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January 2023 Newsletter

Lavender Northwest Invites You To Enjoy Lavender All Year Round!



Lavender Ranch, Washington

January 2023

Happy New Year!

This may be a quieter time in the life of a lavender farmer, but there's a lot going on behind the scenes! This is a time for planning and reflection -- what to add, what to eliminate, where to grow, and what to learn. And since the USLGA Conference is taking place here in the Pacific Northwest this month, full of all kinds of great information, the timing couldn't be better!

Announcements

The Lavender Podcast is here! Kristen Sandoz from Wayward Winds Lavender Farm has started a podcast about all things lavender! She interviewed LNW members Amy Allen from School Bell Flower Farm in Idaho, and Nicole Callen from Norwood Lavender Farm in Oregon. Nicole talks about using culinary lavender in drinks and dishes. **Check it out!**

USLGA Conference is THIS MONTH!

Featured Northwest Lavender

Chris Mulder
Barn Owl Nursery



(PC: Andy Van Hevelingen)

Lavandula angustifolia cultivar 'Bouquet'

Flower Color: dark purple
Stem Length: 10 -12 inches
Plant Height: 18 -24 inches
Best Uses: crafts, culinary, oil
Introduced by:
Dr. Don Roberts, Oregon

This hardy lavender was introduced in the Pacific NW by Dr. Roberts and grown in Central Washington several years ago. It has recently

United States Lavender Conference 2023
Cultivating Connections: Learn, Grow, Refine
January 26 - 28, 2023
Hyatt Regency - Portland, Oregon

Over ten LNW member experts will be providing education at this conference.

Here are just a few topics being presented by Lavender Northwest members:

- ~ "Best in Class - A Proven Formula for Teaching Lavender Wreath-Making & Other How-To Classes on Your Farm"
- ~ "Farming the Transition: Are you jumping in or bailing out?"
- ~ "Harvest & Post-Harvest Equipment & Processing"
- ~ "How to Connect & Collaborate to Grow Your Bottom Line "
- ~ Lavender Distillation - Taking It To The Next Level"
- ~ "Scents & Sensibility - Pacific Northwest & Other Recent Lavender Cultivars, Plus Trends in the Lavender Trade"

Plus the Key Note Speaker

Clive Larkman, from Australia, will present "Lavender Biology: How Understanding Your Plants Can Help Your Lavender Farm Succeed" "Is Fertilizer In Your Lavender Farm's Future?"

Registration ends January 15! To register, go to the USLGA website: uslavender.org

If you can't attend in person, the conference video recordings will be available for viewing a couple of weeks after the conference. You can purchase access to the USLC 2023 post-conference videos.

LNW Member Marketplace Looking for local lavender products but don't know where to find them? Lavender Northwest has a great feature on the website! It's the online **Lavender Marketplace**, where you can find which farms sell which products. An easy way to find what you need!

Attention All LNW members: Volunteers are needed to help in LNW work groups. Please email info@lavender-nw.org to volunteer. We will contact you to let you know where help is needed throughout the year.

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

Events & Classes

January Events:

Grand Opening of Lavender Boutique Store in Wenatchee, Washington

become more available and is being propagated in limited quantities by Van Hevelingen Herb Nursery in Oregon. 'Bouquet' was originally grown for its essential oil and was found to be a very hardy lavender at -25 degrees!

The flowers start blooming around mid June in the North Willamette Valley. This cultivar produces many long flowering stems at least twice a year. The fresh and dried buds have a sweet and savory aroma which makes this lavender cultivar a good choice for culinary applications, as well as for essential oil.

I planted 4" pots of 'Bouquet' in my field in May of 2019. I watched the plants double in size and grow faster than some of my other *L. angustifolia* cultivars. I harvested the first blooms from my plants and they flowered again in August-September, and continued to bloom through early October.

My young plants have grown well in a raised row for over 3 years now. They have remained hardy through an extremely wet spring and through two hot, dry summers without damage or additional water. As these plants mature, it will be interesting to see how well this lovely lavender survives extreme changes in our climate and location and in different zones around the Pacific NW over the next few years.

Pantone: Color of the Year by Pelindaba Lavender



Pantone describes "Viva

Be sure to check our **event calendar** for up-to-date information about what's happening in your area!

You will find LNW members at farmers' markets and booths at special events. Many LNW farmers sell their lavender products online from their websites.

