

USLGA

Newsletter



BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

Congrats to the new
USLGA Executive Board

CULINARY DELIGHT

Lavender sour cream
pound cake to try!

April 2019

Vol. 7 Issue 4

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Day in the Life of a
French Lavender Farm

The Starr Lavender
Harvester™ story

Why Lavender?



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

Beautiful lavender fields at Country Lavender Farm. Photo submitted by member Mim Klawonn, Hampton, NE.

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.

Letter from the editor

Hello USLGA Membership!

Things are really picking up at my little lavender patch. I decided to pursue my dream of getting a bee hive this season and am thrilled to start this journey. Many of our members have bees with their lavender, and I can't wait to learn from all of you! It has been great to see other USLGA members on Instagram share their new hives for the new season. It looks like quite a few of us are taking on this exciting new adventure before the 2019 lavender season kicks off.

As new growers are joining weekly, USLGA highly encourages you to reach out on our closed Facebook page and talk to your fellow members about any questions you may have as you start to get plants for the upcoming season. We are here to help! Please also check out our incredibly resourceful website as new growers start making plans and getting their plots and fields ready for lavender. As a member you have access to a wealth of resources to help guide you on the right path. We want to hear from you!



HAPPY APRIL! USLGA HOPES EVERYONE HAS A GREAT EASTER WITH YOUR FAMILIES!
-AIMEE

News from the Board

BOARD MEMBERS

Dennis Hamilton (President)
Jim Morford (Vice President)
Wynne Wright (Secretary)
Lee Kleinman (Treasurer)
Aimee Crane
Ann Davidson
Ginna Gimmell
Patricia Uptain
Sherri Wood
Marilyn Kosel

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to the following board members who will be taking on these executive board positions for USLGA:

Dennis Hamilton	President
Jim Morford	Vice President
Wynne Wright	Secretary
Lee Kleinman	Treasurer

COMMITTEE GOALS

Each month a different USLGA committee will be sharing committee goals to our readers. This April, we will be hearing from the Membership Committee:

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE GOALS

- Reduce the number of lapsed memberships.
- Reduce the barriers to efficiency and effectiveness of the Membership Committee.
- Review all rules applicable to the Membership Committee and revise them to meet our current-state needs.
- Resurvey the 2018 and 2019 lapsed memberships to determine why the membership was not renewed.
- Develop a new membership survey to poll the membership on what services and benefits the membership desires and work with the other committees and the Board to provide those services.
- Compare Membership benefits to other similar organizations and recommend new services and benefits to the Board of Directors.
- Improve the support given to Regional Coordinator.
- Review the master Membership list to insure everyone is in the correct region.



Lavande du Quercy in beautiful France.

A Day in the Life of a French Lavender Farm

Several of our members travel internationally and enjoy lavender from around the world. Check out these photos from Board Member Wynne Wright, who is near Toulouse, France this month! Wynne will be sharing a day in the life of a French Lavender Farm over the next several newsletter issues.

Provence is not the only region in France that produces excellent quality lavender. The Quercy region in the southwest is also known for exceptional quality lavender producing up to 10% of all essential oil in France up to 1970. The region is currently experiencing a resurgence with many farmers eager to diversify their farming operations and reinvigorate this heritage.

Wynne Wright of Sixteen Sprigs Lavender in Lansing, Michigan visited Ferme de Lacontal this spring to reconnect with friends H el ene Lafon and Xavier Leplaideur and see the changes that have taken place on their 13 acre lavande, lavandin, and helichrysum farm. As owners of the oldest lavender farm in the Quercy region they are resurrecting the production of H el ene's grandparents who produced lavender on this land in the 1950s-1970s. If you're in southern France stop by and visit. They are located outside the village of Touffailles, 1 1/2 hours north of Toulouse.

Learn more at: <https://www.lavande-quercy.fr/>

Lavande du Quercy
Ferme de Lacontal



continued on page 5

Beautiful photos below from Lavande du Quercy. Check back in future issues as Wynne will share with USLGA membership how this farm started growing lavender and the heritage of lavender in this French region. She will also discuss why Provence is considered “THE” region for lavender and much more!





