



# Asparagus



Asparagus is a perennial flowering plant known for its flavorful, nutrient-rich young spears, which are the stems of the plant. It is a member of the lily family (Asparagaceae). While green asparagus is most common, there are also white and purple varieties.

Asparagus plants are grown in temperate regions with cool winters and warm springs. California, Michigan, and Washington are the top asparagus-producing states. The plants are typically grown from crowns, which are root systems of one-year-old plants. They require well-drained sandy or loamy soil and full sun exposure. It can take about 2-3 years to establish a productive bed, after which the bed can produce for 15-20 years.

The edible shoots are typically harvested in the spring when they are tender. Harvesting requires careful handling of the delicate spears and is usually done by hand. The spears are cut or snapped just below the surface of the soil when they are 6-10 inches tall and about the thickness of a pencil. Some farms use harvesting carts that allow workers to lie or sit close to the ground when harvesting. Conveyor belts attached to tractors may also be used during the harvesting process.

After harvesting, asparagus spears are quickly transported to a packing facility where they are sorted and graded by size, color, and quality. The spears are washed and rapidly cooled by immersing them in or spraying them with cold water to preserve freshness and prevent spoilage. They are bunched and secured with rubber bands and boxed for shipping.

Asparagus is low in calories and high in vitamins and minerals, including vitamin K, vitamin C, folate, fiber, and antioxidants. The high potassium content supports heart health, promotes kidney function, and reduces bloating.

Asparagus can be prepared in a variety of ways, including grilled, steamed, boiled, sautéed, roasted, pickled, and added to soups, stews, stir fry, quiche, or pasta.



<https://youtu.be/vZfePWrcm7Y?si=staDR9Ou3OcKTn4Y>