

Lavender Link

Quarterly newsletter for Association members | Issue 50 | Autumn 2011

A SUMMER WITH VERONICA

Members may remember that Veronica Ehijos sent an email to our association last year with the request for a season of labour on a NZ lavender farm in return for tuition and free board. The whole idea was very attractive to us at Hook Bush Lavender, so eventually after a bit of successful research on Facebook we made an approach to her and she responded with her CV and a copy of university degree certificate – a degree in agronomy engineering.

Veronica arrived in NZ just after the new year and the next day began working with me harvesting Pacific Blue. Despite her small size she proved herself to be a tireless worker who could keep going up till 9.00pm at night after a 10.00am start in the day. She was also a very quick learner and her stock response was 'I understand'.

She described her English as medium and always carried her Spanish/English, English/Spanish dictionary with her to expand her vocabulary. A quality digital camera was on hand to record what she saw and to make video clips where appropriate – for example, shots of our mechanical harvester in action.

I have an MA in Geography from Victoria University and have specialized in the Melanesian area of the Pacific. Our home has always been a welcoming place for people of other cultures and Veronica brought to us a beautiful picture of Chile, painted with the aid of beautiful word-pictures, and books with photos of natural beauty - vegetation, mountains, rivers and flowers. She comes from a very large country, geographically speaking, with many extremes of climate from the Atacama Desert in the

Continued on page 9

Upcoming events

NZLGA Conference & AGM
19-21 August 2011

Northern Regional Meeting
30 July 2011





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AND PROMOTE LAVENDER
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OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY

March 2011

We seem to be in a time of transition at present as an executive, with a portfolio reshuffle going on, no progress on the current research project and the Oil Award Committee asking to be relieved of their responsibilities.

Peter Adamski is our new treasurer and Pauline Livesey has taken over the position of new membership secretary in the meantime. We are very grateful for what Sarah Richter has done for us as treasurer and new membership secretary. She remains on executive and will no doubt take on another task. Ian Parlane is unable to complete the work asked of him by the AGM so I guess the existing research program will have to be abandoned midstream. We will be consulting our entire membership about future directions for research. As there are more oil award judges in the Canterbury region than elsewhere, we are exploring a move there for the Oil Award Committee and holding a consultation about future directions for it on Sunday 20th March with available Canterbury members. So far Peter Adamski has secured two sponsorships for the awards of \$250 each.

Conference preparations for the August Conference at Kaikoura are proceeding apace. TALGA

members expressed interest in the conference when I spoke about it at the final dinner of their Tasmanian International Conference early in February. I believe we can expect to see some of them attending.

Some disruption of harvesting occurred in Canterbury as a result of excessive rainfall and many of the growers in the area are deeply involved in supporting people affected by the disastrous second earthquake in Christchurch.

At long last I have been able to secure a copy of the book, *Lavender – The Genus Lavandula* edited by Maria Lis-Balchin, 2002, Taylor and Francis. It is part of a series on the general theme of *Medicinal and Aromatic Plants – Their Industrial Profiles*. The work contains contributions from 21 people including Tim Upton of Cambridge Botanical Gardens, Henry Head of Norfolk Lavender, the late E.F.K. Denny of Bridestowe Lavender Estate and Susyn Andrews of the Royal Botanical Gardens. It is an absorbing read and contains much to learn and ponder. The RRP for the book is \$345 but I was able to obtain it for our library for \$266. Because of the value of the book a \$5 hire fee will be needed to access it from our library, plus postage.

March 2011

Recently I purchased for myself a new book by Jane Wilks of Auckland published by her aromatherapy company, Herb Heaven, at \$36. It is a work about how to use essential oils to enhance our lives. It contains a lot of recipes and is conveniently spiral bound. There are good sections on safety with the use of oils and many innovative suggestions on the use of lavender oil. It is available from Touchwood Books in Hastings and no doubt from Herb Heaven in Auckland. As it is the sort of book every member should have for themselves I do not plan to put it in the library.

