



CALU – Gwlad – October 2007

CALU's Welsh Herbs Project

CALU's herb project at the Welsh College of Horticulture has continued to develop and grow in 2007. Since the herb workshops held in early 2007 the project's findings have been presented at many of the Welsh agricultural shows, including on CALU's award winning stand at the Royal Welsh Show. Wherever the Welsh Herbs Project has exhibited, the display always succeeds in generating a great deal of interest amongst both current and prospective growers.

Feedback from the shows has highlighted a particular interest in producing lavender in Wales. The lavender group is large and includes annual and herbaceous plants. However the plant most widely cultivated in the UK is an evergreen shrub with a strong scent and a range of colours from rich deep purples through subtle blues, pinks and whites. Some lavenders are well suited to the poorer, rocky soils and mild coastal climates found in Wales. An additional benefit is that the plants have quite high pest and disease resistance.

Lavender has a range of uses. Perhaps the most frequently thought of is the production of lavender essential oil, which is used in perfumery (lavender is a key ingredient in the classic Eau de Cologne), cosmetics, aromatherapy and pharmaceutical products. The best quality lavender essential oil commands a high price. Lavenders are also widely grown as ornamentals; for flower arrangements; in pot pourris; and large scale lavender farms can support the production of pure lavender honey.

Through continuing support from CALU the Welsh Herbs Project is pleased to announce that they will be arranging at a programme of meetings in Wales this winter to foster opportunities for further development of commercial herb production. The programme includes a study tour of a herb farm and processing facility, plus a series of talks from industry experts, marketing advisors and seed companies.

As well as bringing in industry experts, the meetings provide a forum where those growing herbs or considering growing herbs in Wales can meet to exchange information, advice and experiences.

For further information contact CALU – calu@bangor.ac.uk. Further details of all CALU's events can be found on the CALU website – www.calu.bangor.ac.uk.