



# RHS Plant Trials and Awards

## Hardy Lavenders

Linda Jones

*Senior Trials Officer*

July 2003

# The Trial of *Lavandula*, hardy (1996–2001)

The RHS Woody Plant Trials Committee's decision to conduct a trial of lavender (1996-2001) was in response to the growing number of new cultivars being introduced to the UK market. RHS plant trials are conducted as part of the RHS' charitable mission to inform, educate and inspire all gardeners. The RHS identifies good, reliable garden plants through its Award of Garden Merit (AGM) scheme after a period of trial.

## Objectives of the trial

**Award of Garden Merit.** By bringing together as many different taxa as possible and assessing their merits, the committee could recommend the Award of Garden Merit 🏆 to those they considered the best.

**Correct Names.** Due to the popularity of the genus, propagation by seed and micro-propagation is being used increasingly to meet the demand. Both these methods result in variability of the essential characteristics of the original cultivar. The trial enabled botanists (RHS and external) to identify the true characteristics of some of the older cultivars.

**Archive** To create a permanent record through detailed descriptions, images and herbarium specimens for future reference by any interested parties.

## Entries

Plants were sourced from National Collection holders and retail and wholesale nurseries (listed on page 9). In most cases three plants of each of the initial 74 entries were received in May 1996. In 1998 it was decided to propagate all the possible contenders for the AGM and plant them in the main trials field at Wisley. Forty two entries were then planted in 1999 along with ten new entries and assessed for the final recommendations in 2000-2001.



Mike Sleigh

## The Woody Plant Trials Committee

The Committee is made up of nurserymen, professional horticulturists and plant enthusiasts. Each has a wealth of experience, knowledge and passion for plants.

Peter Catt Chairman (Liss Forest Nursery)  
John Hillier Vice Chairman (Hillier Nurseries)  
Chris Brickell (plantsman and author)  
David Clark (Notcutts Nurseries)  
Maurice Foster (plantsman)  
John Gallagher (camellia breeder)  
Michael Hickson (Knightshayes Garden)  
John Humphris (Sutton Place Garden)  
Roy Lancaster (plantsman and author)  
Chris Lane (horticulturist and National Collection holder)  
Chris Sanders (plantsman)  
Archie Skinner (Sheffield Park Garden)



Mike Sleigh

Two great figures of the horticultural world who were closely involved with the trial sadly died before this report was produced. John Bond a great plantsman and Keeper of the Gardens, Windsor Great Park, was the Chairman of the Woody Plant Trials Committee since its formation in 1995 and initiated the trial of lavender. Wendy Bowie carried on the tradition of her father Thomas Carlile in being a stalwart and knowledgeable member of RHS Floral Committees. Many of the older cultivars, including those raised and/or introduced by the family nursery, Carlile's Hardy Plants, were submitted by Mrs Bowie.

## Cultivation

The initial trial site was a neutral sandy soil (pH 6.5). The plot had been brought into cultivation from grassland and had had no previous crop. After a year's growth, in 1997, some plants had grown uncharacteristically tall and soft, which caused them to flop or open up. The reason for this may have been the very fertile soil and/or too much irrigation for a genus which in the wild thrives in poor dry conditions.

**Pruning** was undertaken with the *L. angustifolia* and *L. × intermedia* cultivars after their first flowering by removing the flowering stems and at least the first set of leaves. Regular annual pruning of plants by one third kept them compact. *L. stoechas* type cultivars required pruning back by one half.

**Recording** was undertaken throughout the trial and included: hardiness, habit, flowering period, as well as height and spread, colour of flower and foliage.

## The Award of Garden Merit

The Award of Garden Merit requires a plant:

- to be excellent for garden decoration
- to be available from nurseries
- to be of good constitution
- not to require specialist care
- not to be susceptible to pest or disease
- not to be subject to reversion.

