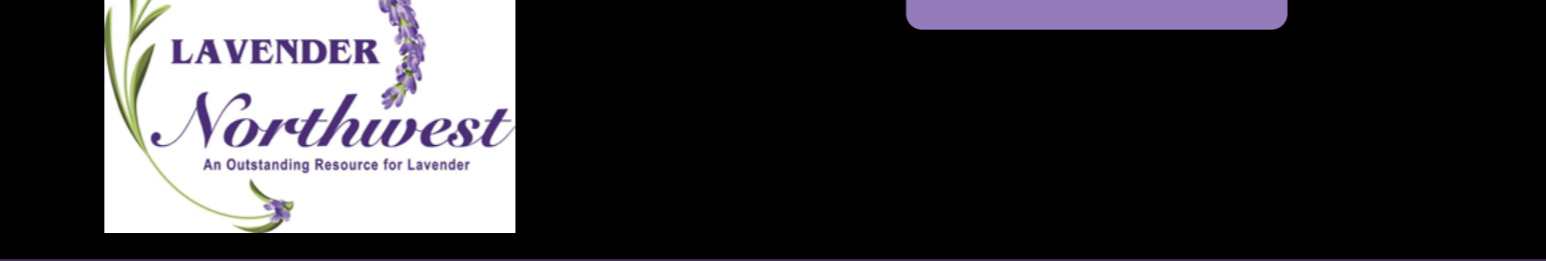


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March 2022 Newsletter

Lavender Northwest Invites You To Enjoy Lavender All Year Round!



PC: Evergreen Valley Farm

March 2022 Announcements

Attention All LNW members: Volunteers are needed to help on LNW committees and with projects. Please email lnw@lavender-nw.org to volunteer.

Professional LNW Members: Please update your information on the LNW website for 2022.

Event

Save the Date

LNW Spring Member Meeting

The weekend of April 29-30 & May 1, 2022

Learning Opportunity

Online OSU class on Agritourism: Are you interested in exploring agricultural tourism as a part of your farm business? OSU is offering an online, self-paced learning module called "Developing a Successful Agritourism Business in Oregon" which opened on March 1, 2022 and runs through April 30, 2022

Course registration is \$20, with scholarships available. For more information and to register visit their website

Lavender Essential Oil and Anxiety

Feeling stressed these days? You're not alone. If you're looking for a natural and effective way to reduce anxiety, look no further than your bottle of lavender essential oil. Several studies have shown great results for what we already know as the many called "Essential oil of lavender in anxiety disorders: Ready for prime time?" notes: "Evidence from multiple high-quality randomized trials suggests there is a role for SLO (standard lavender oil) in the treatment of anxiety disorders. The favorable safety and efficacy profile of SLO makes it a reasonable alternative to consider in patients with anxiety disorders."



6 Things to Know Before Adding Lavender to Your Farm, Flower Business, or Garden

by Julie Park, Park Place Perennials



Lavender is lavender is lavender...right? Well, did you know there are over 400 varieties of lavender to choose from? And not only choosing the right variety but finding a TRUE variety is a challenge. Large nurseries order cuttings from far off places, quality control is hard to trust, and lavender varieties have different uses. Some lavenders are good for bouquets, some are best for culinary, while still others are better for essential oils. There are some good things to research and know before starting a lavender farm or adding lavender to your cut flower business, or even planting for your personal garden.

1. Local, Local, Local. Chances are pretty good that small local specialty growers are going to have a true variety. Larger nurseries buy cuttings on a large scale, usually from out of the country and from different sources. The quality control of small growers is going to be better and they will be able to recognize the true varieties if anything is mislabeled. Most lavender farms propagate from their own lavender plants so buying from a small grower, or at a local farmer's market, is your best choice. And if you buy local then the plants you buy will most likely be the ones that do best in your own area.

2. Decide what you are going to use it for. Are you looking to plant some lavender in the backyard to use for an evening cocktail, or are you looking to add lavender to your backyard flower business? Are you starting a lavender farm and want to distill essential oils? Or are you a crafter and want to make dried lavender wreaths or sachets? Or do you just want to walk up the front path and be able to smell the delightful scent of lavender as you walk in your yard?