When in Tasmania I made some enquiries about the 2003 edition E.F.K. Denny's book The Field Distillation of Herbaceous Oils but was unable to trace it. I was told to look for a secondhand one on eBay which I will do. I have accessed a single chapter from it from the NLA website, but would like to see the full book in our

library. If at any stage you wish to recommend the purchase of any books for our library, do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Recently I was checking the Sequim DVDs and discovered that one of them was not in its case. I have been in touch with some of the recent borrowers to see if they had inadvertently left it in their machine, but to no avail. If anyone else has discovered it I would very much appreciate it being returned at your earliest convenience. The disc is Group 3 V012, Taking the Mystery out of Lavender Oil by Dr Brian Lawrence.

I am aware of two distilleries available for sale with distillation pots of 80 and 100 kg respectively. If you are at all interested please get in touch with me for further details.

Russell Rofe

13.3.2011

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VACANCY

Otago/Southland

VACANCY



From the Editor

Hello Everybody

So much has happened since our last issue in December. Nature has been asserting herself with tragic results, reminding people all over the world, I am sure, of the value of family and friends, and of living to our full potential. In February last year when I had Chilean friends visiting, there was a devastating earthquake over there, a year later in Christchurch a destructive aftershock caused loss of life and irreparable damage. Then we watched TV in horror as a tsunami razed the coastal plains of north-eastern Japan. Having close family ties with both Japan and South America (my daughter was born in Japan, her father South American), and family caught up in the Christchurch earthquake, it has been surreal.

We in Whitianga have been told that our community will be the worst affected if there is a major tsunami in New Zealand. My farm would be safe, but what are the chances of being safely at home when disaster strikes?

On a positive note, some of our members were lucky enough to

attend the TALGA international conference in Tasmania. You will find an informative report from Russell Rofe later in this issue.

Russell has also been kept busy helping the Chileans set up their own lavender industry. He had a Chilean agronomist come to stay, with the support of the Chilean government. (How wonderful it would be to have government backing!) With the abundance of low-cost labour and land, they should be able to create a viable lavender industry. You can also read about that in this issue.

Let me take this opportunity to let you all know that this is the penultimate Lavender Link that I will be producing. The last one will be the pre-conference issue. Then someone else will take over. Who that may be is up to all of you. I took over from Ann Chaney in 2005, and have produced 21 issues to date. It has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience, which I thoroughly recommend.

Judy Evans



To Advertise in *The Lavender Link*

Rates for NZLGA Members:

Full page - \$50.00

Half page - \$31.00

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1/8 page - \$ 14.00

Rates for Non-Members:

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Prices include GST at 15%.

You will be invoiced once your ad appears. Please make sure you include your contact details, and email the ad to:

Judy Evans

judyevansnz@xtra.co.nz

As the content of The Lavender Link is subscribed, comments made and advice given may not necessarily represent or reflect the policy or opinion of the New Zealand Lavender Growers Association.

Secretary's Snippets

Lavender Trail Map

If you have a lavender business it is well worth getting your name and contact details onto the Lavender Trail Map on the NZLGA website. We at Leafy Hollow have had numerous enquiries as a result of this link- great publicity! Contact Judy (judyevansz@xtra.co.nz) to find out what you need to do.

New Members' Pack

Maybe now is the time to take a fresh look at what we provide for our new members. Do you have ideas on useful information or articles to go into a New Members' Pack? Please drop me an email with your thoughts (leafyhollow@yahoo.co.nz)

All Creatures Great and Small

It isn't only humans that benefit from the wonderful properties of lavender. Just recently I noticed that one of our dogs had a tick attached to her ear. I put on a drop of lavender oil and, 'hey presto', before

the end of the day it had disappeared. One of the Waiuku Veterinary Clinics purchases lavender water by the litre. They use it to spray around the waiting room to disguise unpleasant odours and to calm the nerves of their patients.

