



### LAVENDER

Latin: *Lavendula angustifolia/L. officinalis*

Welsh: Lafant

A perennial native to the Mediterranean, Lavender is generally believed to have been introduced into Britain by the Romans who used Lavender to perfume their baths. The name Lavender probably derives from the Latin *lavare* (to wash).

The Romans also recognised Lavender's healing properties for wounds and cuts.

The aromatic and antiseptic properties of Lavender were widely recognised in the Middle Ages and the plant was cultivated in monastic gardens for medicinal uses and for its fragrant properties. After the Dissolution of the monasteries Lavender was more widely grown in private gardens.

In Tudor times Lavender was highly regarded as a fragrant and sanitising strewing herb. It was also used in attempts to ward off the plague, and was hung in rooms to keep away flies. To the present day Lavender balls and sachets are placed in drawers and cupboards to deter moths.

Queen Elizabeth I is said to have required Lavender flowers in her apartments and Lavender conserve on her dining table.

The medicinal properties of Lavender were valued by C16th herbalists. John Gerard (1545-1612) wrote that Lavender was efficacious in the treatment of 'the panting and the passion of the heart'. And the Siena born physician and herbalist Pietro Andrea Mattioli (1501-77) recommended Lavender for the treatment of disorders of the brain. Today, the therapeutic value of Lavender in relieving tension is widely recognised.

The commercial growing of Lavender has been established for centuries. Lavender was brought in quantity to herb markets at London and elsewhere. One of the best known of the London street cries was 'Who will buy my Lavender?'

Lavender is widely used in the perfumery and aromatherapy industries today.