

THE AUSTRALIAN LAVENDER GROWERS ASSOCIATION



IMAGE: "PINELEA LAVENDER" AT MT OUSLEY IN NSW

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone,

I hope you're all keeping warm and that winter has been treating you and your farms kindly. With our ENews now arriving quarterly, every edition is packed with news worth sharing. I especially enjoy reading your farm updates, bringing you the latest industry information, and letting you know what TALGA has planned. Thank you to Editor Karen McRae for her hard work pulling this all together, I think you will find this one a great read!

- President's Message
- AGM & Seminar Day
- Nominations for Committee & ALRs
- Member Harvest Survey
- Member Farms updates
- AICIS Registration
- Distilling Tips
- Preparing for a Dry Season

Editor's note:

In this issue we remember and honour Wendy Fuller, whose photo features on the front page (with more photos and a tribute on pg.16).

You'll also find updates on our upcoming AGM & Seminar Day, member farm news, distilling tips, and advice on preparing for a dry season ahead.

We hope you enjoy this edition. If you'd like to share an update from your farm or be featured in a future newsletter, we'd love to hear from you.

Karen | **Editor**
news@talga.com.au

The committee is pleased to announce plans are now finalised for our AGM & Seminar Day on Friday 9 October in Albury, and registrations are now open (more details and booking link published in this edition). We've put together a relaxed and informative day beginning with our AGM, then two practical seminar sessions designed to benefit new and experienced growers. Most importantly, this in-person event gives us the chance to catch up with old friends and connect with new members. I hope many of you can join us!

Nominations are also now open for Committee positions and Area Liaison Representatives. If you've ever thought about getting a little more involved, we'd love to hear from you. Every contribution, big or small, helps make our Association stronger.

I encourage you also to take a look at the report on our Harvest Survey 2025/26. I have an ambition that in the future TALGA will be able to provide invaluable information about cultivar suitability, changing market trends, benchmark best practices and support our growers with advice based on actual data. It will also further strengthen our role as the trusted voice of Australia's lavender industry.

Welcome to new members who have joined our community in recent months: Monique Delaney CWVIC; Karine Dubois SNSW.

Finally, on a sad note, many of you will have heard of the passing of Wendy Fuller since our last ENews. Wendy was a wonderful supporter of TALGA and a dear friend to many of us. We've included a tribute to her in this edition, and I hope you'll take a moment to remember her.

As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas as the Committee continues to shape TALGA's activities and goals for 2026 and 2027, contact me via email or to our Secretary Moira Bailey E: secretary@talga.com.au. I look forward to catching up with many of you in Albury in October. Louise Bickerton | President | president@talga.com.au



TALGA AGM & SEMINAR DAY 2026

Friday 9th October 2026
9:00am – 3:30pm
*Best Western Plus Hovell Tree Inn,
614 Hovell Street, **ALBURY NSW** 2640*

\$40
per person

*Read more
on the next
page*



TALGA AGM & SEMINAR DAY 2026

– Everyone is welcome! Delegate bookings are now open!

Come along and join us for a great day of catching up with fellow members, sharing ideas and learning something new. Whether you've been growing lavender for years or are just getting started, we've planned two practical and enjoyable seminar sessions that we think everyone will get something out of.



- WHEN? Friday **9th October 2026**
- WHAT TIME? **9:00am – 3:30pm**
- WHERE? **Best Western Plus Hovell Tree Inn**, 614 Hovell Street, **ALBURY NSW 2640**
- COST? **\$40 per person**, includes morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, 2 seminar sessions.
- HOW TO BOOK: [CLICK HERE TO GO TO BOOKING SITE \(TRYBOOKING WEBSITE PAGE\)](#)
- WHERE TO STAY? The hotel is offering delegate rooms from **\$179 per night**. To book, simply phone **(02) 6042 3900**.
- WHAT'S HAPPENING?

9.00 am: Registration and catch up with fellow delegates

9.30 am – 11.00 am: TALGA Annual General Meeting – Find out what's been happening over the past year, have your say on the future of TALGA and hear what's planned for the year ahead.

