

Lavender Link

Quarterly newsletter for Association members

Issue 52

Autumn 2012

Results of members' Consultation

Location for AGM 2012

Date : 25th August 2012

Options: Wellington (Brentwood Hotel as in previous alternate years)
Christchurch (venue dependent on availability)

If you were to attend the AGM which location would you prefer?

Wellington 11 Christchurch 2

Proposed Focus for Research Project

- To investigate the effect of different storage methods on the quality of lavender oil.
- Can the quality of oil be improved during storage by altering specific factors?

Executive would like your thoughts and ideas on the above proposal or any other areas that you feel worthy of investigation.
Is there anyone willing to join a research committee?

All those who responded were in favour of the proposed focus for future research. Below are excerpts from two members' responses:

"...we have been playing around with this for a number of years now and know we can change the oil but our trial and error approach is very unscientific and is using our oil which is untested. Though we are achieving some good results I believe this project has the ability to benefit members by helping them to sell their oil and our industry by helping to raise the quality of oil offered to the public." – Mike Alspach

"That sounds like a pretty good idea. Are you planning to include things like temperature it is stored at and does it degrade over time? These are things I've sometimes wondered about."
– Margaret Hamilton

Three members (Peter Jemmett, Mike Alspach, Pauline Livesey) have volunteered to form/join a sub-committee to help with this particular area of research.

Continued on page 6—results of

A Date for your Diary

AGM 2012

Brentwood Hotel, Wellington
Saturday 25th August 2012



Chairman's Chatter



I have been holding fire with this column right to the last minute in the hope that I might have something concrete to share with you about the import of the new varieties from Australia. People from both sources have not got into gear with the exporting but all the boxes have been ticked for it to happen. Robert Ravens of Bridestowe Lavender Estate is offering us every support to get his initial three varieties here with a further two to follow next year. The ones that are coming are “Bridestowe Myra”, “Bridestowe Elizabeth” and “Bridestowe Philippa”. Myra is the mainstay of their production (80%) and is the abundant producer of a very beautiful floral oil. It has been trialed at another location in Launceston producing a 1% yield at 3 years of age. Elizabeth is extremely high in linalyl acetate and is used in adjusting their final blend. Philippa is uniquely high on linalool and makes a great culinary lavender. It flowers earlier and has a very rich blue colour. Sales of the plant in Australia have been very encouraging. One of the advantages of these three clones is the fact that they are sequential in their maturing which makes it much easier for their harvesting.

Charles Sturt University is providing us with three intermedia cultivars. They are CSU 20 L. Intermedia “Grosso”, CSU 138 L. Intermedia “Riverina Thomas” and CSU 150 L. Intermedia “Riverina Alan”. Each of these cultivars has a chemical profile a little different from the originals and we are told that their yields are up. It will be very interesting to see how they perform in NZ conditions.

We have also asked Clive Larkman for some cultivars from the Riverina series that are suitable for cut flower production. Provisional PVR protection for the Bridestowe cultivars is being arranged and Kiwiflora are looking after the CSU ones.

NEW BOOK FOR THE LIBRARY

“Massage & aromatherapy” published by Reader’s Digest. It covers essentials, oils and blends, types of massage and techniques, the full body massage and specific treatments. It is put together by suitably qualified people, has a good further information section and useful index. It is profusely illustrated. Hardback 248 pages. Published 2011. It must be understood that this book is of a general nature and that further assistance may be required from professional people.



Lxint Riv A CSU139



Lxint RT CSU150

BOOK AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

The Crop and Food publication “Lavender a grower’s guide for commercial production” by J.A. McGimpsey and N.G. Porter has been purchased in bulk and is available to members for \$10 per copy posted. If you wish you can purchase in bulk and sell to the public @ \$20 per copy. This book is a fundamental document for all interested lavender growers. While it could do with revision, with new varieties now available, it is still the most comprehensive document available anywhere. I have sold numerous copies of it overseas to the US and Chile. Plant & Food are closing their bookshop.

Once harvesting is complete, Keith Brown and I will be sitting down with Noel Porter to work on the oil awards and the research project that is clearly favoured by our members. I am hoping that when you see the result of the consultation from Pauline Livesey, more people will agree to assist with the oil judging otherwise we will have to use the old way of doing it with a much higher cost to entrants.

Since visiting Australia last year I have had several emails from TALGA members indicating that in their opinion NZLGA needs to work more closely with them for our mutual benefit. Our last Wellington AGM gave support to this and both execs will need to work at ways of developing it. We are undertaking a website investigation so that we can get the best return possible for our funds.

