



• Creativity • Collaboration • Continuity • Community

IN THIS ISSUE:

FEATURE STORY

CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN AGRICULTURE

[Page 1](#)

LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

► DIARY OF A LEBANESE AROMATHERAPIST [Pages 2-3](#)

► VEGAN FOOD MADE WITH LOVE AT COARA [Page 3](#)

► DON'T SHOOT: THE CRESTED LARK [Page 4](#)

FEATURE STORY

CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN AGRICULTURE

After months of negotiation and preparation we're finally ready to launch our **3-year training program** within the project **FORSA**. The project is led by **Mercy Corps**, and implemented in collaboration with many local NGOs, with funding by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands**.

FORSA (Fostering Resilience by Strengthening Abilities) will focus on expanding economic opportunities for individuals by improving their access to employment, supporting medium and small enterprises, and building technical capacity within private and government-run vocational training centers.

The role of **SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon** is to provide training sessions on **market-led agricultural skills** to Lebanese citizens (mainly rural residents and fresh graduates) and refugees (Syrian and Palestinian), in the regions of **Jezzine, Chouf, Saida, and West Bekaa**.

Between September 2017 and June 2019, we will be implementing **12 training sessions** for the different target groups. This fall we will begin with 3 training sessions in Jezzine:

• Apple and olive orchard management: September 13 - November 30, 2017

Working on the full management of an orchard requires the training to be spread over a year, which is beyond the scope of the project, so we'll focus on 16 training days covering the pruning of apples and olives (the most cultivated trees in Jezzine) in addition to harvesting, integrated pest management for olive trees, soil fertility, and grafting stone fruits. We hope some of the trainees will be able to find seasonal jobs in the region's orchards.

• Table olive processing: September 25 - December 7, 2017

Following the recent inauguration of the table olive processing center in Roum, Jezzine caza, we will be conducting 15 training days for local women in order to have a team ready to produce the first batches of green and black olive pickles and olive paste this autumn.

• Training for Animators of School Gardens and Micro-Gardens

This training will be addressed to fresh graduates from the Lebanese University (agriculture, environment, landscape design, education), to equip them with the tools that will help them work as animators or facilitators of **learning gardens** in various environments such as schools, refugee camps, building rooftops, etc. It will be a residency course, where the trainees will spend **2 full weeks** in **Saidoun** in **November**.

We will be holding an info session for the orchard training on **September 11, 2017** in **Saidoun** and **Jezzine**, and we look forward to meeting the participants.

The Editorial Team



دورة مجانية في إدارة بساتين الزيتون والتفاح
(القطاف، التقليم، التطعيم، الخ.)

التاريخ: ما بين ١٣ أيلول وأواخر تشرين الثاني
المكان: الشق النظري في صيدون والعمل في بساتين متعددة في منطقة جزين

بدل النقل مؤمن / توزيع أدوات تقليم وتطعيم على المشتركين

البرنامج المجدي:
١٣ - ١٩ - ٢٠ أيلول
٢ - ٩ - ٣١ تشرين الأول
١ - ٢ - ٦ - ٨ - ١٣ - ١٤ - ١٥ - ١٧ - ٢١ تشرين الثاني

للتسجيل: الحضور شخصياً يوم الإثنين ١١ أيلول الساعة ١١:٠٠ إلى صيدون (مبنى المدرسة)
أو الساعة ١٠:٠٠ إلى جزين (مبنى البلدية)

للاستعلام: ٧١٣٢٥٨٨

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands | MERCY CORPS | تراب SOILS | فرصة FORSA

► [back to contents](#)



SAVE PAPER – Do you really need to print this newsletter?

L.E.T.S. Lebanon

PAGE 1/4

LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

FOR THE LOVE OF AROMATHERAPY

The sight and smell of orange blossom water as it dripped from the still's spout is what instilled in me a passion for **aromatherapy** a few years ago.

Aromatherapy comes from the Greek *aroma* (scent) and *therapeia* (healing); it means healing through scents. Aromatherapy then is the usage of aromatic plants for therapy, and it is classified under **phytotherapy** (herbal medicine). From these plants we can extract **essential oils** through **distillation** (evaporation and condensation), **solvents** (such as cocoa absolute), or **mechanical pressure** (such as citrus fruit essential oils), as well as **hydrolates**, which are the aqueous part collected at the outlet of the still.

Essential oils do not contain fatty substances as their name may suggest. They are distinguished from fatty oils (such as olive or palm oil) by the volatile nature of their components.

Thanks to a training I took at the **Lyon school of medicinal plants and natural knowledge**, I learned about the therapeutic actions of aromatic molecules. In the anti-infectious class, alcohols with ten carbon atoms (or monoterpenols) are located immediately after the phenols; their list is extensive and includes geraniol, linalol, thujanol and myrcenol, terpineol, menthol, and piperitol among the best known examples and those with the best antibiotic action. The essential oils of lavender contain a large quantity of these molecules. These oils are very reliable and are used to treat many cases of bacterial infections.

