

# Lavender Link

Quarterly newsletter for Association members

Issue 55

Winter 2013

## Trans Tasman Conference 2013

The New Zealand Lavender Growers' Association is holding its bi-annual conference in Auckland from Friday evening 23<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2013. Set in the beautiful surroundings of Lavender Hill in Coatesville, just north of the city, the conference programme is designed to be of interest to both newcomers and veteran lavender growers. A number of growers from TALGA (The Australian Lavender Growers Association) are also joining us.

Guest speakers from the echelons of the lavender world will be there to share their knowledge and expertise. The Association is proud to welcome Robert and Jennifer Ravens from the Bridestowe Lavender Estate in Tasmania (the Ravens have recently been awarded the prestigious National Australian Bank Agribusiness Award for Innovation), Susi and Vaughan White from Lavender Creek in Otaki, Clive and Di Larkman from Larkman Nurseries in Australia, Dr Noel Porter, formerly of Crop, Food and Research NZ plus a range of workshop presenters.

Workshops and presentations will be wide ranging in content including Distillation Skills, Agri-tourism, Oil Sniffing, Culinary Delights and hands-on opportunities to create your own lavender products.

This is proving to be a popular conference with only a few spaces available before we reach venue capacity. So if you haven't yet registered - don't delay!

To find out more about the venue go to [www.lavenderhill.co.nz](http://www.lavenderhill.co.nz)

Directions from Auckland Airport (just 44 minutes drive) will be sent to each registered delegate. Arrangements can be made for pick up and collection from the airport, if you do not have transport

For more information contact

Pauline Livesey (Secretary) [leafyhollow@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:leafyhollow@yahoo.co.nz) 09 2352990



# Chairman's Chatter



TO RESEARCH, DEVELOP  
AND PROMOTE LAVENDER  
ESSENTIAL OIL AND  
ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS

We seem to have slipped an issue of the Link this year and so much has happened since our harvesting. An air-only frost struck early in December and caused all our cultivars to send up another flowering through the crown of the plants. This inevitably meant that we had to wait for all the flowers to mature which led to very late harvest times. We have experienced wonderful assistance this year with a string of very helpful Helpers from Mainland China, Taiwan and the US.

## TOURISM

This is a theme that is coming very much to the fore at the present time being the major theme of our conference. With our PM, John Key, spending time in China and informing us as a nation to expect a 5 fold increase in Chinese tourists over the next twelve months, a number of our execs have been putting their minds into overdrive to work out what we might do to respond to this opportunity. Currently suggestions have included putting a promotional DVD onto YouTube with a link to our new website to doing some research on Chinese preferences when buying lavender products. We do have a tagged sum of \$7500 in a marketing account that has been there for quite a few years. It must surely be time to put it to work for the benefit of all our members.

## THE OIL COMPETITION

This is scheduled to take place 9-11<sup>th</sup> August in the Christchurch area to keep our expenses as low as we can. Facilities have been very difficult to find this year. A lot of the community buildings in the area are still out of commission with the earthquakes. Finally we have secured the Balcairn Hall a few kms south of Amberley just off the main road, at the same rate the facility we used last year. Please make sure that you get your oils in to Keith Brown before the deadline with cheque payments or direct payment of fees. We are expecting overseas entries from Australia, France, USA and Chile.

## WHEAT / LAVENDER BAG FIRE

Several people have told me about a recent TV news item that reported a fire created by heating a wheat / lavender bag in a microwave. I questioned very closely one of the people who spoke to me to see if there was any attempt made to ask the lady who experienced the fire about any labeling provided with the product but only a negative reply was made to me. I am also aware that some of our members have decided not to sell these products again. This is purely a knee jerk reaction without knowing the facts. Catherine and I have been selling large numbers of these bags for years now and have had no complaints from any customers we have sold them to.

The important thing to realize is that the mixture of wheat / dried lavender must be cleaned of all dust and leaf stork because these are very combustible. Also when a bag is placed in a microwave there must always be a mug of cold water with it and you must experiment with the maximum amount of time you can safely heat the bag on the hi setting with your own microwave noting the wattage as well of your unit. All of this info must be given with the product to avoid the possibility of a fire. Do not fail to give your own personal details with phone number and email address if you wish. You can then be confident that your product can be used safely. It also helps to point this out verbally to your customer.

Our three pocket product takes just 3 minutes on a hi setting with 700 watts. This will vary as larger units will need less than 3 minutes.

## PROTOCOLS FOR HANDLING PAYMENTS

For as long as I have been a member of exec, treasurers and chairpersons of our association have faced many difficulties with the payment of accounts including the payments for airline tickets purchased online. This is essentially because of the need for two signatures. After consultation with Kerry Hoggard exec has decided to make a change and will inform our bank once the new range of office bearers is decided at AGM this year. This means that we will only use a one signature system on cheques and may even convert to online banking and use a visa card if we wish. So that the chairperson will know when drawings are being made a quick email from the treasurer will enable close control of our funds. Annually all this will be reviewed as all our transactions are at present and the time and money wasting procedure of obtaining a second signature will be avoided. If someone is making an airline booking online a faxed card number can be destroyed by fire immediately the payment has been verified by the person making the booking.

