

USLGA

Newsletter

February 2021
Vol. 10 Issue 1

USLGA NEEDS YOU!
Volunteer with our organization!



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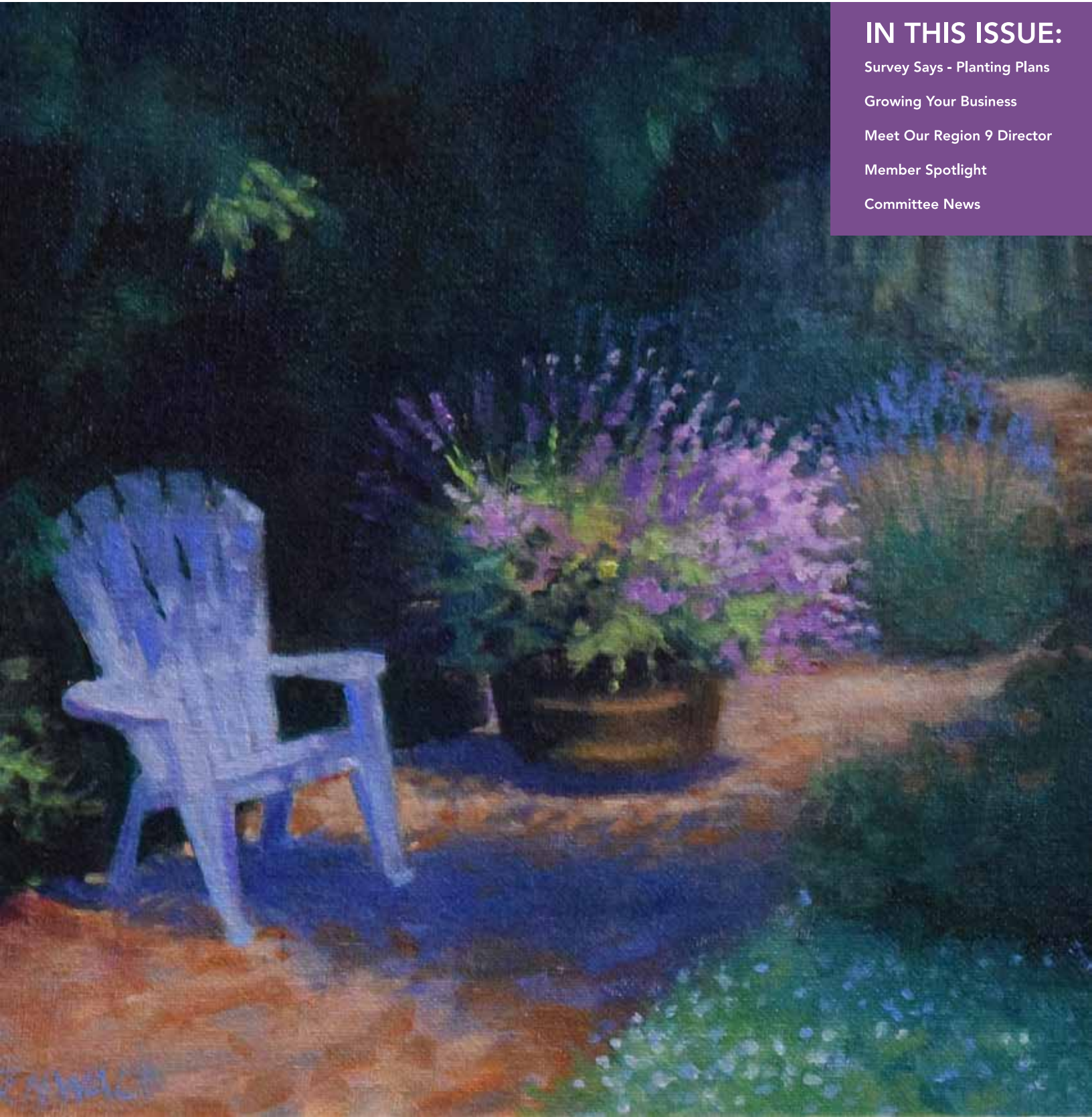
Survey Says - Planting Plans

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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

"Sit For Awhile"

Oil on Canvas: Chris Rectenwald

Location: Barn Owl Nursery
Wilsonville, Oregon

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

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication. The newsletter is distributed bi-monthly.

