

LAVENDER SNIPPETS

October 2026

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

From the Chair

October has been a busy month at FairView Farm, home of Torlesse Lavender. Grass and weeds seem to be growing faster than we can deal to them. The lavender is also growing at pace and this gives hope for a good season ahead. In Canterbury, the big dry has not yet arrived and to date we have had both reliable rainfall and warmth which is setting the crops up well. Summer is boding to be hot with temperatures already reaching 25°C.

During the month I connected with Louise Bickerton (President of The Australian Lavender Growers Association) to look at ways in which the two associations can collaborate together. I will report more on this following TALGAs November executive committee meeting.

Key focus areas for TALGA are currently

- Changing consumer perception around Australian Grown Lavender Oil. Like NZ, Australia imports significant volumes of essential oil from other countries, and they are looking at how they can promote Australian Grown lavender EO
- There is concern that some of the product being imported has been diluted/adulterated but markets as pure EO. They have started a project to look at whether they can quantify this.
- They have recently held their 30th Anniversary conference. TALGA have run a very similar structure to NZLGA where they held a 2-3 day conference every 2 years and a one-day AGM/Seminar day in the intervening year. They have elected to move to the one-day AGM/Seminar for future conferences. This is primarily driven by the cost and time required to organise these 2-3 day conference and the relatively low member attendance numbers.

These areas are very similar to aspects of work underway at NZLGA.

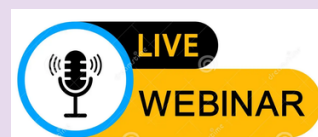
NZLGA Membership invoices have been sent out and if you have not already paid your subs these are now overdue. For those who have paid, you should have received your membership certificate. If you have not yet received your certificate, please email nzлга-membership@lavender.org.nz and Lee-Arne will sort it for you.

We have a couple of seminars coming up. Big thanks to Stuart Abernethy for organising these. If there are other topics that members would like covered please let me know and we will endeavour to make this happen.

Chris Brown

Chairperson

New Zealand Lavender Growers Association



Stu Abernethy presents ...

Soil Report 1 November 7pm to 8.30pm

Producing Quality Oil 8 November 7pm to 8.30pm

Check your emails and the fb page for details



LOCAL LAVENDER GROWER TAKES ON NATIONAL ROLE

Torlesse Lavender Fields co-owner **Chris Brown** says he was both excited and a little daunted when he was elected chairperson of the New Zealand Lavender Growers Association (NZLGA) at its recent 30th anniversary national conference.

Although still relatively new to lavender growing, Chris says he has gained a great deal from NZLGA membership and now wants to support the organisation as it continues to grow, promote quality, and add value for growers around the country.

Torlesse Lavender is based at FairView Farm and Gardens near Sheffield, which Chris owns with his wife, Gayle Souter-Brown. For Chris, the national role is an opportunity to contribute to the wider lavender industry while sharing the farm's approach of combining "new ideas and ancient wisdom". He says New Zealand produces some of the best lavender essential oil in the world yet still imports significant quantities from overseas. The NZLGA is finalising approvals for its NZ Grown Lavender™ trademark, which is designed to give consumers confidence that the lavender they purchase has verified New Zealand origin, traceability, quality and integrity,

While Canterbury is better known for arable and dairy farming, Chris says the region's increasingly Mediterranean climate is also well suited to lavender. Several local farms are producing high-quality lavender products, with some also welcoming visitors to experience the colour, scent and calm of the fields.

FairView Farm is also establishing the South Island's English lavender collection. There are only two other such collections in New Zealand, both in the North Island. Chris says there are 125 varieties of English lavender in the country, and the farm has taken on shared responsibility to help preserve them. "The collection garden is currently being laid out and will hopefully be ready for the public to visit this season," he says.

Chris and Gayle are also working through the approval process to sell culinary lavender products, using a template developed by the NZLGA with MPI and made available to association members. Building the small business has been a steep learning curve. Chris says one of the biggest lessons is that everything takes longer and costs more than expected, but the rewards have made the effort worthwhile.

"The joy of seeing the young and old wander through the lavender fields and around the homestead gardens makes all the hard work worthwhile," he says.

Local support has also been vital, from open day visits and product purchases to social media engagement. Chris says the strongest encouragement comes when visitors say they will return next lavender season, giving them the confidence to keep growing, investing in the farm, and sharing the lavender experience with the wider community.



