

Lavender Link

Quarterly newsletter for Association members

Issue 57

Summer 2014

Lavender Abbey - Pick your own day

Jan Abernathy
Lavender Abbey

Here's a pic from our 'pick you own lavender' last weekend. [18th-19th January]

We had 286 people for the two days which is great. We usually open one day but this year we opened four, we had 105 people for the previous weekend, so well worth opening the extra two days. We had editorials in the Dom Post Life Mag and Wai News which was free. Also Wairarapa Times Age did an editorial on the first weekend (for free) which probably made a big difference to the following weekend.

Regards, Jan

www.lavenderabbey.co.nz



Chairman's Chatter



TO RESEARCH, DEVELOP
AND PROMOTE LAVENDER
ESSENTIAL OIL AND
ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS
OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY



I have just installed Microsoft Office onto my new computer so here goes. This installment of Chatter will give you some insights into what I have been doing for everyone since the last Link.

As an association we exist primarily to promote the production of high quality lavender oil. We offer support to our members through regional links, conferences and competitions. As such we are not a marketing organization, nor do we trade, but we do offer training in marketing especially through our library resources. From time to time we make useful contacts with people, and we share these with you.

DR ROMAIN MONGE of the International Perfume Foundation in Brussels contacted us last year. We have now invited him to be the chief speaker at our next conference, possibly to be held in Queens-town in October 2015, or a more suitable venue in the south. Romain has two points of inspiration for us – the marketing of essential oils and their associated products to tourists, and the protection of the essential oil industry worldwide from attack by legislation that limits the sale of them and undervalues their worth.

Romain has also facilitated an invitation to me from one of the French co-operatives in Volx that handles 400 tons of lavender oil per year, so that I might have the opportunity to showcase some of our NZ oils in an effort to get some new markets for our members to shift some of their stocks of oil. Currently I am in conversation with the director of this co-operative about the likelihood of achieving this goal. I was supplied with a typical profile of an oil they are looking for and I can see there are some challenges ahead because our NZ oils are so different and not enough attention has been paid to marketing in the past when cultivars have been selected for growing. Preferred aromas in France are obviously very different to NZ.

HENRY HAO of China, who is a businessman trying to establish links with NZ lavender growers with a view to manufacturing products in NZ for export to China using member's oils, has been in touch with me and some members as well. I will report any progress on these negotiations when they are available, but in the meantime be assured that no confidential information about the businesses of any of our members will be released under any circumstances. Henry's proposals include a China delivery centre, Chinese Web Construction and customer service, advertisements on behalf of the client and business negotiation with Chinese customers. Sales commissions would fund these. If you have any contribution to these discussions please get back to me with your ideas.

PLANT VARIETY RIGHTS or PVR is the patent system we have in place in NZ to protect the IP rights of those who develop new plants. All plants sold under this system whether single plants or in bulk, have to be clearly marked as such on invoices and labels. Without a license or permission from the PVR holder it is an offense in law to either propagate or sell these plants for your own use or to sell to others. When cases of breach are detected the penalties issued by the court can be most severe. All members need to be aware of this and please make sure that all new members are told about this requirement. Our new membership secretary needs to inform new members about this when they join our association.

MOLTEN SILVER. This is a lanata/angustifolia cross PVR'd by Virginia some years ago. Virginia very kindly allowed me to have a few of these plants after Dennis died and I have finally got round to organizing a trial. I have a good sample of oil now and even some plants available for sale. This oil will have a GC analysis done this year. The plant has a silvery foliage and not too many flowers but they are large and dripping with oil and you can expect a yield comparable with Grosso. It is inclined to keep on flowering so you have to be patient while the flowers are opening. I find the aroma very pleasant and could let you have a sample bottle if you are interested. It will require more space both within and between rows. I also have a seedling of my own under trial. It is a lilac pink and the aroma is like the old smoker lolly. The yield is not high but the aroma is novel.

BRIDESTOWE LAVENDERS. These have been slow to get underway still recovering from the harsh conditions of quarantine but enough extension growth has occurred to enable some cuttings to be taken to build up the number of plants to produce enough flower to do an oil test next season. The two additional clones described by Robert Ravens at our conference last year have yet to be released.

