

Producing a Plant Group

Lavender Trial at Mustikkarinne Farm 2024–2025

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26.8.2025

Starting Point

- ❖ 2.96 hectare forest property, sandy soil
- ❖ Small, overgrown field area on a south-facing slope and pond shore
- ❖ The pond shore and the slope above it were chosen as the growing area, based on light (6–12 hours per day depending on position), water access (pond), and other functions (public events in the garden)

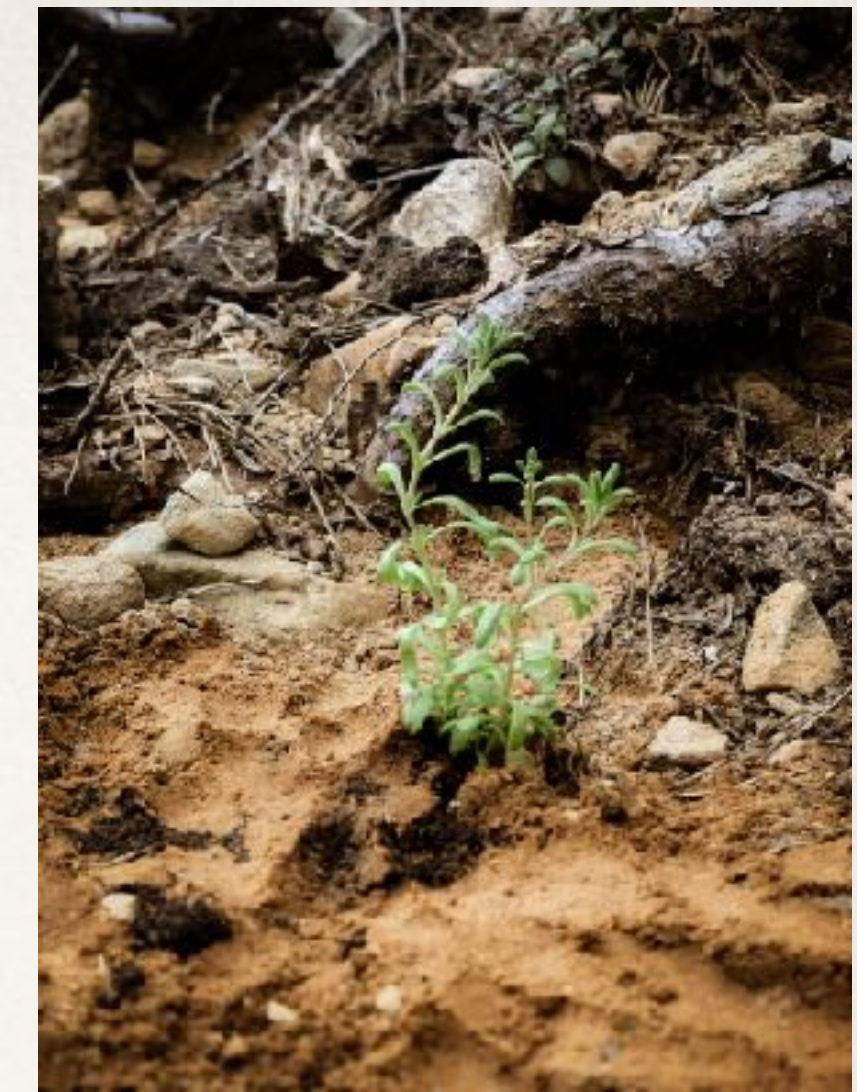


2024

- ❖ **January** — First discussion with my supervisor. The idea: lavender cultivation. Ordered 600 plugs from the nursery, cultivar Blue Scent Early, chosen based on a trial in Satakunta. Applied for a grant from Liideri (Lavender Cultivation Trial). Arranged excavator help and additional soil from a local farmer for spring. Prior to this, I had completed distance studies in lavender cultivation through the University of Michigan's open programme.
- ❖ **March** — Wrestling with the greenhouse question. Since purchasing one wasn't possible, I set up growing conditions at home. The lavender was supposed to arrive on 18 March but was delayed to April due to the supplier.
- ❖ **April** — Picked up the lavender from the nursery on 2 April. Planted into peat pots with potting soil and grow lights. Placed in rooms throughout the house. Struggled with light, moisture, and mould growing on the sides of the pots.



❖ **May** — In April–May I was helping and learning at local perennial nursery, doing my own sowings — first lavender and sage. The germination speed on a heat mat caught me off guard and the seedlings stretched into pale wisps. By 12 May, roughly half the lavender had been lost — first to overwatering, then to drought and lack of light. After consulting my supervisor, I decided to plant the rest outside. Around 30 plants remained from the planting. I transferred them to plastic pots and left them outside to grow.