ARE YOU, OR DO YOU KNOW AN INFLUENCER?



New Zealand Lavender Growers Association,
are looking to boost our profile,
highlighting all that we do, and all that we have to offer.

CAN YOU HELP?

If so, contact nzlga-chair@lavender.org.nz
or nzlga-newsletter@lavender.org.nz

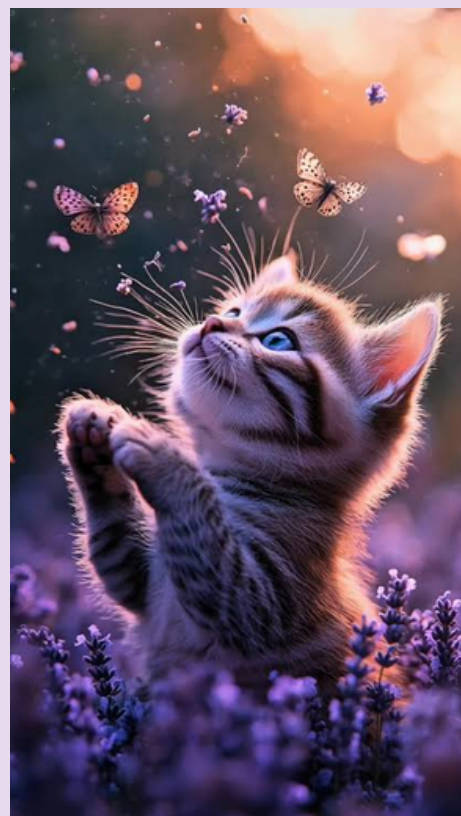
HELP REQUIRED PLEASE

Can you believe it?

Following on from the success of the recent
conference, planning for the next Conference
is already in the works!

Charlotte would appreciate assistance
with the planning.

If you are based in, or have contacts in the
South Island, particularly Wanaka/Cromwell
areas, and have
a little time to give, please contact Charlotte
at lottiebrowncl234@gmail.com



GETTING READING FOR THE LAVENDER SEASON

As spring gathers pace across New Zealand, lavender plants are now well into active growth and the first signs of the coming season are becoming visible. Timing will vary by region, cultivar and local conditions, but if you haven't already done so now is the time to walk every row, note what winter has left behind, and set the crop up for healthy, even flowering.

A little attention before rapid growth and bud development can prevent larger problems later. The priorities are straightforward: tidy plants without cutting into old wood being careful not to cut off new flower growth, keep the root zone free-draining and weed-light, confirm nutrition needs, and make sure harvest equipment is ready before flowering accelerates.



IN THE FIELD - Crop readiness

- Inspect plants. Check for winter damage, weak crowns, dieback and uneven growth.
- Prune carefully. Finish shaping where appropriate, keeping green growth on the plant and avoiding hard cuts into old, leafless wood. For many your plants may be already past the pruning window.
- Manage weeds. Remove competition early, before weeds seed or interfere with airflow and harvest.
- Check drainage. Ensure any drainage channels are clear so runoff from any surprise heavy rains does not leave waterlogged areas.
- Review nutrition. Use soil or tissue information where available and avoid excessive nitrogen, which can favour soft growth over oil and flower quality. BEFORE FLOWERING



IN THE FIELD - Business and harvest readiness

- Monitor pests and disease. Look for symptoms early and use an integrated approach suited to your crop and local requirements.
- Check irrigation. Test lines, filters and emitters before dry weather arrives; repair leaks and uneven delivery.
- Prepare equipment. Service harvesters, sickles, bins and distillation equipment, and confirm cleaning and safety procedures.
- Plan labour. Estimate harvest windows and secure help before the busiest weeks.
- Confirm the route to market. Review bookings, visitor information, product stocks, labels and packaging.

KEEP THE PLAN FLEXIBLE - Let conditions—not the calendar—lead

New Zealand's spring weather can change quickly. Keep an eye on local forecasts, soil moisture and plant development, and adjust irrigation, weed control and harvest planning accordingly. Record flowering dates, yield, oil quality, weather and any crop issues; these notes become some of the most useful tools for improving decisions from season to season.

This is also a good time to check that any products used on the crop are permitted for the intended purpose and applied strictly according to current label directions and regulatory requirements. Where advice is needed, consult an appropriately qualified adviser.