EQUIPMENT. There is a dried lavender cleaning machine available from Virginia McNaughton with four screen sizes. Contacts for Virginia are her usual email address and 03 332 7347, 10 Everest Way, Springston, 0210782992 for cell phone. Keith Rosie also has distilling and harvesting equipment for sale. Contact him for details as per the website.

WEBSITE GRAPHICS. Jo Ewing is progressing well with these. The five paintings that are coming will be used to adorn our website and a medium sized gift card will be available from our secretary in groups of five (one of each cultivar) with cello protection and matching envelopes. 1000 of these sets will be produced and will be sold to defray the expenses of having the paintings produced. This will mean the need for maximum support from all our members. The angustifolias are "Avice Hill", "Violet Intrigue", and "Pacific Blue, with "Grosso" and "Super " for lavandins.

LAVENDER FESTIVAL 2015. No further progress to report at the moment.

NASHVILLE WRAPS Just received a catalogue from this company in the US. They have some stunning product bags and wraps available. I will be importing some and you could add your order to mine if you wish. www.NashvilleWraps.com. Further detail at international@nashvillewraps.com.

LOOKING FOR ORGANIC FERTILISERS? Have a look at Agrissentials. rok@agrissentials.com. They have a range of products available including fertilizer, liquid seaweed and lime. Best wishes for your marketing in 2014.

Russell.
February 2014

From the Vice Chair



Hi every-one. At the last Executive meeting I volunteered and was voted on as Vice Chairperson. This job often seems to be a diplomatic position, although the job description talks about overseeing the online Trail Map of farms, and the status of lavender farm growers, and suppliers to NZLGA. Improving the quality of lavender oil production in NZ also gets a look. But enough of this and a little bit about myself.

I hail from Wellington and moved to Auckland in the late '60s. Did a bit of study and became an Electronic Engineer working for the Post Office. Early '70s I switched occupations to the DSIR and managed the science laboratory at Scott Base for 12 months. Moved to England, Manchester where I worked for a mass spectrometer manufacture and I have been working in this field ever since. Along the way I meet my lovely wife, Margaret and we have had many adventures both above (high mountain passes) and below ground (caving). We have one lovely daughter, Cindy who you will all know. About 18 years ago we purchased a rundown property on Great Barrier Island and about three years ago caught the lavender bug, did some research, meet Susi White, bought some plants from Pauline and got started. Our first meeting with the Northern group was at Trish's place, Lavender Hill and a great bunch of lavender growers they were. This group freely shared ideas and helped with our new adventure. We help each other with bulk purchases and wholesale specialist products between us. It has to be a great model of cooperation which we all benefit from. Now I have decided to step up and take a more active roll in the association and so back to the Vice Chair business.

Unfortunately this January we have had resignations from our Secretary and Treasurer, both for personal reasons. Although the Treasurer has offered to stay on till 30th June, she would prefer to hand over as soon as possible due to current work commitments. The Exec are very keen to hear from members who are interested in taking a more active role in running the Association. In addition we are also looking for a Membership Secretary which will make both the Secretary and Treasurers jobs much more manageable.

You will see in this Lavender Link, three job vacancy ads. This is a great opportunity to join the Executive and I look forward to seeing lots of hands up. Please contact me for more information.

peter@greatbarrierlavender.co.nz

Cheers,
Peter Jemmett

Situations Vacant

Secretary

Hello, to all you organisers out there! Here's a great opportunity to be more actively involved in your Association. We are looking for a competent organiser who enjoys being in touch with members, and fielding enquiries. Responsibilities include sorting and forwarding correspondence, liaising with the executive, preparing agendas, taking minutes, and being a point of contact for TALGA, our Australian cousins. Develop your skills, contribute your mark to the successful running of the NZLGA, and network with lots of people.

Membership Secretary

An opportunity exists for someone to join the executive team in the role of Membership Secretary. This role is all about liaising with new members. We are looking for someone to be a welcoming face to the Association. Skills required are organisation, and the ability to reply promptly to enquiries. Meet new people, show your enthusiasm, and get involved!

