

USLGA

Newsletter



LAVENDER CURRICULUM

The wait is over!
Details inside.

USLGA NEEDS YOU!

Volunteer with our organization!

August 2019

Vol. 7 Issue 8

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Day in the Life of a
French Lavender Farm

Why Lavender?

From our Members



SOCIAL MEDIA

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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

End of Summer blooms at Sandy Creek Ventures in East Canton, Ohio. Photo from grower member Lisa Anthony.

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!

I think Ellen Reynolds at Beagle Ridge said it best on her recent post on our closed Facebook group. I sure miss my lavender blooms! Many of us are feeling the same as summer is ending and we are seeing the last of our lavender's beautiful flowers.

Many are wrapping up distilling and have just a couple of weeks left of open shop hours. I have heard from several growers who are already busy taking cuttings to grow over the fall and winter to plant next Spring. There

is always something to do year round as a lavender grower!

I am very excited to share in this issue the great news about the lavender curriculum that is now ready! Many USLGA members worked extremely hard on this partnership and we encourage you all to take the course.

Each week we are seeing more and more members joining our organization all thanks to the outreach and success of sharing about what we do to our customers, friends, and family. Thank you for all that



you do! For those of you with bees, Happy National Honey Bee Day (August 17) and have a great end of summer season.

-AIMEE

News from the Board

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USLGA NEEDS YOU!

USLGA is an organization of volunteers. With the exception for an Administrative Support person, an accounting firm, and a conference consultant, all the work you see comes from members who, “in their spare time,” bring power to USLGA due to their dedication to the profession. That is why it is so crucial that each one of us help when able.

All of our committees need more members. Look over the list to see if any match your passion and expertise. Then contact that committee's Chair and ask what you can do to help. Most committee's don't meet more than once per month.

Can't commit to a fulltime committee? Perhaps you would be interested in working on a small project that will tackle one specific issue. Coming up: establishing a National Lavender

Day; examining how to draw more international members to our organization; or, researching how USLGA, using the power of the number of members we have, can obtain more services to our members (such as discounts, etc.). Interested in one of these specific issues? Then, contact our President, Dennis Hamilton, at hamiltondennis@comcast.net or 513-295-5360.

And don't forget the surveys. Periodically, a survey created or sponsored by USLGA will be sent to all of us. Information is vital to our organization. Take the small amount of time it takes to provide your important input for these surveys. An enormous amount of effort goes into designing, tabulating, and providing the findings in usable formats to our members. How more of a volunteer can you be than answering one of our surveys!

The Wait is Finally Over!: Lavender Curriculum Release

The **Growing Lavender** curriculum includes on-going support to guide you on your lavender journey. A collaboration of lavender growers and land-grant universities with funding from USDA's North Central Regional Center for Rural Development made this course available.

What goes into the development of a lavender curriculum? As it turns out...the answer is an awful lot! For nearly two years a group of lavender growers and scientists have been busily working to compile a thorough and rigorous lavender curriculum to guide new growers on their lavender journey while simultaneously adding inspiration to those with experience under their belt. The time for waiting is over.

In 2017 the North Regional Center for Rural Development funded the "Growing Lavender: A Curriculum for Growers" initiative. We are happy to report this curriculum was released on August 2, 2019. The curriculum was developed under the leadership of Michigan State University, Kansas State University and the United States Lavender Growers Association and is housed at Michigan State University. It is an interactive, online program designed to provide a comprehensive and accessible learning experience for beginning as well as more seasoned growers, but it has the commercial grower in mind. While gardeners and lavender enthusiasts will find much informative content, a number of the modules have a commercial orientation. We have also worked hard to be sensitive to regional diversity. We know not everyone raises lavender in Kansas, so you will find case studies from growers from the east to west coasts!

