

USLGA
Newsletter

December 2020
Vol. 9 Issue 4

USLGA NEEDS YOU!
Volunteer with our organization!



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SOCIAL MEDIA

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



WEB

www.uslavender.org

If you would like to contribute stories, comments, or other content please email editor@uslavender.org

USLGA NEWSLETTER

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

COVER IMAGE

Winter Lavender Field
Photographer: Daniel Hannabuss
Location: United Kingdom

WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS:

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



The year 2020 will be an infamous year in people's minds for decades to come. There have been many unprecedented challenges for our lavender businesses, and for our customers. Along with the emergence of 2021 comes new optimism and hope that a return to a new normal will soon prevail. What will a return to a new normal mean for our businesses? What will the new normal even be? Now is a good time to evaluate and plan for the year to come. You'll find some tools in this issue to help you do that.

Please take a look at the notices throughout the Newsletter. You'll find them in colored boxes. These notices often contain time-sensitive information that may require your response.

Thank you to members of the Public Relations / Communications Committee for continuing to provide features for our Newsletter.
Stay Well and Happy New Year
- Marilyn



News from the Board

From the President:

It is always interesting living in Kansas. Last week we had snow and ice encasing our plants. This week and today it is in the high 70s. The old expression is if you don't like the weather, just wait a few minutes has been certainly true this whole year. I know 2020 has been a rotten year for most of us in so many ways. We have had members deathly ill with COVID-19 and members who have lost their farms to fire and floods. Politics has played a role in keeping us all in an uproar, and I think most people are relieved the election is over.

However, we have not been idle. The projections from the medical experts on a possible vaccine and probable dates for its distribution kept moving out to late next year. Then all of a sudden it flies through the FDA and launched this week!

We had rescheduled the 2021 USLC in Portland out a year to January 2022. Last month we had to go back and renegotiate the contract with Hyatt Regency yet again. Neither of the parties in the contract could ensure we would be able to live up to the tenets with so many unknowns. We were still on the hook for a payment of \$36,000 due in early December. The contract has been negotiated yet once more moving it to January 2023 at the same location for a number of reasons. However, this leaves us with a huge gap in time for USLGA to provide training and networking opportunities for our members. The Event Committee has stepped up to the plate and are worked out a plan to put on a virtual conference in the intervening time. They have started announcing the dates with topics and speakers to be announced later, but I wanted you to know we are trying to deliver some top rate educational opportunities for our members. Stay tuned for more information as it develops.

As many of the members still are able to provide opportunities for their customers to shop either online or at their shops, the holidays are quickly approaching. Watch for surveys designed to help you decide what may prove beneficial for your business. If you are able to shut down and enjoy the Winter months, I envy you! Stay safe and happy holidays!

Mike Neustrom, USLGA President



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Newsletter - Marilyn Kosel
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PR & Communications - Mary Althoff

Mark Your Calendars

The USLGA Annual Meeting will take place virtually on January 27, 2021 at 8pm Eastern time.

Survey Says - Lavender Retail Products

Jessica Mortvedt, Iowa Lavender - Public Relations/Communications Committee

The USLGA PR/Comm Committee recently conducted a survey with our lavender growers on what they are making and/or selling in their retail shops. The intent of these survey results is to give new and current growers a glimpse of what others are doing to produce income from their crops.

Here are the results:

Total Completed: 112 | Sell Retail Products: 83% | Don't Sell Retail Products: 17%

No Retail Products

Here are the top reasons farms don't sell retail products. (they could select multiple reasons):

- 84% say they are just getting started.
- 15% only sell fresh or dried lavender bundles/buds.
- 5% they do not plan on selling retail.
- Other comments include they haven't decided what to do yet, or they only produce lavender oil.

Note: The following results are based on the 93 members who answered 'yes' to selling retail products. It's not a scientific study, but rather a way to gather some data in helping other members make future product decisions. The popularity of products may vary market to market!

Yes They Have Retail Products

Here are the top ways lavender farms get their products. (They could select multiple reasons):

- 98% say they make some or all of them in house.
- 34% say they buy them wholesale.
- 11% say they use white labeled / custom labeled products.
- Other comments include they collaborate with others for production of skin care products and they buy from local vendors.

Some lavender farms choose to wholesale their products to other shops.

- 40% say they wholesale some of their products to others.
- 34% say they don't wholesale their products.
- 22% say they are considering doing wholesale in the future.

