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Discovering Epsom’s Secret Lavender Garden

24 July 2026



A family-run lavender business has celebrated 20 years after growing from a simple stall and tent into one of the area’s best-known attractions.

Mayfield Lavender marked the milestone at its Epsom site, where its founder, Lorna Maye, reflected on two decades of family life, hard work, community connections and the challenges of building a business from the ground up.

“My goodness knows how we’ve got to 20 years and are still standing upright,” she joked. “It’s been lots of fun. It’s been extremely hard work.”

Her daughters were just four and six when the family started Mayfield Lavender and have grown up alongside the business. In the early days, they would play with Polly Pocket and Playmobil in the back of the family camper van while their parents worked at the lavender fields. “We used to bribe them to come up to the lavender fields,” she recalled.

She said she now wishes the family had filmed those early years after watching Clarkson’s Farm. “It has been a huge learning curve,” she said. “We’ve come a long way.”

But after two decades, one of the things she is proudest of is that the business remains a family affair. “What’s really important to me is working with my girls,” she said. “I think hard work pays off in lots of different ways.”

She admitted that running the business has often meant long hours and that achieving a good work-life balance has not always been easy. “Sometimes people chastise you for working all the time and say, ‘Why do you work so hard? You should be doing other things. But actually, I really enjoy a lot of it. I’ve been doing it for 20 years and I kind of feel like I don’t know anything else.”

From lavender fields to an Epsom café

The family bought its Epsom site in 2011, when it was considerably more dilapidated than it is today. The site had previously been used for growing crops, before the family planted lavender and began transforming the land. Their next major step came in November 2022 when they opened a full café, a venture which quickly became much busier than expected.

Despite its popularity, she told fellow local business owners that hospitality can be a difficult industry in which to make money. She added that while the café is regularly full, the challenge is now working out how to turn that popularity into a sustainable business.

“We tick a lot of the boxes. We’re doing something right, but we just have to work out how we can maximise our opportunity.”

She also praised the staff, friends and family who have helped Mayfield Lavender grow over the years, describing the business as very much a team effort.

The work continues for much of the year. Preparations for the summer lavender season begin around March, before the fields open to visitors. By September, harvesting and closing the fields is under way, before the family turns its attention to Christmas trees and preparations begin once again for the following summer.

A place with meaning

Beyond the business itself, one of the most rewarding parts of Mayfield Lavender has been discovering what the fields mean to the people who visit them. Some customers have returned year after year for two decades.

The fields have also become a place of comfort for some people undergoing treatment at the nearby Royal Marsden. “We’re lucky enough to have the Royal Marsden on our doorstep,” she said. Over the years, memorial benches have been placed at the fields, while patients and their families have visited during and after treatment.

“Sometimes you forget that it actually means a lot to people,” she said. “The lavender makes them feel relaxed. It’s a good thing to have provided something that is a nice environment for people.”

For the founder herself, one of the rewards of all those years of work comes from seeing the fields at the start of the day. “There’s nothing better than going up first thing in the morning and seeing the blue sky over the purple fields,” she said.

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‘Resourcefulness is greater than strength’

After 20 years in business, there is one phrase the family regularly returns to: “Resourcefulness is greater than strength.”

She described it as something of a company motto. “There’s always something that challenges you,” she said. “I think the biggest challenge actually is thinking more cleverly rather than the doing. Like many independent businesses, Mayfield is dealing with rising costs, including business rates, taxes and wages.

“Business is challenging for everybody,” she said. “We just have to figure it out. It’s part of the challenge of business.”

The anniversary event also gave the family a rare opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other local businesses. Although Mayfield Lavender welcomes large numbers of visitors and has strong ties with the community, its founder said running a business can sometimes be surprisingly isolating.

Discovering Epsom’s Secret Lavender Garden

While many people know Mayfield Lavender’s Banstead fields, the family is also keen for more residents to discover its Secret Lavender Garden in Epsom. Unlike the Banstead fields, which can be seen from the road, the Epsom garden is tucked away, which inspired its name.

She added: “What I want is for people to have the confidence to come and discover new things and to support local business.”

Renewal, regrowth and regeneration

Looking to the future also means looking after the lavender itself. Mayfield has begun a major regeneration programme as some of its original lavender plants approach 20 years old. As lavender plants age, they can become more straggly and produce less oil, both in terms of quantity and quality, meaning areas of the fields eventually need to be replanted.

The programme, which began last year, centres on three words: renewal, regrowth and regeneration.

“You can’t come to a lavender field and expect it to look picture-postcard every year because it’s a natural plant,” she said. “The weather plays its part, tourism plays its part, and sometimes the plant ages and it needs to be replaced.”

When some of the older plants were removed, visitors were shown how to take lavender cuttings and were encouraged to take them home and grow them in their own gardens.

The idea was that a small part of Mayfield Lavender could continue growing elsewhere while the main fields themselves were regenerated. The business also grows young plants in its Epsom glasshouse ready for replanting.

The founder hopes the project will encourage more people to grow lavender at home, particularly during increasingly hot and dry weather. Once established in a sunny position and well-drained soil, lavender requires relatively little water and can be a valuable drought-tolerant addition to a garden.

It also provides an important food source for bees and other pollinators. For Mayfield Lavender, the regeneration programme is therefore about much more than keeping the fields looking beautiful.

“You have to keep providing, not just for people to enjoy the field, but for all the wildlife and other plant life that grows around it to carry on.”

Twenty years after the family began with a stall, a tent and two young children in tow, Mayfield Lavender is continuing to evolve, while holding on to the family, community and landscape at the heart of the business.

Visit and get involved

Local residents are invited to discover Mayfield Lavender’s Secret Lavender Garden in Epsom, visit the café and explore the lavender for themselves. The family is also keen to hear from local businesses, community groups and organisations interested in collaborating or developing new ideas at the site. As its founder put it: “If there’s something that you think, ‘I could be doing something really cool here,’ just let us know.”

Where to find us?

Caffee: Mayfield Lavender Glasshouse Cafe and Gift & Plant Shop, 139 Reigate Rd, Epsom KT17 3DW

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