## AGM winners

The Committee gave the Award of Garden Merit to the following entries using the criteria of overall impact of the plant, its habit and vigour; flower colour, foliage colour and freedom of flowering:

- L. × intermedia* 'Alba' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. × intermedia* 'Arabian Night' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Beechwood Blue' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- \*\* *L. angustifolia* 'Hidcote' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. × intermedia* 'Hidcote Giant' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Imperial Gem' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Little Lottie' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Loddon Blue' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Loddon Pink' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Miss Katherine' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* MISS MUFFET 'Scholmis' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Nana Alba' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L. angustifolia* 'Wendy Carlile' 🏆<sup>H4</sup>
- L.* 'Richard Gray' 🏆<sup>H3-4</sup>
- L.* 'Sawyers' 🏆<sup>H3-4</sup>
- L. stoechas* 🏆<sup>H3-4</sup>
- L. stoechas* subsp. *pedunculata* 🏆<sup>H3-4</sup>
- L.* 'Willow Vale' 🏆<sup>H3-4</sup>

### Award rescinded to the following:

- L. × intermedia* Dutch Group ✖
- L. angustifolia* 'Twickel Purple' ✖

H(4) = hardy throughout the UK  
H(3-4) = hardy but may need favoured site

\*\* The true 'Hidcote' received its AGM in 1993 and in the trial was considered to be an exceptionally good cultivar for garden decoration. However the problem that many plants in the trade are seed raised was a cause for concern. The Committee recommend that the public be advised to acquire this cultivar from reputable nurseries and request assurance that plants have been vegetatively propagated.

# A guide to the hardy lavenders from the RHS Trial

Lavender is a popular plant - easy to grow and useful for so many garden situations such as edging, hedging, spot plant or pot plant. It does not generally suffer from any pest or disease attack and its only requirements are a free draining site and an open sunny situation.

The genus *Lavandula* contains about 32 species, with most of the cultivated species coming from the Mediterranean region.



*Lavandula angustifolia* L. *spica* L. in part, *L. officinalis* Chaix (English Lavender) has long been cultivated for its high quality lavender oil. Cultivars of this species tend to be compact in habit and have greyish green narrow leaves and relatively short compact spikes of flowers. Flowers from mid June to end July.



Christie Kerrill

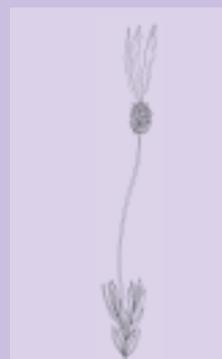
*L. × intermedia* Emeric ex Loisel. (Lavandin) is a hybrid cross between *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia*. Cultivars are slightly less hardy than *L. angustifolia*, are taller with mounds of grey foliage and long loose spikes. Cultivars tend to be more tolerant of acidic conditions. Cultivars are commercially grown for their high yield of oil which is however inferior in quality to *L. angustifolia*. Flowers from mid July to end August.



*L. stoechas* L. (French Lavender) require sheltered but sunny sites. The sterile bracts, on top of the short dense inflorescence, form a distinctive feature. Flowers from early May to the end of August.



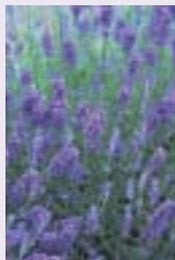
*L. stoechas* subsp. *pedunculata* (Papillon or Butterfly Lavender) flower borne on long stems and topped by particularly long sterile bracts. Flowers early May to September.



# Award of Garden Merit descriptions

h = height of plant without flowering stems w = spread of plant.

Colours from the RHS Colour Chart 2001 (available from RHSE Mail Order, Wisley, Surrey GU23 6QB)



**L. angustifolia** 'Beechwood Blue'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A low growing plant with rich blue flowers, similar to 'Loddon Blue' but with greener stems. Raised by Beechwood Nursery (UK).

*Compact dome, h. 30cm w. 60cm. Overall height including flowers 40-50cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 25-30cm long, held above foliage. Inflorescence 4-9cm, vivid violet (87A/B); calyx deep purple (83B).*



**L. angustifolia** 'Little Lottie'  
AGM (H4) 2002 under review

Dwarf plants with pink flowers. A sport of 'Blue Cushion', raised by Terry Clark and introduced by Notcutts Nurseries (UK) in 1998. Plant Breeders' Rights was rejected in June 2002 due to instability, therefore the AGM is now under review.

