

The Gardenerd  
Gazette

How I spent my Summer  
Vacation

August 12, 2007

---

Featured Product

[Gardenerd BBQ Apron](#)  
**\$19.99**

In This Issue:

1. Soaking Up Summer
2. Lavender vs. Lavandin
3. Parsnip Seed Saving
4. Gardenerd Product of the Month: BBQ Apron

---

1. Soaking Up Summer

Ah summer! It's the perfect time to relax and enjoy the sun, the shade and a nice glass of lemonade. It's also been the time for the Gardenerd to take a trip or two (part of the reason for the lull in your mailboxes recently). This July, yours truly visited Ireland and France and took in some wonderful gardens. You can find details about our tour each week in the [Gardenerd Blog](#), beginning with the little town of Adair, where thatched-roof cottages line the streets and cozy gardens lure you into a fairy tale world that has looked the same for hundreds of years. In coming weeks, you'll read about the lavender fields of Provence and much, much more. Be sure to get on the mailing list at Gardenerd.com. You can even subscribe to the blog and have it delivered to your inbox directly.

---

2. Lavender vs. Lavandin

What if I told you that most lavender scented products don't use lavender, but instead use a hybridized strain of the plant called *lavandin* instead? Lavandin is a cross between true lavender and spike lavender. The truth is that many commercial lavender farmers grow lavandin because it produces more oil during distillation than lavender, is less expensive, has a stronger fragrance, and has just as many uses. It looks just like lavender; they just get more oil per plant than with true lavender.

Medicinally, they have different properties as well. Lavender has more of a sedating effect, perfect for massage and relaxing baths, while lavandin is used for stimulating the respiratory system (treating colds and flu because of the higher camphor content) and skin irritations. As with all essential oils, there are cautionary tales that require expert consultation. For example, during my research, I read that lavender should not be used while pregnant, and can in some cases even be toxic. Here is a great website with more info

about the world of both lavender and lavender essential oils:

Link:

[http://www.jerseylavender.co.uk/content.asp?pageid=488&state\\_sessionid=mijxxuxuzumnfmvboonongouyxn](http://www.jerseylavender.co.uk/content.asp?pageid=488&state_sessionid=mijxxuxuzumnfmvboonongouyxn)

---

### 3. Parsnip Seed Saving

I have a rare opportunity in front of me at the moment. You see - my parsnips have gone to seed. It's rare because not only do I rarely leave parsnips in the ground longer than a season, but parsnips only go to seed in their second year. I certainly haven't left them in the ground *that* long, so I'm taking this as a fluke and jumping on the opportunity to harvest my first seeds.

These plants become even more beautiful when they go to seed. Tall spikes of tiny yellow flowers fan out into a flat circle of chartreuse seedpods that slowly turn brown over time. Each brown seedpod then separates in half and falls to the ground. One half holds the seed and the other is chaff. The key is to cover each stalk with mesh (like an old nylon stocking) so the seeds can fall off in the safety of confinement rather than going to the birds, so to speak.

In a world where most everything comes in a package, it is with opportunities like these that we gain knowledge of where things really come from. I am delighted to have the chance to watch the cycle of life this summer in a way I never have before. I'll keep you posted on the result of next year's planting. To be continued.

---

### 4. Gardenerd Product of the Month: BBQ Apron

What better way to celebrate the great outdoors this summer than to outfit yourself with a [Gardenerd BBQ Apron](#)? It's really all you need to look sharp standing next to your grill. Imagine yourself (or your loved one) flipping grilled veggies while proudly advertising to everyone that you know your stuff when it comes to gardening. Handy pockets make it perfect for multitasking or looking calm, cool and collected under the pressure of producing the world's best burger.

Stay tuned for more gardening tips and tidbits from the Gardenerd. **Happy Summer Gardening!**