

USLGA

# Newsletter



**LAVENDER CURRICULUM**

Have you signed up yet?  
A hit with USLGA members.

**USLGA NEEDS YOU!**

Volunteer with our organization!

**May 2020**

**Vol. 8 Issue 5**

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

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



## WEB

[www.uslavender.org](http://www.uslavender.org)

Email USLGA at [info@uslavender.org](mailto:info@uslavender.org)  
Share your pictures, stories, comments and ideas.

## USLGA NEWSLETTER

Past and current newsletters are accessible on [www.uslavender.org](http://www.uslavender.org)

## COVER IMAGE

A Watchful Eye. Birchen Marans rooster at Wayward Winds Lavender Farm, Newberg, OR. Photo by Charter Member Marilyn Kosel.

## 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](mailto: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.



# Letter from the Editor

Many of us are experiencing increased stress during these uncertain times. It's difficult to project what the future will bring. We find ourselves forced to evaluate our situations daily and looking for the time things will return to normal. The added stress is detrimental to our wellbeing and we have no control over most of what is happening. One thing I've noticed is nature has not stopped. Spring is here and surrounds us whether we are in the mood to acknowledge it or not.



Nature is beneficial in many ways. What we see, feel, hear, and otherwise experience in nature improves our mood. Experiencing nature can also improve the function of our nervous, endocrine, and immune systems. Our emotional and physical health is especially important right now. Many of us find ourselves re-evaluating our businesses and thinking of things in a new way. Taking a moment to experience and enjoy nature can help us think more clearly and calm us down. Offering a needed respite for our overactive minds. So if you can spare a few moments, get outside and take a deep breath. - Marilyn

## News from the Board

### From the President:



The last few months have brought a huge change to all of our lives with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. I have gotten quite a few calls from members truly concerned with how to deal with the impact on their businesses and farms. It is a struggle to find a way forward, but that is what our members do.....work together for the betterment of each of us.

On April 23, 2020 I held a Members' Town Hall on-line via Zoom to discuss the many things we have been hearing from members and explore ideas that may help. (See the link elsewhere in the newsletter for the recording of this event.) This pandemic will surely rock our members and agritourism for some time, even as most of us shelter in place.

We are anticipating a loss of members this year as folks find their way forward. With some struggling with the COVID-19 illness personally, loss of their 'day' job and income, or figuring out how they are going to make their mortgage payment USLGA most likely will not be at the top of their priorities. We do pray this will pass and they will be able to return. With that said it also jeopardizes the plans for our USLC 2021 in Portland scheduled for January 2021. Knowing many would not travel until a vaccine is developed and flights are back to normal we were facing dire numbers we had contracted to meet with the contract with Hyatt Regency in Portland. With a lot of hard work, input from the members' survey and luck we were able to renegotiate the contract for more reasonable costs while retaining much the Event Committee had plans for. The big change though was being able to slide the conference from January 2021 to January 2022. This would normally have resulted in a huge penalty. We were able to work through that without penalty. The Event Committee will be announcing more information once formalized.

It was exactly five years ago I stepped into the shoes of President for our organization. After a hiatus of two years, I am back involved through membership on the Board. I still was active chairing the Nominating Committee and always had my ear to the rail, but I realized I still wanted to do more. There are so many opportunities for involvement in USLGA depending on your interests and talents. No committee is looking for 'lavender farmers' for assistance. Not that we don't have or need them, but our organization also needs those talents many learned in the business. Corporate or non-profit world. Follow the updates from the committee reports and see not only what they are working on but find what you believe you could help make better for all of us. There are many aspects working diligently to provide value for our members. So, if you have an interest in helping out a particular committee please let the Chairs know. If you have already volunteered but haven't heard anything back, let me know. I am more than happy to help you be involved!

My thanks to Dennis Hamilton serving as our President from March 2018. Although he has chosen to step down from the Executive Committee, I am thrilled he remains on the Board of Directors to help out with a series of goals established for this year. Thank you, Dennis! Also, a word of thanks for those outgoing Board members Anne Davidson, Wynne Wright, Aimee Crane and Lee Kleinman. We are grateful for the time and commitment you made on our behalf.