*Dome-shaped, h. 25cm w. 60cm. Overall height including flowers 40cm. Foliage green grey. Flowering stems 20cm long, held above foliage. Inflorescence 7-8cm long, with blunt tip. Flowers very pale purple (69A); calyx pale green.*



**L. angustifolia** 'Hidcote'  
AGM (H4) 1993 reconfirmed 2002

A low growing plant with dark violet flowers. Many plants now seed raised and of variable quality. The Committee recommended that the importance of obtaining verified vegetatively propagated plants was highlighted. Introduced by Major Lawrence Johnston of Hidcote before 1950.

*Compact, spreading dome, h. 35cm w. 75cm. Overall height including flowers 60cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 20-30cm long, spraying outwards. Inflorescence 5-8cm long, dense with rounded tip. Flowers dark violet (87B/88B); paler throat (85C); calyx dark violet (93A/B).*



**L. angustifolia** 'Loddon Blue'  
AGM (H4) 2002

Low neat plants with deep mid purple blue flowers on grey stems. Raised and introduced by Carlile's Hardy Plants (UK) 1957. When first introduced this cultivar was described as being a dwarf plant (possibly only 15cm high) suitable for the rock garden. Therefore plants which have been sold for a long time under this name no longer conform to the original description.

*Compact dome, h. 30cm w. 65cm. Overall height including flowers 50cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 20-25cm long, erect, spraying outwards. Inflorescence 4cm long, compact and dense with blunt tip. Flowers strong violet (90A) with golden throat; calyx (90A).*



**L. angustifolia** 'Imperial Gem'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A cultivar very similar to 'Hidcote' but of a slightly taller habit. Raised and introduced by Norfolk Lavender (UK) in the late 1980's.

*Dome, h. 40cm w. 90cm. Overall height including flowers 60cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 25-30cm long, spraying outwards. Inflorescence 5-6cm long, dense with rounded tip. Flowers dark violet (90B), paler throat (85A); calyx very dark violet (86A).*



**L. angustifolia** 'Loddon Pink'  
AGM (H4) 2002

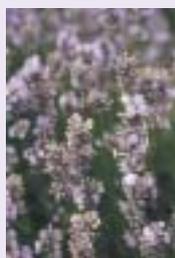
Low neat plants with soft pink flowers and pale green calyces. Raised and introduced by Thomas Carlile (UK) in 1948.

*Compact, erect domes, h. 30cm w. 70cm. Overall height including flowers 65cm. Foliage grey green to green. Flowering stems 30-35cm long, erect. Inflorescence 8cm long, open and dense with blunt tip. Flowers pale lavender (76C/D) with darker throat; calyx pale yellowish green (193A) tinged purple.*

Tim Sandall

Tim Sandall

# Award of Garden Merit descriptions



***L. angustifolia*** 'Miss Katherine'  
AGM (H4) 2002

The cultivar forms erect domes of spreading foliage. Lots of pink flowers with silvery calyxes are held clear of green, strongly aromatic foliage. Raised and introduced by Norfolk Lavender (UK).

*Erect domes, h. 40cm w. 80cm. Overall height including flowers 70cm. Foliage green. Flowering stems 30-40cm long, sage green, spraying outwards, held above foliage. Inflorescence 6-7cm long, open and dense with rounded tip. Flowers pale purple (76A/B), slight orange throat; calyx dark silver grey (201A).*



***L. angustifolia*** 'Wendy Carlile'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A cultivar of dwarf habit. Flowers are white with distinctive silvery blue calyxes. A chance seedling found during RHS Trial in 1998 in the entry of *L. angustifolia* 'Nana Alba' from Carlile's Hardy Plants(UK). Named by the Woody Plant Trials Subcommittee

*Compact dome, h. 30cm w. 60cm. Overall height including flowers 45cm. Foliage silvery grey. Flowering stems 16-20cm above foliage, spraying outwards. Inflorescence 4-5cm long, compact with rounded to blunt tip. Flowers white, with gold in throat; calyx silvery blue green, base (192A) middle (190A), tip (188A).*



***L. angustifolia*** MISS MUFFET 'Scholmis'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A very compact plant with lots of mid violet flowers. Raised by Joan Schofield and introduced by Norfolk Lavender(UK).

