

How to prune and harvest lavender

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Now is the best time to harvest your lavender — here's how to do it the right way

Expert advice on how to harvest lavender and extend its fragrant life

Discover how to harvest lavender and make the most of this aromatic plant

Head: Now is the best time to harvest your lavender - here's how to do it the right way

Strap: Reap the rewards

Synopsis: Lavender is an abundant shrub that keeps on giving. Here an expert explains when and how to harvest lavender to extend its fragrant life.

Images

Intro

Lavender is one of my favorite garden plants and it's a popular yard staple among professional and home gardeners alike. With a compact form and beautiful silvery gray foliage, it has a lot to offer in terms of structure and fragrance. It works well planted on its own or within a low hedge, where its fragrance can be released when you brush past. What's more, lavender is also admired by wildlife and is one of the best [plants to attract butterflies and other pollinators to your yard](#). Another benefit is that it is easy to care for and is an ideal choice for a low-maintenance garden.

Apart from these advantages, lavender's aromatic qualities can extend beyond its life in the yard. So, why not make the most of this perennial and harvest your lavender to enjoy its fragrance throughout the year?

Here, David Denyer, flower expert at [Eflorist](#) shares the best time to harvest lavender for optimal fragrance and how to do it.

Now is the best time to harvest your lavender — here's how to do it the right way (for eg)

1. Harvest lavender at the right time

For the best-dried lavender, Denyer says it's all about when you harvest it. "Aim for that sweet spot in summer — like late June to early August — when most flower buds are colorful but not fully open. This is when the fragrant essential oils are most concentrated," he says

He also recommends harvesting your lavender at midday, "when the sun has chased away dew and the oil content is at its highest."

2. Use the best tool

When it comes to harvesting lavender, you've probably already got a tool that will do the job, although it can help you find something more specialist. "You can technically use any sharp cutting tool, but a hand pruner or a curved harvesting knife stands out as the top choice. These help you make sharp, clean cuts, which is super important to keep your lavender plants happy," says Denyer.

3. Cut the lavender in the right place

The secret to a good lavender harvest is all in the placement. Denyer says, "Aim to cut the stem about 2 inches above the woody part of the plant. This woody section is the plant's base and it's crucial for future growth, so we definitely want to leave it intact."

But why is this important? "By cutting above this point, you're encouraging fresh, new growth from the base, which means a healthier lavender plant in the long run," he explains.

Top tip

Keep your pruning shears clean and sharp to ensure you always get a clean cut without dirt, sap and plant debris that might pass disease onto healthy plants. Discover [easy cleaning tips for cleaning pruners](#) and [how to sharpen pruning shears](#) to keep yours in tip-top condition.

4. How to harvest the buds

My instinct would be to harvest the buds and the stem, but Denyer explains if you're really serious about the scent, you can go the extra mile and harvest just the buds. "This method promises a more concentrated lavender product, however, it requires a bit more effort and a lot of patience. It's a labor of love, that's for sure!"

“To start, you’ll want to wait until the flowers are fully open and their color is at its most vibrant. Then, carefully remove the buds from the stem. You can do this by gently pinching them off or using a small pair of scissors,” he explains, “It can be a bit tedious, but the reward is a top-notch lavender product that’s hard to beat.”

Section: Can lavender be pruned at the same time that it’s harvested?

As a gardener, I’m always looking for quick hacks to save time, so I was interested in learning whether you can prune and harvest lavender at the same time. “It’s definitely tempting to combine harvesting and pruning, but I generally don’t recommend it,” says Denyer. “This is because pruning focuses on shaping the plant, with cuts typically made deeper into the woody stems to encourage new growth. This isn’t ideal for harvesting, where you want to capture the fragrant flowerheads at their peak.”

However, he does say there is a happy medium, “If you’re nearing the end of the flowering season, you can harvest the flower stalks you want and then give the remaining plant a light prune to remove spent blooms and encourage some late-season growth.”

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<https://www.tomsguide.com/home/can-you-save-a-woody-lavender-plant-expert-advice-tips-on-how-to-make-it-fresh-for-summer>

<https://www.tomsguide.com/home/how-to-extend-the-life-of-your-lavender-experts-share-their-tips>

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