



# February is Asparagus

## Nutrition & Health Benefits

- **Vitamin K** - Needed for blood clotting, preventing excess bleeding.
- **Vitamin C** - Needed for blood clotting and preventing excessive bleeding.
- **Folate** - Helps prevent birth defects, is needed to make DNA, and helps your cells divide, including red blood cells.

## Preparation & Cooking Tips

- Select** - Choose asparagus stalks with dry, tight tips. Avoid limp or wilted stalks.
- Store** - Wrap the ends of stalks in a wet paper towel and place in a plastic bag. Refrigerate for up to 4 days.
- Prepare** - Snap off the woody ends, about 1-2 inches. Enjoy raw, steamed, boiled, grilled, or roasted!

## Did you know?

- The word asparagus comes from the Greek word Asparagos, meaning sprout or shoot.
- Egyptians used asparagus spears as gifts for the gods.
- Asparagus can be found in three colors: green, white, and purple. White asparagus is grown under the soil.

## Fun Facts

- Fresh asparagus grown in Wisconsin is available in May and June.
- Asparagus is a stem vegetable, and the roots can grow 20 feet deep.
- Asparagus is related to onions, leeks, and garlic.
- Asparagus can be eaten raw or cooked.

### TASTE

### taste testing



Nutritious,  
Delicious,  
Wisconsin!

Asparagus can be enjoyed raw or cooked! Give each kid a raw spear of asparagus. If possible, allow kids to slice part of the spear crosswise and lengthwise to observe the internal structure (an adult can also pre-slice the spears). Now give each kid a spear of cooked asparagus (asparagus can be pre-cooked in a microwave). Allow kids to slice the cooked spears and note any differences. Encourage kids to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste both versions of asparagus. Poll kids to see if they prefer raw versus cooked asparagus and why.



fit families

Eat healthy • Be active • Your kids are watching

## FUN



### activity: Colorful Stems

**Objective:** Kids will observe how stems transport water and nutrients throughout the plant.

**Supplies:** Celery stalk with leaves, food coloring (blue or red), and a cup or jar of water.

**Procedure:** The stems of vegetables provide structural support while transporting water and nutrients throughout the plant. One way to visually show how stems transport water and nutrients throughout the plant is by using celery, another stem vegetable. Add a few drops of food coloring to a cup of water. Place the bottom part of the celery stalk into the cup of water. Leave the celery in the water overnight and return the next day to record your observations. Just like an elevator, stems pull water up into the leaves.

*This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.*

**Tips for adapting to virtual learning:** This activity is simple to do in a home environment if kids have access to celery. One bunch of celery can be divided among a group of kids. If this is not feasible, share a link to a video: <https://youtu.be/Klug9Foou3s>.

**Share pictures** and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.



## READ



### books

- *Inch by Inch: The Garden Song* by David Mallett
- *The Mighty Asparagus* by Vladimir Radunsky
- *Ryan and the Asparagus* by Mathew Horejsi
- *The Vegetables We Eat* by Gail Gibbons



Find out more at <https://www.wiharvestofthemoth.org>



## Roasted Asparagus

Rinse asparagus spears and trim the ends.

Spread out on a foil covered baking sheet.

Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with herbs, pepper, and garlic powder.

Roast at 400F for 10-15 minutes.

Asparagus will be ready when tender.

Information adapted from Wisconsin Harvest of the Month.