The curriculum is designed to be self-paced, allowing users to move at their own speed. Don't feel you have to sit down for seven hours. Each module will probably take from 1 – 1 ½ hours to complete depending on your interest and speed. You can easily take one module at a time and come back when your schedule allows. The course utilizes videos, audio, web resources and interactive content. Once you have completed all modules, the course also offers a completion certificate. The curriculum is composed of seven modules:

- Why and How to Grow Lavender
- Establishing Lavender
- Selecting Lavender Varieties
- Managing your Lavender Crop
- Harvesting and Caring for your Harvested Lavender
- Developing your Lavender Farm's Business Plan
- Marketing your Lavender and Farm

continued on page 5

The content was developed with the expertise of lavender growers, a wide-range of scientists, and is supported by a team of 24/7 technical support at MSU. It is recommended that all users have access to a relatively up-to-date computer equipped with speakers.

The cost of the curriculum is \$30 per person. We have worked hard to keep the fees to a minimum, just charging enough to cover technical supervision required by the host institution. We do not anticipate making a profit on this curriculum as our purpose is to advance professional development within the lavender industry. We have also made accommodations for growers to receive a discount if they have multiple users take it from the same farm. We suggest that taking the curriculum is a great teaching tool for farm employees. If you have more than one member from your farm enroll in the curriculum, the second and successive enrollees are entitled to a registration fee of \$15 per person after the initial user has paid \$30. We will be working to monitor and improve our content so if you have suggestions, let us hear from you.

It appears it takes a village to develop a lavender curriculum and we were fortunate to have a talented village at our disposal. Special thanks are extended to all advisory team members, module authors, and content reviewers:

Bridget Behe	Kehaulani Jones	Cynthia Rinek
Brad Bergefurd	Megan Kennelly	Jan Schooley
Anita Beuhner	Marilyn Kosel	Sandra Shuff
Lily Calderwood	Joy Landis	Carol Tannenbaum
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Susan Harrington	Mike Neustrom	Wynne Wright
Julie Haushalter	Mary O'Connell	
Bill Jabs	Sarah Richards	

We hope you will benefit from the curriculum and spread the word in order to bring others into the lavender growing family.

To access the curriculum, go to the following link and let the lavender learning begin: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/growinglavender/>

Read more about this effort:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/new-lavender-online-course-now-available>

Wynne Wright
Sixteen Sprigs
Lavender Farm
Lansing, Michigan



A Day in the Life of a French Lavender Farm

“Lavender’s Quercy Heritage”



Quercy might make you forget about Provence! This region in southwest France is a mosaic of orchards, sunflowers, canola fields, and meadows, poplars plantations, as well as a growing number of lavender fields. The region of the Quercy covers swathes of the Lot, Lot and Garonne and the Tarn and Garonne – all French departments known for their beauty of unspoiled and bucolic countryside. Meandering stone fences, dove-cotes, or pigeon towers, award-winning beautiful villages, and slow moving rivers alongside dramatic gorges are just part of the reason to be mesmerized by this iconic landscape. Any discussion of lavender must also include the “causses”, or dry limestone plateau, which, in part, forms the character of the region. It is not much good for a lot of agriculture, but wonderful for lavender.

Between 1950-1970, the Quercy region was known for exceptional quality lavender producing up to 10 percent of all essential oils in France. We typically conjure up images of Provence when we think lavender in France. Provence lavender and lavandin play a big role in the perfume, essential oils, and cleaning products industries, but thinking Provence is the whole of lavender production in France is just wrong. Few people know that between the beginning of the 20th century to around the 1970s the Quercy played a significant role in producing high quality essential oils. The climate and arid plateau are ideal for producing lavender. As a result, lavender of Quercy was recognized for its specific soothing, relaxing, antiseptic, regenerative qualities and for its aroma. It was equally renowned as lavender of Provence.