Another great place to find lavender products from local farms and stores is to check our members' listings on the **Destinations Page** on the LNW website. Find LNW members' farms in Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho to see what they are offering in 2023.

Lavender Clafouti with Fruit

Recipe from Chris Mulder
Barn Owl Nursery, Wilsonville, OR.



(PC: The Food Network)

Ingredients

- 6 eggs
- 1 ¼ cups half & half or whole milk
- 6 Tbsp granulated lavender sugar
- 1 tsp dried culinary lavender buds
- 1 Tbsp brandy
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 cups fresh fruit, peeled and sliced
- ¾ cup unbleached white flour, plus 1 Tbsp for dusting fruit
- Optional: Use lavender powdered sugar to dust the top of the baked cake.

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400F. Butter a 10" round deep dish pie plate.

Peel and slice fruit of your choice. Place fruit in a separate bowl, add 1 Tbsp of flour, and stir until fruit is coated. Set aside.

Magenta" as a color whose "exuberance promotes a joyous and optimistic celebration". May all our gardens be overflowing with these qualities in 2023!

Lavender comes in a myriad of colors from white and pink to purple and magenta. If you would like to plant the Pantone Color of the Year in your own garden, we'd suggest a trip to your local nursery for one of these vivid varieties:

- *Lavandula stoechas* 'Otto Quast'
- *Lavandula stoechas* 'Dark Eyes'
- *Lavandula stoechas* 'Kew Red'
- *Lavandula stoechas* 'Regal Splendour'

Chai Tea with Lavender

Recipe from Deb Davis,
Purple Mountain Lavender,
Lakeside, MT.



A soothing sweet and spicy tea that can be served hot or cold.

Ingredients

- 2 oz. fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced
- 14 whole cloves
- 8 cardamon pods, crushed
- 1 cinnamon stick, 3"
- 2 teaspoons dried culinary lavender buds
- 2 whole peppercorns
- 4 quarts water
- 4 individual Earl Grey or black tea bags
- ½ can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk

Instructions

Combine eggs, milk, granulated lavender sugar, lavender buds, brandy and salt in a food processor. Add flour and blend until combined.

Distribute fruit into baking dish and pour egg mixture over the fruit.

Bake 30 minutes or until knife comes out clean
Cool slightly, serve warm

Optional: dust top with lavender powdered sugar

Note: This and other delicious lavender recipes can be found in Lavender Northwest's Dessert brochure, available at many local lavender farms.



(PC: Michelle Lowe)

Tips for Soil Amendment

Submitted by Pam Baker

Little Lavender Farm, Dundee, OR.

January is a great month to start planning your lavender garden for the upcoming spring, and part of that is evaluating the health of your soil.

While we love that lavender is not a fussy, demanding plant, there are a few things that we can do to make our lavenders happy, and amending our soil is one of those things. The first step to amending your soil would be assessing where your soil is lacking, so getting your soil tested will help with that. **Earthfort** is one local soil testing lab that has helped several of our farmers in creating favorable soil conditions for growing lavender.

There are a few reasons to amend the soil around your lavender plant: 1) creating favorable soil

Place first 6 ingredients into a double-thick cheesecloth and tie the corners with a string to secure.

Add spice bag to 4 quarts water in a slow cooker. Cook on low for 4 hours – covered.

Add tea bags and steep for 5 minutes.

Discard the spice bag and tea bags. Stir in the condensed milk and heat through.

Serve warm or iced.

Refrigerate any leftovers for up to 2 weeks.

Note: This and other delicious lavender drink recipes can be found in Lavender Northwest's Lavender Beverage & Drink brochure, available at many LNW farms.

Lavender Foot Soak



(PC: draxe.com)

Ingredients:

- Warm water
- 1/2 cup Epsom salt
- 15-20 drops of lavender essential oil

Directions:

Fill a basin (or bathtub) with enough warm water to cover your feet.

Add epsom salt and mix to dissolve.

Add the oil and stir.

Soak your feet for 20-30 minutes. (Candles and soft music make this experience even more lovely!)

texture, 2) balancing pH levels, and 3) adding nutrients.

