GREAT LAKES EXPO
FRUIT, VEGETABLE & FARM MARKET

Connect. Innovate. Grow. on Dec 9, 2025

GREAT LAKES Lavender Growers

Annual Meeting and Lavender Sessions on Dec 9 will include:
8:30am - Farm Market Roundtable - Join your fellow farm market and agritourism operators to discuss current challenges and opportunities in the field.

10:30am - Charlotte Smith - Working harder than ever but still struggling to make your farm profitable? Charlotte will reveal the five critical mistakes costing farms tens of thousands of dollars every year—and exactly how to fix them.

2:00pm - Lavender processing with Bill Mansfield & Kaitlin McHenry; Developing a realistic & functional business plan with Florencia Colella; Crash Course in Zoning Laws with Matt Kapp; Autonomous lavender harvesting robots with Jung Yun Bae

Why Expo
The main draw is that the Expo is the largest specialty crop event in the Great Lakes region. The attendees are ready to network with exhibitors about their needs, ideas, and products.
GLEXPO.COM

At Expo
Register at glexpo.com/attend/register
Great Lakes Expo is held December 9-11, Grand Rapids, Michigan

The Expo Social is held in the Amway Grand Plaza on Dec 10 at 5:30pm. Free drinks, food, and networking, prior to industry awards.

Expo 2025
Prepare for expanded special guests and speakers in 2025 Get a copy of the pre-registration brochure or follow us on social media to find out who.

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From Field to Bottle: Lavender Harvesting and Processing Essentials
Day: Tuesday Dec. 9, 2025
Speakers: Bill Mansfield and Kaitlin McHenry
Time: 2:00-2:50 PM
Description: Follow the journey of lavender from field to finished product in this comprehensive session led by growers from Lavender Hill Farm. Bill and Kaitlin will walk you through the entire process—from choosing the right harvest time for your end use to best practices for cutting, drying, and storing plant material. You'll also learn the fundamentals of essential oil extraction through distillation and explore how growers transform their oils into value-added products such as soaps, lotions, and culinary goods. Whether your goal is fresh bouquets or premium oils, you'll leave with practical guidance to improve quality and maximize returns.

Topic: 15-minute Challenge: Three Big Topics Every Lavender Grower Should Know
Day: Tuesday Dec. 9, 2025
Speakers: Florencia Colella, Matt Kapp, Jung Yun Bae
Time: 3:00 – 4:00 PM
Description: In this fast-paced, idea-packed hour, three experts take on the 15-Minute Challenge: distilling their big topics down to the essentials every lavender grower needs to know. Each speaker will share practical insights and key takeaways to help you strengthen your business, avoid costly missteps, and prepare for the future. You'll gain concrete tools for building a solid business plan and navigating zoning laws—plus a glimpse into the next wave of harvest technology through an exciting look at autonomous lavender-harvesting robots.

Building a Business that Lasts
Day: Tuesday Dec 9, 2025
Speaker: Florencia Colella
Affiliation: Michigan State University Extension
Time: 3:00 PM – 3:15 PM (+ 5 minutes Q&A)
Description: A solid business plan is more than a formality, it's your roadmap for growth and sustainability. Florencia will walk you through the must-have elements of a functional business plan, highlight common pitfalls new farmers make, and share practical tips for aligning your vision with real-world budgets, markets, and capacity.

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Zoning Laws 101: Avoiding Regulatory Roadblocks
Day: Tuesday Dec 9, 2025
Speaker: Matt Kapp
Affiliation: Michigan Farm Bureau
Time: 3:20 - 3:35 PM (+ 5 minutes Q&A)
Description: Don't let your dream lavender business get sidelined by local regulations. Matt will deliver a crash course in zoning basics, explaining what every farm owner should know before breaking ground, expanding facilities, or adding agritourism components. Learn key questions to ask, how to engage with local officials, and where to go for help.

Meet the Future: Autonomous Lavender Harvesting Robots
Day: Tuesday Dec 9, 2025
Speaker: Jung Yun Bae
Affiliation: Michigan Technological University
Time: 3:40-3:55 PM (+ 5 minutes Q&A)
Description: Harvesting lavender is beautiful, but back-breaking. Dr, Bae will introduce her cutting-edge research on robotic harvesting technology designed to ease labor demands and improve efficiency during the narrow harvest window. Gain a first look at emerging automation tools and how they could reshape the way growers approach peak season.