The start of a new lavender season always brings renewed energy. I encourage members to share observations from their regions, support newer growers and keep the Association informed about opportunities, challenges and events.

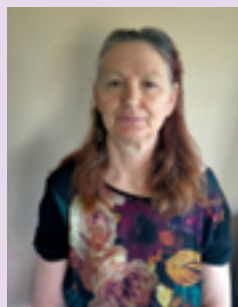
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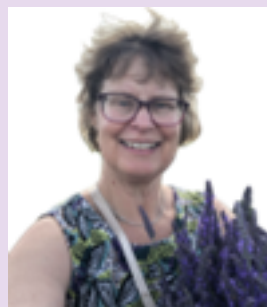


Vice-Chairperson
CHARLOTTE BROWN



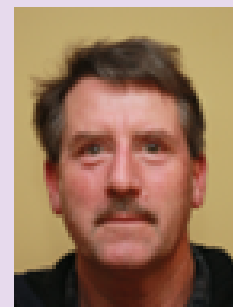
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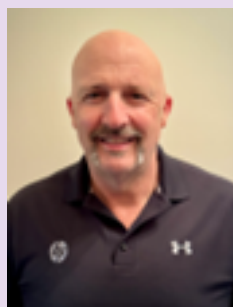
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Committee
MALCOLM ANDERSON



Oil Awards Convenor
STUART ABERNETHY



ATTENTION!

Do you have overdue books?

We need our books back!

Please return them so that other patrons can check them out.



USING BEEF TALLOW IN SOAPS AND OTHER PRODUCTS

By Colleen Coleman

Firstly a bit about us for those of you we have not met. I have been a soap manufacturer for 25 years and over the years have grown lavender for my patented soaps.

When my husband and I retired from farming, we bought a property with a large garden that needed a refurbish so I grew it all in lavender, with the result that we got into distilling. To our delight we got a Silver for our Grosso with our first effort!

At the recent Lavender Conference, Charlotte Brown asked me how to use tallow in soaps etc, and if I would do an article for the newsletter, so here we go:



Consumers have become much more interested in tallow based products in recent years and so I gave it a try. I find it helps repair skin and keeps inflammation down. It seems to work very well with lavender oil.

The first thing you need to do is to prepare your tallow. Any fat can be used but beef brisket fat is by far the best. You will need a slow cooker as it is best to keep the temperature low and cook over a long time. Cut your tallow into small pieces and add 4 cups of water and 3 tbsp salt into your pot, depending on the amount of tallow.

Once rendered down, strain through a muslin cloth to remove any impurities and store in a container in the fridge. Once cooled, lift the tallow off the salt water and dry at room temperature, scraping off any brown sediment. Good beef tallow should not smell but if it does repeat the process again using water, sometimes up to three times. For my products I prefer to use commercially prepared tallow.

Next month I will give you a couple of tallow based soap recipes.





The LIBRARY is available for your use. If you would like to order library books, contact nzlga-library@lavender.org.nz

This link is in the library under Members Resources.

<https://www.lavender.org.nz/nzlga-library-resources/members-resources>



... is sent out every month. To advertise anything lavender related in the Lavender Snippets, send your photos, articles or input to

nzlga-newsletter@lavender.org.nz

LAVENDER SNIPPETS

Contributions from members about what is happening at your place are most welcome. Contributions can be sent at any time.

The newsletter is published after each monthly committee meeting.



The **TALGA** (our Australian Lavender cousins) current newsletter is now available and can be downloaded from the NZLGA website.

Go to: Library/Members Resources–TALGA News



LAVENDER IN NEW ZEALAND Facebook Group

Our Facebook page currently has 62 members.

This group is for members of the NZ Lavender Growers Association and affiliates, in order to share lavender information, pictures, recipes, the latest happenings in your lavender patch, items for sale, or any other lavender related topics.

Only members can see who is in the group and what they post. It is not for people interested in lavender that are not paid members, so please don't invite people to join who are not paid members.

TALGA members are welcome to join.



NZLGA Website

If you are not on the Lavender Trail but wish to be, please email the Webmaster to be activated. Remember - if you are not on, you can't be seen.

Also, it's a good idea to write a short profile about your farm and business, along with some photos from your personal gallery.

You can edit your profile description by logging into the Members Section of our website. Photos will still need to be emailed to the Webmaster for inclusion.

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(Please report any issues to webmaster@lavender.org.nz)