

USLGA

Newsletter



RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY

We would like to
enjoy our fields one day

123 FARM LAVENDER FESTIVAL

A visit from USLGA's Admin

June 2019

Vol. 7 Issue 6

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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

Fresh lavender bundles hang to dry at Luvin Lavender Farm in Madison, Ohio. Photo from grower member Laurie Hejduk.

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!

As we transition over to summer this month we really start to see the lavender growers in high gear as markets and festivals are underway as well as customer favorites, U-picks on the farm!

For those of you that have already had your festivals, please send us some photos! We want to celebrate with you as well and hear about your successes. From those of you that put on festivals later this month or summer, good luck! For new growers, check out

our festival listing at the end of our newsletter and really try and visit one in the area. There is nothing like a lavender festival that brings the joy to customers who get to see the behind-the-scenes and enjoy your piece of heaven with you.

The next few months should be bursting with purple all around. Enjoy the 2019 lavender season!



WELCOME TO SUMMER! PRIME TIME FOR LAVENDER GROWERS IN USLGA. ENJOY THE KICK-OFF OF LAVENDER SEASON THIS MONTH!

-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 – Mary Hamer
Newsletter – Aimee Crane
PR & Communications – Aimee Crane
Internet – Sarah Richards
Finance – Julie Haushalter
Event – Sherri Wood
Education & Research – Ginna Gimmell
Advocacy – OPEN

COMMITTEE GOALS

Each month a different USLGA committee will be sharing committee goals to our readers. This June, we will be hearing from the PR and Communications Committee:

PR AND COMM COMMITTEE GOALS:

- Reach out and partner with international lavender organizations.
- Highlight our growers more on social media.
- Produce engaging graphics to share with our members depicting the benefits of USLGA and visual reminders of the resources your membership includes.

- Produce a monthly newsletter (versus quarterly that USLGA had before).
- Feature large and small farms in all publications.
- Encourage more participation from membership in a variety of PR touch points.
- Grow the committee with members with creative, marketing, and design backgrounds.

NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

The Board welcomes Mary Hamer as the new USLGA Membership chair. We are happy to have you on board and look forward to working with you while engaging our membership!



Luvin Lavender Farm in
Madison, Ohio.

Rain, Rain, Go Away
We would like to enjoy our fields one day

I was outside this week frantically cleaning up my soaking wet rows of half-dead plants and trying to prioritize how to put in another plot of lavender knowing another week of rain was on its way. I ended up putting my newly purchased plants in the greenhouse instead of risking them drowning from me hastily putting them in before our next monsoon. Another week lost. How is it already the middle of June? I feel behind and defeated.

Weeding near my new beehives I thought, isn't lavender supposed to be relaxing? I am incredibly STRESSED. My dog stared at me as I laughed to myself and told her, "I know the Romans sought after lavender to scent their bath waters. How ironic that we are drowning in all this rain!?"

I am very uncomfortable right now as I have to make constant assessments on what to do in between rain storms, tornado watches, flash flood warnings in Ohio. What I do know is that I am not alone. Many of us in the New England states, East Coast, Mid-West and Central Great Plains are under water and/or dealing with winter damage from the polar vortex. We see the devastation on social media. Our heart breaks and we share your pain. But this is farming. Mother Nature is unpredictable. We can rebuild.

You start having doubts of why bother, or you see dead plants and see dollar signs. Some of you might be having serious reconsiderations of hosting your festivals this year. There is concern about new growers becoming turned off by seeing the damage this year and not wanting to kick-off that lavender farming dream they have been saving up for. A lot of people are simply waiting to see if their plants will even bloom this year. Some of you have lost hundreds if not thousands of plants. Our collective crop has been hit hard this year. The United States has had the wettest 12 months on record. So much for lavender, a crop likes a dry, Mediterranean climate.

This is what is so great about our community. We have been seeing many members stepping up and helping other members clean up and rebuild. We have seen regions coming together to support growers in their region that have suffered loss. Our social media is buzzing with encouraging messages from our sister farms internationally who are rallying for us and watching our progress while we replant. So many of us

are turning this potentially negative experience into a positive one with holding tours and sharing with the public about the loss. Educational outreach can be such a positive thing and helps spread information and awareness about the lavender industry, a huge bonus to our organization.



Not fun. A familiar sight this year from our lavender growers.