- Russell Rofe

Hook Bush Lavender
hookbush@maxnet.co.nz

From the Editor

Hello everyone,

Many thanks to all of you who submitted something for this edition. I've been interested to read about how the season has gone for you and to learn a little about how harvesting works. The weather this season has certainly been one of those tricky unpredictable factors.

Down in Franz Josef we had a stunningly sunny New Years, followed by some of the more usual rainy weather that seemed all the colder for the heat that had just preceded it. The weather on the Coast is always up and down, but I understand that compared to previous years it was quite a fine and dry summer.

I've now left Franz Josef, and am in the process of reestablishing life for myself...in Wellington. It will be nice to be somewhere a little easier to travel out from, and hopefully I'll get to visit some of you sometime soon!

The testing of oils, and the possibility of changing them for the better is an interesting research and discussion point raised in this edition, and I look forward to learning more about this in future.

I'm also looking forward to trying your recipes!
Thank you for sharing those.

As I don't have a permanent address yet, the contact details I've included below are my parent's.

Cindy Jemmett

38 Hiwihau Place
Glenfield
Auckland

09 444-2962
c.jemmett@xtra.co.nz



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

Rates for Non-Members:

Full page - \$101.00
Half page - \$62.00
1/4 page - \$39.00
1/8 page - \$28.00

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:

Cindy Jemmett
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



A very warm welcome to our new member

Tracey Chapman from Timaru

tschapman@farmside.co.nz

Waiuku Harvest

What a strange season this has been for all of us!

Up here in Waiuku we have rarely managed more than two consecutive dry, sunny days throughout the whole of spring and summer. The angustifolia was harvested, in desperation, when it was past its best and as a result the quantity and quality of the oil is way down on previous years. Some growers just gave up on their Pacific Blue.

The intermedia produced abundant flowers but, once again, harvesting was a hit and miss affair. We managed to distil 2.6 litres of lovely Grosso oil from 80kg of flowers for one of our customers. Another customer abandoned her Super part way through cutting as the heavens opened and drenched the lot – no oil this year.

Looking on the bright side, the fruit trees and veggie garden have loved the warm, wet weather producing far more than we have ever had in previous summers.

Members' Consultation

Thank you to those who responded to the consultation document, sent out at the beginning of January. Executive are working hard to meet your needs but it is helpful to know what your expectations are. The results are published in this edition of the Lavender Link and will be acted upon during the course of the year

Lavender Water

The lavender water query is still 'live' although the initial quantity is much reduced.

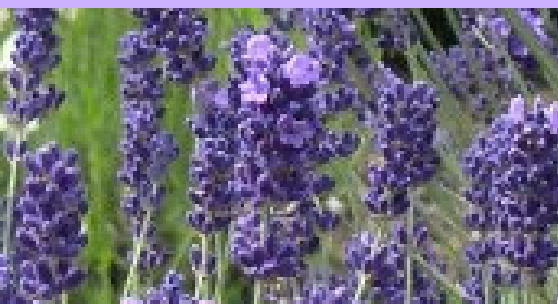
Our potential customer is keen to test the market with a pure NZ product and would like to purchase 1000 litres of distilled lavender water (distillate) this year. He has agreed to pay container and carriage costs but, as he is located near Auckland, he would prefer to purchase from grower/s on the North Island. He is currently in negotiations with a member who has 1000 litres available for purchase. If his plan succeeds he intends to purchase greater quantities in the future, preferably from NZ, which would be of benefit to our members.

Conference 2013

The Northern Region will be meeting on the 4th March to discuss ideas and venue for the next conference. We will keep you posted.

By now you should all have received your 2012 username and password which allows you access to the Members' Section of the website (www.lavender.org.nz). Let me know if you experience any problems logging on.

Pauline Livesey (Secretary)



Results of Members' Consultation

...Continued from page 1

Oil Awards

Executive aim to hold the Oil Awards during 2012.

Initial ideas to progress with the Awards require a minimum of 9 judges split between 3 areas (3 judges per area) - Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch. Members send a 5ml sample to each set of judges. The results would then be collated. A training weekend will be planned for judges and potential judges, probably in the Christchurch area. At present the nucleus of the new Awards Committee comprises Russell Rofo, Keith Brown, Dr. Noel Porter.

Executive would like to hear your thoughts and ideas on the above proposal. Those who responded were positive about the proposal.

Are there any existing, trained judges willing to offer their services in 2012? Four existing trained judges volunteered their services; two from the North and two from the South. There were no volunteers from the lower North ie. Wellington area.

Are there any members, or do you know of anyone, who may be interested in training to be an oil judge?

One member, from the upper North, volunteered to train as a novice judge.

Is anyone interested in joining the Oil Awards Committee to help move these ideas forward?