## okaytostay

This is a new website for attracting customers to your business and it is free to join. It is a network of boutique wineries, cheese makers and lavender farms that operate shops for visitors to NZ who are travelling in self-contained motor homes to park and stay on your property for one night free of charge.

The goodwill by allowing visitors to park overnight motivates them to make purchases. For detail on how it works go to the website or contact [colleen@okaytostay.co.nz](mailto:colleen@okaytostay.co.nz) There were over 37,000 motor home hires in NZ in 2011 for both islands.

## GRAPHICS FOR THE NEW WEBSITE

Earlier this year exec were asked to make some suggestions about new graphics for the new website. I had an idea that has been followed through to the point of making a positive decision. Jo Ewing, an acclaimed NZ botanical artist is to provide sketches of the five most commonly grown cultivars for oil production, as a frieze on the pages – possibly 3 on the top and 2 on the bottom the varieties being Avic Hill, Violet Intrigue and Pacific Blue for angustifolias and Grosso and Super for lavandins. Jo is available to sketch these next season at a low cost of \$100 per sketch. To finance this we are going to have 1000 gift cards printed to be sold with envelopes in a cellophane bag in groups of one each of the five. The small mark up will cover the cost.

Currently Jo has 2 of her designs on Ashdene mugs and her lavender prints have been sold in shops for years. Having this on our website will be a very positive exercise in PR and should benefit all of our members plus the people who grow the plants and those who are looking for oil to buy. Win – win all around.

## UNDERSTANDING PVR

A couple of recent enquires to me about the sale of plants that carry a PVR has alerted me to the fact that some of our members do not know what is involved. Go to the PVR website and read carefully. Under no circumstances can lavenders that carry a current PVR be grown as plants for personal use or for sale to the public unless you have authority to do so from the PVR holder. In practice usually the PVR holder will only give the authority to one propagator who collects the levy for each plant

from the purchaser. Plants that come from an official propagator for sale to the general public must have an approved label on them that gives the caution about propagating and the name of the licence holder.

### NEW DIRECTIONS WEBSITE

This is an aromatherapy company in Sydney that specializes in the private manufacture of products at very reasonable rates compared to NZ companies. It is worth a look.

### CONFERENCE

This year we are planning to have a new generation “tea picker” harvester for you to order if you wish plus fabrics and tote bags from the US, diffuser bottles with rattan canes, Otago Haze plants and oil bottle display boxes.

Russell.

## NEW BOOK REVIEW

### The French Promise

By Fiona McIntosh, 2013

BO57

This thrilling and somewhat disturbing sequel to *The Lavender Keeper*, is set in the period immediately following WW2.

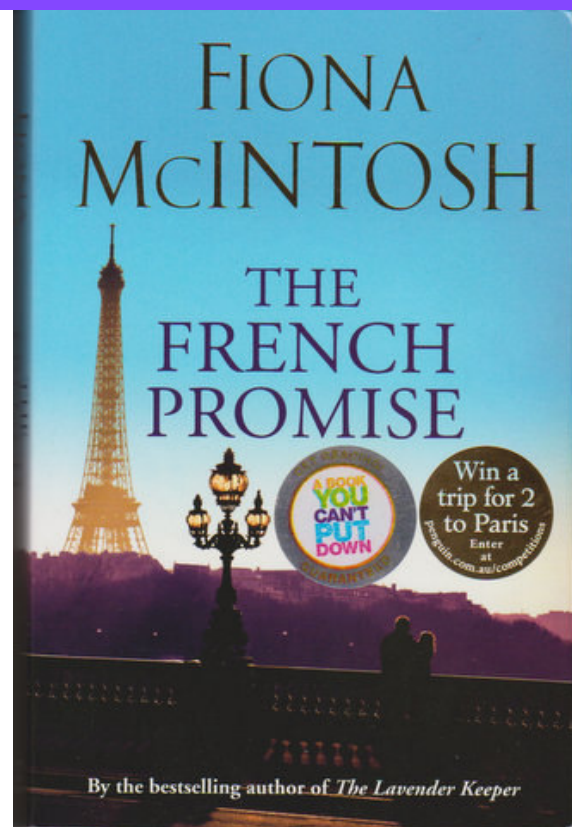
To escape the horror and distraction of post war Europe, Luc and Lisette Ravens set off for Australia hoping to rebuild their lives by planting lavender in the promising new land of Tasmania.

However ghosts from Luc’s troubled past return in the form of a Swiss law student whose life is inextricably linked to the Ravens. Now Luc must return to Europe as he had promised. See how those ghosts of the past are finally laid to rest – with the fragrance of lavender permeating the story.

— Catherine Rofe

A thriller to the last word.