Over the next few issues we will be talking with some charter and founding members of USLGA who will be sharing their wisdom with our readers. Hearing how they have survived some really bad weather and unproductive seasons and lessons learned for us to grow from. Remember, we have incredible resources on our website including webinars and expert advice to get you back on track. Our social media continues to be a source of support and encouragement. I know my Instagram followers have been my cheerleaders, inspiring me as I start again. This will definitely be a season to remember! We are also so close to experiencing our Growing Lavender Curriculum initiative that we shared in our February issue. Please stay tuned for more details!

I am not giving up and you shouldn't either. In an interesting way, this loss has inspired me to change out what varieties I grow in my little plot and reshape the way I work with my plants! My new bees also give me motivation to get in my new plants so that they might have some blooms to enjoy in the late summer.

USLGA is here for you! Don't give up on your lavender and let us know how you are doing!

In the meantime, I am going back outside to do whatever the opposite of a rain dance is :)

Aimee Crane
Bee Loved Lavender
Aurora, Ohio



A Day in the Life of a French Lavender Farm

“Harvest Season on the Farm”



Welcome back! It's early June in southern France and we will be reaping our harvest soon. Late June and early July is the most hectic time of the year on the farm and, like you, it requires all hands on decks. Not only are we harvesting, but harvest soon turns to distillation season; all the while keeping our on-farm shop open 6 days a week and going to local markets every Wednesday and Saturday. It's tiring work but very rewarding. Our primary reward is the lavender scent that wafts through the farm, barns, and shop as well as the beauty that surrounds us. It's also a popular time to visit the farm. Customers visiting our on-farm shop enjoy walking out to the field to see the harvest in action.

Like most crops, harvesting lavender is a process that is very 'weather-dependent'. We must harvest in dry conditions to maximize oil content and prevent mold and mildew. Keep in mind that our primary product from the lavender is essential oil, so our choice in harvest time is contingent upon getting the maximum amount of oil. We prefer to harvest when the blooms on the plants are nearing final stages. We harvest the new plants one year after being in the ground. We consider the first year the year they were planted, so by the time they are first harvested they are around 13-15 months old. Of course, they are not fully mature at this stage, but we do get a good bit of lavender from them.

You will recall that we have 7 hectares (17 ac.) of

lavender, but that's only 5.5 ha. (13.6 ac.) to harvest this year. About 1.5 ha. (3.7 ac.) are too young to be harvested. In a typical year, we begin with the *Angustifolias*: first with *Angustifolia Fine Lavender* (aka true, population or *officinalis*) (3.5 ha. or 8.6 ac.), then with *Angustifolia Lavender* from cuttings (1 ha. or 2.5 ac.), and eventually harvesting the *Lavandins* at the end of July (1 ha. or 2.5 ac.). However, for the first time this year we shall begin with the *Helichrysum* that we planted last year, as it blooms earlier than lavender. That's our newest challenge!

Harvesting is usually a two-person job, but since it is so closely intertwined with distillation, often one or two more people are involved to monitor the stills, but for the sake of simplicity, today we're only going to focus on harvesting.

Harvesting is primarily Xavier's job. He begins by walking the fields looking to see if the majority of plants are just past their peak. He is looking for how many of the plants are still blooming, as well as if there are a lot of bees still working the lavender. Once again, he keeps an eye on the weather forecast and the blooming stage. When a field is beginning to wither, you must be ready to go – this is usually the last week of June or at the beginning of July. During this time the days are warm with temperatures averaging 90°F and the evenings cooling down to about 77°F.

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We own a “Ponzo” lavender harvester that is about 35 years old. We purchased it in Provence from another lavender grower which has been a great investment. It requires a small, 50-horsepower tractor to pull it. The biggest challenge being that the machine is delicate to drive. Another inconvenience is that it needs two people to manage it – one to drive and another to manage the plant intake in the wagon. But it has the added advantage of helping reduce weeds as the harvester passes through the rows.

The harvester is a one-side header mounted to the tractor fitted with a special mechanical unit that lifts the lavender shrub up while blades cut about six to eight inches of stem and blooms off the plant. The driver of the tractor positions the header so it straddles one row of lavender at a time, the blades cut both the left and right sides as well as the top of the plant – very few stems are left on the shrub. Once stems are cut the mechanical unit pushes the material up a specially designed conveyor belt gradually and ultimately dumps the lavender into a hopper or wagon. We don’t go back over the plant and prune each one again. This process of harvests and prunes at the same time. This leaves a nice tight round shrub ready to over-winter.