No volunteers.

Website Coordinator needed

NEW ZEALAND LAVENDER GROWERS ASSOCIATION INC.

Job Description for Website Co-ordinator

2012 / 2013

Overview

To develop, regularly update and maintain the website in liaison with the Executive Committee.

Specific tasks for 2012

Maintain the website, making changes as new material becomes available or when requested to do so by the Executive.

Within the Members Area publish the Lavender Link, downloadable as a pdf.

Maintain the interactive New Zealand map defining a lavender trail to identify the whereabouts of NZLGA members who choose to be included. From the map create links to the Members' List to include name, link to own website, associated businesses e.g. bed and breakfast. Create a dedicated information page for members who opt to pay for this service.

Create an on-line order form for borrowing books from the Library

Create an interactive blog page for the use of members .

Although it is recognised that much of the above will be done on a voluntary basis the role will attract a modest honorarium . The level will be dependent on the amount of outside support required.

If you would like to play an important part in moving our Association forward and feel this is an area suited to your skills and interests please send a short letter / email outlining your relevant skills and experience to :

Pauline Livesey, NZLGA secretary, 66 Duff Road, RD2, Waiuku, 2682

Or leafyhollow@yahoo.co.nz by 14th March 2012

Annual Analyses of Lavender Oil Samples

I hope you have all managed to deal with the vagaries of the current “summer”. It has certainly been a challenging season. It will be interesting to see how the oils have turned out. There are two important matters to do with the annual analyses that I have to bring you all up to date on.

Those of you who sent oils in for analysis last year would have been a bit puzzled by my comments regarding the levels of cineole and limonene in your samples. I apologise for leaving this unexplained for so long but it has taken me considerable time to re-analyse samples and interpret the results to understand the problem. You will be relieved to know that it has not been a real change in plant or oil chemistry, so your oil compositions will be similar to your past samples. The problem turned out to be a change in the analytical equipment which selectively and drastically reduced the levels of cineole but not the other components.

The solution is to replace a component of the gas chromatograph, which is a simple technical job. My problem is that it is rather expensive - several hundred dollars. This cost has to be covered solely by the charge for analyses of lavender oils over the next few years. An increase over the current cost of \$5 per sample over the next 3-4 years would probably be sufficient, provided the demand for analyses stays at around 40 per year. I am happy to make the replacement and continue generating the reports you have had in the past if I can see a continuing demand and income over the next 3-4 years to cover this extra cost.

Other than the Association covering the cost of the replacement, the alternative solution to maintaining the evaluation of samples is to send the samples to a laboratory that will run them as part of their commercial service, and send me the results so that I can continue to generate the reports. I would expect the cost to be higher than the current cost.

You will all know my focus on oil quality, so it won't surprise you if I say that not analyzing oils is an option that the NZ lavender industry can't afford if you want to maintain an acceptable level of oil quality. I hope that you will all send in oils for analysis to maintain the interest in oil quality and the demand for analytical quality.

To help me decide if the cost is affordable and so determine the future of the analytical service, it is essential I get an estimate of the likely demand for analyses. I would be grateful if you would please let me know by email how many samples you expect to send in over the next say 4 years? Thank you.

Noel Porter

the.porters@clear.net.nz

Thoughts from an Old Lavender Grower

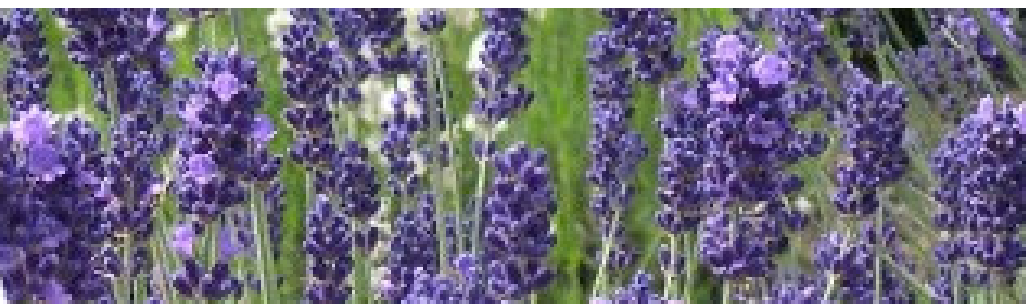
I have been growing lavender for 12 years now and have been a member of the association for as long. When my wife and I started we read books and talked to all sorts of people, some still growing, some retired and some dead now but they all had ideas worth listening to and any action taken was up to us. Most held the view that once distilled oil should be stored in dark bottles full to the brim to exclude all air and that any water should have been removed by any means available. Bottles so filled should then be stored out of the direct sunlight and in a cool place for anything from 6 months to 2 years. Oil thus treated would turn into whatever we thought of as good oil. Once a bottle was opened and some removed for use the rest should be decanted into smaller bottles and treated as above.