11.45 am – 12.45 pm: Seminar 1 – What Can AI Do for You? Presented by Pascal Jallier – Artificial Intelligence seems to be everywhere—but how can it actually help lavender growers? Pascal will discuss practical ways AI can save time, generate ideas and make running your business a little easier.

1.45 pm – 3.30 pm: Seminar 2 – What Does It Really Cost to Establish a Lavender Farm?

Facilitated by Louise Bickerton and TALGA Committee This will be a fun, interactive workshop where everyone is encouraged to join the discussion.

Together we'll build a practical guide to the real costs of establishing a lavender farm—from the obvious expenses through to the hidden costs that often catch people by surprise. The aim isn't to come up with one set of figures, but to pool our knowledge and experience to document the major cost categories and create a valuable resource for both new and established growers.

➤ WHY COME ALONG?

- Catch up with old friends and meet new members.
- Pick up practical ideas you can use on your own farm.
- Share your experience and learn from others.
- Help shape the future direction of TALGA.

We'd love to see as many members as possible in Albury. Bring your ideas, your questions and your experience - it's sure to be a worthwhile day!

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR COMMITTEE & ALR POSITIONS

As we approach our Annual General Meeting, I'd like to encourage you to consider nominating for a Committee or AREA LIASON REPRESENTATIVE (ALR) position or volunteering to help with one of the many jobs that keep TALGA running.

Every contribution, big or small, helps strengthen our Association and benefits all.

You don't need previous committee experience, just a willingness to lend a hand.

Whether you can help with events, communications, projects or behind-the-scenes tasks, you'll be joining our friendly team and your contribution will be genuinely appreciated.

TALGA belongs to all of us, and its future depends on members who are prepared to become involved in whatever way you can.

Fresh ideas, new energy and willing hands are always welcome! If you'd like to play a part in shaping the future of Australia's lavender industry, we'd love to hear from you.

Please see the **Nomination Form attached** to this ENews and/or contact Fiona at admin@talga.com.au or Louise at president@talga.com.au for more information.

TALGA MEMBER HARVEST SURVEY 2025/2026 REPORT

The concept

In May 2026 TALGA asked our members to contribute their harvest data to our Harvest Survey 2025/26 with the aim of building a national picture of the cultivars, production systems and products that make up Australia's commercial lavender industry.

The response

We received responses from eleven grower members. Short of saying this was a disappointing outcome, the positive is that we have now established a framework for building Australia's first national lavender production database. The responses submitted demonstrate the richness of information that can be collected and the value it can provide to growers, researchers and the industry as a whole.

Why this matters

TALGA has historically relied on individual experience and anecdotal knowledge to make guesses about the size and state of our national lavender industry. This is a quote from the Agrifutures RD&E Plan 2023-208, which highlights the fundamental lack of data about our industry:

"There is a lack of information at all levels for the lavender industry.... This step change for the industry includes the need to clearly define the varieties to provide producers with knowledge of what they are growing, and to enable selection of the correct variety for their local environment. The dearth of information with respect to agronomy, irrespective of what can be achieved at other levels, must be resolved if the industry is to grow and survive beyond being largely cottage-based with a few large enterprises."

Our commitment

Although the response rate for this survey is too small to draw statistically reliable industry conclusions, it has proven that meaningful information can be collected.

We will ask you again next year to participate.

Imagine the power of the report if 50 or 100 growers respond? TALGA could identify the best-performing cultivars for different climates, benchmark production, understand market trends and provide reliable guidance for existing and prospective growers.

SURVEY SUMMARY

Number of responses: 11

States represented

- Victoria – 5
- New South Wales – 2
- South Australia – 3
- Tasmania – 1

What We Can Say With Confidence

Even with only eleven responses, the survey demonstrates that:

- ✓ Australian lavender businesses are highly diverse.
- ✓ Growers use many different cultivars for different commercial purposes.
- ✓ Value-added manufacturing is widespread.
- ✓ Direct retail remains an important income stream.
- ✓ There is considerable variation in business size and production systems.

What We Cannot Yet Say

The current survey cannot reliably determine:

- Australia's most popular lavender cultivars.
- Which cultivars produce the highest essential oil yields.
- Which cultivars perform best in different climatic regions.
- Which cultivars are most profitable.
- National production volumes.
- Industry benchmarking figures.