In general, true lavender (Lavandula angustifolia), has a mild scent and can be used for culinary use. Many varieties in this group keep a nice true color when dried which is nice for wreaths. Hybrid lavenders like (Lavandula x intermedia) are larger plants with longer stems and the scent is stronger which is nice for bouquets or scented soaps and candles. This can vary amongst the varieties in each of these groups, so knowing what you are going to do with it is helpful before choosing a plant.

Personally, I like the varieties that will be used for more than one thing. Lavandula angustifolia 'Royal Velvet' for example, makes beautiful bouquets and wreaths with a rich dark color that doesn't fade when dried, it has a smooth, mild flavor in culinary dishes, the essential oil is great for anxiety and sleep, and the plant stays a nice round compact shape in the landscape. It is why it is the most popular variety amongst lavender farmers nationwide--and it was developed right here in Oregon too!

3. Know how much space you have. Lavender can grow from 10-inches to over 5-feet in size. The stem length can vary as well. In general, Lavandula angustifolia varieties should be spaced 2 feet apart while Lavandula x intermedia varieties should be spaced 4-feet apart on center. Remember that lavender does better with adequate air flow. Also keep in mind that when the plant is blooming the stems can tangle up with the plant next to it making harvesting a challenge if planted too close together. If you are planning for harvest, is there space to walk between rows? What about carts? Are you okay with bees around you or do you need more room to walk? Things to consider with large scale planting. Some farms will space their rows the width of the mower so they can make just one pass between rows and a LTV can easily drive up the center without crushing long blooming stems. Do you need room for classes? Does yoga in the field sound enticing? Maybe group rows into blocks closer together with wide open spaces around them. Visit some lavender farms. See what others are doing. Before starting our farm we visited a number of farms. We took notes and pictures and did a lot of research. Because lavender can live 10-20 years, it's a good idea to have a plan since it's an investment of time and money.

4. Choose a Color Palette. Lavenders can come in many shades of purples, blues, whites, and pinks. There are lavender farms that create elaborate designs in their fields with the color variations. Scalloped edges in whites or violets. Alternating row of whites and blues, or with light to dark across the field. Some have created lovely meditation gardens with a circle labyrinth to walk through. So many possibilities.

If you are looking for a nice complimentary pallet in your garden look at colors that coordinate. I love how my 'Peter Pan' lavender with it's explosion of dark blue-violet flowers looks next to my bright yellow daylilies. Or try an all-white pallet with 'Melissa' lavender, or 'Grosso White' (previously 'Alba'), such as in a moon garden.

5. Know Your Climate. All lavender has general growing conditions that make them as happy as growing in the Mediterranean where they originated: neutral pH, well-draining soil, dry summers, trimmed once or twice a year, good air circulation, and full sun. But in less than ideal conditions some lavender varieties are a little more forgiving. Some can tolerate a little more summer humidity, extreme weather like freezing temperatures, or hotter climates, or even might do better in a container. Here in the Pacific NW there are many microclimates. My lavender tends to bloom a week before another lavender farm just a couple of miles away! So before doing any large-scale planting, try experimenting with a few varieties. Ask local growers, neighbors or friends what has done well for them.

6. Be okay with BEES. You will have bees. Your fields will be alive with bees. For it is a joy to see the sleepy bumble bees tucked in between the flowers, sound asleep on a cool morning. Or to watch the honey bees zipping from bud to bud. But many people are scared, nervous or have phobias around bees. So be prepared for bees. But also know wasps, yellow jackets, and hornets are not really interested in lavender. I never see these bees on or in my lavender. Before harvesting, we give the stems a little swoosh and a gentle shake low on the stems and the bees just move on to the next plant. The bees are more interested in the flowers than in you. We harvest by hand to protect all the pollinators that our fields support as well as making sure there are flowering plants in the late Summer and Fall to support them after our lavender is harvested.