Because we decided to build our own still and to try to keep colour on our paddocks for as long as possible to attract customers we did several small distillings and so had some variety of oil. We also brought in oil if we ran out. Noel Porter once told me that if my oil smelt good to me then go ahead and use it. So when a bottle was finished we would sniff all our oils and pick the one that smelt right for the use we had in mind. We have developed a system of grading our oils 1, 2 or 3 with 1 being the best and bottled for sale as pure oil, and 3 being used in soap making.

On one occasion I forgot to put the lid back on a grade 3 bottle which was about half full. It was some weeks before I found this bottle again and the oil was markedly improved. That got me thinking and so I have been playing with my poorer oils to the point of leaving a bottle half full and shaking it every 2 or 3 days all with good results. So far this has been very unscientific as no base measurement has been taken nor a new measurement after treatment. The only test has been our noses but as Marion is one of the oil judges I think we are on the right track.

The purpose of sharing my thoughts is to encourage members to experiment with their poorer oils, not to get locked into the way it has always been done. Go through your oils every two months or so and see if you have any that you would like to change, then try and change them. After all what have you got to lose and there is lots to gain. Probably if you keep better notes than I have done we can all benefit.

Cheers Mike
Our Patch Lavender



Pure Essential Lavender Oil—It's so versatile

What is pure essential oil? It is the 'life blood' or true essence of the plant.

Pure essential lavender oil is indispensable in the home as it is one of the few essential oils that can be used 'neat' on the skin of young children to elderly people without harming.

Pure essential lavender oil is antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, decongestive, relaxing, calming, soothing, balancing, skin-healing and is an insecticide.

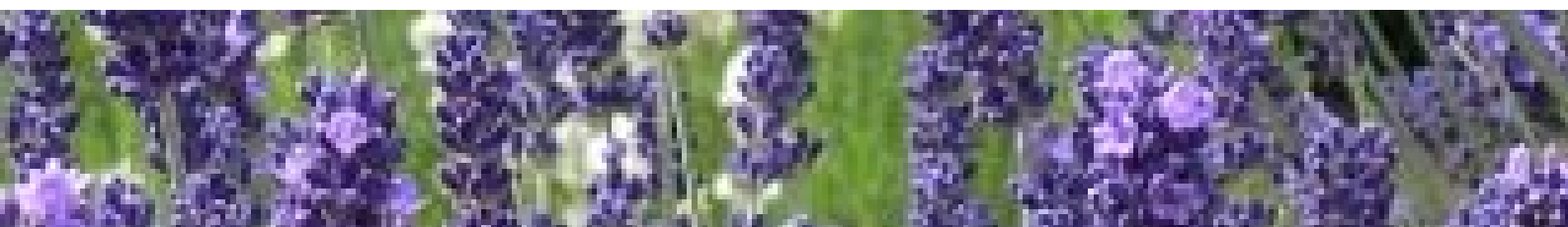
How To Use:

- In baby's bath: just 1 drop in as much milk as you would have in a cup of tea, to cleanse and moisturise. No soap or shampoo needed. Helps to clear any dry skin conditions.
- To soothe and relax fretful babies, put 1 drop in a bowl of hot water directly under the cot.
- For a relaxing up-lifting aroma, put 3 or 4 drops in a tsp of water in a burner. Great in the sick room too as a bacteria-buster.
- Apply 'neat' on kitchen burns after the cold water treatment to kill bacteria, to deal with inflammation and to induce rapid healing of tissue.
- Apply 'neat' on cuts, grazes and insect bites. Suitable for children too and does not sting. Deals to bacteria and swelling.
- Inhalation – place a few drops on a tissue and breathe in deeply to help clear blocked nasal passages.
- As a decongestant – 3 or 4 drops in a bowl of hot water with a towel placed over your head – inhale deeply and breathe down into your chest.
- As possible protection to ward off germs during air travel: place a few drops on a tissue and inhale.
- To induce a decent night's sleep: place 1 drop on each top corner of your pillow.
- To unwind after a day at work – Put 5 to 6 drops in the bath and let your mind wander.
- Take a small bottle of lavender with you on overseas travel to deal with any of the above situations that may arise.
- Headaches – 1 drop placed on each temple.

There are many, many more uses of this wonderful oil. When combined with other essential oils, lavender lends its healing qualities to many other conditions.

We at Lake Road Lavender in Wairoa, Northern Hawkes Bay NZ, are very proud of our high quality oil and would like you, our customers, to know that our product is free of artificial sprays and fertilisers.