— Russell Rofe.



# From the Editor

Hi Lavender Association members,

I hope you all had a good summer. Here in Wellington sunny day followed sunny day, with such consistency that I even stopped checking the forecast. Winter has certainly made its presence felt now though, with exciting storms and biting winds. The kind of winds that make a trip to the outdoor vegetable market a mini adventure. The canopy on one of the stands was almost flying away this morning, and a proprietor was fully engaged attempting to secure one end with a bag of onions.

It's been lovely to read a couple of your personal stories this edition. Keep sending those in.

And I look forward to meeting more of you at the conference!

**Cindy Jemmett**

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Aro Valley  
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## To Advertise in *The Lavender Link*

### Rates for NZLGA Members:

Full page - \$50.00  
Half page - \$31.00  
1/4 page - \$20.00  
1/8 page - \$ 14.00

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1/8 page - \$28.00

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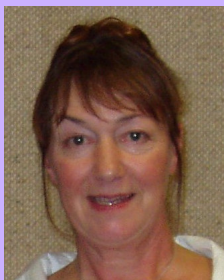
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**Cindy Jemmett**  
[c.jemmett@xtra.co.nz](mailto:c.jemmett@xtra.co.nz)

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



New Zealand Lavender Growers Association Incorporated

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Lavender Growers' Association will be held on  
**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2013** commencing at 8.30am  
in the Riverhead Settlers Hall, Riverhead, Auckland

Each member will receive further information within the next few weeks

## Membership Renewal

It is time to renew your membership again. Doesn't it come round quickly?

You will find a Membership Renewal Form included with the AGM information. If you have joined the Association since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 please ignore this.

## NZLGA / TALGA Reciprocal Membership

Following recent communications with the President and Secretariat of TALGA (The Australian Lavender Growers' Association) it is proposed that membership of NZLGA will also entitle our members to membership of TALGA and vice versa.

1. No money will change hands
2. Respective secretaries will exchange newsletters/ Lavender Link and forward them to their members. The annual TALGA magazine will be put onto CD and sent to the NZLGA secretary. A copy CD can be sent to our members on request and possibly be loaded onto our website in the Members' section.
3. Members' rates for attendance at conferences in Australia and New Zealand
4. Generic password for NZLGA members to access TALGA members section of their website and vice versa
5. If TALGA members wish to borrow books from NZLGA library there would be an additional charge to reflect handling and postage. TALGA secretariat informed of overdue books so that she can do the 'chasing up'.

I would appreciate any thoughts/comments you may have on these proposals

## A very warm welcome to our new members

Welcome to the following members who have joined NZLGA since the last edition of Lavender Link

David Bott  
Waikanae  
[david.bott@transact.co.nz](mailto:david.bott@transact.co.nz)  
04 293 2327

Rachel Carbines  
Judea, Tauranga  
[lavenderscents@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:lavenderscents@slingshot.co.nz)  
07 577 1844

Shelley Bergman  
Nelson  
[oopsiedaisy@ts.co.nz](mailto:oopsiedaisy@ts.co.nz)  
03 544 0504

## Oil Awards 2013

Don't forget to send your oil samples to

Keith Brown  
240 Stanton Road  
RD2  
Amberley

*by 2nd August 2013*

This year there is an additional class for 'Oldest Oil'.

The award winners will be announced at the Conference Dinner on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August.

I will resend the necessary forms and a reminder nearer the time.

## New 'Blood' needed

After four years in the secretary's position I feel it is now time to hand over to someone else so will not be available for re-election at the AGM this year. This is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to learn more about the world of lavender and to have a positive impact on our Association. You do not need to be an expert in anything - just willing to communicate with members, non-members and outside agencies, a positive attitude and a mind open to new ideas. If you would like to find out more just get in touch.

Russell Rofe is also looking for a successor for the role of Chairperson. He has completed four years in this key position and is now in need of a much-deserved break. Russell is willing to work alongside a newly elected Chairperson as mentor and support person, if required. Please give some thought to these key positions. We all need to make a contribution if the Association is to continue to grow and develop.

Pauline Livesey



[leafyhollow@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:leafyhollow@yahoo.co.nz)