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.



Letter from the Editor

Whether you are a beginner or seasoned grower you will find beneficial information in this newsletter edition. This month's, "Survey Says" tells us many farms are planting and expanding regardless of the pandemic. Cindy Jones has shared some great tips for starting and growing a lavender business.

I'm very happy to see my friend Christine Mulder featured this month. Chris is amazingly dedicated and very inspirational. The article barely scratches the surface of what a generous and genuine person she is.

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
- Marilyn



News from the Board



From the President:

This letter should hit your email boxes just about the middle of winter. I hope you have had some respite to plan your activities for 2021. I find it difficult to plan too far ahead not knowing where our locale will be with the pandemic. It seems to ebb and flow; more flow lately. The vaccines are rolling out, and I am of the age I should be up for the next tier and I AM READY! Still the projection for herd immunity even with the vaccines will not be until mid to late fall.

I am having to rethink my annual lavender festival and come up with another plan. Many members have been able to hold events successfully, and I applaud the ability to pull them off. I may be able to squeeze in a couple of smaller events this Summer to help add to those pesky income coffers. Last year and even during one of our Front Porch webinar series I was pretty much gloom and doom with what I had been hearing from the health experts. I predicted we would lose members with the impacted job loss and farm income. Surprisingly, we have lost some members but not at the rate I expected. Instead, we have gained quite a few new members! I think a lot of folks have had time to reevaluate just where they are in life and decided to do what we get to do every day. For those members we lost due to job or farm loss, you have my deepest sympathies. For all you new members, welcome! We will try and help you be successful!

Mike Neustrom, USLGA President

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Vice President - Jim Morford
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Mary Bergstrom
Dennis Hamilton
Marilyn Kosel
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PR & Communications - Mary Althoff

Starting and Growing a Business

Cindy Jones, Ph.D., Sagescript Institute and Colorado Aromatics

Starting and growing a business can be very difficult. If no one knows you are there and what you do, you are not going to make sales. You need to be visible. This is especially difficult now because of COVID-19. Let's talk about some ways to grow your business.

You've got your farm and you've got your products, now what?

Farmers markets. These can be a great way to get local attention and let people know you are there. Markets can be demanding. You need to set up a tent, table and products in an attractive way. You have to stand there all day talking to people (or not talking if the event is not well attended). What are the benefits? Besides being visible to retail customers who might buy immediately, there may be other important contacts made. Store owners (wholesale customers) as well as writers (journalists, bloggers) also go to farmers markets and may take notice of your business. The farmers market itself may also have a website where they will list your business and website which may draw customers to you as well. I've seen some virtual farmers markets pop up in my area this year.

Social Media. Make sure you have a Facebook business page. It takes time to get followers there so the sooner the better. And although your fellow lavender growers are going to be very supportive of you and like your page, remember that they are not your customer. You will need to initially, reach out to friends and family to like your page. But again, remember that they also may not be your customer so don't get your feelings hurt. Then start posting. Everyone likes pictures of lavender. Think of social media as a means for customers to get a behind the scenes look at your business and learn more about your story. Post pictures of what is going on at your farm as well as products that you have and how to use them.

Don't need to be pushy or salesy – that is not what it is about. The more your customers get to know you the more likely they are to buy. Be consistent. Posting daily is good, but if you can't do that, post at least once a week. There are other social media outlets too; Instagram and Pinterest. You don't need to do all of them, but pick 1-2 that you know you can be consistent with. Periodically you can pay for an ad or just a post 'boost'. When you have events, put them on Facebook too. Events can reach a large audience.

Press Releases. Your local newspaper is always looking for news. Write a short press release about your farm and what is going on. You can find instructions and templates for writing a press release online. Search your newspaper to find the right journalist to send it to; business, home and garden, lifestyle. Don't forget about your neighborhood newsletters too. It's easier to start small and work your way up. Many realtors send out neighborhood newsletters and are looking for content. Check out Nextdoor online too. They now allow businesses to promote themselves locally.

