

USLGA

Newsletter



NEW YEAR, NEW MEMBERS!

2019 is shaping up to be an amazing year for USLGA.

COUNTDOWN TO THE CONFERENCE

Only one week away until USLC 2019! Check out the latest conference news inside.

January 2019

Vol. 7 Issue 1

IN THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Events: USLC 2019

We would LIKE to FOLLOW you!

Why Lavender?

Using On-Farm Research to Guide Decision Making

Things you can do NOW to get ready for the spring 2019 season



SOCIAL MEDIA

USLGA is on Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram. Follow us!



WEB

www.uslavender.org

Email USLGA at info@uslavender.org
Share your pictures, stories, comments and ideas.

USLGA NEWSLETTER

Past and current newsletters are accessible on www.uslavender.org

COVER IMAGE

A frosty morning at Bee Loved Lavender Farm in Aurora, Ohio. Photo submitted by Grower Member Aimee Crane.

WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS:

Please submit your lavender and farm photos to be considered in future 2019 newsletters and USLGA's social media at: pr@uslavender.org

MISSION OF USLGA

To support and promote the United States lavender industry through research, education, networking and marketing.

VISION OF USLGA

As a collective voice for members, the United States Lavender Growers Association will advocate for, promote, and support and United States lavender industry. The USLGA will offer opportunities for members to participate in and benefit from networking, education and research. It will seek marketing opportunities to raise awareness of the lavender industry, connect buyers to sellers, and enhance member farms and businesses. The USLGA will support growers in producing a quality sustainable lavender crop and end products to satisfy U.S. demand and will be a partner in the global lavender community.



Upcoming Events



UNITED STATES LAVENDER CONFERENCE
JANUARY 24-26, 2019

Charleston, South Carolina

**Growing Your Lavender Business
with Inspiration and Innovation**

WWW.USLAVENDER.ORG/USLC-2019



**ARE YOU READY FOR
CHARLESTON? GET READY TO
START THE 2019 LAVENDER SEASON
WITH USLGA!**

Our 2019 conference celebrates the inspiration (the “why”) each of us is drawn to lavender and building a lavender business, and the innovation (the “how”) that so many lavender businesses have applied to diversify and have grown their businesses to be profitable and rewarding.

USLC 2019 will inspire and educate you to continue to innovate and define the business model that makes sense for you.

The conference is right around the corner! If you are attending, here are some things to remember: ►

- Bring a product or craft that represents your farm, shop, or company. These will be grouped by region and possibly used in giveaways.
- Are you on social media? We want to support you and amplify your posts! Use hashtag **#USLC2019** while at the conference.
- Please bring contact info to share. This is a HUGE networking opportunity to meet other lavender growers who want to collaborate with you!

Letter from the editor

Hello USLGA Membership!

Happy 2019. This year will be the 7th year of USLGA (celebrating April 27, 2012). With USLGA's 4th biannual conference right around the corner, the organization is growing monthly with lavender growers, enthusiasts, herb lovers, bee keepers and master gardeners all networking and sharing their love and passion for lavender.

In order to promote lively engagement with the membership we have a lot of ideas coming up this year. Each and every member is drawn to USLGA for a

reason and we want to hear from you and be inspired by your story.

The USLGA newsletter will now be issued once a month in order to keep membership up to date with the latest lavender news and ways you can help this organization grow.

The Newsletter committee looks forward to promoting our membership and connecting growers across the United States and abroad with the power of purple.

Enjoy!



I CAN'T WAIT TO WORK WITH ALL THE MEMBERS WITHIN USLGA IN 2019! SEE YOU IN CHARLESTON!
-AIMEE

News from the Board

BOARD MEMBERS

Dennis Hamilton
Aimee Crane
Martha Wilczynski
Julie Haushalter
Ann Davidson
Ginna Gimmell
Patricia Uptain
Wynne Wright

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Nominating – Mike Neustrom
Membership – Derek Garrett
Newsletter – Aimee Crane
PR & Communications – Aimee Crane
Internet – Mary Bergstrom & Sarah Richards
Finance – Julie Haushalter
Event – Joann Voelker
Education & Research – Ginna Gimmell
Advocacy & Publication – Sarah Richards

GOING TO THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE?