09 235 2990

021 264 8654

# TRANS TASMAN CONFERENCE 2013

Friday 23rd August – Sunday 25th August  
Riverhead and Coatesville, Auckland

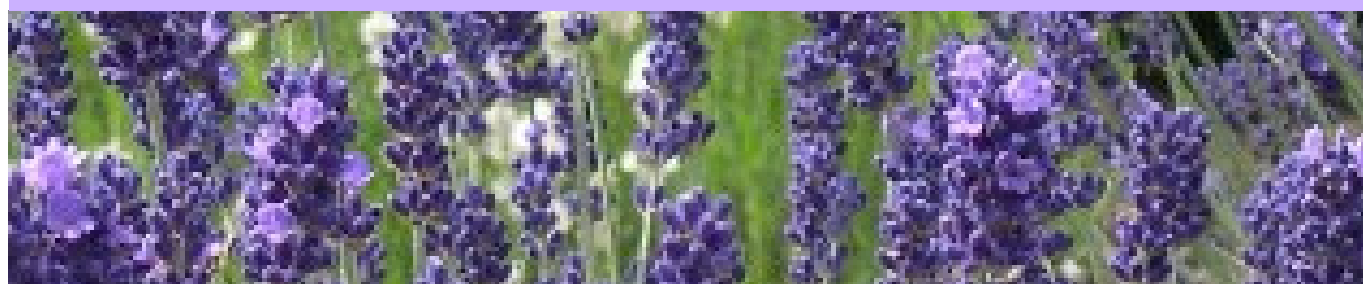
TIME SLOTS	FRIDAY 23rd	SATURDAY 24 <sup>th</sup> Venue: Riverhead Settlers Hall		SUNDAY 25 <sup>th</sup> Venue: Lavender Hill	
8.30 am		<i>Annual General Meeting</i>		<b>Guest Speakers</b> Clive & Di Larkman  <i>Varietal Selection &amp; Growing Conditions</i> Followed by Q and A session  Pauline Livesey <i>Updated Plant Database</i>	
10.30		MORNING TEA		MORNING TEA	
11.00		Venue: Riverhead Settlers Hall <b>Guest Speakers</b> Robert & Jennifer Ravens <i>Agri-tourism and Innovation</i>	Workshop 3A  <i>Culinary Use of Lavender</i>	Workshop 3B  <i>Grow Safe</i>	
1.00 pm		LUNCH		LUNCH	
2.00 pm		Venue: Lavender Hill <b>Guest Speakers</b> Susi & Vaughan White <i>Local Tourism &amp; Distillation Skills</i>	Workshop 4A <i>Oil Sniff Workshop</i> Led by Dr Noel Porter	Workshop 4B <i>Making Creams &amp; Lotions</i> Led by Gina Roberts	
3.15 pm		AFTERNOON TEA			
3.30 pm		Workshop 1 <i>Distilling Demonstration</i> by Alembics Copper Stills	Seminar <i>Distilling by Clonal Type</i> Led by Robert Ravens	4.00 p.m. Close of Conference	
4.30 pm		Workshop 2A <i>Distillation Basics</i> Led by Dr Noel Porter	Workshop 2B <i>Making Oil Diffusers</i> Led by Russell Rofe	  	
5.30 pm		Open Discussion - copper v stainless steel for lavender distillation			
6.30 pm.	Venue: Riverhead Settlers Hall <b>REGISTRATION &amp; Cocktails</b>				
7.00 pm	<b>Conference Opening</b>	DINNER Followed by presentation of the OIL AWARDS			



# Many thanks to the following sponsors of NZLGA Conference 2013

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# New Kids on the Block

Even though we have been running our lavender farm and shop for three seasons we are definitely newbies compared to many of you much longer established lavender growers. Whenever we meet any of you we are immediately learning new stuff and hearing stories of your experiences and benefitting from your wisdom.

Our decision to grow lavender here was not deeply researched, nor were the future consequences given a great deal of thought. We live in quite a remote location (by today's standards) and we really wanted an occupation for ourselves into retirement. Barry is a gardener by trade and specializes in building dry stone walls and I am a gardener by passion so choosing something horticultural was a no brainer really. We knew dried flowers did well here as Barry had tried that many years ago so we chose lavender because it seemed that it would cope well with our extremes which are very like Central Otago. (Although we are in North Otago we are only 5kms from the boundary into Central.) So away we went, I ordered lavender plants and Barry measured our paddock up very strictly in true botanically trained style. The tiny plants grew and before long we had a flowering field. Our personal discussions about selling our products gave us both a different concept of the final result and it wasn't until I ordered an eftpos machine that my very un-techno husband waved goodbye to his idea which was an honesty box and stuff displayed on a stand at the gate.

Our old garage was given a once over and became the shop and we painted the gates and shop bright purple which would surely cause a council headache in Wanaka but has only served to strengthen the pull for tourists to turn into our driveway. The first three seasons have each followed the other with improvements and lots of new customers and new ideas. Our biggest challenge is that we determine to be able to do it all ourselves and so there is a natural limit on our size and style.

The biggest delight has been finding out the history of our property from visitors and locals and last year we were given photos of our little shop when it was a family home, the first on the land here, so we have done some alterations to reflect its history. People coming in now can follow the history of the property and area as well

**Jo and Barry Todd**

**Danseys Pass  
Lavender**

**Otago**





as getting the expected lavender hit. Barry is currently working on a water wheel for a new garden to compliment the turbine garden which displays the old turbine which provided power here in times gone by.