By Fran Proffit of Lake Road Lavender.
Contact me at
www.lakeroadlavender.com
or ph 06 838 8709

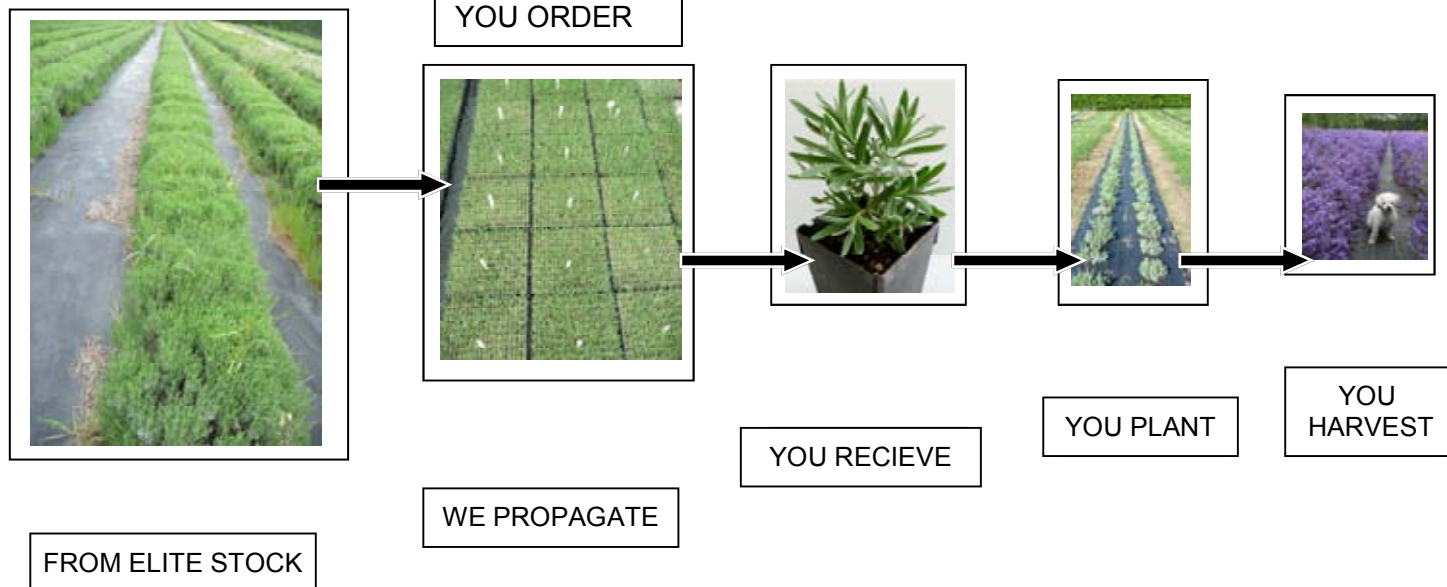




PLANT PRODUCTION LTD PRESENTS



Lavandula AVICE HILL.



New Zealand raised. *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Avic Hill' is protected by Plant Variety Rights/Plant Breeder's Rights and can only be sourced through **Plant Production Ltd**

'Avic Hill' produces a completely different essential oil from any other Lavender, unique and proving extremely popular, performing particularly well in New Zealand growing conditions. Can be used for culinary purposes as well as the obvious fragrant market which includes aromatherapy and cosmetic products. Proven to be an exceptional oil in Europe. Proven a prolific flowerer in ideal lavender growing conditions. Stripped flowers are amazing for dried products.

However demand is far exceeding production at the present time and it will be some time before enough oil is produced to satisfy the consumer. Hence the demand for planting stock.

Plant Production Ltd have been appointed master propagation agent for NZ. We are endeavouring to help meet the demand for this outstanding Lavender.

We are taking forward orders with a limited supply for late Autumn /Spring 2012. Accepting forward orders for Autumn /Spring 2013. When we will be in **full production**.

To contact us with your order or enquiry please Phone Paul on 06 8449679 xt 1 or email Paul at paule@plantproduction.co.nz or write to P. O. Box 5156 Greenmeadows Napier. 4145.

Lavender Creek Farm Harvest and Distillation Weekend



Lavender Creek Farm Harvest and Distillation weekend 14th /15th January 2012.

Epilepsy awareness weekend.

For the last 5 years Lavender Creek Farm has opened its gates for the second weekend in January to demonstrate harvesting and distillation, seeking donations for the Epilepsy Foundation.

We are a working lavender farm 50 minutes north of Wellington, normally open to the public. In the season we offer fields of blue rimmed by green grapevines, olive trees, and gardens with views to Kapiti Island and stunning Tuscan architecture.