We can usually make three to four passes up and down the rows before the wagon is full and has to be emptied. One of our hired workers stands in the back of the wagon and moves the cut lavender around in the wagon with a pitchfork to make sure it doesn’t all accumulate in one place. We are fortunate in that we

have good open spaces, gently rolling hills and fairly long rows to maneuver the harvester. If you have a tight space – i.e. areas requiring tight turns – you might not find this machine as user-friendly as we have. It also does a good job of adjusting to plants of different sized heights. The driver just has to adjust the height of the blade thanks to a clever hydraulic system connected to a joystick-controlled panel. Whether we are harvesting *Angustifolias* or *Lavandins*, the machine can accommodate easily.

Once the wagon is full, we drive it to a spot near our two stills and unload it into a long pile. Another reason that we require sunshine in the forecast is because after the lavender is placed in a pile, we ideally like to let it dry there for about 48 hours before we distill. Sometimes we have to compromise with less drying time if rain is coming. Some prefer to harvest and immediately get the lavender into the still, but we prefer this method because it allows the green ‘grassy’ aromas of the plant to evaporate. This short drying stage enhances the quality of the oil.

Once there is enough cut lavender to do at least six or eight runs of the still, we stop harvesting for a day or two and fire up our steam powered stills. More on distilling next month. In total, it takes us about two weeks to complete the entire harvest, weather cooperating, or a month if it does not. By the end of harvest and distillation season we are exhausted, but satisfied with a good productive year. We hope your season is going well and you will have a great harvest this summer.



Wynne Wright
Sixteen Sprigs
Lavender Farm
Lansing, Michigan

Hélène Lafon
Lavande du Quercy
Touffailles, France

Lavande du Quercy

Ferme de Lacontal



Why Lavender?



Ron and Diane Julian
Door Country Lavender & Lemon

For several years, we had owned a home-based business and we were looking to transition to something different. My husband brought me an idea which I fell in love with! I had been growing my own herbs for years and particularly loved lavender and lemon verbena (which is another story). After doing extension research and participating in an online course we jumped into lavender in 2011.

We expanded our garden and filled it with lavender. We started with 90 plants of Grosso, no weed barrier and limited watering. Weeding became a huge issue, so we put down weed barrier the next year; and the weeds promptly grew under it!!! We jumped in full force the following year and

spent the money on a better weed barrier and added more plants of different varieties. We also came up with our own style of “irrigation”. In short, we did everything wrong in the beginning.

We have covered, not covered, no weed barrier, weed barrier between rows, weed barrier around plants, watered and not watered. We thought everything died, and planted all new, only to find out that lavender is very, VERY slow to green up here. We have tried to propagate and haven’t had much success, so, a couple of years ago we finally plunked a few cuttings right in the ground and SURPRISE! Plants actually grew! That’s not supposed to work, right?

Lavender growing is an adventure every year. Patience is the key, especially in the spring. We are now ready to expand to another area of our yard and will be planting another 170 plants. We are small growers, and with this new garden we will have about 320 plants. We grow Grosso, Gros Bleu, Folgate, Royal Velvet, Hidcote, Tuckers Early Purple, and Avic Hill (which is on its way out). We tell customers we are not a farm, but a large garden. Hopefully we’ve learned something in this process and this garden will do well. Whatever the outcome, we love lavender and talking “lavender” with our customers, and anyone who will listen!!!



I love discovering and exploring new and exciting places, and 123 Farm Lavender Festival this past Sunday was no exception! First, a little background and history. Cherry Valley is located approximately 30 miles northwest of Palm Springs and 80 miles east of Los Angeles. In 1853, Paulino Weaver sold 1000 acres of his southern California ranch to Dr. Isaac William Smith for \$1,000 (!?!?). This former ranch turned stagecoach stop, Smith Station, was a very popular stop along the route from San Bernardino to La Paz, AZ, with everyone passing through including a young Wyatt Earp. In 1884, the Smith property was purchased by a Los Angeles company that built a three-story hotel on the property and called it Highland Home. The first cherry trees were planted at this time, which led to the name that it is still known by today - Cherry Valley. In 1927, Fred and William Hirsch bought the place and turned it into a health retreat, Highland Springs Resort, focusing on the health benefits of juice fasting and colon cleansing, and even included a vegetarian restaurant and a vineyard. How very progressive for that time! Dr. Albert Einstein was a regular guest here (what was then dubbed as “The Last Resort” due to its success in healing ailments), as well as Bob Hope, Elizabeth Taylor, Ernest Hemingway, Roy Rogers, and Lassie the Dog! The main lobby building has since been renovated in order to maintain the original charm of the inn. Within these 2400-acres you will find a certified all-organic farm (123 Farm), restaurant, inn, and various cottages and cabins situated on Highland Springs Ranch, which holds the distinction of being the first historical landmark in Riverside County. Truly a fascinating place!