Of course, the way H el ene and Xavier produce lavender today is quite distinct from her grandparents. In the early days, growers set up stills directly in the fields to distill freshly cut lavender. Today the lavender is brought to the still, not the other way around. The harvest cycle has also changed from the days of H el ene’s ancestors. In the early 20th century, growers would not harvest lavender until it had pasted its bloom and started to dry on the plant. Today, growers, cut while in bloom which cuts the time and costs. The 21st century lavender harvest also begins with the roar of an engine – a tractor engine that is. While H el ene’s ancestors harvested with a hand-held sickle and endured hours of back-breaking labor, the laborers at Ferme de Lacontal now benefit from mechanization. H el ene and Xavier and other producers in the region also use the “vert-broy e” technique – literally meaning

continued on page 7

“crushed-green” – which consists in grinding the plant whilst it is harvested. The *vert-broye* method allows growers to stack cut lavender the rear of the wagon, in a dumpster. The beauty of this process is that in large industrial farms, the dumpster can also serve as a still – as it can be both linked up to the steam production system and the condenser and begin distillation without moving it into the stationary still. It is a mobile still. Even though H el ene and Xavier do not use this technique, it is particularly useful for *lavandins*, as the large amount of oil it produces makes it perfect for production on an industrial scale.

H el ene and Xavier were drawn to lavender farming because it fits with larger family values. Like most American farm families, they both worked other jobs after college before they settled on the farm – she worked as an accountant and he was a director of an environmental non-profit. However, the call to farm was strong so in 2005 - when H el ene’s parents retired - they made the decision to go back to the farm. H el ene’s parents had farmed cereals and raised sheep for meat on the land before them. Her grandparents had raised cereals, sheep, grapes, plum trees and lavender on the same land. H el ene and Xavier wanted to diversify production and develop direct sales in order to have more autonomy in their work and to protect the environment. They began by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the farm: it had a well-preserved environment, there was a huge diversity of crops around the area, a lot of buffer strips and hedges had been maintained, but there was no possibility for irrigation, and the land was far from local urban centers. They also benefitted from knowledge transfer from H el ene’s parents. They knew what worked well on the land in the past, but they were also concerned about the contemporary challenges facing society such as antibiotic resistance, pesticide contamination, and climate change. They also really liked lavender – they could easily direct sell it at local markets and on the farm, allowing them to share their knowledge with customers. Lastly, it provided enough income (with the sheep) to support their family, a deciding factor for most farmers. Thus, they’ve chosen to cultivate lavender as it allowed them to work within the constraints they faced and not reproduce negative threats. They’ve also been growing cereals that are used to feed 300 sheep.

There’s a long history of coupling lavender farming with sheep rearing in France. H el ene still takes the sheep out of their pasture for a day of grazing. As a temporary shepherdess she has two trusty dogs by her side and a good book, which helps her enjoy a peaceful day of exercise and solitude as the sheep graze in the field about 1 to 2 kms from the farm.

Why do lavender farming and sheep rearing go so well together? First the arid plateau is not conducive to a lot of cropping systems and as such you typically find it will grow sufficient cereals to feed animals. The spent lavender straw that is removed from the still after distillation is also a great medium for animal bedding rather than just going to waste. In the early to mid part of the 20th century, when oil was distilled on the farm and the sheep had been sheared, farm women would douse a ball of wool in oil and tuck these scented balls in corners of the home to ward off insects and keep the home fragrant.

The introduction of synthetic oils severely hurt Quercy production and larger farms in the southeast were able to hang on in tough times and out-compete smallholders in the Quercy. In recent years artisanal production has started up again. *Ferme de Lacontal* was among the first to reinvigorate this practice that H el ene’s grandparents established in the 1950s. In coming months, we will talk more about this regeneration, but in the meantime, if you are in France consider giving the lavender fields of the Quercy a try. If you are there in July, be sure to visit the village of Servanac. They hold a *f ete*, or festival, every year, which was formerly known as *la f ete de la Lavande*, where you can hear the musical group, *Les Lavandins*.

