



## Shout-out

*After Suzanne Steed moved to a farm, she realized she'd traded one wellness career in for another. By Jill Buchner*

Each summer, Suzanne Steed's Sparta, Ont., home becomes awash in a haze of powdery violet when some 10,000 lavender plants bloom. As visitors wander the fragrant rows, they report a feeling of well-being. "We plant it so people can come and relax," says Suzanne. Having left her career in nursing, she started Steed and Company Lavender with a different kind of wellness in mind. She now helps people with products and foods containing the herb known for its soothing powers.

A decade ago, Suzanne moved to a farm tucked away within 45 acres of Carolinian forest. In dry summers, she found lavender was one thing that could thrive in the sandy soil just north of Lake Erie. Now, flourishing amidst an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (a provincial designation that offers the land some protection), the lavender – a natural pest repellent – is untouched by chemicals. "It's a very special property," says Suzanne. "You don't want to do anything to damage it." She makes her products with local ingredients – whether they're berries for jams or mustard and garlic for salad dressings.

"When the lavender's in bloom, it's beautiful. It breaks my heart," says Suzanne. "It's just from an artist's palette." But she knows the garden is more than just a pretty picture. It's a part of the environment and community. And "it's an experience. It's giving people a little bit of respite."