These questions require significantly higher participation.

Looking Ahead

Although only eleven growers participated, this inaugural survey demonstrates the considerable value of collecting industry data. Each response contributed unique information about cultivar selection, production methods, distillation practices and marketing approaches.

If future surveys achieved participation from 50 to 100 commercial growers, TALGA would be able to produce evidence-based reports that answer many of the industry's most frequently asked questions, including regional cultivar performance, production benchmarks and emerging market trends.

Rather than viewing this first survey as a disappointment, it should be recognised as the foundation of a long-term national dataset. The information gathered already illustrates the diversity and innovation within the Australian lavender industry and provides a strong platform on which future annual surveys can build.

Thank you to those members who participated in this survey, I look forward to hearing from many more next year!

Louise Bickerton | President
on behalf of TALGA Committee

AICIS REGISTRATION REMINDER

I recently received my 2026 registration email and thought it was worth reminding any members who distill their lavender for essential oil and sell that oil in any form then they are legally obliged to register with the Australian Industrial Chemicals Introduction Scheme (AICIS).

I understand this classification of lavender essential oil as an 'industrial chemical' is incomprehensible and controversial and that the payment is essentially a tax on our horticultural products.

However, it is an Australian Government requirement that we cannot change so I encourage all TALGA members who make essential oil or import their oil directly from overseas suppliers to comply.

All the information you need is to be found on their website registration hub:

<https://www.industrialchemicals.gov.au/business/registration-hub>

- Louise Bickerton, TALGA President, August 2026

TALGA MEMBER FARMS UPDATES

KATHY ROUSSOS | VIC

I would also love to share a little update on our lavender farm project which you may want to include in your newsletter. In May, we planted approximately 3,000 lavender plants on our property in Victoria's High Country.

With the support and advice from Larkman Nurseries, we planted a number of varieties including Pacific Blue, Bee, Asa Blue, Margaret Rocky Hill, Grosso and Riverina Allan, predominantly with the intention of future oil distillation.



We have also installed two 22,000-litre water tanks and, fortunately, it has been a relatively wet season so far, which has helped establish the young plants well.

As complete beginners, we are always looking for ideas,- Tony 0419830804 guidance and support from those with experience in the industry, so any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

We are also documenting the journey on Instagram at Lavernard High Country. Thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from you especially if anyone has some advice on weed control between the rows and the best way to manage this.



FIONA GLOVER | BALLARAT | CENTRAL WEST VICTORIA (AREA ROUND UP)

Rain, rain and more to come. Seems like Winter does not want to leave us in Central Victoria. Our new member growers are feeling frustrated with not being able to plant their lavenders as the ground is too wet to work on. After such a dry Autumn it seems awful to complain of too much rain!

News from Kate Aley who is not missing a beat down at Narrawong Lavender, Portland.

Kate writes "Busy catching up on other tasks while the lavender is asleep. Firewood, fences, doing things with llamas... you know.

Kate took a month in southern WA and got to see a few interesting lavender- based businesses, while admiring the extraordinary amount of *L. dentata candicans* growing abundantly absolutely everywhere.

Pruning the L.x int.'Miss Donnington' is top of the to-do list for August, plus adding home-grown organic fertilizer (llama poops) to the rows and hoping the El Nino won't smite us too hard this summer.

Thinking of the wild birds. Hope everyone is well. NLx "

Our sympathy and hearts go out to Josh Ruff who after a huge setback in his health these last few months has decided not to renew his membership at the present time. Members so appreciated seeing his property Henle Gardens, Maldon as part of

TALGA's 30th Conference last October. We will still follow you on fb Josh, whenever you feel like posting and may you enjoy many days in your delightful garden as we draw closer to Spring and leave the bleakness of Winter behind.

You've been on an amazing journey since you joined TALGA in 2021 and left a lasting impression on all of us who have met you. Bravo!

