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PEGGY TURBETT | THE PLAIN DEALER

Inhale the atmosphere and pick plants at the Daybreak farm in Streetsboro

ROXANNE WASHINGTON | Plain Dealer Reporter

How often does a business boast that not only is it kid-friendly, but that kids "running and screaming are fine"? | Almost never. | But that's the promise made by Jody Byrne and Michael Slyker, owners of the picturesque Daybreak Lavend Farm in Streetsboro. The lavender farmers are welcoming the public (and their offspring) to the couple's 14-acre farm, which produces 13 varieties of lavender. Their invitation reads: "Pick a lavender bouquet, picnic in the lavender or by the pond, and enjoy this wee slice of heaven we call Daybreak Lavender Farm." | But don't wait too long, they add. July is peak bloom time, although the open house continues until Saturday, Aug. 15. | The Daybreak outing, should you head out there, fits right in with the hottest family vacations this summer: It is close and inexpensive. Streetsboro is less than an hour's drive from downtown Cleveland. On the farm, if you squint and deeply inhale the scent of blooming lavender, you can almost imagine you've been transported to the lavender fields of Provence, France.

"I like showing off this property because it's beautiful, and I like to see kids in the field," says Byrne. "And my husband never tires of telling people how to grow and cultivate lavender."

In 2006, Byrne and Slyker had a one-day lavender festival that drew about 1,200 attendees. This year, the fun is spread out over the peak growing season, rather than a one-day event that rain can ruin.

Daybreak also has been recognized by an Ohio Senate proclamation as the state's first lavender farm. The 13 types of lavender grown at Daybreak include "the usual suspects" usual if you are knowledgeable about lavender - including 'Hidcote,' 'Munstead' and 'Grosso.' The couple also grows 'White Provence,' considered the finest culinary lavender in the world, says Byrne.

"You can feel free to cut as much or as little as you want," Byrne says. What's more, the farm's wild oxeye daisies are free.

Byrne and Slyker cultivate, grow, prune, harvest, dry and propagate their lavender by hand. They're more than happy to share their lavender-growing expertise with anyone interested in trying to grow their own. On their Web site, there's a "Growing Great Lavender!" page for folks who think they might want to try this at home.

With the help of staff, the couple create and make sculptural soaps and other bath and body products, and edibles.

"Would you like to try some dark chocolate lavender truffle?"

The person making the tempting offer is Chantal DeRhodes, who manages the Daybreak Boutique, just a few minutes from the farm, at 8376 Ohio 14 (at Diagonal Road), Streetsboro.

A slice of Provence in Streetsboro? That's the atmosphere Jody Byrne and Michael Slyker are going for at their Daybreak Lavender Farm.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
PEGGY TURBETT } THE PLAIN DEALER

FYI

What: Pick your own lavender bunches and discover lavender's many uses at Daybreak Lavender Farm.

Where: 2129 Frost Road, Streetsboro.

Web site: daybreaklavenderfarm.com.

Hours: Noon-4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, Aug. 15.

Price: Free.

Call: 330-626-3235.

Daybreak Boutique: 8376 Ohio 14 (at Diagonal Road), Streetsboro, 330-212-3135.

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ONLINE: To see a gallery of photographs by Peggy Turbett of the Daybreak Lavender Farm, go to:
cleveland.com/insideout

Inhale the atmosphere and pick plants

The charming boutique in the century home shares space with the equally charming Sandy's Notions Flowers & Gifts. The building used to be a stagecoach inn, and the owner is the granddaughter of the inn's original owner.

The person to whom DeRhodes is speaking says, yes, she will try the lavender truffle. Lavender scone? Yes, she'll try some of that, too.

Along with lavender edibles, the small shop is brimming with products such as a lavender loofah, Lavender Mint Aroma Soap, a variety of shea butter products, products made with goat milk all organic, of course, and body pampering.

"This is our best seller," says DeRhodes, picking up the Lovelight Body Candle that's \$24.99. As the wax melts, it becomes a warm moisturizer for the skin.

Back on the farm, when Slyker isn't elbow deep in lavender, he's building and restoring canoes in his barn. The couple describe themselves as aging hippies who love the land, love growing organically and love recycling. So if you ask Slyker about the canoes that he's giving new life, he'll probably show you those, too.



Michael Slyker, who runs Daybreak Lavender Farm with his wife, Jody Byrne, rubs dried buds from a bundle of French lavender stalks. The dried buds can be used in sachet pillows.



"Insanely rich" gourmet dark chocolate lavender torte is one of the culinary lavender treats available at Daybreak Boutique near the Daybreak Lavender Farm.