

## *Lavandula antineae* Maire



Compiled by Dr. Salima Benhouhou

### ■ Morphological description

A perennial herb, frequently found as a small densely ramified shrub 80-100 cm. high. In wet periods the leaves are present along almost the entire square stem. In times of drought, the stems become woody with very few leaves. The leaves are finely dissected and covered with fine hairs check on the field.

Located at the tops of the stems, delicate blue/pale lavender flowers are either solitary or grouped in densely clustered spikes 5-6 cm. long. The flowers are no longer than 1 cm. The fruits are four separate one-seeded nutlets.

The whole plant has a very agreeable smell. Flowering takes place in the spring.

### ■ Geographical distribution

**Local:** Endemic of the Hoggar and Tassili mountains in the central Algerian Sahara.

**Regional:** Algeria and Libya.

**Global:** Algeria and Libya.

### ■ Ecology

The plant favours rocky sites and is either found in gravelly wadis or growing between the crevices of cliffs. The ecological range for altitude varies from 800 to 2200 m.; it thrives in extremely dry conditions with an average rainfall of 100 mm. a year but can live where the yearly rainfall is as low as 20 mm.

### ■ Status

According to the IUCN criteria this endemic species falls into the "E" category.

Human collection poses a real threat to the conservation of this much appreciated medicinal

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*Lavandula* from the Latin lavare, to wash or purify; *antineae*: referring to a beautiful queen of Atlantis

**Targui:** egayah

**French:** lavande du désert

plant in the central Sahara. Urgent measures for its protection and conservation should be taken. So far no data has been reported on its propagation and conservation.

### ■ Part used

The stems, leaves and flowers are collected in the spring and used as an infusion, taken internally.

### ■ Constituents

So far no research has been done on the constituents of this medicinal plant. These are probably similar to those in other lavender species (1.8 – cineole, camphor, linalool, linalyl acetate).

### ■ Pharmacological action and toxicity

So far no research has been done to check on the pharmacological action of this medicinal plant. The plant is not reported as toxic by the Tuareg.

### ■ Pharmacopeias

Not relevant for this species.

### ■ Pharmaceutical products

Not relevant for this species.

### ■ Traditional medicine and local knowledge

It is used as an antiseptic, a bacteriostatic, a sedative, and a vulnerary and for colds and rheumatism. Its aromatic virtues make it a much appreciated herb when added to tea.

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