnerary properties. Be vigilant and read the labels so you know what you're purchasing.



Dried lavandin