



FORT TICONDEROGA

National Historic Landmark

Flower of the Week

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Common Name:	Lavender
Botanical Name:	Lavender angustifolia
Family:	Lamiaceae
Plant Type:	Herbaceous Perennial Flower or shrub
Season of Bloom:	Early Summer

Lavender is believed to be a native of Mesopotamia (current day Iraq). Recorded in history for over 2,500 years, Egyptians used the herb in mummification practices. Ancient Greeks, Romans and Egyptians prized it for its medicinal and aromatic qualities. The Greeks and Romans began the practice of scenting their baths and soaps with Lavender. We derive the modern name from the Latin: lavare; to wash or bathe and livendula; livid or bluish.

For centuries, lavender was used as a 'strewing herb' as it was tossed onto floors of castles and hospitals for its use as a deodorizer and disinfectant. It was placed between clothes and linens as a fragrant repellent of moths and mosquitos.

Lavender's scent is stored in oil glands embedded in its flowers, leaves, and stems. It was popular with ladies during the Victorian era to hold "tussie-mussies" (tiny bouquets) under their noses as they walked down the street to mask the odors of open sewage and animal waste so common to city life at that time.

Introduced to the United States by Shakers in the 17th century, this member of the mint family, with its silvery foliage and tall lavender flowers, is an attractive addition to any perennial bed. Most recently, lavender has become the flavor of choice in boutique bakeries and creameries as a flavoring for ice cream and other desserts. Using it as a savory herb is also popular, blending it with other herbs to season meat and cheese dishes.