With a little planning and thought you can get the most out of your lavender for many years ahead!

Evergreen Valley Lavender Farm (EVLV)

(submitted by Mike and Sandra Mitchell, Willamette Valley Lavender Farm)

If you ever find yourself near Olympia, Washington, and there is a sweet smell of lavender drifting your way, it's coming from Evergreen Valley Lavender Farm (EVLV). What began as a simple four-acre property has blossomed into a thriving lavender venture for Thane and Peggy Bryenton. Thane loves to share the story of the day he decided he was tired of mowing all that grass and there must be something better out there to do with the land. So the two of them set out to discover what that was, and in 2008 ended up in Sequim enjoying the many lavender fields. Inspired by what they saw, they planted 640 plants made up of twelve different varieties, and eventually opened to the public in 2012.



EVLV is a boutique farm which still offers about 650 plants on an acre. They generally have two rows of each variety and double rows of 'Grosso' (a crowd favorite along with 'Phenomenal'), 'Royal Velvet', and 'Melissa'. If you were to ask each of them for their favorite type of lavender, Peggy would say 'Gros Bleu' because their brides love the organic stem shape and the way the buds hold well when dried. Thane's choices are both the 'Betty's Blue' and 'Melissa' varieties. One of the main reasons he loves those is because they create a great contrast of color in their field.

The farm offers a multitude of products for purchase that include sachets, eye pillows, neck wraps, and more. Their steam-distilled essential oils have been sold nationwide. 'Royal Velvet' is the breadwinner for the culinary buyers which include chefs, bakers, bars, and distilleries.

Both Thane and Peggy bring unique skills to the business. Thane is experienced in sales and the telecom industry while Peggy has worked in clinical trials for thirty years and is a licensed LPN. Now, she operates and oversees the administrative duties and serves in the role of customer service expert. Thane uses his experience as a social media consultant to bring fans/flikers to their Facebook page and then to the farm. They are members of the local Chambers and the Tourist Bureaus. They also developed an extensive audience using an email campaign.

Growing lavender, like anything else, takes time, trial and error. One of the things Thane and Peggy wish they had done earlier was to rotate out plants when they became "leggy". When asked for their advice for other farmers, they said to "buy from a reputable grower who has a similar climate as your location, make certain to test and amend your soil to reach PH of approximately 7.0, and don't overwater!"

All in all, EVLV is a family operated labor of love that is open three days each week starting the last week of June and running through the end of July. Thane and Peggy are excited to host their 13 year celebration on July 6th.

EVLV has an onsite gift shop with a variety of wonderful products and they showcase these additionally at two craft shows in the fall. Currently they don't do online sales but their social media Facebook page gets a lot of traction. Aside from products the farm also hosts distillery classes on premises.

So, if you are ever up near Olympia during lavender season, stop by and say hello to Peggy, Thane & their new golden retriever puppy Miss Lavandula Murphy. If you can't wait that long, check out their Facebook page and see what they are up to!

Thank you, Thane and Peggy for allowing us to interview and learn about your farm!

Evergreen Valley Lavender Farm  
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helloevl@gmail.com  
(360) 754-2002

About Lavender Northwest

Lavender Northwest is an organization created for the purpose of showcasing and promoting lavender grown in the Pacific Northwest.

It draws upon established regional expertise in lavender cultivation, preparation of primary lavender products, and incorporation of lavender into value-added products. Through collaborative promotional opportunities, as well as focused educational efforts, Lavender Northwest intends to serve its members by offering extended reach to potential consumers, by expanding technical and business knowledge, and by providing support for interested individuals and developing lavender businesses.

Dedicated to the interests of regional lavender growers and product-makers, the organization is structured as a non-profit corporation, and evolved through the cooperation of its progenitors, the Oregon Lavender Association (OLA) and the Washington Lavender Association (WLA).

Be part of the conversation!

Do you have a lavender-related recipe, growing tip, or experience that you'd like to share? Please contact Pam Baker at pbaker@lililavenderfarm.com

Featured Lavender

'Bridget Chloe' (Lavandula x intermedia cv.)



