



DAVE FRASER / THE INDEPENDENT

GRAFTON — Noah Raymond takes a run through the lavender fields as her father Arnaud looks on at Scott's Barn Lavender Festival near Grafton.

## FESTIVAL

# Everything's coming up lavender

Annual festival held in Grafton

DAVE FRASER

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**GRAFTON** — The rolling hills of Northumberland were the backdrop July 9 and 10 for the fourth annual Lavender Festival.

The two-day event at Scott's Cultural Centre near Grafton brought people from all over the area to sample the sights, smells and taste of lavender. Owner Pat Scott said they had a wonderful turnout and with bright sunny skies the weekend was perfect.

"It was a big success," she said, adding attendance was up about 25 per cent with roughly 2,500 people attending the two-day event.

Visitors were treated to a potpourri of different lavender-inspired delicacies that included ice cream, cookies, and lavender-rubbed beef on a bun. Ms. Scott said the festival has really caught on and with the money she raises she can continue to hire help and keep the

gardens going.

The timing can be a little tricky for the festival, she said, because once the plants are in bloom they have to be harvested so the window for the public viewing is narrow.

"I'm going to be very busy for the next little while," she said.

When she started growing lavender six years ago, it was touch and go at first, Ms. Scott said, because it's a difficult plant to grow and not conducive to the Canadian climate.

"I started with 15 different varieties and was shocked when they all survived."

After that it was full steam ahead and with so many uses that include everything from culinary applications to medicinal purposes, it is a very popular crop.

Lavender is largely grown in France, she said, and Provence is famous for it, but there are thousands of different varieties of lavender. Ms. Scott said what she mainly grows is a selection of French and English plants.

"They are more difficult to grow, but so worth it because of the unique fragrance and taste," she said.

Patricia Burton travelled with a bus tour from Oshawa to take in the festival for the first time and she was amazed at how beautiful the farm was, making the journey well worth it.

"It's beautiful. The fragrance and the grounds (and especially the view from the barn," she said.

Grafton resident Hélène Raymond came to the festival with her family and in-laws from France. Seeing all the lavender reminded her of home and growing up in France where they would often have lavender all around their house.

"I have always loved lavender and my parents use to always have it in their garden," she said.

Since moving to Grafton, Ms. Raymond and her husband Arnaud often go for long bike rides and their route would take them right past the Scott farm, but they never had a chance to take in the festival until now.

"It's like a little taste of home."