Tell whoever will listen. It's hard now because of COVID. But try to find opportunities to talk about your business. Look for organizations in your town that need a speaker; Rotary Club, women's groups, etc., even if it means doing so by Zoom. Find a local business to partner with that perhaps you can talk to their customers. While you are doing this, collect email addresses for your newsletter.

Newsletter. Continually collect email addresses for your newsletter. You can do this at any in person event that you do, just keep a pad of paper and a pencil. You can also have a sign up on your Facebook page and website. There are many programs to choose from; Mailchimp, Mailerlite, Klaviyo, Constant Contact. Find one that works for you. Then send out newsletters regularly so that your customers don't forget about you.

(continued on page 5)



Starting and Growing a Business, continued:

Blog. Google likes current content and blogging is how you stay current. It can be difficult to come up with fresh content so keep a notebook with ideas. Initial blogs can be about how you started your business, what are your passions, and then go on to tips about how your customers can use your products. Use SEO on all of your blogs. You'll be surprised what ends up bringing customers to your site.

Inbound links. The other thing that Google likes is inbound links. This is when other websites link to your website. How do you do this? Well, joining USLGA was one way, now you have your website listed on the USLGA website. You can find other organizations to join as well, such as your local Chamber of Commerce. But another good way is to send your product out to bloggers to review. They write an article on their blog in exchange for product and put a link there so their customers can go to your website. So it is not only an inbound link, it is a promotion of the product you send them.

Growing your business can be overwhelming so start small. Pick a few things to do and then go from there. But above all, remember it is a marathon, not a sprint. Growing a business takes time.

A 2-Day Online Educational & Networking Event!

United States Lavender Conference

GROW YOUR BUSINESS!

March 19 - 20, 2021

- Exciting Topics and Speakers
 - Learn from the Pros
 - Breakout Sessions
- ... and so much more!

virtual



Free Farm Publicity

Want to promote a lavender farm or business event for free? Your USLGA dues allow you to post your events on our website's calendar of "Upcoming Events" -- on both the public and members' websites. We'll also post on the public and member's USLGA Facebook Page.

Here are some ideas on what you can post:

- Farm event
- Open house
- Holiday event

Fill out your event form here:

https://uslga.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_mcform&view=ngforms&id=19500#/

(If the link doesn't take you directly to the form, simply copy and paste the link into your browser.)

And while you're at it -- Update your Member Profile. Make sure your information is updated and accurate. By March, your Profile will connect you to lists including: "Find a Farm" and "Find a Supplier."

<https://uslga.memberclicks.net/member-profile>

INTRODUCING: Christine and Ed Mulder Barn Owl Nursery Wilsonville, Oregon



by Lisa Anthony, USLGA Public Relations/Communications Committee

Barn Owl Nursery began part-time with a desire to grow a variety of herbs and a special interest in their culinary uses. Initially, the Mulder's selected lavender for landscaping. In 1982, the selection of available lavenders was limited, and the first plants at Barn Owl Nursery were four English lavender cultivars they acquired and propagated at Chris' father's nursery.

Now, 39 years later, visiting Barn Owl Nursery is a place where you can "get away from home, stroll through a small lavender field and demonstration herb garden and browse in a cozy gift shop that feels like home." Chris and Ed's part-time endeavor offers their customers an incredible list of nearly 100 different lavender plants and a selection of favorite culinary herbs. Their lavender products include a list of ten custom tea blends, several popular culinary lavender products, fresh-cut and dried lavender and lavandin bundles and buds, and essential oils and hydrosols. The gift shop is also stocked with a nice variety of locally made fragrant lavender and herb products.