Creating Favorable Soil Texture

Soil texture is an important consideration in lavender health. While the ideal soil texture for lavender plants is loose, sandy loam which contains large particles for air and water to move through, it is possible to amend your soil to create a favorable environment for your lavender plants. Of course, what you will add to your soil depends upon the type of soil that you are wanting to amend. If your soil already is loose and allows for the movement of air and water, then you may not need to amend at all. However, if your soil is heavy and clay-like, it would be important to amend your soil to help create more space for your lavender roots to extend. There are several ways to amend:

- Mushroom compost
- Composted leaves
- Perlite and pumice

Balancing pH levels

Soil pH “measures how many hydrogen ions are affecting plant roots. The more hydrogen ions in the soil, the more acidic the soil will be” (Bader 116). The pH scale runs from acidic (pH of 0-6) and alkaline (pH of 8-14). Different plants require different soil pH but lavender plants happen to thrive right in the middle, in a neutral pH soil of 7. To test the pH of your soil, use a pH test kit to help you to determine how to amend your soil in order to achieve that neutral pH.

- If your soil is too acidic, add dolomitic or calcitic lime.
- If your soil is too alkaline, add sphagnum peat and organic matter. Granular sulfur will also work, but take a little longer.

Adding Nutrients

Lavender doesn't need much fertilizer to thrive, but you can add specific kinds of fertilizer to the soil to achieve specific objectives:

Nitrogen: generally, you won't want to add nitrogen heavy fertilizer to the soil since it will promote leave production, to the detriment of bloom production. However, newly planted lavenders can benefit from a fertilizer that has some nitrogen. After that, nitrogen isn't needed.

Phosphorus: Phosphorus helps with root growth, so adding phosphorus sources such as bone meal or bat guano to your soil in the Spring before your plants bloom can be beneficial.

Potassium: Potassium from sources such as

Once you have dried your feet, moisturize with your favorite moisturizer to complete your pampering spa experience.

Provence Potato Soup

Recipe by Kathy Gehrt,
Discover Cooking with Lavender



PC: *The Good Life France*

Ingredients:

- 3 thick slices bacon, cut into 1/4 inch pieces
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 2 tsps *herbes de Provence* (recipe [here](#))
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 3 pounds (about 4 cups) russet or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 Tbsp chives (optional)

Directions

Cook bacon in a large saucepan over medium heat for about 5 minutes.

Saute onions, garlic, carrots and celery in the bacon fat. Add herbes de Provence, salt and pepper. Cook until vegetables are soft, about 7 minutes.

Add the stock and bring mixture to a boil.

composted fruits and vegetables and kelp meal helps plants deal with stresses such as an extended drought.

(Source: The Lavender Lover's Handbook by Sarah Berringer Bader)



(PC: Michelle Lowe)

Add the potatoes and return to a boil. Allow mixture to cook for 3 minutes, stirring often.

Reduce heat and let mixture simmer, uncovered, until potatoes are soft, and can be easily pierced with a fork, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Serve in small bowls and garnish with chives, if desired.

**Featured Farmer:
Willamette Valley Lavender
Canby, Oregon**



PC: above: Willamette Valley Lavender; Below: Jen Blair Photography



What began with a spontaneous trip to Wayward Winds Lavender Farm to celebrate their 20 year anniversary, has blossomed into a productive, working lavender farm started during Covid. But in order to fully understand how they came to where they are at this point, let's go back seventeen years when Mike Mitchell and Sandra Solano-Mitchell initially purchased their ten and a half acres in Canby, Oregon. Although they loved the quiet, peaceful country life, they both realized the potential for growth on their farm, but just didn't know what that ultimately would be. Originally hay seemed a logical choice, so that's what they grew. However, that anniversary trip inspired them to take a leap of faith and jump into the lavender growing world. The result is **Willamette Valley Lavender**, a lovely hobby farm born of determination and hard work.

Once they decided to grow lavender, there was no turning back as they had found what is now their passion. In 2020, during the pandemic, the test garden was plowed, amended, and planted with eleven varieties consisting of 200 lavender plants. The micro climate in Canby makes it a perfect location to grow 'Grosso', 'Purple Bouquet' and 'Melissa' in their commercial field which now consists of over 2500 plants. Others grow equally well, but these were the varieties selected to make up the large field.

