

# T<sup>Swanley</sup> Times


An edition of the Dartford Times series




Kentish Times  
Newspaper

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Sevenoaks, West Kingsdown, Horton Kirby, Eynsford, Farningham, Hextable



All the  
highs  
and  
lows  
**FREE  
INSIDE**  
16-page  
World Cup  
pull-out



## Flavour of the month

Why creative cooks  
are choosing lavender  
for their summer  
dishes, see page 17

A photograph of a person sitting in a field of lavender. The person is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and teal pants. They are holding a small bunch of lavender flowers in their hands. The field is filled with rows of purple lavender plants and green foliage. The background is a soft-focus landscape of more lavender fields under a bright sky.

# Lavender: taste of summer

Reporter SCOTT SINCLAIR reveals why creat  
should make lavender their flavour of the m

**F**OOD producers say they've stumbled on the perfect summer food ingredient - lavender!

Imaginative staff at The Hop Shop, between Eynsford and Shoreham in Sevenoaks, have produced marmalades, cakes, cheeses, jams and even ice cream using the fragranced flower as a core ingredient.

The award-winning shop uses essence made from the oil of lavender plants, thousands of which are grown at nearby Castle Farm.

Lavender, known mostly for its aromatic and therapeutic properties, has been used to make food before, particularly in medieval times.

Caroline Alexander, of The Hop Shop, said: "People think of lavender as a fragrance and not as a flavour.

"But it is not what they expect. Not only are people that try it surprised by the flavour, they are often very pleasantly surprised!"

Caroline said the idea for this unique lavender-based range of grub came up after discovering of the flower's use in shortbreads and other foods centuries ago.

Castle Farm has been growing and distilling the oil of over half a million



PICTURES by ANDY BARNES

HEAVEN SCENT: Top and right, a worker picking lavender, and above, eating

lavender plants every summer for the past eight years.

Caroline explained: "We became interested in the idea of using lavender to make a wide range of foods,

but we knew we had to get an essence developed as the oil does not mix with the fats used in making food.

"We ended up making ice cream with this essence and it was hugely popu-

lar so we had to develop other sorts."

All Castle Farm products are made with beef, honey

## Lavender ice cream

4 egg yolks  
1/2 pint (250ml) milk  
1/2 pint (250ml) double cream  
100g granulated sugar or caster sugar  
0.5ml lavender cold essence (15 drops to taste).

1. Bring the milk slowly to boiling point in a saucepan.

2. Separately, mix

together the egg yolks and sugar until thick.

3. Pour into this the hot milk, whilst continuously stirring.

4. Then pour the mixture back into the pan and heat gently, stirring until the custard thickens - do not boil.

5. When you can see a film form over the back

of your spoon it's time to remove the saucepan from the heat. Leave to cool.

6. When the custard base is cold, stir in the cream and the lavender essence.

7. Transfer the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions.