In its 15th year, the Lavender Festival at 123 Farm has extended in length from two weekends to six weekends. I was told that visitors are coming to the festival on weekend days by the thousands! But with such a vast amount of land, it actually never felt crowded. Summed up in one word: idyllic. I think what struck me the most upon entering, was the number of large trees everywhere. Beautiful towering trees offering much appreciated shade on a very warm, early-summer afternoon. 20 scenic acres of green lavender buds just about ready to pop, with a few purple blooms mixed in for a splash of color. Soon to be fields of all purple! Horse-drawn hay wagons passing by taking people on tours of the farm, a live acoustic band playing in the shaded dining area, a distillation class taking place, and countless cabins and huts offering lavender-inspired foods, drinks, crafts, body, and home products for purchase. Noteworthy menu items included: lavender beef brisket, honey lavender ice cream, chocolate lavender ice cream, lavender cheesecake, lavender lemon bars, churros with chocolate lavender sauce, lavender marshmallows, lavender scones, lavender banana bread, strawberry lavender sorbet, and lavender cronuts!

I was lucky enough to be able to secure a reservation for the Afternoon Tea. Such a lovely experience, sitting outside in a grassy clearing under an umbrella, enjoying chamomile

lavender tea and sweets, and topping it off with a glass of, you guessed it, lavender champagne. What a wonderful treat that was!

Sipping my lavender iced tea, I perused the small colony of 12 historic cottages that were filled with vendors selling lavender inspired goods such as donuts, cheese (yes, lavender cheese!! It's for real and it is DELICIOUS!), jams and jellies, soaps and lotions, and so much more. Visions of lavender ice cream, lavender oils, lavender honey, lavender syrup, lavender eye pillows, and lavender hydrosols filled my eyes as I made my way through. Think: LAVENDER EVERYTHING. The main lobby building offered more lavender products, a bar, a highly sought after sourdough bread pop-up shop, and some wonderful historic photos of the ranch and inn, which remains in pretty impressive shape after all these years. I heard about their farm to table dinners on Friday and Saturday nights during the lavender festival, which sound fantastic! And last but not least, I paid a visit to the 1000+ year-old oak tree on the property. Now that's some history right there!

It was no wonder that I ended up with a sun-kissed face and an arm full of bags filled with a variety of goodies to share with family and friends! This exceptionally well-planned lavender festival truly sets the bar for all others – a fun, unique, and memorable lavender experience!

