

201. *LAVANDULA ANGUSTIFOLIA* Mill. (LAMIACEAE) — Lavender, True or Common Lavender

Lavender is primarily grown for the oil made from the flowering stalks, that from the flowers being the best quality; used in perfumes, soaps, aromatic vinegars, herbal tobaccos, and scented sachets. Under the provocative title “Light on the Shroud?,” Gorkin<sup>192</sup> mentions the use of oil of lavender to make a reinforced plastic, durable for thousands of years. Soak linen in oil of lavender that contains asphalt; let dry in the sun. To the artisans of ancient Egypt it was one trick to wrapping mummies. Dried flowers are also used in sachets. Fresh flowers and stalks used as flavorings in beverages and jellies. The English use bouquets of the fresh flowers in their homes. The oil is also used to give fruity flavors to beverage, baked goods, confectionery, dairy desserts, gelatins, and puddings, usually at levels below 45 ppm.

Leung states that lavender, a folk remedy for acne, colic, flatulence, giddiness, migraine, nausea, neuralgia, nervous headache, pimples, rheumatism, sores, spasms, sprains, toothache, and vomiting, is used as antispasmodic, carminative, diuretic, sedative, stimulant, stomachic, and tonic.<sup>29-32</sup> Essential oil is carminative and stimulant, and used as an insect repellent. Flowers have been used for indurations or tumors of the breast, liver, sinews, and spleen and other types of cancers.<sup>4</sup> Flowering tips, considered diuretic, have been used for colic and flatulence. Seeds once recommended for worms. The inhalation of lavender was once recommended for colic, faintness, giddiness, nervous palpitations, poor appetite, and spasms. A drop of lavender vinegar in a hot footbath was once recommended for fatigue. Outwardly applied, oil of lavender has been suggested for neuralgia, rheumatism, sprains, and toothache. A few drops rubbed on the forehead is supposed to cure headache as is a tea of the tops.

Lavender contains 0.5 to 1.5% volatile oil, tannins, coumarins (coumarin, umbelliferone, and herniarin), flavonoids (e. g., luteolin), ursolic acid.<sup>29</sup> The principal ingredients of lavender oil are linalyl acetate (30 to 60% in French, 8 to 18% in English, 25% in Kashmir), linalool, geraniol and its esters, lavandulol, nerol, cineole, caryophyllene, coumarin, limonene, beta-cimene, furfural, ethyl amyl ketone, thujone, and pinocamphone. Leaves contain 0.7% ursolic acid. Dry seeds of *Lavandula* species contain 23.3 to 29.4% protein, 20.0 to 21.8% fat.<sup>21</sup> Several articles on lavender chemistry are reviewed by Lawrence.<sup>193</sup>

**Toxicity** — In large doses lavender oil is a narcotic poison that can cause death by convulsion.<sup>2</sup> The oil can cause dermatitis.