Here is how many types of products lavender farms are selling:

- 39% sell 1-10 products
- 28% sell 11-20 products
- 19% sell 21-40 products
- 13% sell more than 41 products

Here is where lavender farms sell their products:

- 73% sell them at their farm
- 65% sell them online
- 42% sell them at a farmers markets or craft fairs
- 38% sell them at a local festivals
- 34% sell them at offsite store(s)
- Others mentioned they sell them at local spas, chiropractors, through word of mouth, wholesale to trade shows and garden shops.

Now that we know how farmers are selling their products, we get to the most important part. Here's a list of the fastest selling products. (The fastest selling products are on the top of the list. See chart 1 for a full breakdown of results)

1. Fresh Bundles
2. Soap
3. Lip Balm
4. Room Spray
5. Sachets
6. Lotion
7. Teas
8. Candles
9. Essential Oil
10. Dried Bundles

Others mentioned that food products such as fresh baked cookies, syrups and mixes were very popular. They also said a lot of people like lavender DIY product kits, hand sanitizer, yoga mat spray, lavender seeds and plants.



Product making at
Wayward Winds Lavender

Survey Says - Lavender Retail Products - continued

Here are the top 10 most profitable products:

1. Soap
2. Fresh and Dried Bundles
3. Sachets
4. Fresh Baked Goods
5. Essential Oil
6. Lotion
7. Hydrosol
8. Room Spray
9. Neck Wraps/Eye Pillows
10. Lip Balm

Our members provided some great tips for retail:

1. Pick products you feel passionate about.
2. Be creative and offer unique products.
3. Make a small variety of things and see what is most profitable and then expand on those items.
4. Before you advertise, make sure you have products on hand.
5. Consider your time in the cost of production.
6. Focus on your pricing structure as it's hard to raise prices later.
7. Decide what you enjoy making and stick to that. Nothing is worse than having a great selling item that you dread making.
8. Packaging is important.
9. Offer a large and small size to encourage people to try more products.
10. Don't be afraid to drop a product if it isn't working.
11. Check out using white label / private label products to expand your product line.
12. Remember that it requires personal interactions to make a sale.

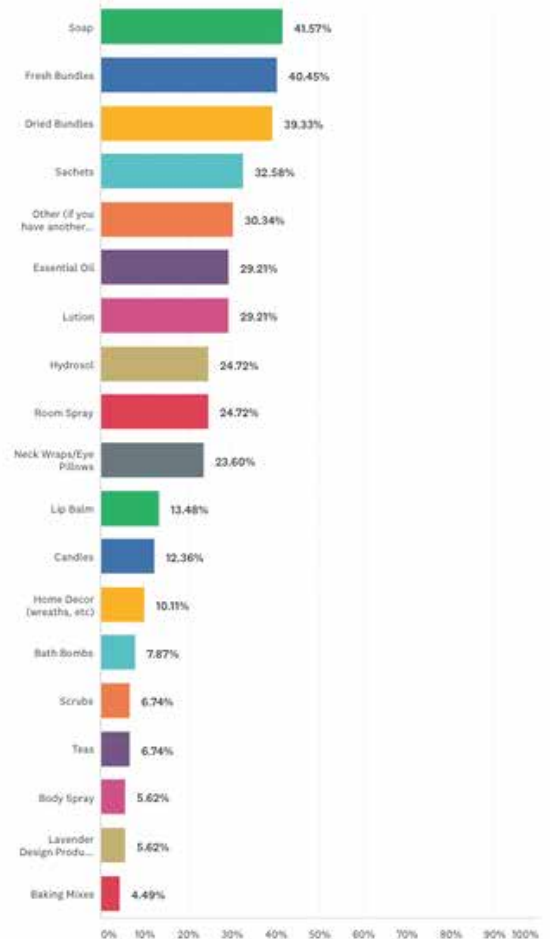
Thanks to all of our members who shared their advice and experience on retail products! We hope that these product ideas will assist you in your business making decisions.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, let us know on Facebook or email us at pr@uslavender.org

Above all, we encourage you to continue being innovative, and spreading the love of lavender to those around you.

What are your most PROFITABLE products? (select up to 5)

Answered: 89 Skipped: 23



To expand your product offerings:
Make what you have time, space, desire, and expertise to produce. Explore private label / white label, or collaborate with others who can make the rest.

If you're making your own products be sure you are following State and Federal rules. Having product liability insurance is also important.



USLGA member Kindra Olson owner of Lavender Life in Iowa recently opened her lavender shop.