Wynne Wright
Sixteen Sprigs
Lavender Farm
Lansing, Michigan

H el ene Lafon
Lavande du Quercy
Touffailles, France





Can Lavender Essential Oils Help Ease Your Anxiety Before a Major Surgery?

by Georgie Smith & Sarah Richards

It's pretty scary waiting in a hospital to be wheeled in for surgery, especially one like breast cancer.

Lavender essential oil can help with that.

A newly published study in the *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing* found that sniffing a rag infused with lavender essential oil helped relieve the anxiety of women prior to breast cancer surgery. The study included eighty women undergoing breast cancer surgery in a university hospital in Adana, Turkey.

The authors concluded that using lavender essential oil as a nursing therapy is an important tool for reducing anxiety, one of the most common psychological disorders observed in breast cancer patients.

The lavender oil not only helped reduce anxiety, but lavender essential oils are known to have a low risk of toxicity and allergic effects as compared to other herbal

supplements, which are easy and inexpensive to administer and not overly sedating for the patients.

“Many studies have shown *Lavandula angustifolia* to reduce anxiety significantly, as well as reduce perceived levels of anxiety,” the authors stated.

Lavandula angustifolia is one of several lavender species used in essential oils. For more information about the various types of lavender essential oils – and how they are used – read here: (see July USLGA issue article).

Lavender helps with many psychological complaints

For many lavender aficionados, lavender's anti-anxiety effects will come as no surprise. Lavender essential oils have been touted for their anti-anxiety effects since ancient times. A slew of studies in the last two decades have found lavender essential oil – in both aromatic and pill form – to help for many psychological complaints. General restlessness, post-partum depression, overall feelings of well-being, insomnia and even anxiety for dental patients awaiting surgery have all been successfully treated with lavender. (Although lavender had no effect on reducing anxiety in regard to future dental visits – apparently you need the REALLY strong stuff for that!)

In one six-week study patients with generalized anxiety were given an oral lavender oil preparation that was shown to be as effective as taking .5 mg daily dose of lorazepam, an anti-anxiety drug associated with many serious side-effects.

Lavender essential oil reduces anxiety before surgery

This most recent study is a follow-up on several others exploring the effects of lavender on postoperative surgical patients in particular.

continued on page 9

Why? Well because surgery is scary. As the authors note;

“Presurgical patients can experience anxiety of different reasons, such as fear of the unknown, fear of waking after anesthesia, or fear of death, loss of control, pain, isolation, separation from a loved one, and being deprived from social life. Complementary therapies are often used to reduce anxiety before surgery.”

The study involved 80 women who were tested on their anxiety levels while being prepped for breast cancer surgery. Forty women were placed in a control group and treated to normal pre-operative care. The other 40 were given a gauze bandage with three to four drops of lavender oil from a popular Turkish brand and asked to inhale the scent for 20 minutes prior to their surgery.

The woman’s anxiety levels were measured by a commonly used tool, a “State-Trait Anxiety Inventory” (STAI). The STAI measures two traits of anxiety, how does one feel at the moment and how does one feel in general. In both groups,

the women were given the test 24 hours before surgery, and then right before they were transferred to the operating room. The anxiety levels “significantly decreased” in the study group supporting the author’s hypothesis that “preoperative inhalation aromatherapy decreases anxiety levels.”

Convincing your doctor to use lavender essential oils

So what does this mean for you or your loved one going in for surgery?

Unfortunately, the western medical system is still coming up to speed when it comes to natural therapies especially when it comes to what many perceive as ‘woo-woo’ medicine like aromatherapy and using essential oils. But it doesn’t hurt to ask!

And if all else fails, it’s awful easy to bring a small bottle of lavender essential oil and a rag to sniff it from. If nothing else lavender will make your hospital experience smell a lot better!



monika ed online

To read more from this article:

Click on: <https://www.lavenderwind.com/2019/can-lavender-essential-oils-help-ease-your-anxiety-before-a-major-surgery/>



Why Lavender?