Our dear life member Dawn Baudinette also suffered a big setback in her health this year after having a bad fall in her garden. Now Dawn has successfully completed reconstruction surgery at the Epworth Hospital, Geelong on her right shoulder and arm and has returned home to convalesce quietly – driving her car is out of the question for a few weeks yet. We wish you a steady return to full mobility and health Dawn – our thoughts are with you.

Kaye Kelly (Tower Hill Lavender) is President of the St Leonards Garden Club and is busy preparing for their Open Gardens event on Saturday 31st October. See separate flyer in this newsletter. All are welcome.

So bring on Spring I say and having just applied lime and blood & bone to my lavenders at Newlyn, I can hardly wait to see the new growth appear when the days become brighter! Spring will be a busy time for all of us this year.



GLENVALLEY LAVENDER FARM & TWOFRIDAS PAINT N' SIP

Enjoy having an afternoon glass of wine and afternoon tea whilst learning to paint with our artist Danielle.

SATURDAY 12TH OF DECEMBER
2:30PM START


The Two Fridas Paint 'n' Sip



FOR MORE ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS CONTACT
CATE AT GLENVALLEY LAVENDER ON
0401 317 635
OR BY EMAIL
GLENVALLEYLAVENDER@YAHOO.COM

**CATE & NEIL
HARPER |
GLENVALLEY
LAVENDER |
GLENGARRY VIC**

We have been busy over the last few months with weeding, more planting and mowing. I have been doing our local market every month so been keeping busy. We have a paint and sip happening here on Saturday 12th of December see attached flyer for more details. Spots are limited. If you're interested in coming along please contact me.

ANNEMARIE | WARRATINA LAVENDER FARM | VIC

Spring news! We are starting to feel a touch of spring in the air despite still needing to keep the home fires burning.



Over Winter it has been a great opportunity to get the gardens cut back, roses pruned & all gardens fertilised.

All weed spraying was completed 6 weeks ago ready for the unwanted spring weeds.

The Tea Rooms will be reopening on the 16th September so as visitors can enjoy the homestead gardens with their daffodils & magnolias. I am starting to get bookings at Garden Clubs keeping me busy while it is still a bit chilly.

Please diarise your diaries with the weekend of 5th & 6th December when we will be celebrating the beginning of the lavender season. This year it will be focusing on entertainment, craft demonstrations, children's entertainment & animals, as well as lots of delicious food & lavender specialities.

Over the Winter we have experienced a drop in sales due to the economic climate. This has not been welcomed but what can one do but plod on!

A few changes at Warratina Lavender Farm will be announced in the next news letter.

Until then enjoy Spring & the warmer weather.



Here in South-Western Qld at Leven K Farm in Inglewood we have been drought declared along with a few other shires surrounding us. Some parts of Queensland have had good rain. We have had no rain since June and very little before that. We have had some frosts with temperatures dropping below -6 degrees for a few nights but days that are very Spring like. So plants and people are very confused. We had some very late flowering of Asa Blue with some super sized flower heads – a product of the late start to Winter. Our dentata were looking lovely until the very severe frosts but they will recover coming into Spring. The intermedia's cope very well with the frosts. The lucerne is growing surprisingly well and Matts forage barley crop is coming along nicely – so some nice hay will be made come early Spring.

(photo left: late flowering Asa Blue)

A lot of garden staples have frosted that have never frosted before (ie The tops of citrus and a lot of plants in the sheltered spots under big trees.

A family wedding is the current project – our son Hamish & his beautiful fiancée Amber will hold their wedding here at the farm in Early October. So lots of watering, mulching, pruning, weeding and titivating is happening! Sooo the second family wedding at Leven K Farm which makes us so very Happy.

(photo right: Winter dentata flower)



Stuart and Jennifer Creighton from Samford Valley Lavender are trialling Intermedia Riverina Alan and Asa Blue which grows well unless they receive too much rain or humidity, most of the intermedia plants can't



cope and are lost. Stuart is trying a little propagating to see if they can keep enough plant stock growing and flowering. In the future they hope to have a go at producing a small amount of oil. Perseverance is Stuart's middle name!