If so, make plans to attend the USLGA Annual Meeting, Saturday, January 26, from 8 am to 9 am. This will give you a chance to hear what your association has been working on this past year, to learn what its goals are for next year, and to meet your Board members and Committee chairs.

USLGA BOARD MEETINGS

Regular board meetings occur monthly, typically the second Wednesday. They are listed on the member calendar and open to non-board attendance. Non-board members may add specific items to the agenda and address them during the meeting. Please contact a board member or email info@uslavender.org for comments, concerns, or suggestions. If there are areas in which you would like to participate, please let us know.

THANK YOU FOR VOTING!

The 2019 United States Lavender Growers Association Board Election voting period has ended. The results will be announced during our Members' Annual Meeting on January 26th in Charleston, SC at the USLGA Conference site. Thank you for all eligible members that voted!

Culinary Lavender:

Lavender honey-spice snickerdoodles



PERHAPS THE MOST SATISFYING, COMFORTING, HOMEY, AND SUCCULENT SNICKERDOODLES EVER! UNLIKE MORE COOKIES, THESE REALLY ARE AT THEIR BEST WHILE STILL WARM FROM THE OVEN.

Author: Nancy Baggett

Recipe type: baking

Serves: 35-40 large cookies

Find online: <http://kitchenlane.com/2017/10/lavender-honey-spice-snickerdoodles.html>

To find more lavender inspired recipes check out *The Art of Cooking with Lavender* found here: <https://nancyslavenderplace.com/product/art-cooking-lavender/>

INGREDIENTS

1¾ cups granulated sugar, divided
1 tablespoon dried culinary lavender buds
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2¾ cups unbleached all purpose white flour
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
Scant ½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, slightly softened
2 tablespoons clover honey
2 teaspoons peeled and finely grated fresh gingerroot
2 large eggs
2½ teaspoons vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F; set a rack in the upper third of the oven. Generously grease several large baking sheets; set aside.
2. Combine ¾ cup sugar and the lavender in a processor. Process continuously for 4 minutes, or until the lavender very finely ground. Stir the processed sugar through a very fine mesh sieve back into the processor to strain out any large bits of lavender. Add the remaining 1 cup sugar and process until well blended.
3. Set aside 5 tablespoons sugar in a shallow bowl and thoroughly stir in the cinnamon. Set this mixture aside for garnishing the cookies.
4. In a large bowl, thoroughly stir together flour, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt. In a mixer bowl with the mixer on medium speed, beat together the butter, remaining lavender sugar, honey, and gingerroot until well blended and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla; continue beating until very well blended and smooth.
5. Beat half the flour mixture into the butter mixture until smoothly incorporated. Stir in the remainder of the flour mixture until evenly incorporated. Let the dough stand 5 to 10 minutes to firm up slightly.
6. With lightly greased or oiled hands, pull off portions of dough, rolling each between the palms to form generous 1½ inch balls (the dough will be soft). Roll each ball in the lavender-cinnamon sugar until coated all over. Space the balls about 2¾ inches apart on the baking sheets. Just slightly pat down the tops of the balls with your palm.
7. Bake, one pan at a time, in the upper third of the oven for 8 to 11 minutes or until the cookies are just light golden brown around edges; turn the pan halfway through baking to ensure even browning. Remove the pan to a cooling rack, and let stand until the cookies cool 1 or 2 minutes. Then, using a wide spatula, transfer the cookies to racks.
8. Let stand until completely cooled. Cool and regrease the baking sheets between batches, or the cookies may spread too much. The cookies are best served still slightly warm from the oven.
9. If necessary, store then airtight at most 2 or 3 days; they will gradually dry out with longer standing. They can be frozen, airtight, for a month or two; let return to room temperature before serving.
10. Makes 35 to 40 3 2- to 4-inch cookies.

Why Lavender?



Marcie and Dean Sextro
Simply Lavender Farm



Dean picking up plants from Jim Morford's Farm.

As a new lavender grower, I get this question all the time. I am sure that each and every one of us has a different response or story to answer that question. But as an introduction, I will share with you my answer to, "Why Lavender?"

We began our journey in November 2017 when we were looking for a new business idea. I was watching *I Bought a Farm* on GAC (one of my late-night favorites) and a couple was buying a farm to grow lavender and goats.

