

Heliotropium

'Augusta Lavender'

Unlike the heliotropes you may be familiar with, this new selection boasts flower power, increased vigor, delightful fragrance and pollinator appeal.

BY JOHN GAYDOS

The lavender-purple flowers of 'August Lavender' are delicately ringed with a starry yellow eye, and its flower clusters are quite fragrant. This plant was selected by Proven Winners for its ability to withstand drought, high heat and consumer neglect. 'Augusta Lavender' was bred by using its predecessor, 'Simply Scentsational', as a springboard.

It was widely praised across southern markets and won Dallas Arboretum's FlameProof Plant award. Its bloodlines have a history of heat and drought tolerance built-in. However, 'Augusta Lavender' builds on this framework with increased vigor, greater flower power and a much better growth potential. In addition to being quite fragrant, the abundant flowers attract a wide range of pollinators including native bees, honey bees, butterflies, moths, and of course plenty of hummingbirds.

PERFORMANCE

New genetics and improvements to known favorites are the lifeblood of the horticultural industry, as well as being a hot topic for every gardener and garden club across the nation. Proven Winners, like most providers of new product lines, use a network of state universities and public gardens to test our newest introductions. These independently run garden trials publish trial results that provide performance information in a wide range of climates. This feedback is necessary for strong introductions and potential improvements to existing plants.

Trials conducted across the nation in 2021, show time and time again that 'Augusta Lavender' heliotrope is one of the top performers.

The accolades were not just from southern tier trials, but from northern and midwestern trials as well. The University of Georgia named 'Augusta Lavender' as one of their 2021 Classic City Award-winning varieties — their top award. Oklahoma State and Cornell University graded it a top performer. In the North, the University of Wisconsin, Madison gave 'Augusta Lavender' perfect scores based upon flower performance and overall garden presence. Oregon State also gave the plant a perfect score and mentioned flower counts exceeding 500 flower clusters per plant. Finally, Colorado State awarded the Novelty Plant of the Year to 'Augusta Lavender'.

Why are all these awards important? Think back to this year's heat load and the level of summer drought that many experienced. Having a variety perform well across multiple soil types, as well as climatic conditions, and consistently come out on top brings to light how tough and beautiful this plant is.

GROWING GUIDELINES

'Augusta Lavender' is as easy to grow as it is beautiful. Similar to all heliotropes, 'Augusta Lavender' grows best in bright warm conditions. Maintain day temperatures between 65 and 72° F; night temperatures can run 5 degrees lower without any adverse reaction.

Heliotropes are not picky when it comes to soil media as long as the average pH stays within the range of 6.0 to 6.5. Average fertilizer rates of 150 to 200 ppm (CLF) will keep the plant growing green and branching well. If leaves become lighter green this could indicate that your pH had drifted out of the proper range, or that the soil media is too wet. It is best to run

your soils moderately dry and when fertigating; water well, but not frequently.

Scout regularly for aphids and whitefly. Treatment should begin immediately once any insects are found and follow-up scouting and treatment as needed should be common sense.

'Augusta Lavender' responds well to tip removal or pinching. Pinch once two weeks after transplant, when the liners are rooted in and have reached the side of the container. For large containers and baskets, an additional pinch three to four weeks after the initial pinch can be beneficial. Growth can also be controlled through the use of 5 to 10 ppm of Sumagic or 2,500 ppm of B-Nine.

FINISH TIMING

Normal growing conditions will allow for a Grande or 4.25-inch container to be finished in five to seven weeks. Royale or gallon containers finish in eight to 10 weeks with two liners per pot, and larger containers like 10- to 12-inch baskets and uprights will finish in 12 weeks with three to five liners per container (liner count is dependent upon container size.)

'Augusta Lavender' heliotrope will finish beautifully as hanging monoculture containers, yet work very well in many planter recipes and as a landscape crop. Make sure you have plenty of Grandes and Royales for the home landscaper. The color, the fragrance and performance under less than desirable conditions make 'Augusta Lavender' a Proven Winner! [gpn](#)

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