

## Lavender Hidcote

*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote'



**Height:** 45cm (18in)

**Suitable for:** A sunny position in well drained soil.

**Summary:** Hidcote is one of the most popular of dwarf lavenders. It has a compact habit and dark purple flowers. A superb garden plant either alone or as a small hedge, with many culinary, medicinal and cosmetic uses.

### More information:

This is an upright lavender with narrow grey leaves and a compact habit. All parts of the plant are strongly scented especially the dark purple flowers. The fragrance is aromatic and sweet, and is very attractive to bees.

The leaves can be used in cooking much in the same way as rosemary. French cuisine uses a lot of lavender in stuffing mixes, with roasting meats and even chopped finely in sweet biscuits. The flowers are also widely used in jams, vinegars, sweets and even icecream.

## Lavender Flower Icecream

- 8 tbs vodka or gin
- 3 tbs lavender flowers
- 6 egg yolks
- 125 ml lavender honey (or runny honey)
- 250 ml thick double cream

Warm the spirit until hand hot in a small bowl and add the flowers. Leave for one hour to infuse, with a lid on the bowl. Strain well through a tea strainer, squeezing the flower heads to extract all the scented spirit.

Meanwhile whisk the egg yolks with an electric beater. Heat the honey to boiling and slowly pour onto the egg yolks whisking all the time. Continue to whisk until cool, and then stir in the lavender flavouring.

Fold in the thick cream, whipped double cream maybe used instead. Transfer to either a freezer proof bowl or an ice-cream machine and freeze.

Serve decorated with lavender petals.

Lavender is very much an all round herb as it is also important medicinally and in aromatherapy, cosmetics and perfumery. English lavender produces particularly high quality oil. Lavender has a multitude of uses both internally and externally. These include indigestion, depression, headaches, burns, muscular pain and head lice to name but a few.

The flowerheads for drying should be harvested just before they are fully open, as they will continue to open as they dry. When harvested commercially they are cut a little later so as to contain maximum essential oils.