INTRODUCING: Jason Woodlief & Jason Woodlief Little Mount Lavender Shelbyville & Little Mount, KY

by Mary Althoff, USLGA Public Relations/Communications Committee

It Starts With a Plan

Jason Woodlief and Jason Woodlief - yes, two Jasons - are a husband team in the successful Kentucky business of Little Mount Lavender. The two have an amazing combination of skills: Jason has hands-on SC farming experience and Jason has corporate retail and distribution experience. Together, they developed and executed a meticulous two-year planning process to find the best place to grow lavender and to build an exceptional lavender-based retail business.

The two-year search brought them to the area of Shelbyville, KY. Little Mount, KY, is an old township north of Shelbyville. Here the Woodlief's executed their plan to create the best farm and retail experience they could. The first plants went into the ground in 2016 and voila -- Little Mount Lavender is now a successful reality.

The farm now known as Little Mount Lavender was previously a tobacco farm. Turns out it's an ideal lavender growing location:

- While Zone 6 on the map, Jason believes the temperatures are closer to Zone 5, so he opts for more hardy plants.
- The topography is sloping, so it never floods.
- The soil naturally has a ph between 6.5 to 7.
- Lime helps grow tobacco and also helps the growth of lavender.
- Natural farming techniques echo throughout everything they do.

The farm has 10,000 lavender plants. They grow Grosso and Phenomenal, both oil-based plants. Jason believes a lavender farm should stick to a small number of varieties that do best, and focus on their success. The acreage also includes a dairy goat herd (with the goat milk being used in their goat-milk soap) and Bees, which produce Little Mount's honey. Chickens, horses, and a dog complete the picture.

Little Mount Lavender's retail shop is in Shelbyville. A quaint nearby historic small town with a vibrant retail community. A community enhanced by Little Mount's ever-expanding footprint and success. Shelbyville is ideally located 30 minutes from both Louisville and Lexington. A perfect distance for day trippers who want to explore and shop. "KY Proud" plays loud and strong at the heart of the Woodlief's business.

The Little Mount Lavender retail store currently has a 4400-square-foot downtown space where they sell gifts and Little Mount's lavender products. Offerings include lotions, bath bombs, essential oils, goat milk soap, and soy candles. Just this fall Little Mount added a professional kitchen and bakery. A Tea Room is coming in the future where they will serve tea, jams, jellies, and more lavender-goodies made with Little Mount's lavender and honey.

"Plan your work, work your plan"-- the old adage has truly paid off for Little Mount Lavender.

Check out their website and learn more: www.littlemountlavender.com



Three Exercises to Evaluate Your Business

Marilyn Kosel, Wayward Winds Lavender

These exercises will help you be ready for business after the disruption has passed.

In this article we'll be looking at three well-known exercises you can do to prepare for the year to come. It's never too early to think about and plan for what the future could mean for your business. The best way to predict the future is to plan for the future. Now is the time to re-think and re-evaluate.

Most of us experienced many disruptions in 2020. Disruptions in customer interactions, supply chains, marketing strategies, and almost every part of our businesses. We can help shape how the new normal looks if we plan now. Put on your thinking caps and build a strategy for when this disruption has passed.

These evaluation tools will help identify what parts of your business are still working. They will also highlight areas that are no longer working or that need to evolve. Take a deep dive into your business so you're optimally ready for the 'normal' to come. Explore the essence of your business, your purpose, the 'why'. Use the information to strategically figure out what's next. Don't leave it to chance.

Exercise One: SWOT

A SWOT analysis is comprehensive and revealing. It will give you a current evaluation of your business fitness and competitiveness. To complete this exercise ask yourself and your team to each complete the exercise individually using the grid below.

For each box in the grid identify three to five factors that are most relevant/important for your business. Use the completed grids to compile the top three to five responses. If you are working alone this is still a valuable exercise but more perspectives can provide better results.

Responses to Strengths and Opportunities provide a basis for your business vision. Where are you headed? What potential should you focus on? What long-term impact will your business have?

Responses to Weaknesses and Threats provide a basis for your business mission. What gaps exist in your business? What parts of your business are less than optimal? What should be addressed immediately to make your business vision a reality?

What is a SWOT Analysis?

<h3>Strengths</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characteristics of the business that give it an advantage over others and are key to success• Internal focus and reflect current status• Examples: Reputation, product, pricing, distribution, market coverage, technology, financial resources, people, intellectual capital, etc.	<h3>Weaknesses</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characteristics of the business that place it at a disadvantage to others in the market, and if not addressed could lead to a significant decline or failure• Internal focus and reflect current status• Examples: Generally reflect gaps or faults in the list under Strengths
<h3>Opportunities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elements in the environment that the business could exploit to its advantage• External focus and reflect both current status and future trends• Examples: Markets, client segments & buying behaviors, technology, product development, value chains & distribution, competition, regulations, etc.	<h3>Threats</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elements in the environment that could cause problems for the business.• External focus and reflect both current status and future trends• Examples: Similar to the list under Opportunities. In periods of change these elements can be both an Opportunity and a Threat

Three Exercises to Evaluate Your Business - continued

Exercise Two: Target Customer Exercise

This exercise will help you identify what the new normal looks like to your customers. What's on their minds and what are they experiencing? This evaluation will help you determine if your customers need something different from you going forward. It will also help identify what you should do and provide confidence your intentions are in line with customer needs.