Treasurer

Want to be more involved with your association? Competent with things financial? How about taking on the role of treasurer! Responsibilities include keeping sound accounts, liaising with the executive, and being in touch with members regarding invoices etc. Lend your skills and ideas to the effective financial running of the Association.

Any queries / job descriptions can be obtained by emailing peter@greatbarrierlavender.co.nz

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From the Editor

Hello,

I hope you've all had an enjoyable and productive summer. I don't know about you guys, but the weather here in Wellington has been very changeable. After being spoilt with consistent sunshine last year, I've certainly been kept on my toes and checking the Metservice website, just to see what to wear in the morning!

We've had sudden heavy showers, or thick mist rolling in out of a clear hot day. But it is still summertime, because I can hear the cicadas out in full, wondrously loud, summer force.

I did, probably not surprising, experience my hottest summer day this year, not in Wellington, but in the South Island, where the temperature was a reported thirty degrees. And after cycling all day in the increasing heat (see photo below of bike trip) I felt compelled to swim in Lake Aviemore. Anyone who knows me will understand by this statement just how hot it was, as I am not often prompted to seek out cold water. But I'm certainly not complaining. I've captured that hot day and that sunshine, and I'll carry it though the cooler days ahead.

Best wishes,

Cindy.

Cindy Jemmett

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To Advertise in *The Lavender Link*

Rates for NZLGA Members:

Full page - \$44.00
Half page - \$27.00
1/4 page - \$17.50
1/8 page - \$ 13.00

Rates for Non-Members:

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

Cindy Jemmett
c.jemmett@xtra.co.nz

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Greetings from Kaikoura

Hi everybody,

Jan & Corry Zeestraten

We are looking forward to the end of a very busy season at the Lavender farm in Kaikoura. It looks like every year we get more visitors, and bookings for our B&B. It is a great combination with the farm and shop, they enjoy their stay and buy there gifts to take home.

The harvest is nearly done, we leave always some purple for the public, they want to see the colour purple, otherwise they do not want to pay \$2.00 entree fee!

All my little travel tin candles I made are sold out. It was a try out, and I do not have time to make more, next season I can make much more! Also the diffusers (workshop Russell) went well. I packed them in clear flower sleeves, with ribbon.

Before Christmas our farm went on the market, see website www.bayleys.co.nz/4150011 There is already a lot of interest. The new lavender farm in Wanaka, will be open September 2014. Tim and Stef our two sons worked very hard and made there first oil. There is a beautiful white wedding garden, nursery and in April they hope to start building the shop, function room and workshop. If you like to see the website that Stef made. www.wanakalavenderfarm.com

In the future we will move to Wanaka and like to be still involved with lavender. Love to give workshops, in craft and cooking and do some catering work.

Hope you had also a great season and nearly time to relax or go away for a holiday.



Greetings from Kaikoura,

Jan & Corry.



**More photos from
Cory and Jan's
farm in Kaikoura**



A New Beginning!

It has been a long five or so months since we relocated to Waimate and re-joined the NZ Lavender Growers Association.

I had been involved in growing lavender in Helensville, Auckland for a period of four years, until disaster struck. Relying on information gleaned from the previous property owners for over 40 years, that the river flats had never flooded, I planted 3,000 plants. 'Foveaux Storm', 'Pacific Blue', and 'Grosso'.

But 'yes' you guessed it, a one in a hundred year storm, alas soaked the plants to the point of no return!

So six years on from that, we upped house, lock stock and barrel and migrated south to Waimate, Canterbury.

It is a familiar stomping ground for me personally, having owned and run a pub in Queenstown for almost ten years, however my wife had only visited the Mainland years ago with her parents.

So it was with at least a degree of trepidation that we moved to Waimate.

My wife Sandra now commutes double the distance she used to travel to work up north, but still pursues her passion in helping animals by continuing to practice as a vet nurse in Oamaru.

I, on the other hand, dabbling in software and other commitments, realised I had the time to re-investigate my dream and passion, lavender, and with the patience and assistance from dear Russel Rolfe, (your NZGLA Chair/Pres) I now have a new planting at the entrance to Waimate (from the Kurow end)

Not much, 300, but a start, with Waimate Lavender being born!

