

Lavender Study Determines Best Cultivars for Missouri Growers

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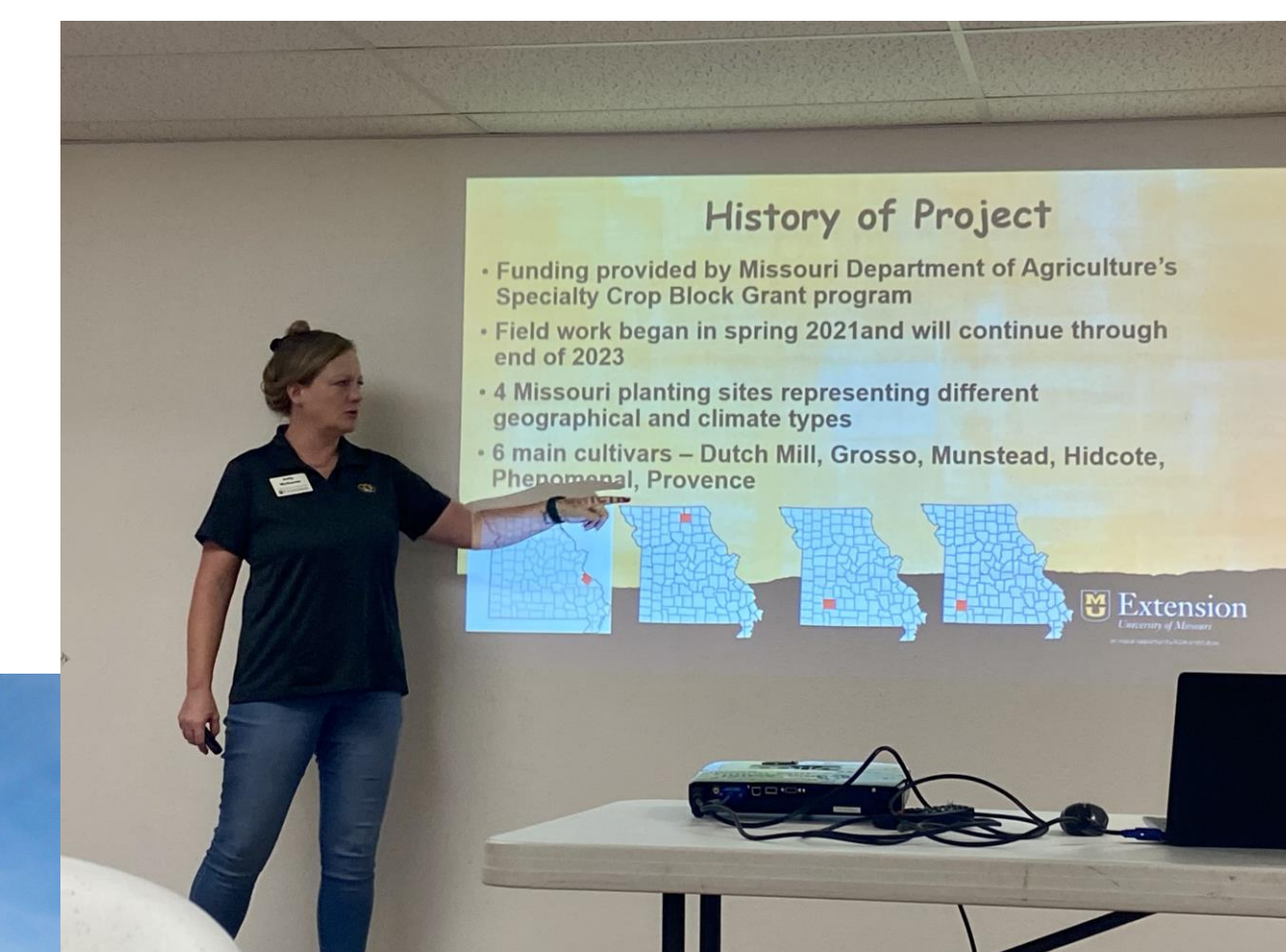
Program Objectives

- Determine the best lavender cultivars for Missouri
- Increase production of lavender as a specialty crop
- Improve knowledge and understanding in growing lavender in Missouri
- Increase profitability and viability of Missouri's lavender growers
- Teach home gardeners to grow lavender and incorporate into landscapes
- Incorporate lavender into gardens including public garden spaces to attract pollinators



Program Activities

- Kelly McGowan, PI, Jennifer Schutter, Katie Kammler and Patrick Byers received a \$39,274 Missouri Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant to study lavender cultivars and best practices in different regions of the state.
- Lavender plots were installed in the northeast, southeast and southwest regions of Missouri.
- Six cultivars, 'Hidcote', 'Phenomenal', 'Munstead', 'Grosso', 'Dutch' and 'Provence' were grown at all three sites, with 22 cultivars in all grown in the northeast Missouri site.
- Data collected on each cultivar included plant height and width, stem length, flower color, winter hardiness, drought tolerance, moisture (rain) tolerance and disease and insect issues.
- Workshops were held at all three sites with an average of 45 people in attendance at each site.
- Programs were given to groups and organizations around the region.
- Newsletters, magazines, radio and television interviews were ways information was distributed to growers, gardeners and the public.



Teaching Methods

- Seven, 40-foot rows were installed at three growing sites in Missouri.
- Data was collected from lavender cultivars and is being used to develop a grower guide.
- Cut flower growers and gardeners attended workshops to learn the best cultivars and practices for growing lavender in their region.
- Participants toured the lavender plot and learned best practices for growing lavender.
- Plant propagator and team member, Donna Aufdenberg, taught team members, growers and home gardeners how to propagate lavender from cuttings.



Quotes

"Thanks for a really informative and fun workshop!"

"I had lots of questions and I got great answers"

Program Outcomes and Impacts

- Average workshop attendance was 45 participants, with just under 150 with all three workshops combined.
- Participants learned how lavender oil is extracted during a lavender distiller demonstration.
- Participants networked and learned best practices and growing information for lavender by attending sessions taught by regional specialists on the team.
- Throughout the past three years, gardeners and growers from all over the state contacted our MU Extension team, asking for information and seeking input on growing lavender in Missouri.
- Multiple media outlets from throughout Missouri and from Quincy, IL reached out to do a story and help distribute our information to the public.
- A cut flower grower planted 500 lavender plants on her northeast Missouri farm.
- After three years of data collection, 'Phenomenal', 'Hidcote', 'Munstead', 'Grosso', 'Super', 'Betty's Blue', 'Sachet', 'Provence' and 'Melissa' are the cultivars we recommend.
- A lavender grower guide is being developed by the team in 2024.

Evaluation

- Evaluations were given to program participants at the workshop.
- 89% of participants rated the workshops excellent.
- 89% of participants had no to very little knowledge of growing lavender before attending the workshop.
- 100% of participants learned some to a lot about lavender after participating in a workshop.