Going International

Last week I was contacted by Kathleen Van Hevelingen who was visiting Auckland from Oregon. She purchased several varieties of lavender to take back to her parents' lavender farm in Oregon. They have over 100 different varieties and were looking for specific plants to add to their collection. Wouldn't it be great if we could import plants to NZ with such relative ease?

Pauline Livesey
Secretary



A Very Warm Welcome to Our New Members

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Lavandula angustifolia 'Melissa Lilac'

Height	60 - 70cm
Stem (peduncle)	15 cm -20cm long.
Flower (spike)	5 – 6cm. Soft, hazy lavender purple. Calyces look like velvet (you just can't help touching them)
Habit	Erect, slightly splayed bush with vigorous grey green foliage.
Flowering period	Later than many angustifolias- summer flowering.
Uses	An attractive feature/ornamental plant. Produces cut flowers with an intensely sweet aroma.

Pauline Livesey - Leafy Hollow Lavender

'Melissa Lilac' was raised here in Waiuku. Although not widely grown in New Zealand it became popular in the UK when it was imported by Simon Charlesworth of Downderry Nursery . The Downderry website describes it as

"A real marshmallow of a lavender with beautiful furry calyces and mellow purple flowers. So sumptuous you feel you could eat it!"

Lavandula angustifolia 'Melissa Lilac'





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A SUMMER WITH VERONICA

Continued from page 1

north, to the sub-Antarctic Punta Arenas. Chile is however a country without a full infrastructure and the area of Patagonia where she comes from has a huge unemployment rate of around 60%. Coyhaique, the city she comes from has a population of around 40,000. Most of the employed there work for their government. Veronica works for a privately owned hydro-electricity company which is in the process of establishing a huge generation complex. When this is completed it will offer much potential for economic development and her job is to try and persuade the people to accept it as beneficial for them.

Every lavender season is different and this one was very difficult because of the bees. I had about 100 hives of *Apis mellifera* removed from our property over the harvest time to make it easier for us. However, we were plagued with a huge number of bumble bees that became a real problem. On December 28th we had a deluge of rain and some of our varieties sat down and over the edge of the weedmat. These we had to harvest by hand with sickles involving intimate contact with the bumble brigade, who became quite vicious in the afternoon when the area of flower got smaller and smaller. They had a habit of flying at high speed around you and would climb up your clothing, seeking flesh to vent their anger on. At one point Veronica was invaded by one up her jeans and made urgent noises about strip tease in the paddock. Fortunately for me I was able to direct her into the bathroom on the corner of our woolshed where she was able to do battle on her own. We purchased a product from our chemist called Anthisan. If put on straight after a sting you could expect one night of restlessness in bed instead of two. Some may think that we should have been using lavender oil on the stings. The point is that bumble stings are on a different scale altogether. One day after 15 stings I wondered if I would need a shot of adrenalin!

Over the time Veronica was with us we were able to offer a lot of experience and training with harvesting, distilling, product manufacturing and

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marketing. We also did propagation and nursery work coupled with the usual weeding. She developed a good nose for when a crop was fit and ready for harvest. At one stage I was invited onto a property to advise some folk about what to do with a lavender crop they had inherited from a previous owner. I let Veronica use her nose and she did extremely well on a crop with five varieties and no name tags.

Back in Coyhaique Veronica has been allocated one ha of suitable north facing well drained land by her father who is a cattle breeder. She has sister-in-law with the same university degree and together they seek suitable plant material to get their dream underway. I have visited a number of South American websites trying to find suitable plants without success. One site offered Grosso and Super plants, 500 minimum of each and when questioned about whether the plants were genuine could not provide that assurance. It looks as though I will have to export tissue cultures of suitable varieties to trial. Biosecurity NZ and the Chilean government have been very helpful with my initial enquiries. I have found a NZ scientist with a suitable lab in northern Chile for growing on. She is involved in forestry.