*Low dome, h. 30cm w. 40cm. Overall height including flowers 35-40cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 20-23cm long, spraying outwards. Inflorescence 3-5cm long, compact, dense with blunt tip. Flowers strong purple (83D/84A); calyx grey green (194B) tinged violet at edge.*



***L. × intermedia*** 'Alba'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A very old cultivar known in the 19th century with very long white flower spikes held erect, well above a mound of foliage

*Open dome, h. 50cm w. 90cm. Overall height including flowers 80cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 30cm above foliage, spraying outwards, erect. Inflorescence 9-18cm long, compact to slightly open with tapering blunt tip. Flowers white, whiter than (155D); calyx sage green (190C) with long white hairs.*



***L. angustifolia*** 'Nana Alba'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A cultivar with a dwarf, neat habit. The stems of white flowers are held just clear of the green aromatic foliage. Introduced before 1938.

*Compact domes, h. 25cm w. 60cm. Overall height including flowers 40-50cm. Foliage green (144B). Flowering stems 10-13cm above foliage. Inflorescence 4cm long, dense with blunt tip. Flowers white with hint of very pale purple (97D); calyx pale green (194C).*



***L. × intermedia*** 'Arabian Night'  
AGM (H4) 2002

A plant with long pointed flower spikes held well above compact dome of foliage. Synonym *L. × intermedia* 'Super'.

*Upright domes, h. 35cm w. 70cm. Overall height including flowers 90-100cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 60cm long, sage green grey, spraying outwards, held high above foliage. Inflorescence 10-15cm long, compact, with pointed tip. Flowers lilac (92A/90C); calyx greyish olive (195A) tinged violet (86A).*



*L.* × *intermedia* 'Hidcote Giant'  
AGM (H4) 2002

Very distinctive plant with solid flowers on long stems. Introduced by Major Lawrence Johnston of Hidcote before 1958.

*Dome, h. 35cm w. 40cm. Overall height including flowers 90cm. Foliage green. Flowering stems 60cm long, spraying outwards, held high above foliage. Inflorescence 5-10cm long, dense with pointed to rounded tip. Flowers bright violet (90C); calyx a silvery strong violet (90C).*



*L.* 'Richard Gray'  
(*L. lanata* × *L. angustifolia*)  
AGM (H3-4) 2002

A low growing plant with an open habit. Silvery foliage and vivid violet, blunt-tipped flower spikes. Warm, slightly medicinal scent. Flowers July to August. Introduced by RBG Kew in 1980's and named after Richard Gray, who worked at Kew.

*Spreading plant, h. 30cm w. 60cm. Overall height including flowers 50cm. Foliage silver grey. Flowering stems 25-30cm long, soft grey, spraying outwards, some held in foliage. Inflorescence 3-5cm long, dense. Flowers dark violet (88A), throat (88C); calyx silvered strong violet (98A).*



*L.* 'Sawyers'  
(*L. lanata* × *L. angustifolia*)  
AGM (H3-4) 2002

A plant with silvery foliage and tall thin wands of pointed dark purple spikes. Warm, slightly medicinal scent. Flowers July and August. Not fully hardy. Introduced by Suffolk Herbs, Sudbury (UK) in late 1980's. Originally called 'Conard Blue'.

*Flattened dome, h. 40cm w. 70cm. Overall height including flowers 60cm. Foliage silver grey. Flowering stems 30-40cm long, spraying outwards, held above foliage. Inflorescence 5-10cm long, dense with pointed tip. Flowers intense purple (83B); calyx silvery violet (90A) with long white hairs.*



*L. stoechas*  
AGM (H3-4) 1993 reconfirmed 2002

Flowers from May to September. Not fully hardy

*Upright plant, h. 60cm w. 40cm. Overall height including flowering stem 60cm. Foliage grey green. Inflorescence 3.5cm long, tapering to blunt tip, 4 terminal bracts to 2.5cm long. Flowers dark purple (83A), bracts vivid purple (80A); calyx greyed purple darker than (183D).*



*L. stoechas* subsp. *pedunculata*  
(syn. 'Papillon'; 'James Compton')  
AGM (H3-4) 2002

A plant of tall upright habit with distinctive long purplish-pink sterile bracts. In favourable conditions will flower most of the year, main flowering period from May to August. James Compton collected seed from Sierra Nevada, Spain in 1975, plants from which were grown in the Chelsea Physic Garden, London, and named 'James Compton' by Duncan Donald, Curator. In the trial no distinction was found between the entries of the subspecies and 'James Compton'.