I had about 30 seedlings left over from the planting, so I transferred them to plastic pots and left them outside to grow.





A future flower bed. The base consists of soil taken from the pond.



Blue Scent on the bench at the top of the slope; pre-grown lavender seedlings are arriving later.



Flower bed on the left.

- ❖ **June** — Picked up replacement lavender plants (Munstead) from the nursery in early June and cleared ground for lavender and summer flowers. The flower bed base was prepared with newspaper / cardboard, fox soil, and field soil. Bone meal mixed in to deter deer.





The base of the flower bed (currently filled with dahlias, and next summer with lavender) consists of newspaper / cardboard, fox manure, and field soil. Bone meal is mixed in to deter deer.







On June 6,
2024, the
remaining
home-grown
lavender
plants were
planted.





Space was cleared under the birch trees for direct seeding: some chamomile and the rest strawberries, as well as for our own seedlings to come later (lavender the following year). A few herbs from the nearby garden center—hyssop, mountain mint, and wild thyme—added to the atmosphere. Newspaper served as the base for the bed, and fox mulch was brought in from the nearby sand pit. Bone meal was added as a fertilizer.







Pre-grown greenhouse seedlings are blooming. In the open field, folks are mainly taking root.



Helleborus. A fling.

19.6.2024





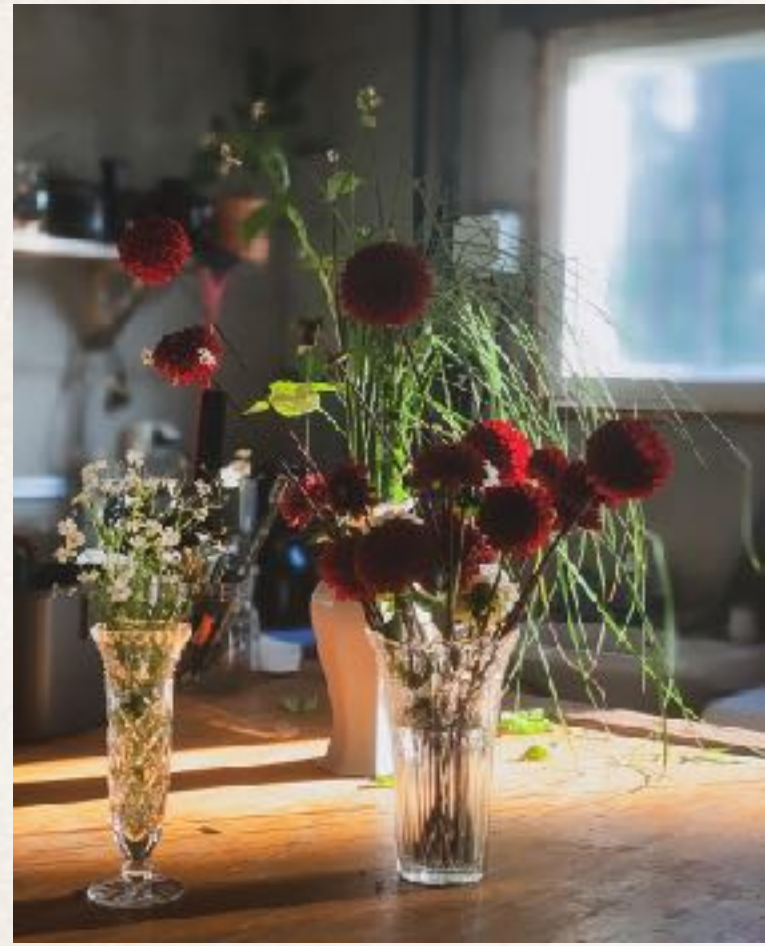
On Midsummer's Day, there was a jam session by the pond.

❖ **July** — Watching growth, weeding out the weeds that came with the field soil, watering, squashing aphids, and watering. Did I mention watering. While waiting for blooms, I foraged wildflowers and practised arrangements for myself and for sale. The first Blue Scent Early buds opened.

