

## [From farm to store: Wonderland Tea and Spice owner stocks shelves and spreads knowledge with family farms](#)



Linda Quintana has owned Wonderland Tea and Spice for the last 35 years. Her shelves are partly stocked with herbs grown at her two farms, one in Deming and one in Ferndale. Michael Homnick | BBJ

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The walls of [Wonderland Tea and Spice](#) are lined with every variation of tea, herb and spice one could ask for — something that is made immediately known to customers entering the shop, as their noses fill with a pungent combination of scents.

The small store, located at [1305 Railroad Ave.](#), has been owned and run by Linda Quintana for more than 35 years, a testament to her love for the business of cultivating herbs and sharing her knowledge.

“Thirty-five years, can you believe it?” she said.

Quintana has dedicated much of her life to herbs and spices, teaching classes on plant identification and herb usage, and living with her family in Deming, on one of her two organic herb farms. The farms supply her store and provide assurance that the herbs and spices have been grown and harvested to her specifications.



Spices line the walls of Wonderland Tea and Spice. Michael Homnick | BBJ

“It’s nice to have control,” said Terra, Linda’s daughter who works at the store as well. “Planting it from a seed, watching it grow, you know there are no pesticides or anything.”

Linda said the two farms are necessary because of the area’s diverse weather and growing conditions. What she can’t grow at the Deming farm, which she describes as “woodlands,” she grows at the second farm in “hotter and sunnier” Ferndale. The more than 25 herbs grown at both farms are used in soaps, lotions, body oils and numerous other products sold at the store.

However, Quintana said, the farms cannot supply her with everything she needs for the store.

“You can’t expect to grow everything right in Bellingham,” she said.

She said she buys certain herbs from larger farms in Oregon and Idaho, as well as looking to other states for herbs that can only be grown in different climates.

“We try to keep things local as much as we can,” Terra said. “But we also want the best products we can find. Sometimes this means we get them from far away.”

Quintana also uses her farms to bring what she knows about herbs to the community. She said one of her main goals is to teach what she calls “edible landscaping” and make people more self-sustaining and able to support themselves with the things they grow.

“I want people to see how to harvest herbs, and work from the ground up,” she said. Her most recent class, held at the beginning of November, offered advice on using herbs to create homegrown cold remedies. She said herbs that grow in wet, cold areas like the Northwest often provide ways to help problems associated with the climate, like colds and other sicknesses.

As the weather improves, Linda said she will begin teaching more classes at the farm, starting with plant identification in April. She also plans to continue working with the Wolf Camp, an outdoor-themed youth camp, teaching children about herbs in the area.

“I love teaching children to be self-sufficient,” she said. “Letting them know you can do something with your health, you can be in control.”

While Quintana has dedicated her life to using herbs for health benefits, she acknowledges the importance of traditional doctors and medicine. She said herb usage is not meant to take the place of doctors, and the best method is to work with doctors and use herbs to help the body heal better.

“The whole basis of herbs is preventative care,” she said. “Everyone needs to work together.”

After 35 years, Quintana said, running the store and growing herbs has become a way of life for her family and she is still content doing what she has been for so long.

“I still love coming to work,” she said. “Even if it’s hard to get out of the garden sometimes.”