Matt & Sandra Hampton
Waimate Lavender





So here we are busy creating that long lost dream, and hoping to reap the benefits!

Photo at left: New Products going to market for first time with the first crop.

Contact Details:

Matt & Sandra Hampton,
Waimate Lavender,
P.O.Box 15,
Waimate 7900

Email: waimatelavender@gmail.com

Web: www.waimatelavender.co.nz

Kindest regards,
Matt

Leafy Hollow

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Farmers Corner

Lillian Huang
Farmers Corner



This is our first year as members of the Lavender Association. Our lavender farm is located at 12 Longbeach Road, Ashburton about five minutes away from town proper. We have around 20,000 lavender plants, on ten acres of land, which were planted in 2011. Our Lavender farm is primarily for tourist attraction purposes as our main business is focussed on our souvenir shop called Farmers Corner Ltd. We cater for South East Asian tourists, with the majority of these coming from Taiwan, Thailand and China.



Our plants have matured and fully grown over the past three years, and we had a great yield of lavender oil this year. Our lavender flowers are sent directly to Amberley after harvest and are being distilled for us by Mrs. Charlotte Brown of Herbal Visionz Lavender Ltd.



We also bought a very efficient harvesting machine, which has eased the harvesting process and labour costs for us.

We are using the latest model of HT-Tom harvester which we bought late last year from Harvester Concept Ltd. The machine works perfectly, and it can carry around 25 to 30kg of flowers in one go. It is easy to operate, however we still need two people to hold it from end-to-end to get the machine to run straight and give it a good push as the catcher bag can be heavy as it begins to fill up. This machine has a built in blower to push the plant inside the bag, which is convenient, however it would have been better if the blower were a bit bigger. Overall, this machine is cost effective and worth the investment and it really makes the harvesting part enjoyable and faster.

Our Lavender oil product is marketed under our own brand, Southern Isles®. We designed it ourselves, and sourced and imported the packaging materials from Taiwan which works out to be 50% to 60% cheaper compared to a local NZ packaging manufacturer. Please feel free to visit us here in Ashburton and we'll give you a tour around our humble lavender farm.

Lillian Huang

Director – Farmers Corner Ltd.
12 Longbeach Road, Ashburton



News from Great Barrier Lavender

Peter and Margaret Jemmett
Great Barrier Lavender



This year we delayed getting to our farm on Great Barrier Island, and instead spent the early part of our Christmas holidays camping near Coroglen on the Coromandel peninsular. We enjoyed ten days of tramping, kayaking and visiting the local Coroglen Tavern for meals and New Year celebrations.

Arriving at our Lavender Farm on 6th February, we were greeted by lavender patches almost overgrown with long grass. After much mowing and edge trimming we could at last see the front lavender patch in full flower. It looked like we were about two or more weeks late in picking, but decided to leave it for a few more days so we could enjoy the lavender colours.

Our still is not up and running yet, so this year's harvest all went for drying. We sell most of our lavender products at our local Arts and Craft Gallery where Margaret volunteers one day a week during January. Our product sales have been going very well this year and were a big improvement on last year. We had 1115 visitors to the gallery in December and 1754 in January. Now we just have to think of more creative ways to present our products. Another challenge is working out the optimum pricing to help our visitors to empty their pockets. It is quite a challenge in marketing and my conclusion is there is no easy way to work it out. It is probably best to put yourself into the buyer's shoes and ask yourself what you would spend. I have an old saying for this. *You model your business at the price your customers are willing to pay.*

In the meantime away from this marketing stuff there is other work to be done. We are in the middle of some major house renovations and additions so we can accommodate our friends for visits to this very scenic island. Great Barrier Island has no reticulated power so we all make our own by either generators or various combinations of solar and wind. Our power system is 100% solar which can bring its challengers on non-sunny days. This subject can get very technical so if anyone is interested I can write a separate article. Anyway it is not all hard work and having a few tools does help to ease the back pain. Especially when digging a trench to bury the new power cable from the garage to the house. This also comes in handy when I have to dig the garden.



But it is not all work and at around 3pm we usually head to the beach for some serious relaxing time or surfing in the waves. We also had an 80th birthday party to attend where the bears did a lot of the entertaining.