To complete this exercise ask yourself and your team the two questions below. Reflect on these questions from the viewpoint of your customers. Use what you have learned in the past year and what you picture business will be like going forward. Compile and refine your responses down to three to five answers for each question. Once you have done so select a range of customers to test them on. Contact these customers and ask for input. Are you supplying what they need today? Tomorrow? And going forward?

- 1) What do your customers think and feel about your business, what you offer? Use how customers act and respond to your business as a guide.
- 2) What do we want our customers to think and feel about our business and what we will offer in the future?

Exercise Three: Branding Exercise

Branding is an important business strategy. As a graphic designer, I see the importance of branding often overlooked in our fledgling industry. Branding is scientifically grounded and universally applicable for differentiation and establishing brand ownership.

Your branding should reflect your business personality and values. Everything about branding is important. Branding should be consistent. The colors, fonts, and logo are important. Cohesive packaging choices are important. Having an overall design style is important. If you aren't sure how to approach branding do some research or consult with a professional.

To complete this exercise utilize the information learned from completing the SWOT and Target Customer exercises. Are the key points you learned about your business reflected in your current branding? Ask yourself the following questions.

- 1) Do the results of the exercises affect the relevancy of your current brand personality?
- 2) Will your branding need modification due to new requirements or customer needs?
- 3) Is your branding attracting the customers you are looking for?
- 4) Do you have a design style for your branding? Does it need updating?

Completing these three exercises can reveal a plethora of valuable information about your business. They can be used independently or grouped as in this article. Regardless of how you utilize these tools, I hope you find them valuable. Let's all look forward to and be ready for the new normal.

Marilyn is Creative Director at Wayward Winds Lavender. She is a product formulator, graphic designer, and lavender farmer. Wayward Winds Lavender produces private label lavender products specifically for lavender farms.

2021 USLGA LIFT AWARD "Lavender Ideas For Tomorrow"

It's that time again to submit your nomination for the USLGA LIFT Award!

In March 2014, USLGA introduced the "LIFT" Award. LIFT stands for "Lavender Ideas For Tomorrow" and recognizes the contribution, innovation, influence and ideas of those in the lavender industry. The LIFT Award is given to those whose passion, actions, and innovations encourage and shape the lavender industry in the US. USLGA honors these pathfinders because they offer us something new, a better method, a new invention, an artful design, inspiration, and passionate advocacy. The LIFT Award acknowledges their significance, influence, and contribution.

Nomination Guidelines: The Nominee needs to have provided work of national significance, whether by actual action or inspiration, a body of work that is accessible to read, watch or listen to, or have served the industry in a significant way. The nominating person as well as the person being nominated must be a USLGA member in good standing.

Click [HERE](https://uslga.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_mcform&view=ngforms&id=19501#/) to access the nomination form. (link to that form is https://uslga.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_mcform&view=ngforms&id=19501#/ just in case the link in the word HERE (above) isn't active)

The nomination must be received by the Membership Committee no later than: January 30, 2021. If you have any questions, please email: Membership@uslavender.org.

Survey Says - Lavender Winter Covering

Jessica Mortvedt, Iowa Lavender - Public Relations / Communications Committee Member

We have heard many members ask how other lavender farmers are preparing for winter. We saw how much you all loved our last u-pick survey, so we added another one about whether or not to cover your lavender plants.

Here are the results.

Total Completed: 44 | Cover Plants: 64% | Don't Cover Plants: 25% | First Year: 11%

Cover vs. Don't Cover By Zone

- Zone 4A-4B | Cover: 100% | Don't Cover 0% (total completed: 1)
- Zone 5A-5B | Cover: 54% | Don't Cover 46% (total completed: 13)
- Zone 6A-6B | Cover: 23% | Don't Cover 77% (total completed: 13)
- Zone 7A-7B | Cover: 0% | Don't Cover 100% (total completed: 7)
- Zone 8A-8B | Cover: 0% | Don't Cover 100% (total completed: 5)

Here are the top reasons farms don't cover their plants (they could select multiple reasons):

- 44% said it doesn't get cold enough to cover.
- 30% said it costs too much money to cover.
- 19% said they don't cover because they are concerned about mold.