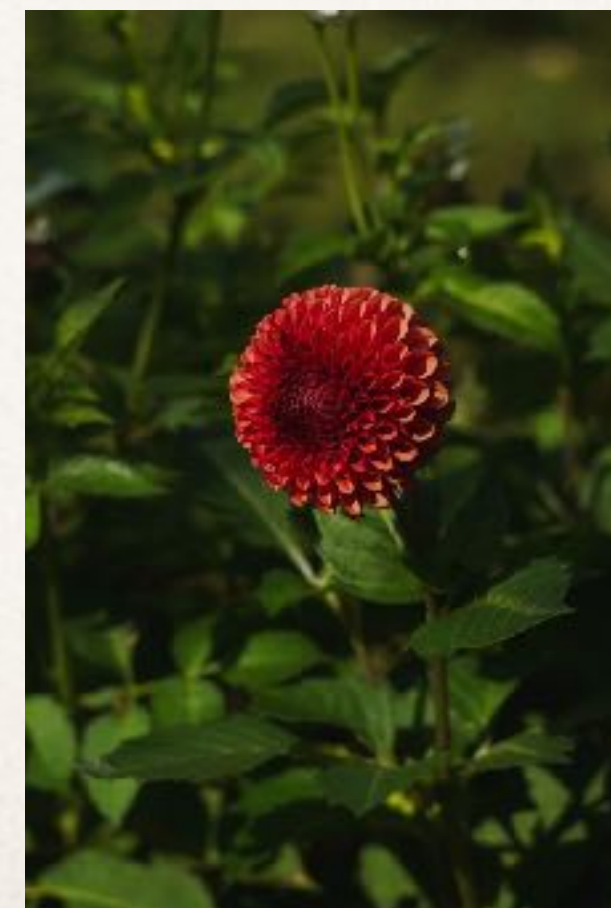




- ❖ **August** — The world's first self-grown, self-sold bouquet, and a new challenge: what to do with all the dahlias. Shop renovation, commissioned bouquets, and a little holiday.



- ❖ **September** — Growing, gathering, making bouquets and arrangements, and drying.



- ❖ **October–November** — An important decision. I left the Blue Scent Earlys to seed and did not deadhead them. The Munsteads were also left alone after their establishment trim. Cleared the dahlia bed on 3 November. The lavender bloomed until the first hard frosts.



- ❖ **December** — I considered winter protection, but because the weather kept swinging back and forth and lavender hates wet feet, I did not cover them at this stage. Otherwise December on the farm was wreath-making and forcing Christmas flowers. I grew Paperwhite narcissus in boxes from Christmas through to March; tulips too, but most of those came from a nearby nursery.



- ❖ **January** — Finally some snow. It turned out that the lavender's slope position between the pond and the forest ridge was both sheltered and favourable for snow accumulation. There was more snow than elsewhere on the property, and when the opportunity arose I piled extra snow around the lavender, mainly to protect the roots.



- ❖ **February** — In February the helleborus, which had been flowering since autumn, got company — and woke both the lavender and the gardener. For the first time, real hope stirred that the lavender might actually survive the winter. Neighbours came to marvel at the fragrant plants in February.



New Arrivals

I was thrilled that the lavender appeared to have survived winter. I called the nursery, asked about additional stock, and ordered three hundred plugs for early April. I also picked up 60 pot plants from the previous summer's stock, with the idea of selling them to keen neighbours.

My growing space was the boiler room, where I set up both a grow light chain and 2700K lamps. This seemed to work well for both lavender and narcissus. After the hard frosts passed, the plants went outside on above-zero days.



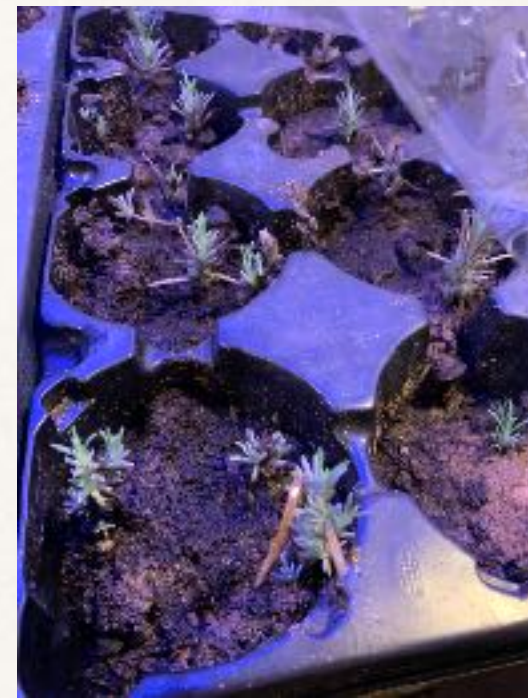
- ❖ **March** — I thought it was the right time to trim the lavender. I also decided to take a small risk and plant the leggy pot plants into the former summer flower bed. Deep sigh. I had just levelled the plants and taken Munstead cuttings when the thermometer dropped to $-15\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. I learned that while *angustifolia* handles $-15\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, a small young plant does not.



