

Tim Sommer of Purple Sage Farms has over 21 years experience as a certified organic grower of fresh herbs, greens and specialty produce. The company's focus has been on providing great flavors and the freshest quality. They have supplied commercial quantities to retailers, restaurants, and produce distributors over the years and now have one of the most widely known, organic brands in the Southern Idaho region. Tim's entire family has been involved in the hard work that it takes to keep an organic, specialty produce farm operating.

In the late 1980's Tim, along with Mike Heath, Nate Jones and Dick Parrott were actively involved in establishing an Organic Certification Program to serve the organic industry in Idaho. A group of progressive farmers looking to do things differently and fill a market niche, they slowly they gained acceptance with other producers. Instead of challenging the conventional practices of other farmers, they decided to pursue something different. It takes a long time for change to occur and for people to come to value organic and local food, as they often have an expectation for cheap (not necessarily high quality) food. Tim and the others' hard work has paid off as organic has become more popular.

Because of all the hard work involved, Purple Sage Farms will never become a giant operation, but they are happy to run a sustainable, circular system with greenhouses and hay and pasture grounds. Planting grass and hay helps rebuild the soil, and livestock on the pasture help spread nutrients around the soil. Tim then uses livestock manure and hay to compost greenhouses, resulting in healthy soil and animals.



In addition to well-known herbs and greens, Purple Sage sells unique, historically important foods, such as stinging nettle and purslane, that modern people have lost track of somewhat.

Stinging Nettle



Historically nettle served as a principle food in costal areas of poor nations like Ireland and Scotland, as it was a widely available native plant. Although you do not want to brush up against it, stinging nettle is a wonderful food. It's highly nutritious, providing the highest plant source of iron, in addition to other vitamins, nutrients and protein.

Cooking suggestions:

Tim likes to add nettle, browned onions and veggies to a basic stock to make an excellent, simple soup. Once the nettle has been cooked it no longer stings, and can be used in any recipe in place spinach or kale. Steamed nettle makes a delightful side dish. If you want to try it raw, fold it up so only the bottom of the leaf is exposed (the stingers are on the top), place the folded leaf in your cheek and let it sit for a few seconds to deactivate the stingers, chew and enjoy...

Purslane



Purslane has been a culinary favorite since ancient times, in cultures including Greece and Central America. Before the 1900's it was the most widely eaten vegetable in America.

Purslane has the highest omega 3 fatty acids of any leafy vegetable, and has high levels of beta carotene, magnesium, and potassium. It has a great texture and a nice, slightly tart, refreshing flavor.

Cooking Suggestions:

Purslane is most commonly eaten fresh as the main ingredient in a salad, or as an addition to green salads. Purslane can be substituted for spinach or wild greens in lasagnas, or steamed or boiled to include in many mexican dishes. There are many purslane potato salad recipes available online. Purslane provides an excellent opportunity to explore new flavors and recipes. Have fun!

Imagine . . .

Knowing where your food comes from, who is producing it, and their ethics and farming practices

Working in support of the health of your local community food shed where energy stays local and supports our rural economy