While working the internet in South America – mainly Chile and Argentina – I came across the following website available in both English and Spanish. Do have a look at it and be drawn in by the enthralling music and the wonderful collection of photos. www.lavandacasadete.cl.

Coyhaique has adequate rainfall for lavender but a fairly damp, cold winter. Soil will need to be mounded before covering with weedmat. Snow is experienced every winter and a mid spring pruning will probably be necessary to avoid frost damage to flower heads. I would expect an early March harvest.

Most of us know about wwoofers but Tricia Henderson alerted exec at one of our meetings about the website www.helpx.co.nz. They encourage growers seeking assistance to put their profile online and they offer to try and find a suitable match of a person or a couple. The usual arrangement is four hours work a day for free board and keep. If you are instructing people in the art of growing lavender etc you could probably extend the work hours to six a day.

Russell Rofe
Hook Bush Lavender
4th March 2011.



**;Cosechando manualmente!
Veronica harvesting by hand.**

TALGA Conference Report

5th-9th February 2011

Eight kiwis attended the TALGA conference and swelled the numbers attending to around 80. It was a well run international conference with excellent speakers, venue and accommodation, etc. with a truly inspirational visit to Bridestowe Lavender Estate.



The list of speakers included the following:

- Scott Nagle from Sequim, an event organizer, who shared the sad news that townsfolk and growers there have separated, so the growers are having to regroup and rebrand themselves and reconnect with the tourism industry.
- Keith Stubbs and Jean Sergeant gave an overview of the Scentsimental Collection. This is now a range of four products manufactured with Australian oil for TALGA members to sell. It includes a men's aftershave balm, a lavender soap and a lavender gardeners soap plus a fragrance diffuser. I am getting a sample of each to have for display

purposes here in NZ.

- The story of Tomita Farm in central Hokkaido was related by Mr Tomita through an interpreter. From Passion to Success was the story of resurrection in the late 1930's when manufacturers began using synthetic additives in perfume to a massive tourist attraction today that welcomes a million visitors.
- Robert Ravens of Bridestowe shared another resurrection story. When Tim Denny died the farm was sold a couple of times before Robert and his family purchased it. Rejuvenation of 130 acres of contoured plantings is now taking place with about 650,000 plants involved. Five of the original clones from seed are being released on the market: Philippa, Myra, Elizabeth and Jennifer, with the fifth next year. With 40,000 visitors per year, this is a major tourist attraction.
- Catherine Liardet gave us a truly amazing French cameo complete with historic movie footage of harvesting and distilling – a very moving family story.
- Ian Southwell made a strong case for an industry standard for *Lavandin* in Australia.
- Noel porter presented a very useful paper on the impact of flower maturity and distillation times on oil quality.
- Clive Larkman let his business

“Talking of websites, do
Google Farm Tomita and
have your breath taken
away.”

TALGA Conference Report (continued)

skills run riot making a strong case for diversification in business.

- Dawn Baudinette, who distills a very large quantity of flower for Australian members in Portland, probably shamed some of us with her energy!

Excellent workshops that Catherine and I attended included Catherine Liardet on Perfume Construction and Jennifer Ravens (Bridestowe) on Cooking with Lavender, complete with delicious samples. Noel Porter gave his three hour workshop on lavender oil components, and a craft workshop explored many ingenious ideas with value added for lavender products including display stands for lavender oils. A number of trade displays tempted our spending and ordering power.

There have been three requests from TALGA to consider. They would like to receive the Lavender Link for publication on their website for their members only. Also, they would like to receive the final edition of a pamphlet advertising our conference details so that they can inform all of their members. In addition, they have expressed interest in seeing us join with them in having an international conference every three years in alternate countries. If we are able to respond to these suggestions positively it will give real substance to the desire expressed by our last AGM to link more with TALGA. They have a very clear link with us on their new website. Talking of websites, do *Google* Farm Tomita and have your breath taken away.