- ❖ By the end of the month the ground was warm enough to nap on. Even the cuttings showed a hint of green. I scattered bone meal and ash between the plants and brushed away the fallen leaves that had served as cover. This was the moment I think I truly fell in love with the sleeping lavender. It felt like we would manage together.



- ❖ **April** — The waiting felt long. The new plugs arrived on 14 April. I chose Ellagance White because it had been reported to tolerate some shade, and Grosso (propagated from cuttings) because, if successful, it would grow to bouquet height and work as a cut flower. Both cultivars, like Munstead, are staple varieties in the Michigan region, whose growers I had been in contact with since the previous spring.



- ❖ This time I planted the plugs in crates — gravel at the bottom, soil-sand mix on top. This way the plants could be outside from the start, brought inside only on frost days and nights. Growth was even slower than the previous year, but this time not a single plant died.



❖ **May** — In the first half of May I cleared additional space for lavender next to and in front of the Munstead planting. The spot was as sunny as possible and suitable for taller plants. The Ellagance Whites were planted in the graveyard — both dahlias and the winter's pot-plant purchases were laid to rest in the same month. Letting go was surprisingly easy, a relief even. It felt like the pieces were finally in place in the lavender valley. Planted on 28 May. I mixed in a little bone meal at planting; otherwise the plants were on their own. Fox soil was added from the adjacent sand pit, mixed with compost.



❖ **June** — The lavender began to stir in early June. By mid-month it felt like my new friends deserved proper surroundings. I scraped the grass off the overgrown path, laid down cardboard, and carted fox soil on top as a mulch. The first Blue Scent Early opened on 23 June. Munstead buds appeared on 26 June.



- ❖ **July** — First Munstead harvest, and immediately a challenge: when to cut. I cut them just as the buds were opening, with dried flowers in mind. Next year (if overwintering succeeds) I plan to let them bloom a little longer, aiming for soaps and infusion.





The first Munstead harvest.



Warehouse hall "Humuhalli".





Blue Scent Early.



Testings.



August 2025. There is a bud on one of the Grossos.



Ellagance White is opening.



Lavandula angustifolia Munstead

Classic, low lavender with blue-violet blooms and silver-green foliage. Blooms early and is excellent for borders, pots, and drying.