We were totally stunned to win the two lavender awards last year, our hope from submitting an entry was that we would get some information about our oil as it was being well received but we wondered if our customers had any real knowledge to base their comments on. The awards bought us a lot of free press and in turn that has put us into a busier and more definite business mode. It doesn't really feel like we are just pleasing ourselves anymore and there is an expectation from the public, something we had not originally factored in, innocence is bliss, so they say. However despite this we thoroughly enjoy meeting the people who come from everywhere imaginable and we love the lifestyle. The input from Russell and Elsie and many others in the group we have met has been both generous and inspiring.

From naively choosing a lifestyle to suit our location and personal interests we find we have a busy lavender business which has enlarged our lives in so many ways. We are still being surprised by the unexpected and during the season never know from one week to another, what may happen the next day. From vintage car rally groups to motorcycle adventurers, authors, push bike tourists, photography groups and notably one day a visitor from the society of sundials....life is full of amazing moments.

- Jo and Barry Todd



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# Who said lavender was easy to plant?

After hearing that Lavender was easy to grow and after much thought and planning we sold our old business and started this new business. The Bees Nees was established June 2012.

Living in Northland, Kaiwaka no one could ever imagine how difficult the soil is to plant anything. The last four years we have spent planting olive trees, fruit trees, shelter belt trees any trees you can think of as we started off with a bare block. Every autumn we aim to plant at least 200 trees. Be it for shelter, wood, soil erosion. It is a never ending planting of trees. Never mind all the other types of planting we have done.

Then came the ultimate - we heard and read that Lavender was easy to plant and grow. If that is the case why not let's give it a go. We joined the NZLGA so that we could be in touch with like minded growers and get advice and hear what others have done and share thoughts.

We have the stickiest clay soil you can ever imagine entwined with kikuyu grass. If we can plant trees, what can a few hundred or so little plants do. After much thought we took the plunge and asked a local contractor to till one paddock and then we had 6 tons of lime spread on top and prayed for rain which came after a week. Our gardens looked like it had snowed. How were we supposed to know that the lime would cover our house, our gardens you name it, and even Monty the dog took cover. The contractor did not tell us that this would happen. It took over a month to wash house, grounds, plants and everything else that was covered in lime. Our poor roses had a coughing fit. First lesson learnt. Do not spray anything with a contractor. Do it yourself bit by bit.

We decided that we wanted to grow with weed matting because we knew sooner or later the kikuyu grass would be back with a vengeance. So seeking out good quality breathable matting at a reasonable price was not easy. Now we are hitting late spring and time is at an essence to try to get plants in. Ordering 900 plants from propagators which were ordered months previous not arriving until just before Christmas was not what we planned. Then the matting did not arrive until after Christmas. All the planning we had done months previous all gone to pot. It was not looking good all round. Then if nothing else could go wrong a family member passed away in England which meant that Roby had to go back and deal with this as she was the executor. I had to stay back and start laying matting and some planting starting in the New Year. Who could predict having one of the hottest summers on record?

Roby come back quickly - but she was snowed in back in England and unable to get a flight back to NZ until the end of January.

Roby got back to an explosion of thistles and ox tongue weeds amongst a few to name. I did my best, but could not get 900 plants planted. With only small planting windows early morning and late evening I did well

**The Bees Nees  
Lavender Fields and  
Herb Gardens  
Northland**

**Phil and Roby  
Dummigan  
&  
Monty the English  
Springer Spaniel**



to get 300 planted and lay matting which came in one huge roll 1200m long.

The weather cost us 50% of the seedlings. They did not survive. It did not matter how much water you gave them they needed to be in the ground not in the pots. Second lesson learnt. Only order what you can plant immediately.

We planted up what was still alive during the course of February and it all seems to be coming along now. Our biggest headache is weeds. Third lesson for the next tranche of planting. Do not till all the paddock. Only till the beds and put lime on and lay matting on immediately. The lime has been wonderful as it has helped greatly with breaking down the clay soil.

Looking forward to our first crop.

We have started with Grosso and hope over the many coming years to be able to grow different types of Lavenders for oil, rubbings, culinary use and anything else we put our hands to.

Visitors are always welcome. The jug is always on and a slice of good home baking in the cake tin to be shared.

- Phil and Roby Dummigan





# The who, what, why, how, and where of blending

Russell asked me to do some research into blending last year (2012). I started off with great gusto but found it hard to finish ... partly because it's a subject that not much is written about. This research draws on searching the internet and the papers of Dr. Noel Porter, Scientist and Life Member of the NZLGA. Please note that I do not come from a science background.

## What is blending?

We all know what blending is: the combining of different substances / elements to form a new whole – but did you know that within Europe (and undoubtedly other parts of the world) it also refers to the practice of essential oil traders 'adjusting' the chemical structure (and so the scent) of an essential oil so that it fits the needs of the market. In New Zealand - as far as I'm aware - when we talk of blending and lavender essential oil we mean the blending of 100% pure & naturally grown essential oil with the same. I will write more about New Zealand & blending under the heading 'Where is 'blending' done?'

