

# Patti Lyons

## Who is she?

Patti Lyons was driving with her husband when she got a vision: a field of lavender to call her own. It took lots of hard work for her to end up where she is now, but it all had to start somewhere.

Patti grew up in Minden, Nebraska helping out on the family farm with her five siblings. Once she received her degree in business from the University of Nebraska, she moved state-to-state while taking on various jobs. First was Arizona where she was an educational financial aid processor, then was San Diego where she worked at a natural food store. This is where she met her now husband, George, and where her interest in organic farming blossomed. When she was presented with the options to either go to the University of California, Santa Cruz for their organic farming program or take on a job as an apprentice at an organic vegetable farm in Pennsylvania, her and George decided on the latter.



After working on this farm for about a year, they both agreed they didn't want to work that hard for anyone else other than themselves, so they decided to start their own farm called Blue Moon Acres on five acres of land that George's brother owned. They soon found they were very successful in this venture and later expanded their business to be based out of green houses, growing specialty organic greens that were transported and sold to the highest end restaurants in New York City. Working that close with family proved to be hard, and after six years Patti and George decided to split from this business and buy their own plot of land to fulfill Patti's vision of a field of lavender.

### Figure 1

*Patti Lyons posing for gridphilly.com  
in the lavender drying room*





Figure 2, The Barn - Ella Phipps

### Peace Valley Lavender Farm

Peace Valley Lavender Farm is located in Doylestown, Pennsylvania about an hour away from Philadelphia. Patti and George harvest the lavender in June/July and prune it in the spring to promote new growth, keeping the plants happy and healthy and, thus, profitable. Additionally, the couple and their five employees sell all things lavender in their shop, from soaps and sprays, to tote bags and pillows – all of which are also available on their website. The target market for this business is mainly women from ages 30-70 and is more regionally focused in the Eastern Pennsylvania area. The majority of customers are from Bucks County and, due to the shop’s close proximity to Peace Valley Park, they gain a lot of interest from those walking around Lake Galena. While most of the customers are local, Patti and George have also attended the Philadelphia Flower Show for the past couple of years. At the show, people come from all over the region to purchase floral goods. This means they are able to target individuals all over the United States, making them highly accessible to the masses.

Once the farm and shop were up and running more than 20 years ago, they started to gain traction from advertisements in local publications like the Bucks County Herald. One night, Patti met a woman at a party who did freelance writing and offered to write a story about the farm. That article, written for Bucks County Magazine, “just took off” – giving the farm the label of “tourist attraction” that is used to this day. Due to all of this ongoing attention, Patti and her husband George don’t see much of a need to invest in advertising. Instead, they place most of their focus on the quality of their products – something that many in the community know about and love them for.

Since then, the lavender farm has collaborated with local businesses – many of which are female run. Owowcow, an ice cream shop in town, uses their culinary lavender to make their honey lavender ice cream; and Broad Street Grind, a coffee shop, uses the lavender for lattes. The lavender farm products are also wholesaled to local businesses including a local Italian market.

Rather than having to keep the business relevant themselves, the farm just so happened to go viral on TikTok through Visit Bucks County’s page. It got 85.7K likes, almost 10,000 shares, 13.9K saves, and 530K views. This has also helped to expand their consumer reach because TikTok is concentrated by younger generations, so this was a great way for them to target more individuals in the area and around the country.



Figure 3, The Shop - gridphilly.com

### How they operate

Some of the major cost drivers that Peace Valley Lavender Farm experiences are packaging for their products, labor expenses, supplementary lavender and materials, labels, and base products. Overall, the largest expense for the farm is the materials. They not only need to grow, maintain, and harvest the lavender, but they also need to get the materials to create the goods that they sell in the gift shop area.

Moreover, with word-of-mouth having a profound impact on the farm, sales have continued to increase year after year. Unlike other businesses, Peace Valley Lavender farm thrived during Covid. With fast thinking from the owners, Patti and George were able to integrate curbside pickup into their business model.