John and Kitty Shipley
Nyala Farm

Our lavender adventure began when my son went on a school trip to a lavender farm which was actually sold last year and has gone fallow. Prior to that, I hardly even knew lavender existed.

At the time we lived in a beautiful house in the woods, and obviously could not grow lavender, but the seed had been planted!

Last summer, we purchased the little old abandoned farm at the end of our street. Though, we did not yet know that we were going to be farming lavender, we did know that we wanted to be out of the woods.

Flash forward to March of this year, and I broke my ankle! And had to sit on the couch for a month and a half as I recovered. I decided that life is short enough that I needed to get my rear in gear and do something with our land. So I started doing research.

The herd of deer that we have in our front yard every day, compelled me to think in terms of deer resistant plants. Lavender seemed to be a perfectly natural fit for our needs. Having spent my career teaching biology to high school students, after a college career focused on botany,



continued on page 11





Why Lavender?

researching and learning how to grow lavender was pretty straightforward for me.

I discovered that many of the lavender growers in our area had lost large percentages of their crops to an excessively moist year last year, so I knew that I needed to promote as much drainage as possible in my fields.

I began by taking soil samples from around my fields and sending them to Penn State for analysis. Not surprisingly, they had quite low pH and clearly a substantial amount of red clay. Our farm is about 1 mile as the crow flies, away from the Delaware river in eastern Pennsylvania. Our soil is actually quite rocky even though it is basically clay.

I sought the advice of a friend of mine who is a horticulturist, and we came up with a formula for my soil amendment. In each 100 foot long row, I added 2 yards of pea gravel, 2 yards of crushed bluestone, and eight bags of pelletized lime stone.

My primary machine is a 1967 international Harvester 444 tractor, (which was purchased new by my wife's grandfather on their farm in Chester Springs Pennsylvania. That farm was named Nyala farm as is ours since they were from New York and Alabama...) behind which I pull a woods Rototiller that is 4 feet wide.

I add all of my amendments to the rows, after I have filled the rows multiple times and allowed grass and the weeds to die and dry out. I did a lot of research on hilling and fabric I discovered that purchasing a mechanical hiller and fabric applying machine costs a fortune. So I decided to create my own Rube- Goldberg of a hiller. I cut an old horse trough in half and bolted some mahogany planks to the side of it and to the side of my Rototiller, and managed to get the soil hilled, somewhat. The rest I did with a garden rake and some serious sweat equity!

Once I piled it as high as possible, I put down my fabric. Then I carefully measured 3 feet between plants and burned holes in the fabric with a propane torch. I threaded my drip irrigation strip through the holes and began planting.

I found that a simple hoe fit perfectly in my holes and I was able to create the perfect depression. Then I mixed up

my planting soil which was one part garden soil, one part multipurpose sand, one part sphagnum moss, and one part "Horticultite".

So I have planted Provence, Big-time blue, Munstead, Hidcote, and Phenomenal. At this point everything is growing well. I am keeping my fingers crossed for a continued relatively dry summer and a nice healthy cold winter, so that everything stays happy.

All of our neighbors are very excited, that the old abandoned farm is turning into a beautiful lavender farm. Even though I have no products yet, I have many potential clients!

John and Kitty Shipley
Nyala Farm
New Hope, PA



From our Members



Hello USLGA! Our names are Laurel and Ken and we started and own Luna Lavender Farms (<http://lunalavenderfarms.com>) which is on 70 acres in the Capay Valley in Northern CA.

We wanted to share a photo with you. The original design was for the engagement ring to be designed as a surprise by Ken for his sunset proposal on a catamaran in Belize. Ken's ring was designed to match, and both were done by Skalet Family Jewelers in Old Town Sacramento, CA (<https://www.skaletjewelers.com>). The stones are purple sapphires.