## Why 'blend'?

The big answer to this question is money / price. Essential oils are 'blended' to meet the demands of the market place. The market is primarily the perfume industry and maybe the skincare industry. Because essential oils are such a pure and concentrated product they can be very expensive.

Following is an excerpt from *Complete Aromatherapy Handbook: Essential Oils for Radiant Health* by Susanne Fischer-Rizzi which is the best explanation of why and how blending came about that I found on the Internet.

### Fragrances From The Test Tube

... Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century all perfumes were made from essential oils. But, when synthetic fragrances developed around 1930, aromatherapy and the perfume industry parted company. Today only a very small number of perfumes are produced from pure essential oils.

Even when well produced, the quality of essential oils will vary. Like wines they have good years and bad years. The perfume industry needed to rely on oils that were stable and inexpensive. This fact has been responsible for the rapid development of synthetic oils, which have been perfected to such a degree that it's difficult to tell them from the real thing. Purportedly pure oil can just as well be a product from a test tube. The high price of pure essential oils is the reason for most of the mixing and diluting that is called "blending" in the industry. For example, when the price for a quart of synthetic jasmine oil ranged between \$8 and \$50, a quart of pure essential oil jasmine oil was over \$2000.

(Fischer-Rizzi 1991, 22-23)

A research paper  
by Jenny Holmes,  
a NZLGA committee  
member



Further on in this paper I will quote further from this same book as it powerfully illustrates the superiority of 100% pure essential oils over synthetic oils.

So ... 'Blending' has come about so that the perfume industries can make a product that is affordable to the consumer and still make a profit. I've heard / read that during World War II farmers / able men were conscripted into the armies and the production of such as lavender essential oil dwindled and maybe the practice of 'blending' came into its own about this time also because of the scarcity of essential oils. Another factor that promotes the practice of blending is that by doing so you can standardise an essential oil. This is important if you want to maintain the delicate balance of a perfume year after year. Too much of that chemical and too little of this (I'm referring here to the chemical components within lavender oil itself) may mean the loss of a perfume's x factor. And remember lavender essential oil has over 100 different chemical components.

### **How is 'blending' done?**

I'm not sure how synthetic blending is done.

Dr. Noel Porter's Report 'Specifications, analysis and blending of lavender oil', (available from the NZLGA library) very thoroughly explains how you can blend two lavender essential oils to get a planned for result and later on I quote from this paper.

Apparently essential oils can be souped-up or souped-down. I think to soup-up you would add the chemical component(s) that are missing or low so as to meet the requirements of the buyer or the market place in general. To soup-down probably refers to adding thinners so that x amount of a pure essential oil goes further - this is referred to as stretching.

The 'souping-up' is often done with synthetic chemical components because they can be created quite easily and cheaply within labs. Susanne Fischer-Rizzi in the previously mentioned book also tells us:

It is common knowledge, for instance, that pure essential oil – produced in the South of France – is often sold at a lower price by dealers than the farmer or distiller was paid. This is possible because synthetic substances ("sauce") are added.

(Fischer-Rizzi 1991, 22-23)

Though lavender essential oil has over 100 different chemicals the two main ones are linalyl acetate and linalool.

You may have seen a lavender blend called 41/42 for sale or mentioned on the Internet. Here is a description of Lavender 40/42 I found on [www.camdengrey.com](http://www.camdengrey.com)

The numbers in Lavender 40/42 indicate the linalyl acetate content; in this case, they indicate the product contains 40%-42% of linalyl acetate. Lavender 40/42 is generally a blend of various lavenders in order to get a consistent scent from batch to batch, with processors adding linalyl acetate to cover the smell of camphor or borneol components of a given lavender.

Further mention of blend Lavender 40/42 is given on [www.thesage.com](http://www.thesage.com) which is interesting as it illustrates how 'blending' comes into its own when lavender crops fail or are not as good as in previous years. Also of interest is that the lavender blend 40/42 is not synonymous with a synthetic blend. It can be 100% pure lavender essential oil blended with the same.

Lavender prices have been very high over the last several years. The crop of 2010 was one of the lowest quantity crops we have ever seen. We do not expect to see greater quantity in the market until mid summer to autumn 2012. This is why we are now offering Lavender 40/42 Extra and Select versions. Both versions are blended to get a standard linalyl acetate and linalool content of 40-42%, but the Extra has an extra umpph in the floral notes. The Select version is very nice, but has a more typical lavender smell. We offer both, with their price variations, so you can choose the best lavender for your project.

The name of 40/42 does not indicate this essential oil is blended with synthetic fragrances, the term 40/42 means we blend various crops of essential oil together to get a more standard product. This product is pure essential oil.

I understand that 'blending' is a respectable practice as long as there is clear paperwork as to how the basic essential oil has been 'adjusted'. This is fair trade, as both the buyer and seller know the true components of what they are buying. 'Blending' also has a dark side and that is when buyers think they are buying 100% pure essential oil but in fact it may have been stretched by thinners or adjusted to smell more pleasing. Sometimes it is a case of buyer beware – if the price is very cheap the essential oil is probably not 100% pure.

