



LAVENDER: THE AROMA MISSIONARY

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INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANCE:

Lavender (*Lavandula spica*) is a Lamiaceae family aromatic plant. It is a perennial flowering scented herb or shrub. It requires cool winters and cool summers for its desirable growth. It generally grows to a height of 40cm-80cm and can withstand drought and frost. The lavender leaves are oblong-linear, opposite, and covered in tiny flowers. The tiny nutlet fruits are surrounded by a sparse cluster of purple blooms on spikes at the tops of long, bare stems. The Glistening oil glands that are tucked away within the plant hairs that cover the flowers, leaves, and stems of a plant produce the aroma. The lavender is processed to make lavender oil, dry flower, and other products

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the industrial cultivation and production of *Lavandula x intermedia* Emeric and *Lavandula angustifolia* Mill. as therapeutic and aromatic plants, and the demand for *Lavandula* essential oil is still rising globally. Therefore, thorough analyses of created essential oils to establish their quantity and quality that is vital for choosing industrial applications.

Lavender has therapeutic and aesthetic uses and has a high economic value. It is frequently used to make talc, essential body oils, soap, lotion, night cream, and other cosmetic products. Around the world, lavender essential oils are used in aromatherapy in the hotel and herbal spa industries.

Lavender helps cure depression and has a pleasant fragrance. As a result, it is recommended as an alternative medicine by many doctors and consultants to treat anxiety and psychological illnesses. Lavender oil is sold at ₹10000 per kg and has an increasing demand. It is also utilized in beer and wine production as well as many culinary preparations. Lavender oil has anti-inflammatory properties, and relaxing properties, and helps in the relaxing of muscles. Lavender is used against depression, anxiety, stress, dementia, and many other ailments. The primary contents in lavender oil found are (2.05%)linalyl acetate (28.9%), linalool (24.3%), caryophyllene (7.9%), trans-3, 7-dimethylocta-1, 3, 6-triene (4.6%), 4-terpineol (4.0%), lavandulyl acetate (3.5%), borneol (2.60%), and eucalyptol (2.60%).



PURPLE REVOLUTION:

The farmers' biggest move to reverse their fortune was to start growing lavender. The various regions of the Doda district are devoted only to the cultivation of aromatic lavender; hence it is also called the birthplace of the purple revolution. Lavender cultivation was most profitable for them than any other cash crop. As a part of the union government's fragrance mission, which aims to assist low-income farmers increase their revenue by concentrating on natural product medicine research, the farmers in this area are cultivating lavender. One of the top institutions, the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), a National Institute of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), has made great strides in advancing the aroma mission by providing end-to-end technology, information, and raw materials for aromatic crops. It was introduced in 2018 by the CSIR-IIIM Jammu as a component of the CSIR-Aroma mission, and it completely changed the Doda, Kishtwar, and Rajouri districts in the Jammu region. In J&K, more than 600 farmers have planted lavender on 150 acres of land. It has been introduced in many regions of Kashmir as well due to the chilly climate and a supportive development climate.

Lavender is now a profitable crop for Jammu and Kashmir's agriculture business because the region's natural circumstances are excellent for its development. Over 5000 kanal of land is being used to cultivate lavender in J&K as it is a great crop along with high incentives to the grower it has boosted our state's economy as well. According to a recent survey, nearly 400 farmers are engaged in lavender cultivation on more than 450 acres of land in dozens of hilly hamlets in Doda. Lavender was produced in 550 quintals the previous year.

USES OF LAVENDER:

Stress reliever:

Lavender has calming properties and is known to alleviate stress and anxiety, improve sleep as well as rejuvenate the body and relax the mind. Lavender when inhaled, the evaporated molecules are taken up by the receptor cells that transmit electrochemical signals to the limbic part of the brain, which is said to control emotions and the mental functioning of the body. Lavender oil is used for aromatherapy. There are many good spas where aromatherapy is performed by highly trained specialists at reasonable prices. Besides this, the oil helps reduce inflammation and promote circulation



Cosmetic industry:

It is mainly employed in the manufacture of various products for international beauty. Lavender may be used to make any healthy living product because it is non-toxic. Lavender products in the cosmetic industry include lavender talc, body mists, body shampoo, bathing soaps, face creams, etc. It is essential for mental relaxation and completely safe for use on the body. It is an herb with a wide range of applications.

Culinary lavender:

Lavender can be used to add flavor and color to culinary recipes either in fresh or dried form. It can be used in combination with other spices and foods as it's both a savory and sweet herb. Lavender tea is used to treat various digestion-related issues, such as constipation, ulcers, indigestion, etc. It also provides relief from menstrual cramps, helps boost immunity and promotes good sleep.

Fragrance and cologne industry:

Lavender oil is used in the perfume industry to make high-quality scents. International Brands like Dior, Yardley London, Chanel, and various Indian brands produce and sell lavender perfumes. Linalool molecule is said to be responsible for its pleasant, unisex, and floral aroma.

Medicinal uses:

The essential oils in lavender have high therapeutic value and are effective against various diseases and disorders. Lavender has many antiseptic and antifungal properties. It is used for skin and used to treat dry skin, acne, wrinkles, eczema, etc thus giving glowing and smooth skin. It has been shown to heal scrapes, cuts, sunburn, and other burns, etc.