*Erect upright plant, h. 45cm w. 40cm. Overall height including flowers 60cm. Foliage grey green. Inflorescence to 2cm long, square, 2-5 sterile bracts 5cm long. Flowers almost black, darker than (86A), bracts purplish red (186A/182A).*



*L.* 'Willow Vale'  
(*L. stoechas* × *L. viridis*)  
AGM (H3-4) 2002

A cultivar with a neat habit, its flowers having crinkled purple sterile bracts. The flowers are mixed in with foliage, giving a tumbled effect. Flowers from May to August. Originated in a garden in NSW, Australia, introduced in the UK by John Coke of Green Farm Plants (ceased trading 2002).

*Erect upright plant, h. 80cm w. 50cm. Overall height including flowers 80cm. Foliage grey green. Flowering stems 80cm just 10-15cm above foliage. Inflorescence 3-3.5cm long, 1.5cm wide, with 3 to 4 sterile bracts, crinkly, twisted and flaring 2.5-3.5cm long. Flowers reddish purple (77A/78A) fading to (77B); calyx grey (201A) tinged red (184B) ageing to (147C) tinged purplish pink.*

## Other lavenders in the trial

### *L. angustifolia* BLUE CUSHION

'Schola'. A small, compact plant which forms a mound of soft mid blue flowers. Bred by Joan Schofield and introduced by Blooms (UK) in 1992.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Blue Mountain'

A late entrant in the trial, considered to be similar to 'Hidcote' but commenced flowering later. Raised by Blue Mountain Nursery, New Zealand in the 1950's and introduced in the UK by Downderry Nursery.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Bowles' Early'

An older variety which makes a good medium height hedge of green foliage. Introduced by Amos Perry (UK) in 1913.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Bridehead Silver'

A late entrant to the trial. White flowers with silvery calyces, similar to *L. angustifolia* 'Wendy Carlile'. Raised and introduced by Chris Yates of The Scented Garden (UK)

### *L. angustifolia* 'Cedar Blue'

A cultivar similar to 'Hidcote' but with a slightly paler flower. Introduced (inadvertently as 'Hidcote') by Monktons Microplants Ltd (UK) in 1994.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Forston'

A plant of medium height with a lax habit. Very floriferous, with mid violet flowers, flowering over a long period. Original plants from Arthur Beresford of Forston Manor, Dorchester and introduced by Anthony Lyman-Dixon of Arne Herb (UK).

### *L. angustifolia* 'Heacham Blue'

synonym for 'G4' a commercial oil variety from Norfolk Lavender (UK).

### *L. angustifolia* 'Jean Davis'

In the trial could not be distinguished from 'Loddon Pink' except for being darker pink in bud.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Lavender Lady'

raised in US by Atlee Burpee and Co in 1993 as a lavender which will flower from seed in six months.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Munstead'

An old cultivar with mid blue flowers, often grown from seed. Introduced by Barr & Sons (UK), in 1913

### *L. angustifolia* 'Nana Atropurpurea'

often sold as 'Hidcote' but the foliage is different.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Princess Blue'

Raised and introduced by Norfolk Lavender (UK).

### *L. angustifolia* subsp. *pyrenaica*

A purple-flowered, low growing subspecies from the Pyrenees.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Royal Purple'

A cultivar with very long deep purple flower spikes. Raised and introduced by Norfolk Lavender (UK).

### *L. angustifolia* 'Silver Blue'

A late entrant to the trial. In the time it proved to be very floriferous with large flowering spikes. Similar to 'Beechwood Blue'. Raised by Baumschule Fr. Rohlfing, Germany, introduced by Darthuizer Boomkwekerijen BV, Leersum, Holland.

