



# Sweet smell of lavender success

## Stephanie Dalton

Most farmers finish a day's work smelling a bit dusty and sweaty, but at Margate a harvest has just begun that leaves the workers smelling like a luxurious day spa.

Essential Oils of Tasmania has just begun its harvest season at Brookfield Farm Margate, where more than 16ha of purple rolling fields will be harvested to make pure lavender oil.

Farm supervisor Daphine Ong said the farm recently underwent a major upgrade, enabling the distillation of the plant onsite.

"It takes around three to three and a half weeks to harvest the lavender," Ms Ong said.

"We have about three paddocks or 16ha, and we begin harvesting

closest to the road. Then, as soon as we harvest, we take the lavender to our onsite distillery, which we do rather quickly as lavender oil can be quite volatile, and we want the scent to be as

strong and of the highest quality possible," she said.

Ms Ong said the distilled flowers produced pure Tasmanian lavender oil, which is known worldwide for its "sweet, floral, herbaceous and

slightly woody smell". "Our lavender was originally cultivated from true French lavender sourced from the Maritime Alps in Provence, which funnily enough, enjoys a climate similar to that here in

southern Tasmania. But we have worked closely with the University of Tasmania over many years to establish Tasmanian lavender, which is now recognised as its own subspecies," Ms Ong said.



Essential Oils of Tasmania farm supervisor Daphine Ong in the fields of lavender, as the harvest begins at Margate (inset). Pictures: Chris Kidd