



GTCG WEEKLY

Recipes, Garden Pests and TidBits

Newsletter

Issue #3

Purslane

[Scientific name: *Portulaca Oleracea*]

GROWTH

Purslane is a common weed in North America, even though it has roots in Africa and the Middle East. Purslane will grow in full sun in almost any soil and does best in warm weather. It prefers regular watering but can survive in drought. These weeds will die at the first freeze of the year.

DISEASES/PESTS

Purslane sawflies, non-stinging wasps, are common pests to purslane and are commonly found resting on all kinds of plants, but purslane is its only host. These wasps mine the inside of the leaves to allow their larvae to eat. Due to this, the plants can be damaged and not grow as abundantly. Leafminer weevils are also common pests of purslane. Characterized by their beetle-like appearance, these small insects create mines in leaves in order to house larvae and feed.



HISTORY

Purslane is native to North Africa and the Middle East but found its way to North America in pre-Columbian times.

Currently, purslane is typically used as fodder for livestock and fed to chickens to reduce egg cholesterol.



PRESERVATION

After harvesting purslane, you can place it in a plastic bag and put it in the refrigerator for up to one week. When identifying purslane, cut the stem with a pair of scissors and squeeze the plant with your fingers. If a milk sap protrudes, do not eat the plant – this may be a similar-in-appearance poisonous plant called hairy-stemmed spurge.

Recipe of the Week

Purslane Quesadillas



INGREDIENTS

- 4 ounces purslane leaves, washed and rinsed
- 4 (8-inch) flour tortillas
- 8 ounces mozzarella, shredded
- 1 Roma tomato, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or butter

DIRECTIONS

1. Tear the purslane into 2 to 3 inch pieces, stripping the little shoots from the main stems. Discard the wood-like pieces.
2. Lay the tortillas on a clean work surface and sprinkle half of the tortilla with some of the cheese. Place chopped tomato, chopped green pepper and purslane on the tortilla. Sprinkle with more cheese. Repeat this step on all tortillas.
3. Heat a non-stick skillet over medium heat with 1 tablespoon of olive oil or butter. Place one tortilla on the skillet (or more if the skillet is large enough) and cook for about two minutes on each side.
4. Transfer the tortillas to a cutting board and cut them into pie-like slices or leave as is.
5. Pair with guacamole, sour cream, salsa or pico de gallo.

CONSUMPTION

This weed has a tart, sour and salty taste depending on what type of environment it is grown in. In hot, dry conditions, this weed will taste more sour. To get a less sour flavor, pick purslane's leaves early in the morning to avoid the sun from creating malic acid, which gives it its sour taste. Purslane, like other weeds, can be high in nitrates and oxalates. Have caution when eating this weed in fields treated with herbicides.

NUTRITION

Recipe makes four quesadillas. Each serving has 350 calories, 16 grams (g) fat, 21 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 460 milligrams sodium.



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