Sally Miller
USLGA Admin



Lavender Festival Schedule 2019

DATE	EVENT	FARM	CITY	STATE
May 4, 2019	21st annual Lavender Fest	Becker Vineyards	Stonewall	TX
May 23-June 30, 2019	Cherry Valley Lavender Fest	123 Farm	Cherry Valley	CA
June 7-9, 2019	Blanco Lavender Fest		Blanco	TX
June 8-9, 2019	Lavender Fest 2019	Cache Creek Lavender	Rumsey	CA
June 8, 2019	Roswell Lavender Fest		Roswell	GA
June 8, 2019	Festival in the Field 2019	The Lavender Farm at Woodstock	Somerset	KY
Jun 14-17, 2019	Sharp's Crossing 9th Annual U-Pick Lavender Festival	Sharp's Crossing Lavender Farm	Champaign	IL
June 15-16, 2019	Lav Fest at Beagle Ridge Herb Farm		Wytheville	VA
June 15-16, 2019	Herb and Lavender Festival		Santa Fe	NM
June 15-16, 2019	Maryland Lavender Fest		Thurmont	MD
June 15-16, 2019	Summer Solstice Lav Fest	Peaceful Acres Lav Farm	Martinsville	OH
June 15, 2019	Evergreen Lavender Fest		Appomattox	VA
June 15, 2019	Prairie Lavender Fest		Bennington	KS
June 15, 2019	5th Annual Lavender Fest	Red Oak Lavender Farm	Dahlonga	GA
June 15, 2019	Lavender Fest	Historic Jackson Square	Oak Ridge	TN
June 15, 2019	Smokey Cat Lavender Festival		Federsburg	MD
June 15, 2019	Gertie's Lavender Farm Festival		Burrton	KS
June 20-23 / June 27-30	Red Rock Lavender Fest	Red Rock Ranch & Farms	Concho	AZ
June 21-23, 2019	Lavender Days		Wilsonville	OR
June 21-23, 2019	Southern OR Lavender Festival		Applegate	OR
June 21-23, 2019	Lavender Farm Fest	The Farm at SummitWynds	Holden	MA
June 21-23, 2019	Lavender Days at Barn Owl Nursery	Barn Owl Nursery	Wilsonville	OR
June 22-23, 2019	Lavender Fest 2019		Colchester, Ontario	CANADA
June 22, 2019	Lavender Festival	Peace, Love and Lavender	Johnson Lake	NE
June 23, 2019	Lavender & Honey Festival		Sparks	NV
June 25-27, 2019	U-Pick Festival	Lavender in Bloom	Georgetown	KY
June 28 - Aug 23, 2019	Lavender Festival Fridays	Lavender Hill Farm	Boyne City	MI
June 29, 2019	2019 Lavender Day	Young Living Lavender Farm	Mona	UT
June 29, 2019	Colorado Lavender Festival		Palisade	CO
June 29, 2019	2nd Annual Lavender Fest	Schooner Farms	Weston	OH
June 29, 2019	Ojai Lav Fest		Ojai	CA
June 29, 2019	Sweethaven Lavender Fest		Williamsburg	VA
June 29, 2019	Schooner Farms Lavender Festival	Schooner Farms	Weston	OH
June 29-30, 2019	13th Annual Lavender Fest		Clackamas County	OR
July 6, 2019	Kingston Lavender Fest		Kingston	WA
July 6, 2019	Central Coast Lavender Fest		Paso Robles	CA
July 6, 2019	Paradise Lavender Farm Festival	Paradise Lavender Farm	Cresco	PA
July 6, 2019	It's Bloomn' Time at Heritage Lavender	Heritage Lavender	Berthoud	CO
July 6-7, 2019	6th Annual Lavender Festival & Art in the Garden	Luvin Lavender Farm	Madison	OH
July 6-7, 2019	Lavender Festival & Art in the Garden		Madison	OH
July 6-7, 2019	Red Chair Lavender Festival		Eagle	ID
July 6-7, 2019	Lavender Merchant Lavender Fest		Kuna	ID
July 6-7, 2019	Hood River Lavender DAZE Fest		Hood River	OR
July 6-7, 2019	Evening Light Lavender U-Pick Festival	Evening Light Lavender	Deer Park	WA
July 11-13, 2019	Michigan Lavender Fest		Eastern MI Fairgrounds	MI
July 12 - 14, 2019	Helvetia Lavender Fest		Hillsboro	OR
July 12-14, 2019	Blake's Lavender Festival		Armada	MI
July 12-14, 2019	McKenzie River Lav Fest		Springfield	OR
July 13-14, 2019	Willamette Valley Lavender Fest		Newberg	OR
July 13-14, 2019	NY Lavender Fest		Red Creek	NY
July 13-14, 2019	12th Annual Lavender Fest	Olfactory Soaps	Rochester	NY
July 13, 2019	Lavender Festival	Lavender Dream Farm	Marcellus	MI
July 19-21, 2019	Sequim Lavender Fest		Sequim	WA
July 20-21, 2019	San Juan Island Lavender Fest		Friday Harbor	WA
July 20-21, 2019	Seafoam Lavender Fest		Northumberland Shore,	CANADA
July 20-21, 2019	Lavender Fest		Nova Scotia	
July 20, 2019	Denver Botanic Gardens Lavender Festival	Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield	Village of Los Ranchos	NM
July 27, 2019	Lavender Fest 2019	Ananda Farm Camano Island	Littleton	CO
July 29, 2019	8th Annual Lavender Festival	Heisen House Vineyards	Camano Island	WA
			Battle Ground	WA