

# Heavenly Scents

TETON VIEW LAVENDER FARM CREATES HERBAL PRODUCT LINE

WORDS JENN REIN | IMAGES COURTESY TETON VIEW LAVENDER FARM

When former engineer Tom Howell was assigned to a job in France, he and wife Linda explored their new environment with enthusiasm. They were especially taken by the region of Provence, and the two became enamored with its lavender fields.



After returning to Idaho, they were nearing retirement and it had already occurred to them that the environment in which lavender thrives was very similar to that of a Teton Valley summer. The plant likes it high and dry. Add hot days with cold nights, along with well-drained alkaline soil, and lavender will thrive.

On their property near St. Anthony, the Howells now tend to more than just lavender plants at their Teton View Lavender Farm. Tom points out, “Most anyone else that farms will harvest and that will be the end of it. We nurture it all through the summer and baby it. We go through this huge process in July getting it cut, and then we start making products. Our harvest is just the beginning.”

Their yield is hand-harvested, with each bush yielding five or six bunches. In 2014, Teton View Lavender harvested over 6,000 of those bunches.

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—Tom Howell

The growth is based on experimenting with their products. “Someone will make a suggestion about something else we could do with it, and we give it a try,” Linda explained.

This has resulted in the creation of linen mist, lotion, soap, bath salts, and a hydrosol spray, among other items. The oil used in their collection of goods is steam distilled at the farm. If the blossoms are not used in this distillation process, the plants are sold as starts, freshly-cut flowers, or lovely dried bundles.

The scent of lavender brings about a sense of calm, and is used in aromatherapy. The uses of lavender are many, and its applications are ancient. The Romans used lavender oil as a deodorant. It can be used to ease skin irritations, provide relief from insect bites, act as a bug repellent, and it can even be used around a garden to ward off animals that might want to graze—they hate the taste of it.

Animals’ disdain for lavender’s flavor only means more for the rest of us, as certain varieties of lavender can be put to use in the kitchen. Teton View Lavender grows the Royal Velvet variety as its edible lavender, which is included in their version of Herbs de Provence and their bestselling spice, lemon pepper. You can find their fresh and dried flowers and culinary items at the Driggs and Jackson Hole Farmer’s Markets. Their entire catalog of items is also for sale at the farm itself, which is home to two retirees embracing a journey of horticulture and homeopathy. ■