Hoping for Rain. (photo above: Lucerne crop view)

MEMBER PROFILE: LAUREL HOSKING | PARA PARA LAVENDER

1. Tell us about your background and what started your interest in lavender?

When we first arrived, the property boasted more than 360 roses. While beautiful, they struggled to survive the relentless heat, drying winds and years of drought. As more and more succumbed to the harsh conditions, I began to wonder what our grandmothers and great-grandmothers would have planted here long before automatic irrigation systems and reticulated water.

Gardening has never come naturally to me—I often joke that I have a black thumb rather than a green one—and with both time and money in short supply, I decided I had nothing to lose by experimenting with cuttings from my lavender *Lavandula dentata*. To my delight, every one of them struck.

Over the following years, one tray of cuttings became dozens, then hundreds. Weekend after weekend, the whole family pitched in, building new garden beds and planting more than 700 lavender plants throughout the grounds. Before long, I found myself looking around and asking, "What's next?"

The answer lay beyond the gardens. Inspired by the success of the display beds and convinced that lavender was a plant perfectly suited to our climate, (and my black thumb), I planted the first commercial lavender crop—marking the beginning of what would eventually become Para Para Lavender.

2. What kind of lavender enterprise business do you operate?

Today, we propagate many of our own plants, particularly from cuttings grown here on the property. While our commercial Lavandin and Angustifolia crops are still maturing, we also offer a selection of lavender plants sourced from both our own propagation and carefully selected wholesale growers.

Using our home-grown lavender wherever possible, we handcraft a range of lavender-inspired gifts and products, which are available through our online store and at local markets.

Beyond the lavender, Para Para has become a destination for visitors through heritage open days and participation in the Open Gardens Scheme, allowing people to experience the beauty and history of this remarkable property.

Most recently, Para Para gained national and international recognition as a major filming location for Netflix's *My Brilliant Career*, introducing the property to a whole new audience and generating significant interest in its history, gardens and ongoing restoration.

3. What are your biggest challenges?

Our biggest challenges are the same ones faced by many rural properties: rabbits, weeds and water.

Despite ongoing rabbit control, they continue to damage young plants and create burrows throughout the property, requiring constant monitoring and maintenance. Weed management is a year-round commitment, particularly following seasonal rain.

Perhaps our greatest challenge is the climate. Para Para receives an average annual rainfall of only approximately 380 mm, and prolonged periods of drought, combined with hot northerly winds, place significant pressure on both the gardens and the developing lavender crop. These conditions have shaped our planting philosophy, leading us to favour hardy, drought-tolerant species that are better suited to South Australia's environment while preserving the beauty and heritage character of the property.

4. Tips for others

My best tip? Learn to outsmart the rabbits!

After waking one morning to find every flower eaten just before harvest, I was devastated. A fellow TALGA member suggested I try placing gutter guard around the base of my plants as a protective barrier. It was simple, inexpensive—and to my delight, it worked brilliantly.

Since then, I've noticed an interesting pattern. Plants growing in raised beds or those surrounded by some form of barrier, such as stone edging or timber, are rarely touched by rabbits. In contrast, plants in open garden beds are far more vulnerable. We've also

had good success using chicken wire guards around young trees and other susceptible plants.

Gardening has been one long learning experience for me, and I still face new challenges every season. Every failure teaches me something. Rather than dwelling on the damage or what's been lost, I prefer to ask, "What can I learn from this, and how can I stop it happening again?" That philosophy has shaped both my gardens and my approach to restoring Para Para. It may sound cliché, but every setback is simply another opportunity to learn and improve.

NETFLIX NEWS!

For most of 2025, Netflix used our property for filming the upcoming adaptation of Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*.

Unfortunately I was required to sign a non-disclosure agreement and could not say a word. Now however, I can. The first trailer was released today, and it airs on August 13th.

We are very excited. The homestead was a major location, and most of the 12 acre property was used in some form. It really was a most exciting and worthwhile experience.

You can see the trailer here:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoPbcfUmMYw>

Netflix was here between March and August, so fortunately there was little impact on tending the lavender. Plus they thankfully brought much-needed rain. I am attaching a couple of photos I took during the process (*enjoy more photos on the next page!*).

