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Export date: Sun Nov 1 3:12:50 2026 / +0000 GMT

East Garafraxa farm recognized at 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The founder and owner of a 250-acre lavender and sunflower farm in East Garafraxa was recently recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Julie Thurgood-Burnett of Hereward Farms was presented with an Honoury Mention in the Women in Excellence in Agriculture category at OMAFRA's 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards in November.

?I'm truly honoured to be recognized among so many inspiring leaders in agriculture,? said Thurgood-Burnett. ?This award is a reflection of our team's dedication and our mission to create something meaningful ? not just for our customers, but for our land, our community, and for Canadian agriculture as a whole.?

Thurgood-Burnett was recognized for her leadership in sustainable farming, having converted her family's plot of land into a successful farm-to-business operation.

Hereward Farms began in 2020 with very humble beginnings. Thurgood-Burnett planted just 40 lavender plants as a side project ? what she called ?a passion planted in the soil.?

From there, it has rapidly expanded into a large agricultural operation.

?I never imagined it would bloom into more than 6,000 lavender plants and 400,000 sunflowers, or that it would change our lives the way it has,? she told the Citizen.

?Watching this farm grow has been nothing short of magical. Every season reminds me that when you nurture something with love, hard work, and a bit of lavender-scented optimism, incredible things can grow.?

Hereward Farm's focus is on crafting premium skincare and home products, which are 100 per cent Canadian-made and eco-friendly. These products are made from crops grown on the farm.

?Guided by the farm's philosophy, ?from our soil to your soul,' Hereward Farms demonstrates how agriculture and mindful entrepreneurship can grow hand in hand. From seed to shelf, every step of production happens with intention ? celebrating nature, nurturing community, and setting a new standard for what sustainable beauty and home care can look like in Canada,? reads a press release recognizing Hereward Farms as a recipient of OMAFRA's 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Award.

OMAFRA congratulated Thurgood-Burnett, along with all the 2025 award recipients, for their efforts in supporting the future of agriculture in the province.

OMAFRA's 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards took place at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto on Nov. 8.