On these open days refreshments are available (tea, coffee and cakes) which are sold, all proceeds to Epilepsy.

We are joined by the Kapiti Coast Water Colour Artists and the Kapiti Herb society. This year Charlie and Jill from Alembics Craft Distillation set up a stall and regaled people with tales of distilling everything from herbs to Pastis (highly alcoholic) to much applause.

We cut and distilled twenty loads of Pacific Blue to the wonder and amazement of the visiting public, in the process demonstrating the Japanese tea harvester mounted on a bicycle wheel frame for us by Merv of Jenquip, Feilding.

The total number of visitors over the weekend was 1600 and the donations totalled \$2500. Many thanks to the twenty volunteers, family and good friends who made this event possible

Epilepsy sells kites and are on site to give support and information

Enclosed are photos from the drawing and photo competition.

Susi and Vaughan White



Lavender Creek Farm Harvest and Distillation Weekend



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Propagation Professionals & Horticultural Transport Specialists

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ornamental and oil producing varieties

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Coatesville Lavender Hill

From us at Coatesville Lavender Hill:



“The lavender harvest is finally finished, having kept the Grosso as long as possible in the hope of at least one more Chinese pre-wedding photo shoot.

We have had at least 30 this season, and it has been more worthwhile keep the lavender harvest until the last possible moment to continue the photo shoots.

It’s a trade-off!

But now it is all in – the Pacific Blue yielded only 550 mls of oil; the blend of Yuulong, Bridestowe and Miss Donnington, along with a few Super and 7-Oaks yielded 900mls; the final Grosso count came to about 2.5 litres.

When weighed against the revenue from the photo shoots and farm visits, plus some revenue from shop sales of the mighty “Kaikoura soap recipe”, lavender oils, spritzers, olive oil, Limoncello and other various bits and pieces, it was worth losing a few litres of lavender oil. However, we are now down some four litres of oil for our soap-making and other product programmes.

The next Northern Regional NZLGA meeting is here at Coatesville, noon, on Saturday, 03 March. I have a wedding to go to at 3:30pm, so, it will be a short one!

I hope you have all had a great lavender season. Ours was late in, and early out – something to do with inclement weather patterns! Makes things very unpredictable!”

Best regards
Tricia Henderson

www.lavenderhill.co.nz



A Couple More Pictures from Coatesville Lavender Hill



Leafy Hollow

GARDEN AND LAVENDER NURSERY

www.lavendergarden.co.nz

Looking for something different?
Been searching for a specific cultivar?



We hold over 250 varieties of Lavender
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Contact us for a catalogue or advice.

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Plants are mailed throughout New Zealand.

From the Kaikoura Lavender Farm

Summer comes to an end, we still harvest and distill oil.

Kaikoura had a very wet season, we could not make the English Lavender oil. One day sunshine next day rain or more rain.

We have never been so busy with the shop and B&B.
It started in November with the world rugby, also never seen so many Asian people coming to our farm (and they buy very well!)

Three weddings we had in the beautiful gardens and one of them was very special.....

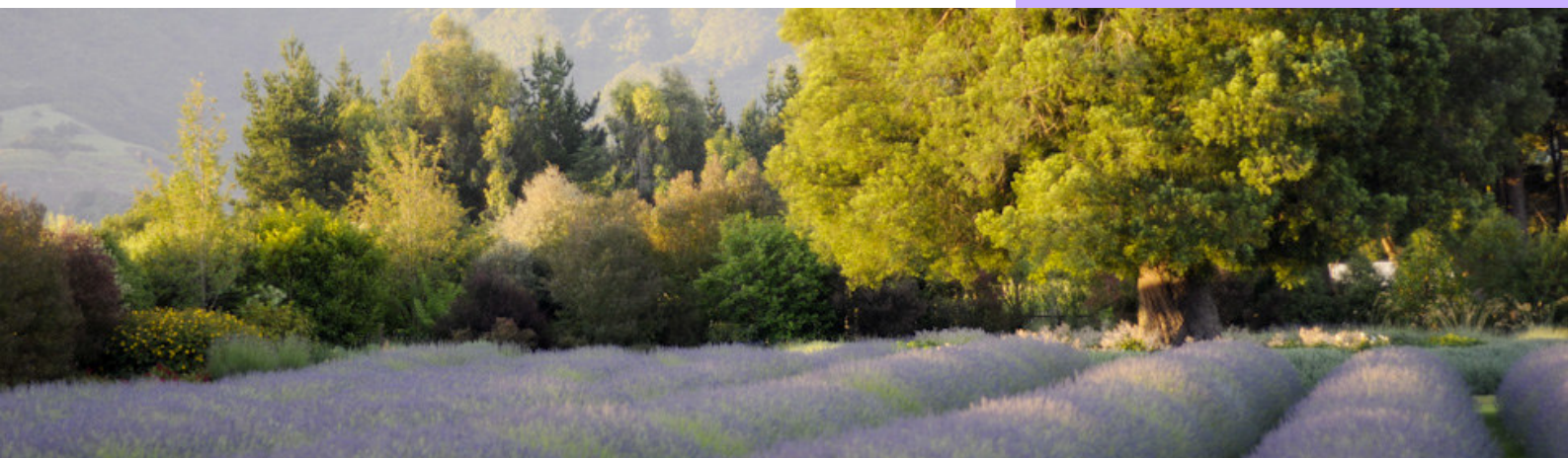
The All Black Colin Slade married his sweetheart Emma.
They sold their story to New Idea magazine. (January 23)
After this we got four more bookings for 2013.