For the interest of TALGA membership around Australia, we are including a member profile in this e-news issue. We would love to hear about your story and invite you to submit a profile. The segment is intended to be a brief overview and understanding of the conditions, background etc of lavender enterprises around Australia. The format is a simple question and answer exercise, intended to be brief, recognising that everyone is busy.

By Christine Hitchin | McLaren Vale Lavender
(mclarenavale.lavender@bigpond.com)



A TRIBUTE TO WENDY FULLER

It was with great sadness that we shared the news of our longstanding TALGA member, NSW South ALR and good friend Wendy Fuller who passed away Saturday 16 May 2026. Briefly, Wendy experienced some complex health issues early in April and was hospitalised where the full seriousness was discovered and she chose to be cared for in gentle palliative care. She was supported and cared for by her husband Harry, children and grandchildren who kindly kept myself and Fiona Glover informed of Wendy's condition.

Fiona has written a lovely tribute to Wendy, I would like to add that Wendy was so kind and supportive of me during my lavender life and helped me in every way, with information, advice and she ensured she attended every AGM, Seminar and conference she could in recent years. An amazing, kind, creative and optimistic personality, Wendy will be greatly missed. – Louise

Wendy Fuller – A Tribute

Wendy joined TALGA on 7th February 1999 and established her lavender business "Pinelea Lavender" at Mt Ousley in NSW. Over the following years Wendy propagated and planted a lavender field of more than 400 plants and 23 cultivars, on the family property at Kentucky (Armidale) NSW.

In 2015 Wendy nominated and was accepted for the position of ALR NSW. Membership grew, and Wendy requested dividing the list into Southern and Northern NSW, which was more manageable for her. Members who knew Wendy, would agree that her reports for the Journal and e:news were always full of news -she enjoyed keeping in touch with her members. Wendy held the position of ALR Southern NSW until present day. Wendy attended many Conferences, her first was the 4th TALGA Conference 1999, at Portland, Vic and most recently the 30th TALGA Conference, Creswick, Vic October 2025. In 2019, Wendy was awarded Honorary membership at the 24th TALGA Conference, Port Arthur, Tas. for her great support of TALGA over the twenty years since joining.



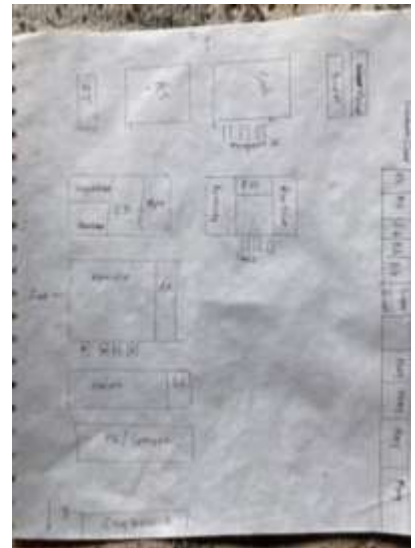
Wendy used her dried Lavender to make gifts, often for charity, and members may recall Wendy's craftwork often winning the Jean Sargeant Craft Award for Best Lavender Product.

She was unbeatable with her beautiful handcrafted and embroidered lavender products. Wendy was a lovely friend to many of us and words such as these written by Christine Hitchin describe our thoughts and feelings well:

"I remember Wendy with great affection, she was always kind, friendly and supportive towards me. I come across her name often when I flip through old copies of the TALGA Journal, during lunch time in my workshop. In many ways she was a pioneer of our industry, and her considerable knowledge and experience of our lovely flower will be sadly missed. RIP Wendy".

TALGA members extend their sincere condolences to husband Harry, daughter Robyn and family. Wendy will always be remembered by her TALGA friends and colleagues. - Fiona Glover

Photos (right) courtesy of Robyn, who recently spent time at Pinelea Lavender harvesting lavender before stopping in to visit Wine Country Lavender on her journey home. Wendy had always hoped to visit one day, making Robyn's visit especially meaningful. During her visit, Robyn generously shared Wendy's hand-drawn lavender field plans, carefully marking each variety they cultivated, along with beautiful photographs of the lavender rows and bunches drying in their charming shed. These treasured glimpses into Pinelea Lavender's history are a wonderful reminder of Wendy's passion, dedication, and the legacy she created - Karen, Wine Country Lavender



STILL FOR SALE

For sale at \$12 000. Contact Matthew: PH 0407588750.