Peter & Margaret Jemmett
Great Barrier Lavender
Great Barrier Island

Looking Back - Looking Forward

Keith and Sylvia Rosie

In every lavender plot through the length and breadth of New Zealand there is a story. Your story.

Our story is pretty much the same as everyone else's. Hope and dreams, plenty of hard work, steep learning curves, sacrificing things when money was short, endless waiting, disappointments, failures (I am old enough to be able to use that word without needing counselling) glimmers of success, resignation, adjustments to the budget, adjustments to the management plan, and that feeling "I am locked in ... keep going" occasional snippets of encouragement and heaps of cold water "what are you doing that for?" "are you still doing lavender?" If this sounds familiar you are a true lavender grower. If it doesn't yet register, keep going – a few more years.

Twenty years ago we were told by reputable people we would sell angustifolia oil for \$900 /litre. \$900 then was more than \$900 now. We had bought 200 acres of bare scorched stones in North Canterbury and worked hard at two jobs to meet mortgage payments as well as provide fences, plant trees and build sheds – that part is familiar I am sure. We tried olives – tried them three times in fact and there are still six trees growing out of 80 or 90 planted. We tried sweet chestnuts, we tried hazelnuts, and we kept working in town to pay off the mortgage. But \$900 a litre for oil sounded too good to be true – and it was. In the budgets we drew up in those days we halved the price received for oil to \$400/litre and halved the yield per plant. It was still too good to be true.

For sale - mechanical lavender harvester. Single row, currently attached to David Brown 880 diesel tractor.

Cutter, height adjustment, reel speed and elevator speed are driven via PTO driven hydraulic pump. Easy to operate cost \$25,000.00 about 10 years ago plus \$5,000.00 for modifications 8 years ago.

Price \$10,000 including tractor –firm- no offers. Email to us and we'll supply photos.

Situated at West Eyreton – North Canterbury (not South Canterbury as listed in Lavender growers directory)

Keith Rosie

crofters@scorch.co.nz

For sale Cultivator for lavender planting – 3 tyne cultivator adapted from Massey Ferguson grubber, (3 point linkage mounted) is excellent for cultivating prior to planting. Has "vee" boards to scoop soil back into concentrated row to prevent widespread soil/ stones spread over future grass strip. Works well – simple to use.

\$250.00 –firm

Situated at West Eyreton – North Canterbury.

Keith Rosie

crofters@scorch.co.nz





Left: Andrew and Angela loading a steam pot.

Below: Grandson Josiah on the harvester.

We kept on trying – with that “locked in feeling”. We have three sons—three families – six grandchildren – nice close families...Surely there will be someone who wants to follow on growing lavender??

No one. Surely...someone in the family. No one. So looking forward we see empty sheds where a harvester used to dwell, empty shelves where rows of big brown bottles used to sit, empty distillery where there used to be a big boiler, big stainless steel vessels and lots of laughter and a few bee stings as friends piled mountains of lavender flowers into the steam pots. About to be empty...And slippers – yes two pairs each so we can always find at least one pair...not down and not out...just looking forward.

Keith and Sylvia Rosie.



Coatesville Lavender Hill – 2014 Harvest

Tricia Henderson
Coatesville Lavender Hill

We had a fantastic little team of Help-Xers with us for our 2014 lavender harvest which finally got under way on 25 January, after two very wet days when we could do nothing. The house got a really good clean!!!

We had Stephen and Nancy from China, Gianmarco from Italy (by way of Ireland) and our German duo: Tobi and Amelie. I've never seen United Nations working so well together, when they didn't know each other from Adam! They worked so well that we had the whole harvest picked and distilled in three days! Oh, and we also had Lorci and Charlie who travelled up from New Plymouth to help with the harvest as well – this Hungarian couple stayed with us last year for just on nine months and it was like coming home for them.

The girls were very competitive when it came to extracting the very last drop of each variety as we distilled three separate varieties – of course Grosso continued to give the best yield, then our blend of Miss Donnington, Bridestowe, and Yuulong (the three Australian varieties that we grow), and lastly the Pacific Blue Angustifolia. These were picked and processed in reverse order.