As we come up on April 27, 2020, we celebrate our 8th anniversary. Here's to having many more.

Mike Neustrom, USLGA President

### BOARD MEMBERS

President - Mike Neustrom  
Vise President - Jim Morford  
Patricia Uptain - Secretary  
Sarah Richards - Treasurer  
Mary Bergstrom  
Dennis Hamilton  
Marilyn Kosel  
Tim Van Binsbergen  
Sherri Wood

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Advocacy - OPEN  
Education & Research -  
Martha Wilczynski  
Event - Sherri Wood  
Finance - Sarah Richards  
Internet - Mary Bergstrom  
Membership - Mary Hammer  
Newsletter - Marilyn Kosel  
Nominating - Mike Neustrom  
PR & Communications -  
Tim Van Binsbergen

# History of Commercial Lavender Growing in the Northwest

Chris Mulder, Barn Owl Nursery

Did you know that the first commercially grown lavender in the Pacific Northwest began in the 1920s, around 100 years ago? Luther J. Wyckoff, a resident of Seattle, Washington, was considered to be one of the pioneers of lavender breeding in the Pacific Northwest. He began growing *L. angustifolia* to be a source of essential oil for the American perfume industry. He found that *L. angustifolia* grew well along Puget Sound, where it had a good chance of remaining free from disease. He was quoted as saying that the Puget Sound region is "climatically suited to lavender growing as long as you keep your operation on high, well-drained ground."

In 1924, Wyckoff agreed to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This allowed him to be a collaborator and supply plants and supervise a joint lavender project, while the USDA paid for some of the expenses and helped publish the information. Three areas along Puget Sound were chosen to plant lavender: Bothell, Chimacum, and Chambers Prairie, now called the Horizon Pointe area in Lacey, WA.

In 1928, Wyckoff planted rooted cuttings that were propagated from large lavenders planted around the Seattle area. In 1929, his new lavenders sustained considerable winter damage. It was discovered that the original plants that supplied those first cuttings were not *L. angustifolia* at all, but were actually mislabeled *L. x intermedia* plants! Fortunately, there were hardy lavender seedlings growing nearby that were true lavender, *L. angustifolia*, and those plants proved to be the hardiest species of lavender to grow in the area. So Wyckoff acquired seeds and plants of *L. angustifolia* cultivars from several sources in France and began growing them in those locations in Washington state. In 1931, each of the acquired French lavender plants were grown apart from the other lavenders, until the quality of the oil could be tested. Then further distillation was done to produce larger quantities of essential oil. Extensive data was gathered about each area where the lavenders were grown. Their data included extensive notes on their successes and the growing conditions.

In 1934, due to the depression, Wyckoff's agreement with the USDA ended. He moved his lavender plants to 10 acres of land that he rented, just to keep his project going. Eventually, Wyckoff received enough donations and financing to purchase 80 acres of land close to the rented land he was using. He built several buildings on the property, including a distilling room, a boiler house and machine shed.

In early 1940, he built a house on the property and moved his family to live in Lacey, WA. He began a non-profit, Plant Research Foundation, to experiment with growing lavender and other plants. His farm became so successful that 5,000 cuttings of his lavender were sent to Yardley and Co. Ltd, which at that time was the world's largest user of lavender oil. The strains that Wyckoff developed were desired for their high quality and resistance to disease. According to the newspapers of that time, Wyckoff's business was the first lavender farm in the United States.

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## Wyckoff or Wyckoff Blue

(*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Photo credit: Joycreek Nursery

Flower Color: Bright Violet-Blue

Stem Length: 10-12 inches

Height: 15-18 inches

Best Uses: bouquets, crafts, culinary

This lavender is presumed to have been developed by L. J. Wyckoff for its strong oil content. It is hardy to Zone 5, even though some growers find it difficult to keep it growing for a long period of time. The very fragrant, large flowers bloom in mid to late June and have lovely dark buds (calyxes) and bright violet flowers (corollas) on long stems. The plant forms an erect, compact shrub and has silver-gray foliage. This semi-dwarf cultivar is suitable to grow in a large container or to plant in the landscape in a row for a short lavender border in the garden.

