**

***Lavandula stoechas ‘Ruffles’ and ‘Lace’***

Lavandula is the genus name for what we all know as Lavender. A wonderful hardy plant that is actually related to the mint family and is mostly endemic to countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. They are loved for their fragrant leaves and beautiful flowers and have a wide variety of uses from scenting products to herbal remedies and cooking.

Lavenders like to grow in the sun with sufficient air movement around them. They prefer to grow in well drained soil to which well decomposed compost has been added. They require regular watering when first planted but once the plants are established they are water-wise. Be aware of over watering as this will cause rotting and they could die.

To keep a Lavender bush tidy prune back lightly, up to a third after flowering. Do not allow it to become overgrown and woody and then attempt to prune back as you could lose your plant.

Lavenders have a wonderfully long flowering period which makes them good garden subjects. They generally start flowering from early winter through spring and into summer and its best to remove faded flowers to encourage new flowers. The flowers make excellent cut flowers and are often used in dried arrangement too. Lavender flowers are butterfly magnets and the shrubs are known to be buck & rabbit resistant which make them great from farm yard gardening.

Lavender can also be used

* medicinally, it is said to aid sleep ,
* as a scented repellent....excellent for mosquito, midge and fly repellents
* as a culinary herb, the flowers are delicious when used for baking purposes
* as a household freshener and cleaning agent.

Lavenders make excellent trimmed garden bed borders or can be planted en mass for a lovely show. Plant them in areas where you are able to brush against them to experience their beautiful scent. They work well in containers, especially on a braai patio, and make gardening heavenly scented and easy!

Lavandula stoechas ‘Ruffles’ varieties are compact and neat growing shrubs which reaches about 80cm in height. They produce very fragrant flowers in winter and spring, these have violet tufts or bracts at the top of each flower which are ruffled or slightly crinkled in appearance. “Ruffles” are excellent for planting in containers, using for small hedges or being clipped into topiary’s.

Lavender Lace and Winter Lace, although known for a slightly earlier flowering time then other lavender varieties, also produce fragrant flowers predominantly in winter and spring. They become covered in light lilac flowers during these seasons and have an added interest when with age the flowers lighted ensuring the shrub has a two -tone effect. They are slightly smaller than ‘Ruffles’ varieties and measure approximately 70 cm when fully grown.