The Starr Lavender Harvester™ story

- Self-propelled single row harvester
- 4-Wheel Drive
- 4-Wheel Steering
- All Hydraulic



continued on page 7

In 2013, Bill and Mary Jabs attended a lavender festival, and they were hooked. Having previously grown Christmas trees, they were looking for a replacement crop. Mary loves flowers and Bill has always wanted to be a farmer, so lavender was a good choice. They visited with the lavender farm owner, who agreed to provide advice, his harvester and the use of his lavender still. In 2014, they planted 300 plants of six different varieties and they all did well. They then formed Eagle Creek Lavender (Eagle Creek, Oregon) and over the next four years, planted 20,000 more plants, 17,000 of which are Buena Vista, grown for essential oil and 3,000 mixed varieties, mostly for culinary purposes. 2,000 more plants will be planted in 2019.

In 2016, they tried the homemade harvester of their mentor, made from a hay swather, which proved to be too big and damaged their tender plants. So, in 2016 and 2017, all harvesting was done by hand. With labor being expensive and limited availability, Bill, a retired engineer, began looking for a harvester. Not finding any single-row, self-propelled lavender harvesters being manufactured anywhere at a reasonable price for medium-sized farms, he decided to design and build one himself. The harvester was completed in time for the 2018 harvest.

Previously, on their best day with six people, they harvested 1000 pounds of raw lavender. The harvester can cut between 500 and 1000 pounds per hour with two people. Given how successful the harvester performed, Bill decided to begin manufacturing and selling to others.

The **Starr Lavender Harvester™** is self-propelled, 100% hydraulic, 4-wheel drive, 4-wheel steering with variable speed control on all moving components. It can discharge directly into a trailer mounted distillation vessel or in agricultural bags, which Bill prefers. It does not require a tractor or any other equipment to operate. It is designed for variable row configurations, plant widths and heights, but each machine is custom built to the customer's specifications.

For more information or a harvester brochure, contact Bill. All contact information is provided at www.starrmanufacturing.com



The Starr Lavender Harvester™ in action.



The harvester loaded with agricultural bags.



Our lavender festival in progress.



Our Buena Vista lavender field in bloom.

Culinary Lavender: Lavender Sour Cream Pound Cake



“THIS IS A QUICK CAKE YOU CAN WHIP UP WHEN YOU ARE IN A HURRY AND MAY BE MADE WITH A VARIETY OF HERBS. OUR FAVORITES ARE LAVENDER OR ROSEMARY.”

“WE CHANGE IT UP DEPENDING ON OUR SEASON. IT IS OUR MOST ASKED FOR DESSERT IN OUR TEA ROOM. IN THE WINTER I USE ROSEMARY IT REALLY WORKS WELL WITH A VARIETY OF HERBS.”

-ELLEN REYNOLDS

Author: Ellen Reynolds
Beagle Ridge Herb Farm and
Environmental Education Center
Recipe type: baking
Serves: 6 to 8

INGREDIENTS

- One yellow cake mix
- 1 package of vanilla or lemon pudding mix
- 4 eggs
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 1/2 C of sugar
- 3/4 C of vegetable oil of your choice
- 2 T of crushed lavender buds or herb of your choice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix all ingredients and beat on medium speed for 4 minutes and place in a greased and floured tube or bundt pan. Place in a preheated oven (325 degrees) and bake for 45 minutes until it begins to pull away from the sides.
2. Cool on a rack for 20 minutes, and then remove from the pan. Dress with the following glaze if desired.
3. Glaze: Take 1 C of water, add 2 T of crushed lavender or herb of your choice and bring to a boil, strain off the herbs and mix 1C of confectioners sugar. This will make a very light but flavorful glaze to dress the cake with after it has been cut into serving pieces.
4. We usually add a quick sprinkle of whole buds along the spine of the cake for a garnish and serve each piece with a short stem of Royal Velvet lavender on the plate.
5. If you prefer a naked cake, a dusting of powdered sugar will work just as well. Presentation is everything.



Why Lavender?



Bill and Michelle Bakan
Maize Valley Winery
& Craft Brewery



Prepping the fields in Hartville, Ohio.

Why lavender?

So I can buy faster motorcycles and spend more time in Key West!