Use the cut flowers fresh or dried for bouquets, the dried buds to make fragrant sachets and other crafts, and the fresh and dried flowering spikes and buds to garnish and flavor foods and beverages.

Do you know about  
the history of  
lavender growing  
in your area?  
Please share,  
submit an article!

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By 1950, Wyckoff had been producing lavender oil for nearly 25 years in Washington state. He was regarded as the foremost authority on the commercial cultivation of *L. angustifolia* in North America! Despite his slow start and early problems, Wyckoff established that a good grade of lavender oil could be produced from lavender grown on Puget Sound and that lavender plants grew well there, even under some challenging conditions due to the soil, the site and the climate.

Wyckoff noted that some of the lavenders he grew flowered early, with a 2 to 3 week difference in bloom time, and later flowering lavenders could be grown, too, which extended the flowering season. Also notable, was he found that the life span of some of the lavenders he grew was much longer than the plants grown in several other countries. Some of Wyckoff's plants survived up to 25 years!

When the essential oils distilled from his lavenders were analyzed and compared with selected lavender oils from France, it was said that the aroma of his lavender oil was very similar to the French oil and no camphor was detected in the oil produced from the lavender grown at his farm in Washington state.

Sources:

*The Genus Lavandula*, by Tim Upton and Susyn Andrews

*Lacey Museum Musings Newsletter*, Vol. 2 Issue 2, Spring 2015



## No. 9 or No. 9 Norfolk

(*Lavandula angustifolia*)

photo credit: Downderry Nursery

Flower Color: Dark Violet Blue

Stem Length: 10-12 inches

Height: 20-24 inches

Best Uses: bouquets, crafts, culinary, oil

This early flowering lavender cultivar was introduced by Norfolk Lavender, but the original plants came from lavender grown near Puget Sound in Washington state. It probably was collected by J.H. Seager of Yardley & Co. Ltd, around the 1950s, after one of his visits with L.J. Wyckoff in Washington state. This large lavender cultivar has gray-green foliage and flowers that bloom on long stems earlier in June. 'No. 9' produces many strongly scented flower spikes throughout the season. The plants can be grown as a hedge or border in the garden.

The flowers have been used for oil production. This lavender cultivar can also be used for fresh cut and dried bouquets. The fresh flower spikes are a nice garnish for foods and beverages. The very fragrant dark, dried buds can be used to make a potpourri and to fill sachet bags.

## ANNOUNCING 'AN EVENING OUT'

Front Porch Zoom Series  
Thursday, May 28, 2020  
8:00 PM Eastern time

"Are my plants dead or alive?"  
- vital signs of life  
- when do I "pull the plug"  
- how and when to prune

An announcement to the  
membership will be  
going out soon.  
Watch for it!

USLC postponed until  
January 2022



# INTRODUCING:

## Tim and Lisa Anthony

### Sandy Creek Ventures, LLC

### East Canton, OH

It has been my husband's dream to farm full-time. In 2013 his dream became reality. In 2009, my husband and I bought his grandparent's farm. With their blessing, we moved onto the farm in 2016.

My husband Tim is a fifth generation farmer - something I am more proud of than he is - we have been blessed with the sixth generation. Our two beautiful children. While many changes have taken place in the course of 100+ years, our family's genuine love for agriculture has remained.

As Tim and I have been learning the business side of farm life, we've been encouraged to find our niche. To think outside the box over and over. We currently farm about 500 acres of hay, corn, and soybeans. We raise a couple dozen beef cattle, and have foraged into raising hogs.

When our daughter said she wanted to grow something (it's in her blood!), I started to do some research. I do not have a green thumb and wanted to find something I wouldn't kill and break baby girl's heart. We considered herbs as a good place to start. Lavender jumped out at me as an intriguing choice. I kept reading and reading and reading. Learning all I could about lavender.