During the show, they had a few questions about the lavender business which really piqued my

interest. I shared it with my husband, Dean and the research began.

We spent most of November-February 2018 investigating if it was even possible to grow in Northeast Nebraska.

We toured Mim and Kevin Klawonn's Country Lavender Farm in Hampton, NE and they invited us to the Regional Lavender meeting as their guests.

After that meeting, we were hooked. We found Lavender Farmers to be the nicest people. We came out of that meeting with ideas, support and determination to make this happen.

We ordered fourteen varieties of

lavender to plant in our test plot although it was kind of late in the season to be ordering. Thankfully, we were able to purchase most of what we wanted.

We had our soil tested, bought our own fancy PH tester and prepped the soil in April and May as we went through the coolest, downright coldest spring I ever remember.

We finally got our plants in the ground the very last week in May and were so concerned about watering them too much that we didn't water them enough.

Ugh, they looked kind of rough going in but my hubby made sure the rows

continued on page 7



Why Lavender?



Plants all in a row!



Dean Ph testing with help from the cat.

were perfectly straight and they were all nestled in their new soil home. Then the wind began to blow in June and July. Now if you live in Nebraska you know the wind is just part of our seasons, EACH and EVERY one of them. The contrast from winter hanging on through May to 100-degree temps with winds that made your hair stand on end was a bit much though.

We were biting our nails and trying to revive our poor plants with water and out of the first 100 we had only 46 survive.

The summer was filled with watering and weeding, watering and weeding and watching tons of videos, scouring books and learning how to make products.

Our business model is kind of different from other lavender farmers in that we have an online store and aren't really looking to open our farm to the public any time soon.

So after our first year my reason for "Why Lavender?" hasn't changed. It's the adventure of trying something new: the learning, the growing and the making of products~it's just what we were looking for.

**Marcie Sextro from
Simply Lavender Farm,
Battle Creek, NE**



First blooms!

Using On-Farm Research to Guide Decision Making

The old saying goes, “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”. Though at first this seems a simple morsel of wisdom to perhaps encourage self-sufficiency, I have found that this message encapsulates my thoughts on farming in general. Now, perhaps more than ever, we are inundated with more information than we can possibly process on any topic you can think of but I find myself often questioning the validity of the information derived from a quick internet search. In the end, the collective and unique experiences (successes and failures) that we endure on farms in our regions should be a guide for future decisions and encourage exploration of new strategies for success.

In 2017, my wife Mary and I started the Flint Hills Lavender Farm located in Council Grove, Kansas. Mary, having grown up on a farm here, and me with my background in specialty crop production were both excited to move back and help with the family cattle farm, while pursuing our own farming enterprise. Having lived in the Flint Hills for several years, I had some understanding of the limitations facing the region with regards to specialty crops. There are inherent challenges in trying to grow anything here- the

rocky, calcareous soils, often-droughty summers, and extreme temperature fluctuations. A healthy degree of trepidation is warranted for new farming ideas in the region, though not dissuaded, we decided to implement a test plot in 2014 to see if lavender would be a potential crop for us to grow.

Perhaps our biggest struggle, we have discovered has been time management. It has at times been challenging to manage weeds in our fields because of such constraints. In order to address possible solutions to this, we implemented a trial to evaluate several management practices this spring with the financial assistance of the Farmer-Rancher grant program administered by the USDA-NCR SARE program.

In the trial, four varieties were planted in three ‘management’ systems: bareground/cultivated, black landscape fabric, and white landscape fabric. We are continuously monitoring labor inputs for each of these systems and hope to determine the costs associated with each by the end of the trial next year. We have and continue to expect to see differences in plant performance and water usage, two other variables we have collected data on.

The graph below shows promising results for utilizing black landscape fabric based on plant quality. The average plant diameter, height and overall plant vigor was higher than both the white fabric and bareground treatments. Additionally, the black fabric treatment required less labor for weeding and fewer irrigation events as soil moisture was retained under the fabric. There have been concerns that utilizing fabric can cause disease issues and we will continue to monitor plant health and hopefully bud yield data in 2019.