Greetings from Farmer Bill at Maize Valley Farm, Market, Winery, and Craft Brewery. I graduated from Ohio State in 1985 with a degree in Agricultural Education, and married a gal who majored in Dairy Science. We ended up returning to her family farm full-time in 1986, after her father had an accident. Things were not going well for a small, family farm like ours in the 1990s, and we needed to change. As commercial agriculture continued to squeeze my father-in-law's farm business, he had to downsize and restructure. In the fall of 2000 we

purchased a run down century barn. That winter, we began restoration. We gutted, sand blasted, and rebuilt it, working through one of the coldest winters in years. As members of the North American Farmer's Direct Marketing Association, we were provided inspiration for the direction we felt we needed to take with the barn. In June of 2001, we opened with a bakery, deli, and fresh produce market. Each fall we continued to expand our agritourism offerings with success, and each summer we added more fresh produce, while slowly adding some on-site café-style food service. When winter hit, things would pretty much grind to a halt. We yo-yoed along this way for a few years and it was very difficult.

In 2004 we got the idea to start a winery, which quickly began to stabilize our income. As we continued to grow the agritourism areas of our business in fall, we began to expand with other special events throughout the year, thus leveling out our income stream and reducing seasonality. In 2015, we were able to add a Craft Brewery to our offering. The agritourism was continuing to grow, the winery was expanding, and our food service was growing at a rate between 20-30% a year. My wife's father continued to farm about 800 acres, but was slowing down as he got into his 80s. The question of what to do with the 100-acre farm kept us looking for crops we could both grow and direct market.

continued on page 10



Why Lavender?



Part of our lavender order from Victor's Lavender.

Through our NAFDMA group, we stumbled upon sunflowers a couple years back, and created an extremely successful event around it in 2018 that helped expand our agritourism offerings beyond the traditional fall season. This helped expose us to another market segment and provided more income during the summer months. Any activity that draws people to the farm provides an opportunity to market to the guest.

One day while out riding my motorcycle, I visited a winery operated by a friend of mine in Central Ohio, where I discovered lavender on his farm. My knowledge of sunflowers had me tuned into “Flower Power”. I picked his brain and formulated an idea for lavender to be planted at Maize Valley. We soil sampled and discovered we needed a little bit of lime. We prepped

the field and waited on the weather to cooperate. Through Victor’s Lavender, I was able to secure 1650 plants. In September we planted Super, Betty’s Blue, and Folgate. Shipping to Ohio cost almost as much as the plants! In November, we purchased, put on row cover, and weighted it down, in hopes that our new transplants could survive the wet fall and frigid winter.

March 26th-28th, we uncovered the raised beds, and began to hand weed and survey the health of the stock. I was pleased to discover that we have an 85-90% survival rate. The field is a sandy, decently well-drained piece, but the raised beds created dams on the hillside, trapping some of the water and killed the plants in those areas. Some of the plants in sections of the beds with heavier soil also gave up. As fast as I moved on this project, I’m

reasonably pleased with the outcome so far. We’ll see how the plants handle April. Is the soft tissue growth I see from a plant ready to grow, or one just living off stored carbohydrates? I guess we will see!

This uncertainty inhibits me from aggressively marketing any type of festival, which is the big “WHY” in this story. I really don’t have any plans to process or do value-added marketing to the crop, but plan on using it to leverage another experience-based event featuring lavender in July. Our profit centers lie in the food, wine, craft beer, and pay-to-play activities. We will likely combine a lavender harvest festival event with a pop-up type art marketplace, similar to what we did with our sunflower festival, which turned out to be very successful. I plan on selling the lavender crop as a cut-flower type product. This will be more of a premium event on the farm.

Growing lavender gives me content to reinforce our farm’s agricultural roots and heritage. I can see many opportunities to create farm-to-table, food-centered events, adding lavender to the mix both as a menu item and dinner setting with our 9-foot center-to-center row spacing. We also put the lavender patch adjacent to our vineyard to provide a diverse and attractive farm setting.

The day we began entertaining people was the day we began paying the bills. The day we began making and selling alcohol was the day we began making money. Lavender provides another content-based crop and platform to continue to expand this concept. I am probably not your typical lavender

continued on page 11



Why Lavender?

grower, if there is such a thing. I farm to live; I don't live to farm. I have had the pleasure of being "unemployed" since 1985, because I enjoy what I do for a living most days.

Please visit www.maizevalley.com if you would like to learn more about our family farm-based business. You can also like or follow us on Facebook or on Instagram at [maize_valley_](#) or [Ohio_lavender](#).



Bill Bakan
Maize Valley Winery
& Craft Brewery
Hartville, OH



Farming in Hartville, Ohio.



Lots of plants to get in the ground!



Inspecting under the frost cloth.