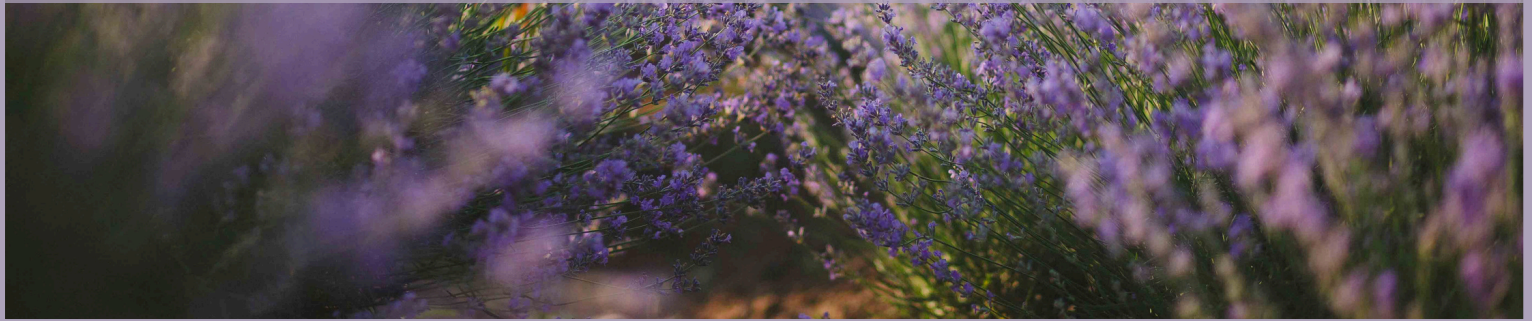


# Lavender



Lavender is a bushy perennial plant that grows between 1 to 3 feet tall and wide. The leaves and stems are a silvery pastel green color with flowers that can be white or different shades of purple or pink. Lavender is very fragrant and has a soothing, balsam-like scent.

There are around 45 species of lavender with over 450 different varieties. Most lavender growers in Illinois grow “English Lavender” because it grows well in the Midwest humidity and is frost resistant. Lavender grows best in a sunny area with well drained, sandy soil.



Lavender can be used for many different purposes. It can be grown as an ornamental plant in pots or in landscaping around buildings. It can be dried and hung upside down to add a soothing scent in any room. The oils can be extracted to make essential oils, perfumes, lotions, and more. And, since the flowers and leaves are edible, lavender can be used in a variety of different recipes.

For centuries, lavender oil has been used around the world to clean wounds and promote healing. During World War 1, military hospitals even used lavender oil to treat soldiers' wounds and to sterilize equipment when antiseptics were in short supply. The scent of lavender can also be very calming, helping people fall asleep faster and even reduce stress.



# Meet the Stahlhut Sisters

Tenderloin Farms | Edwardsville, IL



## Tell us about your farm.

Our family has been farming in the Edwardsville area since 1853. Our farm has changed over the years from farming alfalfa, eggs, cheese, dairy cows, and hogs, to now farming 300 acres of corn and soybeans. In 2016, after my sister and I took over the farm, we decided to add lavender plants in hopes of opening our farm to the public. With over 450 varieties of lavender to choose from, we tested 40 to determine which would grow best in our area and chose 12 to continue to grow. Then in 2021, after a few years of planning and hard work, we were able to fulfill our dreams and open our farm to the public each June to pick lavender and shop our lavender products.

## When and how do you harvest the lavender?

The short stem lavender starts blooming typically around the end of May. We let it bloom for 2 to 3 weeks and then harvest it. It will bloom again in 6 to 8 weeks and we harvest again. The long stem lavender only blooms once in mid-June for 2 to 3 weeks and we then harvest it. Since we are a small farm with only around 1,200 plants, we use a sickle to hand harvest the lavender instead of a harvesting machine like larger lavender farms. We work year-round fertilizing, watering, hand weeding, pruning, and propagating to make sure we have healthy plants.

## What do you do with the lavender once it is harvested?

Once the lavender is harvested, we hang it to dry for two weeks before storing it. We not only sell the lavender bundles, but we also use the lavender to make things like soap, lotion, lip balm, and so much more. Our products are sold on our website store, directly from our farm, and at farmers markets during the summer and fall.



*Lavender stalks are placed in a basket after harvesting with the sickle and then taken to be bundled and hung to dry.*

*All photos on this page courtesy of Tenderloin Farms*