For the Soap makers

I bought some new moulds, they are made from silicon, small,,
ferns/rugby balls/sheep/Maori faces.

Sells like cookies (in good home/ cook shop \$16.00)
In The Warehouse I bought a rose/flower mould, great for my rose/
lavender soaps with some sprigs of Lavender and rose petals.

*Over the page, more from Corry & Jan at Lavendyll Farm—a delicious
Apricot / Lavender Cake recipe...*



Apricot / Lavender Cake

For the bakers a new recipe I made with my apricots (I had about 70 kg from my old trees)
Apricot/Lavender cake, (from Holland)

Dough

- 275 self rising flour
- 200gram butter
- 100 gram sugar
- 20 gram ground almond
- 500 gram apricots (no pits and take skin of)

Preheat oven 180 degrees

Mix self rising flour, sugar and ground almonds.
Cut the butter in small pieces through the flour mix.
Knead the dough

Grease a cake pan (26 cm) and line it with the dough.
Cut the apricots in half and lay on the bottom

Bake for 30 minutes.

Filling

- 3 eggs separate
- 30 gram self rising flour
- 100 gram butter
- 100 gram cream cheese
- 100 gram castor sugar
- rind of a lemon
- 3 Tbsp lavender flowers
- Melt butter
- Beat egg yolk with castor sugar
- Add self rising flour, cream cheese, rind of lemon and lavender flowers and mix well
- Beat the egg whites stiff and fold into the egg mixture and fold also the melted butter.
- After 30 minutes, take the cake out of the oven, fill it with the filling and return to the oven for at least 30 minutes

When it is not cooked in the middle leave a little longer cover with foil otherwise you will burn your cake.

Eet smakelijk..... bon appetite enjoy.
(Try other fruit as well, what is in season)
Corry and Jan Zeestraten

Lavendyl Farm
Dylans Country Cottages

www.lavenderfarm.co.nz
Email: info@lavenderfarm.co.nz
+64 (0)3 3195473



Lavender Lemonade

Makes 1.5 litres, store in fridge and drink within a day or two.

15g (1/2oz) lavender heads (I used hidcote)
500mls boiling water
150g (5 1/2oz) sugar
1.2L (2 pints) cold water
5 ripe lemons

Shake the lavender gently to remove any insects

Put the flower heads into a saucepan and pour the boiling water over them.

Bring to the boil again and simmer for a minute or two

Turn off the heat and allow to seep for 10 minutes.

Strain

Add sugar and stir to dissolve.

Add the cold water

Squeeze the lemons directly (through a tea strainer) into the pan, it should turn a lovely pink

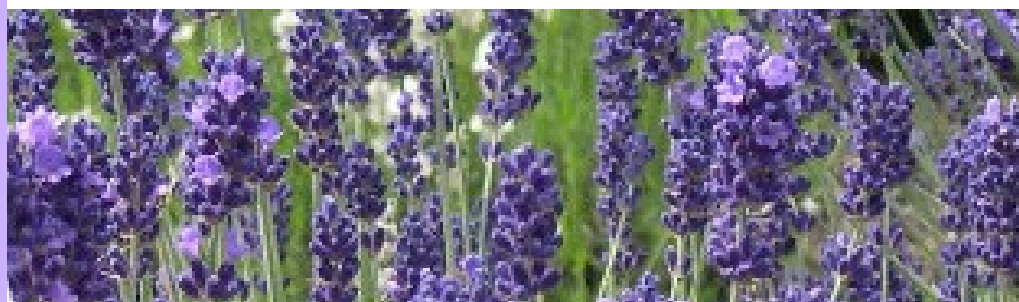
Taste to see how concentrated the flavour is – when serving add more water to dilute if wanted, we dilute with ice.