Chris's passion for lavender shines through when discussing any one of the 50+ cultivars grown on their five acres. Chris shares her expertise about lavender and herbs by offering private garden and field tours and a variety of classes and workshops including a segment on quality control for culinary lavender to small groups and garden clubs. Most of the lavender plants at Barn Owl Nursery are English cultivars, varying from "Alpine Alba" and "Thumbelina Leigh," to "Gorgeous" and "Opal Rain." Many Lavandin varieties such as "Grosso" and "Riverina Thomas" are also grown successfully at the Zone 7 nursery. This particular location faces challenges with clay soil and sometimes too much rain when the first cultivars are ready for harvest.

Both Chris and Ed retired from their regular jobs six years ago and Chris has since re-directed her energy into growing the lavender industry in the Pacific Northwest. Chris is a Charter USLGA member and a former president of the Oregon Lavender Association. She is also a pillar in developing Lavender Northwest, a multi-state regional lavender organization. Ed continues to be hands-on building their first still and distilling different lavender essential oils. He is behind most of the maintenance at the nursery. Growing up on a dairy farm and working on landscape gardening projects has given Ed the invaluable experience and work ethic that has enabled the nursery's success.



Chris shared their greatest success has been developing a loyal customer base who "simply want to learn more about lavender and herbs and enjoy visiting and supporting local nurseries and farms." She is inspired by seeing generations of families return to the nursery to shop, learn, and share the experience "to come see it, smell it, and taste it." Word of mouth, a frequently updated website, timely personal emails, providing lavender information to customers and organizations and for local news features, offering high quality plants and products, and building dependable trusting relationships have been critical to keeping their loyal customer base. This success has made it possible for Barn Owl Nursery to offer beauty and peace in the midst of a pandemic.

Survey Says - Planting and Expanding 2021 - what plants?

Jessica Mortvedt, Iowa Lavender - Public Relations/Communications Committee

The USLGA PR/Comm Committee recently conducted a survey via our Facebook members group to hear about your lavender plans for 2021. 44 USLGA members participated in this mini-survey and shared what they plan to add to their lavender field in 2021! Note: This survey does not endorse cultivars as doing well in certain zones, but gives you a sampling of what is being added by our growers!

Total Surveys Completed: 44
 Plan to expand in 2021: 71%
 Replacing some plants in 2021: 66%
 Not expanding or replacing 5%

Here are some of the plants to be added or expanded in 2021 by Zone.

Zone 4A-4B

Fat Spike Grosso
 Folgate
 Grosso
 Impress Purple
 Irene Doyle
 Melissa Lilac
 Munstead

Zone 7A-7B

Grosso
 Hidcote
 Phenomenal
 Provence
 Royal Velvet
 Sensational



Iowa Lavender Owner Jessica Mortvedt guides a skid loader full of rock to prepare their land for lavender. She plans to add to her lavender field in 2021.

Zone 5A-5B

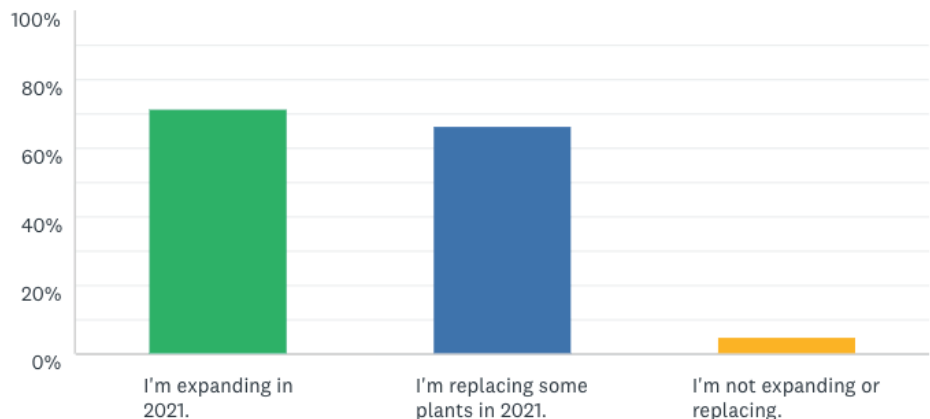
Betty's Blue
 Big Time Blue
 Folgate
 Grosso
 Hidcote Blue
 Melissa Lilac
 Miss Katherine
 Munstead
 Phenomenal
 Provence
 Sensational
 Sharon Roberts
 Super Blue

