

## PLANT ASSIGNMENT 2 LAVENDER AND IT'S COMPANION IN MY GARDEN, MACADAMIA NUT TREE

Spending time with the lavender bushes in my garden makes me realize just what wonderful friends they are. While keeping company with my Lavender plants I had an insight into their strength and purpose, with their small pointy leaves which are soft to touch.

The Lavender flowers are telling me how important they are to this plant. The flowers are large size compared to the more subdued smaller leaves and are eye catching in their colour, as they protrude from the end of the stem a long way ahead of the little leaves. This clever flower contains oils that have been used over the centuries for many uses.

Lavender has been in documented use for over 2500 years, with its name coming from the Latin root "lavare", meaning "to wash". It most likely earned its name because it was frequently used in baths to purify the body and spirit. Ancient Egyptians used lavender for embalming and in cosmetics. When King Tut's tomb was opened in 1923, there was said to be a faint scent of lavender that could still be detected an incredible 3,000 years later!

Lavender continues to help our body and spirit in many ways. The stresses of modern life can be assisted by the soothing qualities of Lavender. Lavender can act as a sleep aid and has been used for centuries as a remedy for anxiety and depression.

When I look at the long-elongated purple and mauve flowers of Lavender they are very striking, glistening in the Sun. Lavender loves being in the sun, and look as though they are bending towards the Sun to soak up as much energy as possible from the Sun's warm rays so that they can continue their important work.

Bees love Lavender. This fragrant herb provides nectar for foraging bees from spring and through summer. But although lavender may

have a smell pleasant to humans it's not so popular with ants, flies, moths, fleas and mosquitoes.

Keeping company with my lavender friends on a windy, sunny, spring day makes me take notice of how other neighboring plants in the garden are responding to the day. Planted just behind my lavender bushes is a mature macadamia nut tree. The macadamia nut tree towers over the lavender bushes (being about five metres high), but in a friendly welcoming way, like a waving gentle giant. While the resilient little lavender flower spikes just move in the wind but not to the same degree as the macadamia.

The macadamia nut tree gives me a sense of mystery and wonder! The tree is in flower, and when you look at it closely, concealed underneath its dense green foliage are these amazing, delicate yellow flowers. These golden flowers that look as though they have been threaded on a fine piece of fiber about 25cm long.

Looking up inside the macadamia tree, underneath it's green foliage is like entering a magical concealed world where the tree has been decorated by these golden tendril-like flowers. The macadamia tends to hide it's sparkling flowers from the world and sun. In contrast the lavender flower spikes are constantly bathed in the sun's rays.

It is interesting to know that the macadamia flowers produce edible nuts and a luscious edible oil that have been used by the indigenous people of Australia for various reasons and they were the first people to harvest and trade macadamia nuts. My sense is that the Macadamia nut tree has much more to tell me and I will need to be patient and sit and immerse myself in her wisdom.

It is interesting to reflect on the fact that a fossilized pollen of a plant that was recognized as an ancestor of Macadamia has been found in central Queensland and dated to about 50 million years old.