Russell and Catherine Rofe

Hook Bush Lavender

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Lavender Nuptials

During the months of December and January, Coatesville Lavender Hill hosted 26 Chinese pre-wedding photo shoots in the lavender. News sure gets around real quick - we started off with one photographer's studio and ended up with three. They provide the wedding costumes (bridal gowns and groom's wear), do make-up and hair in their studio, then bring their customers out to the lavender patch, and then on to other picturesque spots in the North-West of Auckland. They then produce a very professional photo essay for their customers who send them off to China to their families and friends. The bridal couples follow a couple of months later and have their official weddings in China and Hong Kong. Looks like big business for someone!!!

Here are a few of the couples who took part in the photo shoots taken in our lavender in the 2010/2011 lavender season.

Regards to all

Tricia Henderson



Upper North Island Regional Meeting

With more apologies than attendees, we were always heading for a small meeting. Those that went had a great time those that didn't, well, your loss.

It is a three and a half hour drive to New Plymouth from Hamilton and five from Auckland. We left early in a soft rain, stopped at Mokau for a whitebait omelet and on to a warm welcome from Peter and Kathleen Adamski our southern-most members. Their lavender all laid out in neat rows is the first thing you see as you round the corner and that well groomed look continues through a truly amazing garden which has its fence pushed out as Kathleen buys more plants. Turns out only Marion and myself, Tricia and Pauline made the trip down but it was well worth it and apparently it chucked it down in Hamilton while we were away. Thanks to those who made the trip and thanks to Peter and Kathleen for their hospitality.

Peter spoke briefly on the Aussie conference which was expensive but good value and very informative. Russel is writing a report for the Link.

Matters discussed:

- Ideas to think about for research which is not horrendously expensive and will benefit many members.
- Some members have noticed their oil changes with time, air, temp, sunlight etc., so maybe someone like Noel Porter may be interested or

has already done some work on how to improve the oil after it has been distilled.

- We think we need to do more to keep existing members, so what do you as members want from your association and your region?
- More use could be made of skills some members already have and to that end Marion will be giving a soap-making demo at the next meeting.
- Conference was discussed and there is to be an update in the Link.
- We still believe that the association needs to do more to promote (not market) us, our members, and lavender and its benefits.
- New members should get something tangible when they join. Suggested a card and badge and list of members and a map and the Regional co-ordinator to try to find a buddy for them if they want it.

Next meeting at Tricia Henderson's place Sat 30 July. Meet at 12; lunch 12.30; meeting 1.00 - 2.00, then soap making.

Bring your favourite tippie something nice to eat to share, your remits to AGM and your wants from your region.

Treat each meeting at different venues as an adventure and enjoy.

See you there,

Mike Alspach, The Big Cheese, Northern Region.





2011

New Zealand Lavender
Growers Association
National Conference
19 - 21 August 2011
Kaikoura

NZLGA AGM
21 August 2011
Kaikoura



TO BE HELD 19,20,21 AUGUST 2011

Come and enjoy the extreme diversity Kaikoura has to offer, from snow capped mountains to the unfathomed depths of the sea. It is the first community in the world to have 'Greenglobe' accreditation. In this setting we invite you to share the expertise offered in this unique part of New Zealand.

With your budget in mind we have chosen the venue to be central and affordable. If required, alternative accommodation is available within easy walking distance.

The programme planned for this event includes:

- Sensory Marketing presented by Briar Harland. This is a first for our industry.
- Marketing Workshop by a photography expert. BRING YOUR CAMERA.
- Build your own website
- Culinary workshop in master class style

And various other industry related workshops:

- Elementary oil assessment
- Exporting(freight requirements)
- Plant Data Base
- Shared Panel Expertise

We have time set aside for a Local Public Field day "Meet the Farmer" Bring a photo explaining your business for a competition during the conference.