Tobi, with the longest legs and arms took control of operating the hoist (which is still manual) while Charlie showed his prowess at stomping the material down inside the basket. The distillation went like clockwork – I think we've finally got it nailed!

Next step – better get making some more soap as we've run out yet again!



Above: Lorci and Amelie getting the good oil!





Left: Alyssa the budding distiller.

Below: Gianmarco, Lorci, and Tobi sealing the still.



Above: Chef Gianmarco making the harvest dinner.

Right: The lads getting the condenser onto the still.



Leafy Hollow Garden & Lavender Nursery

This summer we have had lots of requests for fresh and dried lavender for weddings, and use of the garden for photo opportunities. There seems to be a resurgence in low cost DIY weddings with rustic appeal!

We have had to plan our harvesting so that the long stemmed cultivars such as *Lavandula x intermedia* **Super** have been left for continuous picking, **Rocky Hall Margaret** and **Grosso** for drying, *Lavandula angustifolia* **Pacific Blue** for culinary orders. Unfortunately, this hasn't left much for distillation so our oil stocks are somewhat depleted this year.

Below is a Leafy Hollow display at the local Festival of Flowers in November (the theme was 'Country Calendar') and also a Lavender Arch for a recent wedding using dried **Grosso**.

Pauline Livesey

Pauline Livesey
Leafy Hollow



Greetings from Shire Downs

Pam & Robert Tapp
Shire Downs Lavender



Shire Downs in Matamata is one of the new kids on the block when it comes to growing lavender. We were very late getting our 500 hundred grosso plants in last year - lets say it was probably September / October before the last of them were planted, therefore we never expected much of an output from them and had decided really that this year was going to simply be an experimental year and to basically let the plants find their feet and get established.

Well the lavender had other ideas for us - it has absolutely flourished and given and given. Some of my early cuttings may have been a bit early as I was a little confused about when the flower was ready, but as I got wiser, I also got selective and have chosen to only cut flowers that are ready than to cut the whole lot at one time.

We are never alone in the garden when working with the lavender. Our cat and dog love being amongst the lavender and the cat in particular can often be found chilling out amongst it.

We have not taken oil this year, but have instead dried our flowers and have had a good response to people wanting dried flowers. We now look forward to getting our distiller and producing oil next year as well as looking at other product ideas and avenues for our lavender.

Kind regards,
Pam Tapp



Pam & Robert Tapp
Shire Downs
Matamata

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0212984252

Thoughts from an Old Lavender Grower

Mike Alspatch reports on the Northern Regional Meeting

For some time now I have been wondering about the value of the regional meetings and how to put it into words and like most things if you think about them long enough the answer will present itself.

On the 23rd of this month we had a meeting at Coatsville (Tricia Henderson). Only Three members turned up, a small number for us but we all have different lives to lead. After a very nice lunch and a glass of pinot gris the discussion turned to things lavender. In amongst the more official stuff as per Peter/s minutes (or maybe seconds as they are fairly short) the talk turned to cutting lavender for rubbings.

Now I do a few rubbings myself and thought most people would be cutting the same way, you know grab a handful cut with a pair of scissors and put a rubber band around them and hang them up. Three members and four different methods. The way I do it, then those that tie with string only to find as the plant dries, it shrinks and the stems start to fall out. Then the team approach, of one person grabbing the flowers from one plant while the other person cuts them all with hedge cutters lays them down and then bands suitable size bunches to hang, this method requires a fair amount of trust. Then the last style was cutting each flower individually for an even stem length to facilitate rubbing.

Now far be from me to suggest one method is better than another, but



the fun we had and the information gained during the discussion was worth attending the meeting on its own.

So apart from the good food and official business and the networking and in the case of the Northern region the development of bulk buying and selling, there is the small matter of how to cut lavender for rubbings. Not a big issue but if not for the regional meeting one that would never have been discussed. Your regional meetings are as good or as bad as the people who attend and the range of topics discussed.

An old and sometimes grumpy lavender grower.

Mike Alspach
Our Patch Lavender



Above: Homemade rubbing machine.



Left: Dried lavender waiting to be rubbed.