Zone 8A-12B

Grosso
 Gros Bleu
 Melissa
 Provence
 Riverina Thomas
 Royal Velvet
 Spike

Zone 6A-6B

Alba
 Betty's Blue
 Dilly Dilly
 Edelweiss
 Folgate
 French Fields
 Hidcote
 Grosso
 Maillette
 Melissa
 Miss Katherine
 Nana Alba
 Provence
 Riverina Thomas
 Royal Velvet
 Phenomenal
 Sensational



Thanks to all of our members who shared their plan for 2021! We wish you a plentiful and profitable new year!

Meet Our Region 9 Coordinator Ellen Reynolds



Region 9: parts of Ohio, Indiana, IL, MD, VA, NC, SC and all of WV, KY, and Tennessee. A rather large and diverse region!

Contact information: email beagleridge@gmail.com phone 276-621-4511
Charter member of the USLGA.

Some things to know about me:

"I started a Lavender Trail here in Southwest Virginia and am hoping to expand it throughout the region. Everything I do tends to have an education component. My husband Gregg jokes that most of the time I wear my teacher's hat. I believe in sharing my passion and am anxious to help new growers on their lavender journey."

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE

The Public Relations/Communications Committee is on a mission to have fresh content for the updated website, for other growers, and lavender enthusiasts. One key area we would like to focus is "Lavender Recipes and Uses." We would love to feature your favorite recipes and uses for lavender on the website, in newsletters, and on Facebook. The end result will be a clean updated online library. Here is how you can help:

1. Recipes: Send us your favorite lavender recipes. And please include a photo of the finished goods. Here are the categories for recipes:

beverages	appetizers	salads	vegetable dishes	main dishes
	bread	desserts	holiday	entertaining

2. Uses for and benefits of lavender: Send us your favorite write-ups and information about the benefits and uses of lavender.

3. Growing lavender in your backyard: We all get the same starter questions. Provide your input on what it takes to get lavender growing.

Send your contributions to editor@uslavender.org. Be sure to include your zone, farm name, city, and state. And send photos whenever possible. Thanks!

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

Lavender Curriculum at Michigan State University - update



It's hard to believe that one and a half years ago the Education and Research Committee rolled out our lavender curriculum! Hundreds have taken the curriculum and more enroll every day. In 2020, 333 lavender enthusiasts from around the world completed the class and improved their lavender farming skills. In total, over 577 individuals have taken the curriculum. Were you one of these? If not, now is the time as winter (and COVID) have set in to limit our mobility.

As a reminder, the "Growing Lavender: A Curriculum for Growers" was funded by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and is a product of a collaboration between Michigan State University, Kansas State University and the United States Lavender Growers Association. Its development took almost three years with talented USLGA growers partnering with university scientists to develop a practical, interactive curriculum that is accessible to both beginner and seasoned growers. For only \$30, it's the best buy in town.

The curriculum is designed to be self-paced, allowing users to move at their own speed. So you have a choice...you can spend your winter months with Netflix and Hulu or you can add tools to your lavender tool belt by completing the curriculum and earning a certificate at the end of the program. The seven modules included in the curriculum are: 1) Why and How to Grow Lavender; 2) Establishing Lavender; 3) Selecting Lavender Varieties; 4) Managing your Lavender Crop; 5) Harvesting and Caring for your Harvested Lavender; 6) Developing your Lavender Farm's Business Plan; and, 7) Marketing your Lavender and Farm. To access the curriculum go to, <https://d2l.msu.edu/d2l/home/705179>.

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: The elections for new Board members took place in January. New Board members were announced at the Annual Meeting on January 27, 2021.

Show Us Your Farm - winter

We occasionally ask for photos on our member Facebook page. Here is a collection of winter photos of member farms in winter. Please watch the Facebook page for future photo requests and submit your photos. If there is a photo collection you would like to see please suggest it to Ellen Reynolds on Facebook.