STILL SPECIFICATIONS - STAINLESS STEEL POT, SEPERATOR, CONDENSOR AND PIPEWORK.

BOILER IS 10MM MILD STEEL.

CAPACITY – 150 LITRES.

BOILER DIMENSIONS – 580mm diameter x 1200mm long

STILL BASKET DIMENSIONS – 500 mm diameter x 1050 mm high

CONDENSER DIMENSIONS – 1200mm long x 150 mm round

SEPERATOR DIMENSIONS – 550 mm high x 400 mm diameter

Built in 2004 by local boilermaker and designed by Matthew. Registered with the Australian Government in January 2005. Located in QLD.



PRACTICAL DISTILLING TIPS FOR THE NEW DISTILLER

Matthew is the co-owner of **Leven K Farm** (QLD) and has been distilling Lavender essential oil (and other essential oils such as Rosemary, Rose Geranium and Bay Laurel) for 20+ years.

Producing award winning Lavender essential oil using a Stainless Steel Still Pot and condenser with separate Steam Generator and Stainless Separator. The boiler is wood-fired. The Still has a capacity 200L basket. The Still at Leven K Farm was designed by Matthew and built by our local boilermaker in Inglewood Qld.

Matthew has a preference for distilling product as soon as possible after picking.

- Be prepared before you start your distilling. Have your shed laid out and clean. Have a plan for the product going in and going out after distillation. Make sure you have plenty of fuel, cooling water, and vessels for capture of your oil and hydrosol and storage before you start.
- Keep accurate records – this is important for your own benefit. Try and record weights of still loads, yields of oil, time in still once your condensate starts to flow, some environmental notes on the day of picking and time of day and also some notes on the maturity of the flower.
- Pack your product (lavender flower) into the still basket evenly and tightly with as little stem as possible and mostly flower is best for a good quality oil.
- Your still and separator should be CLEAN before starting for the season. A dry steam run before starting is ideal.
- Aim for 20-40 mins of time once your condensate starts to flow. (we prefer the 30minute run)
- Run your condenser as cool as possible. Lavender oil degrades/oxides quickly when it is hot.
- Flower material should NOT come into contact with boiling water.
- Separate your oil promptly from the last of the hydrosol once finished your distillation.
- NO vapour should come out of the condenser, if this is happening you are putting steam through and losing valuable oil.
- Insulating your pot saves heat and energy and reduces reflux.

PREPARING FOR A DRY SEASON

Following on from our article last issue (May ENews) about the 'Seasonal Climate Outlook Winter-Spring 2026', here are some practical suggestions on how to prepare for this significant climate event predicted for many areas of Australia.

With seasonal forecasts strongly indicating the potential for an El Niño and positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) this coming summer, many parts of Australia could experience below-average rainfall, higher temperatures, increased evaporation and an elevated bushfire risk. While lavender is well known for its drought tolerance once established, prolonged periods of heat and moisture stress can reduce plant vigour, shorten flowering, affect oil quality and yields, and place young plantings at particular risk. The good news is that there are several practical steps we can take now to improve the resilience of our farms before the big dry hits.

Review Your Water Security

Without a doubt, water is your most valuable resource during a dry summer. Assess how much water is available from dams, tanks or bores and estimate how long those supplies will last if rainfall is limited. Check pumps, filters, valves and drip irrigation systems for leaks or blockages, and repair them now. If you don't have irrigation installed, consider and plan methods of applying water manually before the situation becomes critical.

Conserve Every Drop

Healthy soils act like a sponge, storing moisture for longer between irrigation or rainfall events. Maintaining organic matter, minimising unnecessary cultivation and keeping soils in good condition can improve water-holding capacity. Equally important is weed control. Weeds compete directly with lavender for moisture and nutrients, so reducing weed pressure before summer can make a significant difference to available soil water. To mulch or not to mulch?