Although they work together on the farm, they differ in their favorite lavender plants. Mike enjoys 'Betty's Blue' for its sweet aroma and dark color while Sandra likes 'Melissa' because of its exquisite oil. What they have in common; however, is the love of having many varieties of lavender on the farm, 30+ and growing. This makes it fun when propagating and creating a colorful and attractive landscape. Not having a background in lavender farming prior to the start-up has produced a fast and exciting learning curve. They have a new found respect for the knowledge and work that goes into farming and the best advice they would offer to those who are thinking about jumping in, is take your time and do your research and planning before beginning. Before they started, the couple visited many farms, spoke with farmers, read books, completed online courses and studied every scholastic paper they could find. In the end, nothing compares with the knowledge they gained from talking with other members from Lavender Northwest.

Mike is a native Oregonian and Sandra is originally from Costa Rica, a country the couple also calls their second home and are currently reforesting their own tree farm. If you meet Mike and Sandra, you will immediately get a sense that they are always excited about learning, new challenges, and adventures. Even though both have been in international education for more than twenty years and currently teach public school in Oregon, adding lavender to the mix made sense. They find it relaxing and a great stress reducer to work in the fields in the evenings and on the weekends. In order to grow their brand and to promote their products, they got involved in their local farmer's market and have created important connections with local businesses and organizations. So far, it's been a great way for people to find out about the farm and their journey.

Social Media, particularly **Instagram**, has proved very helpful as well. Both Mike and Sandra are very conscientious about their product, sources, and branding and strive to offer beautifully crafted products. Their product has even attracted the attention of Sur La Table who directly approached Willamette Valley Lavender inquiring about a partnership and now sells their product in stores nationwide and has aided the farm to promote their name to other partnerships. Although the couple has formal education in the areas of marketing and communication, building their social media platform and a functional website was one of their biggest challenges. The many hours invested in learning about new technologies are paying off.

Although there isn't a storefront at Willamette Valley Lavender Farm yet, you can find them online where you will discover not only high quality products to purchase, but also a list of events, markets, and festivals they attend on a regular basis. Many of the customers they meet in the markets have become returning online customers. Their new online store offers direct shipping anywhere in the USA and free farm pick up, which is very popular

among people who would like access to visit the farm. 2022 was the launching year for **Willamette Valley Lavender** and the farm is currently only open for farm pick ups or bilingual educational tours for organized community groups. Mike and Sandra are currently exploring different sustainable models to share the farm with the public in the near future.

Along with the need to grow healthy lavender plants, their love for photography and all creative endeavors led to a gorgeous **white greenhouse** which was built by Sandra's dad, Rafael. Its location, in the middle of their fields, provides the perfect setting for amateur and professional photographers and artists to use. It has a wonderful feel and is being rented as a creative studio and learning space. This is just another aspect of their dream to build a serene oasis in the country for everyone to enjoy.

Thanks to Mike Mitchell and Sandra Solano-Mitchell for sharing their farm with us.

Website: www.willamettevalleylavender.com
Instagram: [@willamettevalleylavender](https://www.instagram.com/willamettevalleylavender)

Call for Action:

Would you like to see your farm featured in this newsletter? Contact Mike & Sandra Mitchell today at willamettevalleylavender@gmail.com or call at (503) 860-8346 / (503) 705-7731. LNW is always looking for member farms, new or old, big or small willing to share their lavender journey.

About Lavender Northwest

Check out our beautiful new brochure!

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)*.

Stay Connected!

Become a Member

Have you thought about being a member of Lavender Northwest?

Did you know that you don't have to be a lavender grower to be a member!

Great things are happening at our meetings. In-person meetings include many educational and networking opportunities like farm tours in our NW region, distillation and equipment demonstrations, propagation and other hands-on workshops, along with many knowledge sharing activities that members are able to take part in.

Being entirely member driven, our association asks for an active membership.

There are two levels of membership: **Professional** and **Associate**.

The **Professional** level is for those with direct ties to lavender grown in the Pacific Northwest, either as a grower, primary product supplier (plants, bundles, buds, oils, etc.), or as a product developer

Check out our [website](#) for more information on lavender and its many uses! Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for more ideas!

Be part of the conversation!

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

featuring northwest-grown lavender.

A n **Associate** level supports the efforts of Lavender Northwest to promote awareness and expansion of regional lavender growers and product developers and may have a potential business interest involving northwest-grown lavender.

New members enroll on the website Lavender-NW.org

And finally, Dear Readers...

“If everyone is moving forward together,
then success takes care of itself.”

~Henry Ford



Lavender Northwest

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