I was also able to build a basic collection of essential oils. I can use them individually or in combinations to create massage oils but also perfumes and aromatic candles.

I am particularly interested in lavender, which I process and plant in the Lebanese mountains. There are several types of lavender but they all share exceptional properties that make their oil among the most used today. In a recent survey that I conducted as part of a SwitchMed training for entrepreneurs, I found that lavender was the most used essential oil.

The name "lavender" comes from the Latin term *lavare* which means cleansing. This plant endowed with powerful aromas is able to defend itself against attacks and develop a repulsive system against insects and aggressions of various forms. Lavender is complex and I learned to identify its many species and varieties. French lavender (*Lavandula stoecha*) occurs naturally in Lebanon's wilderness, often nested in a rocky and sandy corner. But the species from which I extract essential oil include English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*, formerly *Lavandula officinalis*), spike lavender (*Lavandula latifolia*), and lavandin (*Lavandula hybrida*) a natural hybrid occurring from the cross pollination of English lavender and spike lavender.

Lavandula angustifolia measures 20-60 cm. It grows in highly calcareous soils at altitudes between 500 and 1,800 m, flowering around end-June. Using cuttings from this wild lavender, we obtained "clones" known as "Maillette," "Matherone," etc. which are now widely cultivated. *Lavandula latifolia* has larger hairy leaves and measures 60-90 cm. It grows at altitudes of 200 to 800 m and flowers later in the year, around August. Cross pollination between these two species occurs at altitudes between 500 and 800 m and produces lavandin. Because this hybrid is a sterile clone, it is propagated by cuttings, which makes natural cultivation difficult as all members of a plantation are identical. There are currently two main clones named after their creators: "Grosso" and "l'Abrial."

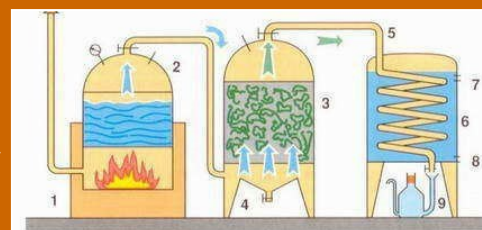
Lavender is harvested between July and August. Distillation consists of packing lavender in a vat and boiling water in another. As the water evaporates, it escapes through pressure into the other vat. The charged steam then goes through a refrigerant which condenses it. At the end of the process, we obtain essential oil and a hydrolate. 20 kg of lavender flowers produce about 400 ml of oil and 3 gallons of hydrolate.

Lavender is one of the essential oils with the most medicinally active ingredients. We will enumerate and explain each medicinal property.

- Calming**: a sedative substance with generalized action.
- Sedative**: a substance that moderates the abnormal excitability of the nervous system and attenuates general sensitivity.
- Hypotensive**: a substance that can lower blood pressure by blood vessel vasodilation.
- Antispasmodic**: a substance intended to eliminate spasms, cramps, and involuntary contractions of smooth muscles, whatever their seat.
- Antiseptic**: a substance capable of destroying the germs causing many ailments. Its antimicrobial activity can be tested by an aromagram, equivalent to the antibiogram commonly used in the laboratory.
- Anti-inflammatory**: a substance that controls inflammatory reactions resulting in redness, heat, and pain, which accompany a number of ailments.

Lavender essential oil in its pure form should be used externally by cutaneously applying a few drops in the hollow of the palms, the neck, or the lower back because the oil then penetrates quickly in the blood. It could also be diluted in a neutral oil and applied by massage on a larger part of the body.

Continued on Page 3



1. Foyer - 2. Chaudière - 3. Vase à fleurs - 4. Vidange de condensation - 5. Col de cygne
6. Réfrigérant avec serpentins 7. Sortie d'eau chaude - 8. Arrivée d'eau froide - 9. Essencier servant à la décantation de l'essence et de l'hydrolat

The distillation process. Source: http://s2.e-monsite.com/2010/01/06/12/resize_550_550/j.jpg



► [back to contents](#)



LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

Continued from Page 2

The hydrolate is less concentrated than the essential oil and can be ingested to combat acidity or used as a tonic in a spray. It can also be a base for balms and soaps.

If the biochemical molecules of essential oils have powerful effects on the ailments of the body, they also act on the psycho-emotional level. For example, essential oil of tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) has antifungal and anti-infectious properties but also combats nervous exhaustion and improves mental clarity and serenity.

I distribute my production of lavender essential oils and hydrolates under the name **Aromarietherapy** (<https://www.facebook.com/Aromarietherapy-1839775312906690/>). I take part in local markets such as **Souk el Tayeb** or the natural products market in Jbeil, and organize workshops in collaboration with venues like the Alice Edde boutique or Marc Beyrouthi's Nature store.