Prioritise Your Crop



If water supplies become limited, consider which areas of the farm will need the greatest protection. Newly established lavender requires more frequent watering than mature plants, while your highest-performing blocks are likely to provide the greatest return on any irrigation investment. Do you have any particular cultivars that are vulnerable to high temperatures and prolonged dry?

Prepare for an Earlier Harvest

Hot, dry conditions can accelerate flowering and shorten the optimum harvest window. Rather than relying solely on previous years' harvest dates, monitor flower development closely so you can harvest at the stage that best suits your end product, whether that's premium essential oil or dried buds. Some cultivars can go from bud to full bloom within one or two days, so keep a close eye if your harvest is dependant on bloom stage. An earlier bloom will also affect agritourism visitor open day planning!

Service Equipment Before the Rush

Harvest is never the ideal time for machinery breakdowns. Service tractors, mowers, pumps, harvest equipment and distillation systems well in advance, and check that spare parts and consumables are on hand.

Don't Forget Bushfire Preparedness

Dry summers also bring an increased risk of bushfire. Now is the time to maintain fire breaks, slash grass around buildings and fence lines, clear vegetation from around sheds and fuel storage areas, and check that pumps, hoses and firefighting equipment are operational. Review your emergency plan and ensure everyone working on the farm understands the procedures should a fire threaten.

If You Welcome Visitors

For growers involved in agritourism, a hot summer may also affect visitor comfort and expectations. Consider providing additional shade, drinking water and seating, while monitoring flowering closely so visitors receive accurate information about bloom timing. This can be tricky if you accept pre-bookings, so be sure to include a disclaimer in your ticketing about cancellation or changes to dates. Adjustments to marketing and visitor bookings may be required if you distill for oil which requires a precise harvest time.

Expect The Unexpected?

The prospect of a record-breaking dry season can be challenging, but thoughtful planning and timely preparation will always place us in a stronger position to make the most of whatever the season delivers. Further reading:

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/jul/17/record-el-nino-forecast-2027-hottest-year-on-record-bom-says?CMP=share_btn_url

If you have different strategies for preparing for a hot dry summer, we would love to hear them! Send your tips to news@talga.com.au

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NZLGA 2026 CONFERENCE

The NZLGA 2026 conference is confirmed to take place from **Friday 28 August to Sunday 30 August 2026**. This will be a special occasion as it marks our 30th year. The conference will be held at the Rydges Hotel **Wellington** Airport, the same venue as last year's AGM and seminar day. Given the current global uncertainty, including the situation in Iran, and its potential impact on the economy and travel costs, the committee would like to gain an early indication of expected attendance numbers. This will assist us in confirming the venue, speakers, and other arrangements as soon as possible.

The projected cost of attendance for NZLGA Members is approximately \$200 per person, with a similar amount subsidised by the association and our sponsors. Accommodation at the Rydges Hotel is \$195 plus GST per person, per night. Email: secretary@talga.com.au if you would like more information (including the conference program).

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Our final newsletter for 2026 will be published in **November**, featuring industry news, grower updates, research, events and member achievements.

We'd love to hear from our member farms and Area Liaison Representatives (ALRs). Help us showcase what's happening across Australia's lavender community by sending your updates to news@talga.com.au by **the end of October**.

We welcome:

- Seasonal farm updates (planting, harvest, distillation, weather)
- Oil results or product highlights
- Sustainable or regenerative farming initiatives
- New products, collaborations or farm developments
- Events, workshops, open days or field days
- Awards, milestones and achievements
- Community partnerships and agritourism stories

Photos are always encouraged, and your update only needs to be a few paragraphs.

Interested in sharing your lavender journey? We'd love to feature you in our **Member Spotlight**. Simply let us know you're keen, and we'll email you a few questions. Add some photos, and we'll take care of the rest!

We also welcome your feedback and ideas for future newsletters. **Send contributions or suggestions to:** news@talga.com.au

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10:00AM – 4:00PM

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GUEST PRESENTERS



**Millie
Ross**

*ABC Gardening
Australia*



Laura Kuzmicky
Pindatoes Produce



Wayne Long
Local Horticulturalist

TICKETS

\$15

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MAP, ENTRY TO ALL
GARDENS AND
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OR



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