Here are the additional comments from growers who don't cover:

- It would take too much effort to cover the large number of plants they have (5000+).
- It's too windy to cover.
- Plants have done fine without covering.
- One person noted that covering their plants ruined them (zone 6a).
- Another member says they don't cover because they aren't sure when to cover and uncover given the weather is unpredictable.
- Some growers say they only cover their stoechas lavender cultivars, and others say they may try covering their intermedias this year.

Here are the top reasons farms cover their plants. (they could select multiple reasons):

- 63% said it gets too cold in their zone and they must cover the plants.
- 36% said they lost all or most of their plants when they didn't cover. (all from zone 5A/5B)
- 18% said they have always covered them so will continue to cover them.
- One grower said they cover only 1st year plants.

How Do You Cover Your Plants?

- 54% said they lay fabric directly on the plants.
- 18% said they use hoops to hold the cover above the plants.
- 18% said they use stakes near the plants to prop up the cover.
- 9% said they use hoops for smaller plants; when plants are too big for hoops they lay the cover directly on the plants.

Our members provided some great tips to help you protect your lavender this winter:

- 3 members mentioned the DeWitt brand. DeWitt Ultimate 2.5 ounce and DeWitt 1 ounce frost cover. Other members said they had white fabric, but didn't know the brand. They also recommend checking with your local ag supplier.
- To keep the cover secured, use staples and concrete blocks. If you have sandy or rocky soil and can't use staples, you can use sandbags to keep the fabric down.
- When to cover: Apply row cover late in the fall and remove it early in the spring. Fabric left on too long in the spring can advance growth which should be avoided. If growth is advanced, tender shoots are prone to frost damage whereas dormant shoots can tolerate frost. Similarly in the fall. If row cover is applied too early, it could slow down the winter acclimation process. Plants should be allowed to go through a normal hardening off before winter.
- If you have an early warmup you may need to pull the fabric off the plants but leave it weighted down next to the row so you can easily re-cover the plants in case of late freeze.

Thanks to all of our members who shared their advice on whether or not to cover plants in winter.

Free Farm Publicity for USLGA Members

Your USLGA dues allow you to post events on the USLGA website calendar of Upcoming Events. Your event will be posted on both the public and member websites and on our Facebook pages.

Fill out the event form here: https://uslga.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_mcform&view=ngforms&id=19500#/

events on the farm • holiday shows • open houses • classes on the farm

The USLGA Public Relations / Communications Committee asks for your contributions. Specifically your favorite lavender recipes and your favorite uses for lavender.

We are seeking fresh content for the USLGA website. Key areas we are focusing on are recipes and the many uses of lavender. The information will be used to build an on-line library which can be accessed by other lavender growers and enthusiasts. We will feature your favorite recipes and uses for lavender on the website, in newsletters, and on Facebook.

Recipe Categories:

beverages

appetizers

salads

miscellaneous

bread

desserts

holiday recipes

entrees

entertaining

vegetable dishes

Uses of Lavender: beneficial uses, uses in products, craft uses, fragrant uses, other uses

Please include your name, farm name, city, and state with your response.

Submit to: pr@uslavender.org

What have USLGA Committees been up to? Here is a summary of recent activities:

Advocacy Committee: Currently inactive. Are you interested? Contact us at advocacy@uslavender.org.

Event Committee: Chair Sherri Wood and her team have done a great job shifting from an in conference to a virtual one. Planning is well underway and registration will begin in February.

Education & Research Committee: Will be conducting quarterly "Front Porch Gatherings in 2021 as well as providing content for the Newsletter.

Finance Committee: Has finalized the 2021 budget which has been approved by the Board.

Internet Committee: Is working with the PR Committee on new and beneficial changes to the website. The result will be more useful and user friendly for members and the public.

Membership Committee: Some re-working of regions is being considered, and focused work on increasing member engagement is underway.

Newsletter Committee: The Newsletter will continue to be produced bi-monthly. It will contain its regular features, plus articles that are relevant and educational for our members.

Nominating Committee: An announcement has gone out for two open Board positions. Deadline for members to apply is December 30th. An election will take place in early January 2021.

Would you like to have direct influence in USLGA decision making?

Two Board of Director positions will be open in 2021. The deadline to apply is December 30th.

Contact the Nominating Committee: nomination@uslavender.org

Help make USLGA better. Please consider joining a committee. Most committees are short members, or have no members at all.