Today, the production of essential oils in Lebanon focuses on lavender, trilobal sage, oregano syriacum, and rosemary. There is a need to motivate farmers to cultivate more aromatic plants like sweet scented geraniums (*Pelargonium graveolens*) or peppermint to produce new quality oils. We must also continue to reach out to the public because aromatherapy needs awareness and transmission of knowledge through informed advice.

Shared by Marie Mouzaya



► [back to contents](#)

VEGAN FOOD MADE WITH LOVE AT COARA

I met **Walid** and **Maysoun** a few years ago at the **Souk El Tayeb** farmer's market, where they used to sell vegan products. Since then, I learned that they had opened their small vegan restaurant which they named **Coara** (the English transliteration of an old word designating a container for storing preserves) in **Kfarqatra** in the **Chouf caza**. I'm not a vegan myself but I was curious to pay them a visit and get the chance to support a small business like theirs while enjoying a cozy atmosphere and good food.

I finally got around to visiting the couple with my partner a couple of weeks ago. Thanks to the phone navigator we were able to find our way through the narrow roads that lead to a small house which Walid and Maysoun are renting for their business. The first thing I noticed was a vegetable bed mulched with lavender cuttings - an example of waste products becoming a resource. Maysoun greeted us and asked if we wanted to sit indoor or outdoor. Because the weather was so great, we went for the outdoor option where wooden tables were arranged on a gravel terrace and decorated with vases brimming with fresh and colorful flowers, surrounded by strawberries planted in cut barrels.

We didn't know what the menu was in advance, and only discovered it while listening to the owners list the dishes to the nearby group. To all our surprise, the appetizers included *shawarma* and *soujouk* (traditionally meat dishes) but Maysoun explained that the "meat" consisted of cooked wheat gluten. We went for quinoa *tabboule* salad, a seasonal salad, mini pizzas, chard pies, and *shawarma*, with a main dish of gratin with courgettes, fresh mushrooms, and almond cheese. It was the first time I tasted almond cheese and found it to be delicious. As for the gluten meat, I was glad it was made from a local ingredient rather than soya; it tasted ok until my head realized I was eating something unusual!

Overall the food was great and very light, and the experience of eating in a cozy atmosphere and having a direct contact with the owners was refreshing.

Some years ago, the couple decided to change their diet after they faced health problems. They started to rely more on whole grains and organic vegetables, and were pleased with the positive effects this had on their entire family's health. When Walid had to quit his job in 2002, they decided to share their passion for healthy food with others and established their Coara company for processed and fresh products.

I highly recommend Coara even for non-vegans, it's always refreshing to try something different. **Facebook page:** Coara <https://www.facebook.com/CoaraKfarqatra/>

Shared by Rita Khawand



► [back to contents](#)



LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

SHOOT ONLY WITH A CAMERA: THE CRESTED LARK

The **crested lark** (*Galerida cristata* - القبرة المتوجة) is a small predominantly brown bird weighing around 50 grams, with a white belly also daubed with brown feathers. It has a large wingspan of 38 cm and a short tail with yellow legs, a brown beak, and brown eyes. It is easily recognized by a crest of brown feathers on its head, measuring up to 17 cm, which gives it its name and distinguishes it from other larks.

The crested lark's long, large wings helps it stay airborne for a long time. It feeds on grains, seeds, insects, spiders, and worms. They build ground nests made of dry wigs and grass, which they hide among tall grass or in the shade of trees or bushes. The female lays around 4 eggs that are cream-colored with shades of brown. The male is known for its ability to chirp continuously for several minutes, especially during the mating period.

The crested lark is a resident bird that nests in Lebanon. It can be found in coastal plains, the Bekaa Valley, and mountainous areas below 1,400 meters in altitude. In the winter and outside the mating season, it can be seen flying in flocks. Unlike the Calandra lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*) - the only lark species classified as a game bird under the new Lebanese Hunting Law - the crested lark is not considered a game bird.

Shared by Fouad Itani

This article was originally published on the Sayd magazine's website:
<http://www.sayd-magazine.com/4220/>

All photos courtesy of Fouad Itani. See more photos on **Birds of Lebanon and the Middle East**
<https://www.facebook.com/birdsoflebanon/>



► [back to contents](#)

GET IN TOUCH, GET INVOLVED


Do you enjoy reading this newsletter?


Send us your feedback and suggestions, share your news, photos, tips or thoughts, or find out more.


Email us at: contact.soilslebanon@gmail.com


Editor in chief: Alexis Baghdadi

L.E.T.S. Lebanon is published by
SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon

 www.soils-permaculture-lebanon.com

 SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon

 +961-71-617988

 twitter.com/SOILSLebanon

A THOUGHT TO SHARE ...

"Nature can do more
than physicians."



—Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

► [back to contents](#)



SAVE PAPER – Do you really need to print this newsletter?

L.E.T.S. Lebanon

PAGE 4/4