

Harvest of the Month

Asparagus



About 22 million pounds of asparagus are grown in WA State on around 7,000 acres in the Columbia Basin, the Yakima Valley and the Walla Walla Valley.

All about Asparagus

History

- Wild asparagus was pictured as an offering on an Egyptian frieze dating to 3000 BC.
- Asparagus has been cultivated for more than 2,500 years by people worldwide.
- The name “asparagus” comes from Latin but originating from the Persian word *asparag*, meaning "sprout" or "shoot"
- Asparagus is often called the “Food of Kings.” King Louis XIV of France was so fond of this delicacy that he ordered special greenhouses built so he could enjoy asparagus all year-round.
- Asparagus is a member of the lily family as are onions and garlic.

Types of Asparagus

White asparagus is the same as green asparagus but grown without

daylight. Growing asparagus without daylight prevents photosynthesis from taking place and the formation of green chlorophyll.

Purple asparagus is a different variety than green or white asparagus. Its purple color comes from the high levels of anthocyanins (potent antioxidants), which have significant health benefits.

When we eat asparagus, what part of the plant are we eating?



Why Eat Asparagus?

Asparagus is packed with goodness!



- It is a very good source of Dietary Fiber, Protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Niacin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Iron, Phosphorus, Potassium, Copper and Manganese and a good source of Pantothenic Acid, Calcium, Magnesium, Zinc and Selenium. Whew! Eat up for good health!
- Asparagus is the leading natural source for folic acid which helps create healthy blood cells and prevent birth defects. Just 1 cup of asparagus provides over 20% of your daily needs.
- According to the National Cancer Institute, asparagus contains more glutathione than any other fruit or vegetable. This antioxidant plays an important role in the prevention of certain cancers and diseases.



Asparagus can be steamed, grilled, microwaved, stir-fried or roasted in the oven. Here's a simple oven roasting recipe.

Preheat the oven to 425°. Place asparagus on a cookie sheet in a single layer. Drizzle olive oil (or vegetable oil) over the asparagus, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place in the oven and cook until tender crisp and just starting to brown – about 10 minutes. This can be eaten as it is or sprinkled with parmesan cheese, or cut and added to salads.