Susanne Fischer-Rizzi in the previously mentioned book also tells us:

Unfortunately, unscrupulous merchants often ask as much for an essential oil that has been 'stretched' as for one that is pure. Since the term 'real' or 'pure essential oil' is not protected, there is no guarantee of purity or quality.

(Fischer-Rizzi 1991, 22-23)

### **Where is 'blending' done?**

As mentioned earlier 'blending' is practised in Europe and maybe other places but is 'blending' done in New Zealand? What is the NZLGA stance on 'blending'?

As far as I know very little (if any) commercial blending goes on in NZ. It is useful for us to know about 'blending' though because it could be a tool / method that could be very handy.

Blending could solve the problem of having a large amount of lavender essential oil that was short of market standards because of such factors as unkind weather, unsuccessful storage on way to distiller or the distilling process itself. Once a CG (Gas chromatographic) test has been done the deficiencies of particular lavender essential oil can be identified and another lavender essential oil that is high in the deficient qualities can be blended in. Dr. Noel Porter's paper entitled "Specifications, analysis and blending of lavender oil" is held by the NZLGA library and gives de-



tailed information about how to blend in this way.

The stance of the NZLGA on 'blending' is to only blend lavender essential oil with lavender essential oil because to do otherwise would be harmful to the reputation of the quality of our 100% pure NZ brand. Any blending that is done (lavender essential oil with lavender essential oil) should be well documented with detailed paperwork so that the process is transparent. I think NZ is perceived internationally as a country where honest business practice can be relied on and we can be proud of that.

**Stance on Blending As Quoted From 'Practical aspects of lavender oil production in New Zealand' by N G Porter**  
**This was a report prepared for the New Zealand Lavender Oil Producers' Association Inc.**

### **BLENDING**

Blending is a universal practice for producers, dealers/brokers and formulators to meet oil specifications and should be a routine part of the Association's operation when necessary. In the commercial environment, blending practices are determined by the prices of raw materials and products and the specifications required by buyers. There are no formal or official rules and there are always anecdotes of undesirable substances used to blend and/or stretch oils. Any rules or practices the Association wishes to define for blending should be determined first by the intention to sell pure, natural oils of New Zealand origin which fall within the AFNOR oil specifications for the major identified lavandin and lavender oils; and second, by the intention to develop a reputation as a reputable trader of genuine, quality oils. If the intentions are such, then the rules and practices become self-apparent –

- pure natural oils,
  - no extenders,
  - documentation for quality assurance of raw and blended materials,
  - consistency of product,
- professional business practices.

These rules obviously cover blending of whole oils, and a natural assumption would be that blending refers to either lavandin or lavender oils. There is no reason why the two types should not be blended together provided they satisfy the rules of raw materials and that the blended oil satisfies a profitable client requirement. These rules could also cover the fractionation of oils and the blending in of fractions. Fractionation may be useful to reduce less desirable notes e.g. green sharp notes, or to boost a desirable fraction to achieve a particular specification in a difficult year. Fractionation is a valid practice provided it is acceptable to clients and the uses of natural fractions is both documented and acknowledged.

(Porter 1996, 15)

Following is my understanding of what fractionation is:  
During the distillation process i.e. the 30 minutes or so that the steam pushes up through the harvested lavender flowers and stem the different chemical components that make up lavender essential oil release themselves from the plant material at different times. I understand that the



‘goodies’ are the first to release. This adds up to the essential oil that comes off first as being the most beneficial for fractionation – as I’m assuming these are the ones that will need topping up when a lavender oil is substandard.

### **Who (knows) about ‘blending’ in New Zealand?**

Answer: Dr. Noel Porter.

For detailed description of how blending is done (i.e. 100% essential oil with same) I recommend Dr. Noel Porter’s comprehensive and scientific paper written in August 1999 called: ‘Specifications, analysis and blending of lavender oil’. This gives a nuts and bolts description of how to blend.

Below I will quote from this paper

#### **Blending**

Blending is simply mixing oils to obtain a product that is different from the starting components. It is a common and widely accepted practice at many levels in national and international markets – from primary producers to dealers to end-users. However, not all blending is acceptable, e.g. increasing oil volumes with extenders, or boosting critical component with synthetic components. Where such blending is designed to correct faults or oil prices fraudulently and is discovered, severe damage is done to reputations and businesses. In line with the professional approach of the NZLOPA, this discussion and exercise assumes that all NZLOPA blending will be done only with pure oils for good reasons. All blending exercises require three things – a recognisable objective, a reproducible process, and adequate quality control and assurance.

#### **Reasons and objectives**

The four most likely reasons for blending in New Zealand are:

- To maintain an oil specification and product consistency in spite of minor seasonal variations in oil composition
- To avoid significant financial loss of a batch of oil that falls outside the specified composition by adjusting it to a more acceptable composition
- To provide a particular oil composition or character specified by a client
- To develop new products with compositions or characters that are not possible with oils that can be obtained directly from currently available plants or extraction methods.

