

Heavy Clay Percolation Test and Mediterranean Herb Mound Specification Sheet

Companion Reference Sheet for: Lavender in Heavy Soil: Fix Drainage Before Feeding
Save this PDF to your phone or print a copy for field reference. Verify local conditions and manufacturer specs before use.

Key Takeaways

- Watch the bed after rain or watering to tell slow infiltration from runoff, compaction, or persistent wetness deeper in the soil.
- Improve a broad bed when the whole area drains slowly. Choose mound planting, a raised bed, or a container when the ground below stays wet.
- Prepare soil across the root area, not in a small pocket surrounded by clay. Work only when the soil crumbles instead of smearing.
- Keep container mix free draining and make sure water can leave through open drainage holes.
- Test pH and nutrients separately from drainage. Feed only after the water problem is corrected and a test supports the need.
- For more lavender growing advice, see our [lavender planting and care guide](#), and explore practical growing articles at The Garden Den.

Follow the water before choosing a fix

Approach	Problem it addresses	How water exits	Best fit
Broad bed improvement	Slow infiltration across a large planting area	Through improved soil across the bed	When the whole site drains slowly but is not persistently saturated at depth
Mound planting	Wet ground or a root zone that needs to sit above the existing grade	Down and away from the raised root area	When the underlying ground stays wet and a defined raised area is practical
Raised bed	Persistent wetness below ground level or widespread heavy soil	Through the bed's open bottom and surrounding soil	When a deeper, controlled planting area is needed
Container	A site that remains unsuitable for in-ground planting	Through unobstructed drainage holes	When you need control over the growing medium and water outlet

Use this field checklist before planting

- ☐ **Watch water after rain or irrigation.** Decide whether the main issue is slow infiltration, runoff, compaction, or persistent wetness at depth, because each requires a different response.
- ☐ **Wait until the soil is workable.** Choose broad bed improvement for widespread slow drainage, or mound planting or a raised bed when the ground remains persistently wet.
- ☐ **Prepare the whole root area.** Incorporate the coarse compost through the bed as described above, and avoid digging or walking on soil that smears under pressure.
- ☐ **Plant only after water drains freely.** Reassess watering once lavender is in place, and keep mulch and other moisture-retaining material away from the crown.

This order avoids the common trap of planting first and trying to repair a wet root zone later. If water still sits in the prepared area, pause and change the site or raise the growing area before planting.