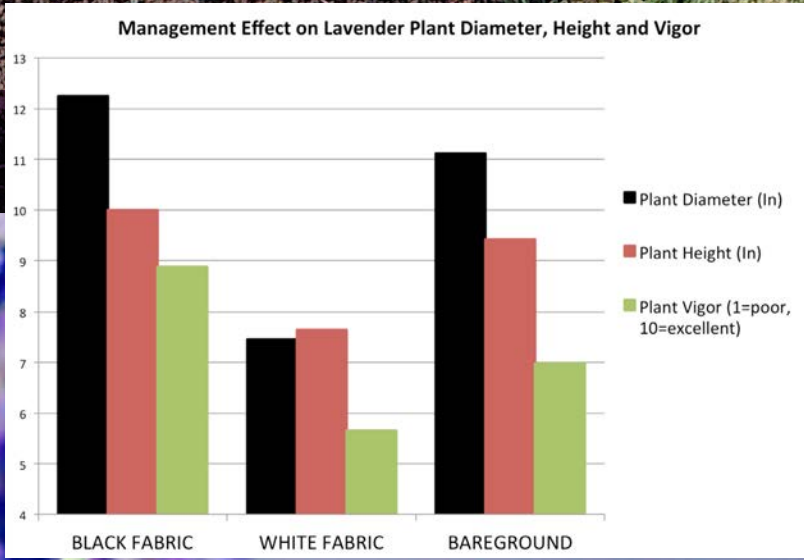
Though the trial is not complete, we’ve already been able to collect some valuable information that will guide our future management practices. Please feel free to contact us at flinthillslavenderfarm@gmail.com if you have any questions or comments regarding the study and we will be sure to continue to update you as the trial progresses!

Aaron Yoder
Flint Hills Lavender Farm,
Council Grove, KS

continued on page 9



Aaron and Elmer planting SARE trial at FHLF in May 2018





Social Media:

We would LIKE to FOLLOW you!



Whether networking as a new grower, announcing your farm's summer festival and U-Pick schedule or promoting your online shop, social media is key to connecting with other lavender growers worldwide.

With USLGA being a virtual organization, it is incredibly important for the organization to be able to network with you, our members and your social media.

USLGA's number one mode of collaboration with members is our closed Facebook group. This is by far the most interaction there is between members and between the members and USLGA. But, it isn't the only way people can interact! USLGA is also active on Pinterest and Instagram with new content rolling out in early 2019.

Does your farm or shop have Facebook or Instagram? USLGA follows many of our members and we want to follow your lavender farm's development.

More and more regions are becoming interested in creating lavender trails. Social media is a great way to connect farms and regions for visitors to explore and link together during the bloom and harvest season.

For me personally, both customers and visitors to my property are excited to see I am on Instagram and can tag a post with my farm name. It is fun to see customers share images of products they enjoyed and connect with you online. Plus, it is a great way to get testimonials!

We have some very active members on social media that are always fun to watch and learn from. If you are

just starting out and would like to see examples or network with members who are very active and successful online, just email pr@uslavender.org and we can connect you!

Just remember, crops don't grow overnight, and neither do social networks! The more consistently you post and share your stories and progress, the more you will see an increase in followers, supporters, and more importantly awareness for your lavender.

**Aimee Crane from
Bee Loved Lavender,
Aurora, OH**

Jump start your 2019 season

Did you know there are things you can be doing now to get ready for 2019! It is never too early to start planning for this year's lavender season and harvest.

“Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream” -Josephine Neuse

- Get ready for purple watch 2019. Talk to members in your region about when they plan to start to see their plants come out of dormancy and start to shoot up spikes. USLGA has plans to create a bloom map so members can see lavender bloom times across the country.
- For those of you who ordered new plants in the fall, that is great! If you did not, do not panic! There are nurseries and wholesalers and even members selling plants in the spring for growers all over. Connect with your regional Facebook group for help.
- Many members take this time to research and try out new products that they will debut in the spring and summer.
- Early in the year is a great time to work out budgets for supplies, plants, and any materials you need to purchase for products.
- Already, we are seeing members post online their festival dates, farmer's market and show schedules. Customers are already booking summer plans early!
- Early in the year is also a great time to revise event and photography contracts and pricing for those that have opportunities at your farm and garden. Don't forget vendor applications!
- Make plans to visit other lavender farms in your region or if you are taking a vacation. This is wonderful way to get a head start on your plans, and inspiration for future ideas!