PC: Stockholm Gardens

Flower Color: Purple  
Stem Lengths: 12-18 inches  
Height & Spread: 24-30 inches  
Hardiness Zone: 5-9

This new lavender was discovered and trialed by John Hendon in Georgia, and patented in 2016 as an improved, harder cultivar than Lavandula 'Provence'. In the S.E. states, like Georgia, it has proven to be an exceptional lavender that will survive heat of over 100 degrees and high humidity, with less foliage dieback in the summer. It also has a stronger resistance to disease. In 2021, Lavandula 'Bridget Chloe' was awarded the Gold Award of Excellence by the International Perfume Foundation!

The flower spikes and buds have a spicy, sweet aroma with less camphor, so L. 'Bridget Chloe' can be used as a culinary lavender, as well as for crafts and to fill sachet bags.

The plant forms a large compact, rounded shape with fragrant gray-green foliage, making it suitable to grow as a border in the garden or as a row crop. L. 'Bridget Chloe' requires especially good air circulation, so it is best to give it plenty of room to grow. It should be pruned regularly in the spring, and after it flowers, to maintain its shape.

Unlike L. 'Provence', the flower buds of L. 'Bridget Chloe' are darker purple and they stay on the stem when dried, so the flowers can be cut and used for long lasting fresh and dried bouquets, wreaths, and flower arrangements.

Chris Muller  
Barn Owl Nursery

Lavender In The News



Important Product Recall

Recently, a lethal bacterial disease was linked to an imported product branded Better Homes and Gardens Essential Oil Infused Aromatherapy Room Spray with Geraniums: Lavender and Chamomile Scent. (Note: all scent variants of this product were recalled in November 2021). Distribution was nationwide, in Walmart stores and online.

You can find a full summary by Dr. Michael Lemmers, RavenCroft, on the Lavender Northwest website

Spring Cleaning with Lavender



Lavender is a natural and effective surface disinfectant, and makes your house smell wonderful at the same time!

Here are just a few ways to incorporate lavender into your spring cleaning!

All Purpose Deodorizer

From The Lavender-Lover's Handbook by Sarah Berringer Bader

- 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon borax
- Distilled or purified water
- ¼ c liquid castile soap
- 10 drops lavender oil
- 5 drops of lemon essential oil or 1 tsp lemon juice

Mix the white vinegar and borax together in a 16 ounce spray bottle. Fill the bottle ¾ full with hot purified or distilled water. Shake well until the borax is dissolved.

Add the liquid castile soap and the essential oils (or the lavender oil and lemon juice) to the solution and shake well. Use as you would any other all-purpose cleaner.

Carpet Deodorizer Area rugs and carpets are breeding grounds for odors and bacteria, so here is an idea for fresh and clean carpets without the expense:

- 8 drops of lavender oil
- ½-cup baking soda
- Large mason jar

Combine ingredients and shake well. Sprinkle over the carpet, wait a few minutes, and then vacuum.



Sugared Lavender Almonds

Recipe and photo by Pedalaba Lavender

Ingredients:

- 1 pound raw almonds (approximately 3 1/2 cups)
- 2 Tablespoons Organic Culinary Lavender
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil

Directions Finely grind lavender and sugar together with a mortar and pestle or a spice mill. If a food processor or blender is what you have at hand, either will also do the job.

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Place raw almonds on a rimmed baking sheet. Similar recipes might call for you to peel the almonds. If you have the time and prefer your almonds peeled, go for it. We don't find this step makes a marked difference.

Slowly roast the almonds, stirring once, until lightly browned. This takes about 15 minutes.

Let the toasted almonds cool until just warm and transfer them to a large bowl. Drizzle with oil and mix to coat. Sprinkle the lavender and sugar over the almonds and mix until thoroughly distributed.

While you can certainly eat them right away, we suggest covering them and allowing the oils and flavors to infuse for 24 hours. This delicious snack will easily keep for a couple of weeks in an airtight container. In fact, we think the flavor improves with time!