### *L. angustifolia* 'Twickel Purple'

Originated in Holland before 1922. A good plant, being vigorous with impressive long flower spikes. As there are so many different plants in the trade it was decided that the AGM awarded in 1993 should be rescinded.

### *L. 'Goodwin Creek Gray'*

(*L. dentata* × *L. lanata*).

A plant of tall bushy habit with soft grey toothed leaves and not fully hardy. Originated from a nursery in Oregon USA in 1990's.

### *L. 'Helmsdale'*

(*L. stoechas* × *L. viridis*)

A plant with an open bushy habit, narrow green leaves and burgundy coloured flowers and sterile bracts. In the trial proved not to be very hardy. Raised in New Zealand in late 1980's, introduced to the UK by Aline Fairweather.

### *L. × intermedia* 'Dutch Group'

An old cultivar grown for its grey foliage and habit which is suitable for a large hedge. In the trial plants flowered only sparsely. The AGM awarded in 1993 was rescinded in 2001. Originated from Europe before 1920's.

### *L. × intermedia* 'Fragrant Memories'

A large plant with pointed flowers, held well clear of dome of silver grey foliage. Introduced by Blooms of Bressingham (UK), from plants grown by David Kemp's wife's family in the 1920's.

### *L. × intermedia* 'Grappenhall Variety'

Introduced c. 1909 by Clibrans Nursery, UK.

### *L. × intermedia* 'Grosso'

Three quarters of the lavender grown for oil in France is from this cultivar. Very floriferous on particularly long stems, forming an arc of colour. Introduced by Pierre Grosso in France in 1972.

### *L. × intermedia* 'Lullingstone Castle'

Very good grey foliage.

### *L. × intermedia* Old English Group

A taller plant with greener foliage than Dutch Group.

### *L. × intermedia* 'Seal'

Introduced by Herb Farm, Seal (UK), before 1935.

### *L. 'Marshwood'*

(*L. stoechas* × *L. viridis*)

A plant with an erect open bushy habit and narrow grey green foliage. Attractive purple flowers with pink sterile bracts. Very early into flower and very floriferous but in the trial suffered from dieback and was not hardy. Raised in New Zealand in the 1980's and introduced in the UK by Aline Fairweather.

### *L. 'Roxlea Park'*

A compact neat plant with distinctive large dark pink sterile bracts. Not fully hardy. Raised by Gillian Cayford in New Zealand and introduced into the UK by Norfolk Lavender.

## RHS Trials

RHS Trials have been undertaken by the Royal Horticultural Society since its foundation in 1804. This continuous assessment of groups of plants by the leading horticulturists of the day has provided a valuable reference for generations of gardeners. Today there are 13 different committees whose members each year devote time and expertise to trials of plants in which they have a lifetime's knowledge. The combination of Committee members and the resources of the Society's professional horticulturists and scientific staff enables gardeners and the horticultural trade to get sound and useful information.

Entries of plants to trials are by open invitation, either directly or through a specialist committee. During each trial not only are the plants and their cultivation details demonstrated but issues of pest and disease prevention and cure investigated, as well as matters concerning the correct naming of plants. Each trial results in the Award of Garden Merit 🏆 to plants (or seed) which are recommended as being an excellent choice for the general gardener to grow.

The Trial of hardy lavenders provided an opportunity for many people interested in the group to exchange knowledge and their experience over a four year period. Some examples are:

### *The Lavender Bag*

A publication with subscribers and contributors which include botanists, growers, collection holders, specialist nurserymen and lavender enthusiasts from around the world. *The Lavender Bag* organized an open day in July 1997 at the trials site, a report of which is in issue Number 8. The Editor is Mrs Joan Head. Contact: 6 Church Gate, Clipston-on-the Wolds, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5PA. email: [jhead@headfamily.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:jhead@headfamily.freeserve.co.uk) [www.headfamily.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.headfamily.freeserve.co.uk)

## National Collection holders

An important contact for all RHS trials is the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) who have their independent headquarters at the RHS Gardens at Wisley. The National Collection holders who submitted plant material and participated in the assessments were: Simon Charlesworth of Downderry; David Christie of Jersey Lavender; Henry Head of Norfolk Lavender; Joan Head of Nottingham; Chris Yates of The Scented Garden

## The Botanists

Dr Tim Upson (Superintendent of The Cambridge Botanic Garden) and Susyn Andrews (Horticultural Taxonomist at Kew) attended many of the assessments of the trial and provided much valuable information on the taxonomy of the entries.

