

# First-Of-Its-Kind Purple Sweet Corn

Munk Bergin's purple sweet corn is like no other. The Soltera Morado kernels are good to eat whole or as corn meal. The silk has medicinal uses. The cobs can be processed for a rich purple dye, and even the baby cobs and husks can be used.

"We harvest the silk early, and the workers who pick it eat the baby cobs like you would cucumbers or they can be used in a stir fry," says Bergin. "You can put the husks in a pitcher of water and steep them for sun tea. Pour off the tea and sweeten it with honey. It's such a refreshing and energizing drink that I dilute it."

Bergin spent four years working with researchers investigating nutrient density levels in heirloom varieties. He explains that because all the plant components are a deep purple color, the corn is loaded with antioxidants. They have health benefits for people as well. Bergin believes it has at least 4 times and perhaps as much as 20 times the anthocyanins as blueberries.

"The color gets even deeper when the corn is cooked," he says. "The deep colors have an impact on taste. These rich, dense colors accentuate the flavor you experience."

Bergin says the amazing Soltera Morado resulted from crossing open pollinated corn lines he has been breeding for more than 30 years. He first crossed various red cob and white cob flour and sweet corn lines to develop a red sweet corn he calls Blood Brothers. Then in 2002, he crossed Blood Brothers (male) with Martian Red, a sweet corn with purple cobs.

"Two years later I found 5 purple plants in a 3-acre field of Blood Brothers," recalls Bergin. "From 2005 until 2008, I grew the purple plant seeds in isolation. I called them Purple Sage."

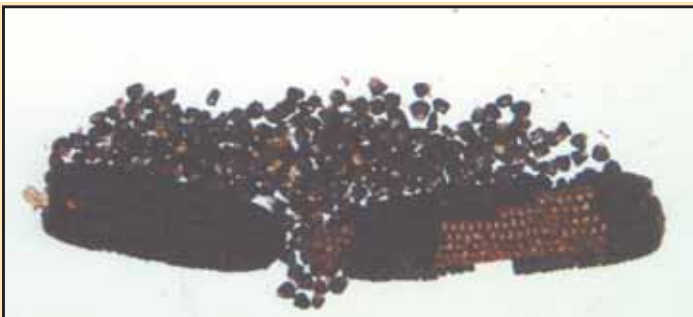
In 2009, he crossed them to Double Red, and Soltera Morado was the result. Since then he has been growing the seeds out, increasing his population and trying to further purify both Blood Brothers and Soltera Morado for red and purple traits respectively.

"I plan to start contracting with growers to produce the seed for me next year," he says. "I have some contracted this year."

Bergin is very excited about the unique purple corn. He says nutraceutical companies are also very interested. However, he hopes to keep the seed out of commercial, corporate hands.

"I hope to put it in the hands of market gardeners and small growers," says Bergin. "It has an old-time corn flavor that is not sugar enhanced."

Bergin says small amounts of the Soltera Morado seed are currently available at about



Munk Bergin is excited about his unique Soltera Morado purple corn. "I hope to put it in the hands of market gardeners and small growers. It has an old-time corn flavor that isn't sugar enhanced," he says.



Small amounts of the seed are currently available. The kernels are good to eat whole or can be made into cornmeal.

\$40/lb. Blood Brothers is priced at \$30/lb. Eventually the price likely will drop, but for the near term, it has to be grown in small lots in isolation from hybrid corn.

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## Zip Line Used To Transport Firewood

Patrick Jeanquart uses a zip line to transport firewood over a deep ravine near his house. It has saved him a lot of time and labor.

"Our home is on a small bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, with a ravine about 30 ft. deep between the house and an area we call the campsite," explains Jeanquart. "We like to have a bonfire there, overlooking the lake, when we have friends over."

However, hauling wood with a wheelbarrow through the ravine didn't appeal to him.

Jeanquart had already built a zip line between his house and the campsite for his son, Zachary. It retracts like a pulley-equipped clothes line, using an electric drill. He used wheelchair wheels as pulleys at either end of the zip line.

Making the zip line trolley into a wood carrier was a simple matter of tying a plastic trash barrel to a rope that hangs from a pulley on the trolley. "We tie the rope on the trash can to the handles on the trolley and give it a push."

At the other end of the zip line, Jeanquart's son unhooks the barrel, dumps it and reattaches it to the trolley to send it back. With a 350-lb. limit on the zip line trolley, Jeanquart isn't worried about overloading the barrel.

You can see a video of the firewood zip line at farmshow.com.

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Patrick Jeanquart uses a zip line as a firewood carrier by hanging a plastic trash barrel from a pulley on the trolley.



Wood carrier retracts like a pulley-equipped clothes line, using an electric drill. Wheelchair wheels serve as pulleys at either end of zip line.