One of the biggest partnerships that the farm has is their relationship with Visit Bucks County. They are consistently featured on their website and social media accounts, and they also appear on a pamphlet that Visit Bucks County places all over town. Patti and George’s business has started to lean more into digital marketing by chance, and has seen great success due to this. They understand the importance of evolving with the times while also creating genuine relationships with the community, and this has been critical to their success and continued growth.

Figure 4  
Patti and George Lyons for  
phillyburbs.com  
Figure 5  
George’s Dojo in 2021



### Lavendar Farm and Dojo?

When Patti met George in San Diego, he was actively studying the Japanese martial art Aikido. She soon realized it was something that he was extremely passionate about, and he decided he wanted to teach others. After starting their first business, Blue Moon Acres, George turned their chicken coop into a dojo and began training a small group interested in the popular spiritual practice.

After thinking about splitting from her brother-in-law’s farm and opening a lavender farm with George, they both agreed they wanted a property that was big enough to accommodate a professional dojo. Once they purchased the land and built the barn, George started training others on the second floor. While originally a small venture, the business has become quite successful and aids in keeping the couple grounded and positive. Now it is an extra activity offered to the Bucks County community, and many of the trainees help Patti and George during harvest season to show their gratitude.

When business became busy, the entrepreneurs found themselves retreating to the dojo to regroup and feed a different part of themselves. Patti describes their business as the foundation and what makes them successful financially, but the dojo is the “upper level that provides relief and mindfulness.”





## Any Advice?

Early on in her experience as an entrepreneur, Patti understood that many people have a clear career path, but hers was anything but. After graduating college, Patti had no idea what direction she wanted to go in, and aspiring entrepreneurs “don’t have to either”. She says the best thing to do early in your career is develop your footprint in the professional world as practical experience is most valuable. Additionally, Patti was lucky enough to avoid going into debt by receiving help from family to buy equipment, which was huge for the expansion of her business.

Patti did not follow the traditional five-year business model and, instead, adapted to changes as they arose. It was emphasized that an entrepreneur must be willing to take risks and roll with the punches. “You have to spend money to make money,” Patti quotes as a saying George uses frequently. Essentially, entrepreneurs need to become comfortable with some level of unpredictability. When she started her business, she was completely unsure how it would turn out, nor did she know of anyone doing something similar. “There’s always a degree of uncertainty when you’re your own boss,” Patti says. She stressed the value of believing in your idea and committing one hundred percent of yourself to the business’s success. While passion is vital, Patti advises any young entrepreneur to understand the balance between their passion and recognizing when it is necessary to step away from a particular endeavor.

*Figure 6*  
*Pick your own lavender, Guide to Philly*

Patti’s final piece of advice is for up-and-coming women. As a female entrepreneur, she has been subjected to gender bias. People often assume that her husband George is the one who owns and facilitates business operations. But Patti wants young women to know that they can overcome the obstacles they may encounter, and a great way to ensure that is to support other female businesses. “Meet other women, share your stories and experiences, and create a collaborative, empowering environment.”



## Future Plans

In the future, Patti and George are interested in possibly expanding the shop. They have talked to their neighbors about buying property, which would allow them to have more space for both lavender farming and customer parking. They would move product production to the neighboring structure and house a new farm manager, which would allow them to possibly expand the shop creating more room for new products.

Originally, Patti was very surprised by the farm’s performance. But eventually, she acknowledges her success is the result of consistent hard work and effort. She strives to create a product for everyone, and does not see another lavender farm that comes close to the quality and aesthetic that her and George strive so hard to keep up with.

While not facing many large obstacles throughout her journey, Patti explains that having a strong work ethic and vision superseded her lack of a clear career path. “Life happens, so having the ability to navigate it takes you where you go,” she says. And for the Peace Valley Lavender Farm, it seems the only way is up.