There are probably other reasons, but like those above both the reason and the objective of blending must be clearly defined and both professionally and financially justified.

The objective may be well defined, for example, to maintain acceptable composition ranges such as the ISO and AFNOR standards. If so, the blending process for the first two reasons can be defined and monitored by standard GC analyses. In the case of the last two reasons, the objective may only be defined in subjective terms, e.g. descriptions of various aroma notes, and will be more difficult to define and achieve on a consistent basis. If agreement can be reached with the client(s) on the acceptability of a blended product, a sample of the product could be analysed



## “Essential Oils In The Green Revolution”

<http://www.younglivingaspirations.com/Articles/oils-go-green.html>

**Understanding the Green Revolution** The term “Going Green!” has exploded into popular culture, but what does it really mean? Basically, going green means eliminating products and practices that pollute and deplete the environment and choosing instead to use products and practices that enhance life, are natural, safe, renewable, and non-toxic.

**What's Wrong with Synthetic Products?** Many modern products, including food additives, cleansers, and medicines were developed by isolating the active ingredients in plant materials and synthesizing them in the laboratory. When the “active ingredients” in cleaning compounds, food additives, and medicines are replaced by chemicals synthesized in the laboratory, the resulting manufactured products are standardized, cheaper, easier to produce, patentable, and promoted as “miracles” of modern science.

The trouble is, synthetic substances never contain the complex blend of organic compounds that are richly abundant in essential oils, and thus lack the balancing and protective power of the natural plant substances. Because of this, synthetics have unwanted side effects.

**The Essential Oil Alternative** Research all over the world has shown that many therapeutic grade essential oils are antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal. They facilitate the absorption of oxygen and nutrients, digest and remove synthetic chemicals, and generally restore the natural balance disrupted by synthetics and environmental pollutants. Essential oil companies have begun to acknowledge the value of producing cleaning and personal care products that replace hazardous synthetic chemicals with therapeutic-grade essential oil.

by GC as soon as possible to provide an objective in the form of a profile and composition that can be more easily defined, monitored and reproduced.

### The process

Blending is simply mixing, but there are some aspects that require attention.

### The starting oils

The saying – “rubbish in, rubbish out” – applies so your starting oils should:

- Be pure, clean and dry
- Be identified by a unique batch number
- Have a documented history including agronomic, extraction and other relevant information
- Have suitable composition and character to achieve the right blend
- Be confirmed by GC analysis and subjective evaluation shortly before being used, since composition can change in storage.

(Porter 1999, 16-17)

Someone told me that all the papers done by Dr. Noel Porter are very good. I found this to be true and would recommend to others that they borrow Noel’s reports from the NZLGA library.

To end off this paper I’d like to quote from *Complete Aromatherapy Handbook: Essential Oils for Radiant Health* by Susanne Fischer-Rizzi again and also another piece I found about essential oils on the Internet. Both pieces illustrate why essential oils reign supreme over fragrance oils that are created in labs.

Synthetic oils, or oils blended with synthetic substances, are unacceptable for aromatherapy: they have no healing properties. On the contrary, these synthetic oils may endanger your health – causing allergies and weakening of the immune system. Synthetic oils are never pure. They contain by-products that cannot be easily identified and their effects are unknown. They are devoid of vitality and energy, and it is precisely the vital energy in pure essential oils that is responsible for their positive, healing effect on mind and body.

Essential oils are complex and many of their numerous substances remain unidentified. The small number of substances we do know about are extremely effective ... How potent are they? Aroma researchers have discovered a substance in green peppers so concentrated that the fragrance from less than one drop can be detected an Olympic-size swimming pool!

...The enormous vital energy that radiates from pure essential oils and the weakness of synthetic oils can be measured with a divining rod or Geiger counter. The results are similar to those shown in Kirlian photography and other related methods. A synthetic oil is a dead product. In the eyes of holistic practitioners, it should not be used for healing, strengthening or health promoting purposes.

(Fischer-Rizzi 1991, 24)

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In conclusion: It is very interesting to know about 'blending' as it gives us a deeper understanding of why we can be proud to be producing 100% pure lavender essential oil and it gives us a deeper understanding of why there seem to be roadblocks when we try to sell our lavender essential oil to such as cosmetic companies i.e. they are wanting their essential oil components to be consistent from year to year so as to ensure the make-up of their product also remains the same and price is always a factor in commercial enterprises. I imagine that in Europe this even relates to labelling as I think they have to list the chemical components of lavender on their INCI label.

It is also of value to know of the NZLGA stance on 'blending' and to know that there are acceptable processes of blending there to consider using when our lavender essential oil harvests are substandard.

Jenny Holmes  
25 March 2013

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- Noel Porter's articles are held by the NZLGA Library and are available for loan by members.