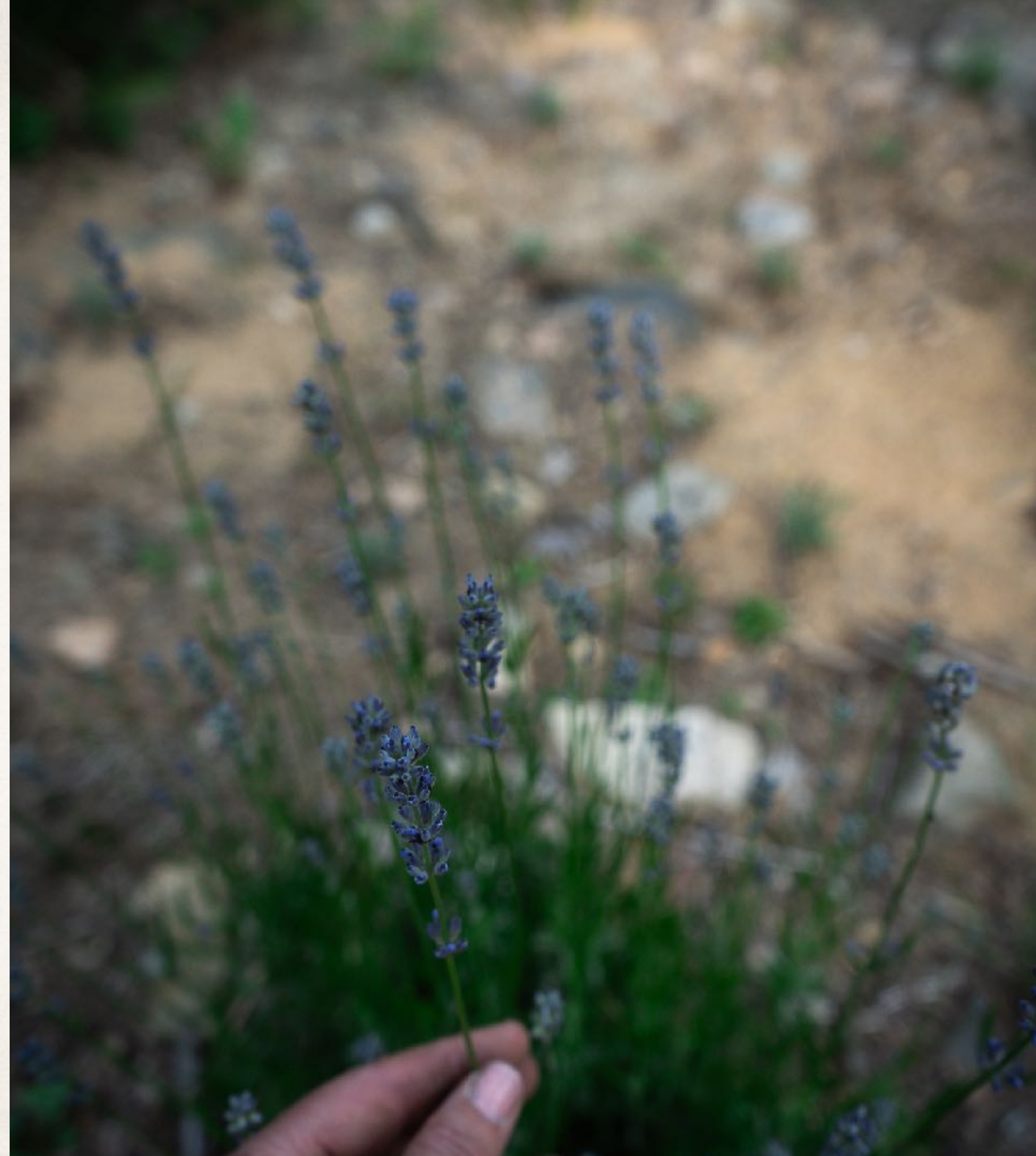
Habit: dense, mound-forming

Height: 30–45 cm

Bloom: July–August, early

Site: full sun, well-drained, dry, preferably calcareous soil

Pruning: remove dead material in spring; young plants can be pinched to encourage bushiness



Lavandula angustifolia 'Blue Scent Early'

Compact seed-grown lavender with deep blue colour, earlier than comparable cultivars.

Sun: full sun

Soil type: normal or sandy

Soil pH: neutral, alkaline, or acidic

Soil moisture: dry

Pruning: light trim in spring; remove spent flower stems after blooming



Lavandula angustifolia 'Elegance White'

A rare white lavender that offers contrast to traditional violet. Soft fragrance and white flowers create a calm atmosphere in the garden. Blooms throughout summer.

Habit: dense, rounded

Height: 25–35 cm

Flower size: 7 cm

Site: full sun, dry soil

Pinching: when height reaches 12 cm



Lavandula x intermedia 'Grosso'

Tall lavandin with long, strongly fragrant stems. Excellent for bundles, wreaths, and oil; generous late-summer flowering.

Habit: upright, vigorous

Height: 60–90 cm

Bloom: late summer, July–August

Site: sunny, warm, and sheltered; well-drained, calcareous soil

Pruning: light trim in spring; do not cut into old wood; winter protection beneficial



Lavandula angustifolia ‘Vienco Early White’

Early, white-flowering cultivar with even branching. Easy in pots and borders; pollinator-friendly and good for drying.

Habit: dense, low

Height: 25–35 cm

Bloom: early, July–August

Site: full sun, well-drained, dry soil

Pruning: light spring trim; remove spent flower stems to encourage continued blooming



Notes 2024

- ❖ Never peat pots again
- ❖ The better you prepare, the easier it gets
- ❖ Have the courage not to make emergency decisions — patience pays off
- ❖ Listen less, do more. Your own soil is your own soil
- ❖ Even a dry-soil plant needs water and nutrients
- ❖ Producing a plant group is surprisingly earthy work in the hands of something greater
- ❖ I am completely hooked and have found a vocation in my grandmother's footsteps
- ❖ Without mentors, tutors, teachers, and supervisors, this journey would remain nothing more than scratching the surface

Notes 2025

- ❖ Every supervisor, mentor, and grower has their own ideas about lavender, rooted in their own soil and their own way of working. The only one you can and should ultimately listen to is your own instinct and experience from your own land
- ❖ Preparation is actually quite enjoyable, not just a task to get through
- ❖ Patience pays off, but courage to act matters even more
- ❖ Listen less, trust more. Your own path really is your own path
- ❖ Everything takes time. From idea to execution to fruition, lavender takes even longer
- ❖ I am becoming a lavender specialist
- ❖ I am only at the beginning, but clearly already on the way