## Senders of plants to the trial

**Aline Fairweather**, Hill Top Nursery, Beaulieu, SO4 7YR  
**Arne Herbs**, Limeburn Nurseries, Chew Magna, BS18 8QW  
**Blooms of Bressingham**, Bressingham, Diss, IP22 2AB  
**Bowers Hill Nursery**, Badsey, Evesham, WR11 5HG  
**Carlile's Hardy Plants** (no longer trading)  
**Cheshire Herbs**, Little Budworth, Cheshire CW6 9ES  
**Country Garden Sales**, Rempstone, Corfe Castle, Dorset BH20 5JQ  
**Darthuizer**, Postbus 2, 3956 ZR Leersham, Holland  
**Downderry Nursery**, Pillar Box Lane, Hadlow, TN11 9SS  
**Four Seasons**, Forncett St Mary, Norwich, NR16 1JT  
**Green Farm Plants** (no longer trading)  
**J A Head**, The Lavender Bag  
**Jersey Lavender Ltd**, St Brelade, Jersey, Channel Islands  
**Liss Forest Nursery Ltd**, Greatham, Liss, GU33 6HA  
**Monksilver Nursery**, Cottenham, Cambridge, CB4 4TW  
**Norfolk Lavender Ltd**, Caley Mill, Heacham, PE31 7JE  
**Notcutts Nurseries**, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 4AF  
**The University of Reading**, Whiteknights Park, RG6 6AS  
**The Royal Horticultural Society**, Wisley, GU23 6QB  
**The Scented Garden**, Littlebredy, Dorchester, DT2 9HG  
**Yorkstock**, Clifford Moor Road, Clifford, Weatherby, LS23 6LD

## RHS contributors to this report

Plant illustrations and descriptions by Chrissie Ferriroli (Trials Recorder)

Assistance with nomenclature by Diana Miller, Keeper of the Herbarium.

## RHS Herbarium

The Herbarium of the RHS at Wisley is one of only a small number in the world dedicated to horticultural plants. At present the collection contains about 80,000 herbarium specimens and over 30,000 images of plants. Material is actively collected from a wide spectrum of sources, including RHS trials.



## Further reading

RHS Advisory Leaflet *Lavender*  
*Lavender – the grower's guide* by Virginia McNaughton.  
Garden Art Press

# Lavender selection guide

Name	Flower	Foliage	Habit	Comments
Blue flowered Dwarf plants (up to 40cm/16")				
<i>L. angustifolia</i> MISS MUFFET 'Scholmis'	violet	grey green	2	 Nice habit, neat floriferous domes. Good container plant and for small sites
<i>L. angustifolia</i> subsp. <i>pyrenaica</i>	dark violet	grey green	1	
Blue flowered Short plants (up to 60cm/24")				
<i>L. angustifolia</i> BLUE CUSHION 'Schola'	light violet	grey green	1	Compact mound, pretty, soft mid blue colour good container plant and for small sites
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Beechwood Blue'	violet	grey green	2	 Neat habit. Very floriferous with dense spikes. Similar to 'Loddon Blue' but stems greener.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Cedar Blue'	violet	green	2	Similar to 'Hidcote' but paler
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Loddon Blue'	violet	grey green	2	 Compact tight plant, low robust growth. Very aromatic foliage. Free-flowering.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Munstead'	violet	grey green	2	
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Silver Blue'	violet	grey green	2	Similar to 'Beechwood Blue' but larger flower spike and more open habit.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Blue Mountain'	dark violet	grey green	2	similar to 'Hidcote' but later flowering.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Hidcote'	dark violet	grey green	2	 Dark violet flowers covering compact domes of grey green, aromatic foliage
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Imperial Gem'	dark violet	grey green	2	 Similar to 'Hidcote', slightly taller and fatter flower spike and smaller bracteoles.
<i>L. 'Richard Gray'</i>	dark violet	silver	2	 A little winner, good cushion, silvery foliage. Came through in trial but not fully hardy.
<i>L. 'Sawyers'</i>	purple	silver	2	 A gem. Wonderful silver grey foliage with dark pointed flower spikes. Not as hardy as 'Richard Gray.'
Blue flowered Medium sized plants (to 90cm/36")				
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Bowles' Early'	violet	green	2	An older variety which makes a good hedge. Not very floriferous in the trial.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Forston'	violet	grey green	2	lax habit, long flowering spikes, large individual flowers.
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Grosso'	violet	green	3	Very long flowering stems with long conical spikes. Extremely floriferous. Good as cut flower.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Princess Blue'	violet	grey green	2	
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Twickel Purple'	violet	green	2	Long flower spikes.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Royal Purple'	violet	grey green	2	Like 'Twickel Purple' but habit more open.
<i>L. stoechas</i>	purple	grey green	1	 Dark purple flowers with fairly long pale purple sterile bracts. Very long flowering period. Not fully hardy.