My girls and I love this with our dinner and over the weekend.

Enjoy

Sarah Richter

(richter.packer@gmail.com)



Plant Profile



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



Lavandula x intermedia 'Julienne Blue' (of French origin)

Height	A compact bushy plant. Can grow to 80 cm when in flower.
Stem (peduncle)	Upright and elegant reaching up to 50cm in height.
Flower (spike)	5.5 - 7.5cm. slender pyramid shape. Calyx very dark purple. Corolla dark violet. This is the darkest Lavandin in the garden.
Aroma	Flowery and gentle.
Flowering period	Late December to end of February in the Auckland area.
Uses	An attractive feature/ornamental plant. Good for cut flowers and for dried rubbings.

Pauline Livesey

A Summer Without Veronica



Last summer we were indeed blest to have Veronica Ehijos from Coihaique in southern Chile with us. She came to learn about growing lavender for a mid-life career change. Being university educated in agriculture she fitted in well through weeding, harvesting, distilling, propagation, product manufacture and business planning. Back home it was hard to find correctly labeled plant material. After much searching she found 1500 Super from a nursery near Santiago, about 1600 kms away for the princely sum of about NZ\$1.00 each. They travelled well and in July last year she managed to persuade her cattle farming dad and his men to assist her to get them into the ground.

Up until summer the plants did well but in the December-January period hot dry winds put them under intense pressure so she harvested them for drying. This climatic variation was a spike not known in the area before so current plans are to install emitters before next season. The photos give views of planting and harvesting flowers with her niece, Jacinta.

This season we were all prepared to receive a couple from Ireland for a similar work/learning experience, but by Christmas eve we were informed that their school trustees had refused permission for time out from teaching because of the recession. We have been advertising on HelpX.net but the young people who offered from Japan, France and China were not really suitable and only wanted to stay for a few days.

Our angustifolia harvest went well but with many days of damp conditions it has been a totally different story with the lavandins. Yields have been lower and there is a question mark over quality. At different points we have involved prospective members so that they can see what it is like to run lavender.

So we have fallen back on to finding more efficient ways of working, keeping our harvesting equipment sharp and sterilized. We have a Jenquip HT-Tom harvester and have now had three seasons of experience with it and have been working hard at trying to get round the limitations with the use of it. The design of the machine for cutting height leaves a lot to be desired. The manufacturer has just released a new version of the machine. I will be calling into the factory in Feilding in a few weeks to study what improvements have been made. I think a larger, more robust, drawn or self-propelled machine would be a better buy possibly shared by several growers. A lot of this stuff can be shared to advantage when we have a blog page up and running. Those who have big dreams for their lavender need to think very differently and more robustly about harvesting and distilling equipment. Currently I am looking at using steam from the Energy for Industry steam farm at Washdyke, Timaru, to distill oil from flower in containers fixed on a light truck. This could be a great assistance to larger growers because it would eliminate the capital cost of on-site boilers and their maintenance.

- Russell Rofe

Hook Bush Lavender



Jan and Stuart Abernethy's lavender farm, as featured in the 'Wairarapa Times Age'

Romp in lavender field a bunch of fun

By Amie Hickland

A Field of lavender in rural Carterton was enjoyed by many families on Sunday, as part the Pick Your Own Lavender day.

Jan and Stuart Abernethy, of Lavender Abbey, ran the day from their property for the second year running.

Mrs. Abernethy said people seemed "pretty keen" on the idea, and they had a steady crowd from 10am.

"It's pretty amazing how many people we get. They come over from Wellington, Lower Hutt and all over the place," she said.

"we've had families come through and stay for a couple of hours and have a picnic."

The lavender was already growing on the property when the couple took over five years ago, and

they decided last year to open the field to the public.

"It just seemed like such a waste not to do anything with it," she said.

The couple have even developed a green thumb and have started making lavender soap, hand cream, lip balm, sachets of dry lavender, and oils to sell.

"We didn't know anything about it so it's been a big learning curve," she said.

"It's more of a hobby— we both work full time."

She said picking lavender is "something different to do" on a Sunday afternoon.

"I think they just enjoy picking their own bunch because there's no where around here they can do that," she said. "Most people just love the smell and want to spend some time."



GREEN FINGERS: Martinborough's Olivia Guscott, 5, shows some of the lavender she picked.

PHOTOS/AMIE HICKLAND



CRAFTY: Jan and Stuart Abernethy, of Lavender Abbey, show some of their products at the Pick Your Own Lavender Day.



LUSH: The field at Lavender Abbey, on Pick Your Own Lavender Day on Sunday, in Carterton.