Everything about lavender seemed a perfect match for us: climate, soil, harvest season, and simplicity. Our farm is nestled in a little valley in southeastern Stark County, OH. Our soil is very sandy and we have a sweet little creek running through our property; hence our name Sandy Creek Ventures. Our land and lavender farming seemed compatible. We are on zone 5b and 6a border. I am a teacher and the lavender harvest perfectly coincides with my summer. Our young children can get involved at every level of lavender production.

We broke ground for our first 18 plants May of 2018; testing Betty's Blue, Buena Vista and Grosso. May/June of 2019 we planted another 180 plugs (60 of each previously named varieties). May of 2020, we anticipate filling holes for a few losses and testing new varieties. We have plans to expand our 200 plants to two acres in the next couple of years.

We plan to hold small scale u-pick, private events, and classes for 2020. There are many unknowns going into this season with COVID-19, but we are so excited we are going to have a solid bloom and harvest!

We have certainly made mistakes: no weed barrier, no winter cover, pruning too soon, etc. But we have learned so much and are so excited for the future of lavender on our farm! I think we've found our niche!

Lisa Anthony



**"Everything about lavender seemed a perfect match for us: climate, soil, harvest season, and simplicity."**  
Lisa Anthony



# USLGA Board of Directors Goals for 2020



Each year your Board of Directors identifies and works toward new or ongoing goals to improve our organization and member experience. The list of goals this year includes:

- Develop an orientation for new Board members.
- Develop an orientation for new USLGA members.
- Engage more members through involvement in committees.
- Improving our "Regions" program and member involvement in regional USLGA groups.
- Adding a Board liaison to each standing committee.
- Examine USLGA structure, policies, and by-laws for needed updates.
- Redesign the USLGA website.
- Develop a procedure for responding to inquiries from the general public.

Can you help us achieve these goals? Your assistance is needed to keep our organization moving forward. Please contact us if you can help.

## Show us Your Still

Send us a picture and some information about your still for a future issue.



at Wayward Winds Lavender Farm

The still at Wayward Winds Lavender in Newberg, Oregon is an antique copper moonshine still that has been modified for distilling essential oil. The still holds about 100 gallons of plant material and takes 3 hours to run. We operate the still 3-4 times per day from late June until well into September. We distill for a number of other lavender farms in our area which keeps us very busy. We fit our own lavender in when we get a chance. People often ask why we don't polish it. I love the patina and antique origin of the still. As long as I have it, the outside will be left alone to age gracefully and tell its story.

On April, 23rd 2020 President Mike Neustom hosted a Town Hall meeting on Zoom. Ideas about how farms can adjust to the COVID-19 situation were discussed. Find the recording here:



<https://uslga.memberclicks.net/meetings>

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

**Advocacy Committee:** Currently inactive. Are you interested? Contact us.

**Event Committee:** Chair Sherri Wood and her team have been very busy first booking, and then negotiating to postpone USLC 2021 until January 2022 due to the pandemic. The location will remain Portland, Oregon.

**Education & Research Committee:** Will be sending out a survey soon to USLGA members. The survey is designed to identify what our members priorities are on topics of education. The committee is planning to produce webinars based on the information gleaned.

**Finance Committee:** New Finance Chair, Sarah Richards, has been updating banking information and signor information. The budget will be updated soon.

**Internet Committee:** Has been planning Yammer training for the Board. An app for the USLC is being developed. Forms and web updates regarding USLC are in process.

**Membership Committee:** Is encouraging staying in touch with your fellow USLGA members on the members Facebook page. It's a great way to stay connected and learn what farms are doing during the COVID19 crisis. They have also been considering ways to better organize and encourage participation in USLGA Regions.

**Newsletter Committee:** We now have a Newsletter again. The plan is to publish bi-monthly for now. This committee is looking for a Chair and an Editor, as well as regular contributors and committee members.

**Nominating Committee:** This committee active around election time or when vacancies need to be filled. There has been no new activity recently.

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