Habit: 1 = flowers held close to foliage  
 2 = flowers held above foliage  
 3 = flowers held well above foliage.



Name	Flower	Foliage	Habit		Comments
<i>L. stoechas</i> subsp. <i>pedunculata</i>	purple	grey green	2		Very long pale purple sterile bracts wave like 'prayer flags' in a breeze. Flowers May to July. Not fully hardy, survives best on chalky soils.
<i>L.</i> 'Willow Vale'	purple	grey green	3		Brilliant plant. Long purple sterile bracts. Flowers May to August. Not fully hardy.
Blue flowered Large/tall plants (over 90cm/36")					
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Arabian Night'	light violet	grey green	3		Lovely long pointed spikes, foliage stands up well, forms large dome of pale violet colour.
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Grappenhall Variety'	light violet	grey green	3		
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Dutch Group'	light violet	silver	2		Good light grey foliage, bushy habit.
<i>L.</i> 'Fragrant Memories'	light violet	silver	3		Airy wands of tall, long pointed flower spikes well above compact dome of grey foliage. Good perfume.
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Hidcote Giant'	violet	green	3		Very distinctive solid flowers on end of long flowering stems. Very striking. Good for flower arranging.
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Lullingstone Castle'	violet	silver	1-2		Dutch Group type. Wonderful grey mounds of foliage but sparse flowering in trial.
<i>L. × intermedia</i> Old English Group	violet	green	3		More vigorous, greener foliage than Dutch Group, not free flowering.
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Seal'	violet	silver	3		Handsome brute, similar to 'Arabian Night'.
White flowered Dwarf plants (to 40cm/16")					
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Wendy Carlile'	white	grey green	1		Excellent grey foliage. Silvery blue calyces.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Nana Alba'	white	green	1		Good light green foliage. Very floriferous. Pale green calyces.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Bridehead Silver'	white	green	1		Silvery blue calyces.
White flowered Large plants (over 90cm/36")					
<i>L. × intermedia</i> 'Alba'	white	grey green	3		Best large white
Pink flowered Dwarf plants (to 40cm/16")					
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Little Lottie'	pink	grey green	2		AGM under review, because of possible instability. Very compact habit. Pink flowers held above mound of foliage.
Pink flowered Medium plants (to 90cm/36")					
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Loddon Pink'	pink	green	2		Tidy grower. good habit & foliage. Upright sprays of soft pink flowers held well above tight green foliage.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Jean Davis'	pink	green	2		As 'Loddon Pink' but darker in bud.
<i>L. angustifolia</i> 'Miss Katherine'	pink	green	2		Bushy open habit largest and boldest of the pinks.

We welcome comments on any aspect of this report.



Trials Office, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB  
e-mail: [trials@rhs.org.uk](mailto:trials@rhs.org.uk)

[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

Reg charity no. 222879

All text and images © Copyright RHS 2003

ISSN: 1477-9153 (print)

ISSN: 1477-9161 (online)